

## MILITARY REGIMES AND PROSPECTS OF LONG TERM DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

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### **Abstract**

*This paper tends to explore the role of army in Pakistani politics. It discusses various internal and external factors which paved the way for army intervention in politics. Internal factors have been covered in the form of mullah, judiciary and political parties which external have been highlighted in terms of west and USA. The study concludes that military has been intervening in Pakistan's politics particularly due to strong support from within the society and institutions of the state and it remains in process of decision making either directly or indirectly. The study also analyzes application of Turkish Model of Democracy.*

### **Key words**

Military, Judiciary, Political Parties, Mullah, Turkey, and Democracy

### **Introduction**

Democracy is a highly complex political system. It is not only a concept; it's a culture, a code and a way of life. Democracy can be defined as,<sup>1</sup>

A competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that public can participate in the decision making process.

Whereas Vanhennen defines democracy as<sup>2</sup>,

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A political system in which different political groups are legally entitled to compete for power in which institutional power holders are elected by the people and are responsible to the people.

### **Literature Review**

Zaidi (2011) in his book, “Military, Civil Society and Democratization in Pakistan” expresses the views that even after the democratic transition in Pakistan, democracy, real or formal, is still a long way from being established. The writer has pointed out how civil society was suppressed by the military regimes in Pakistan. Zia by alienating Bhutto’s supporters, was able to draw support from other political groups and built his own mainstream political constituency. Musharraf too, was able to work with majority political parties and groups who felt that supporting military would pave the way for them to get power. The military game, once in power, is to quickly identify groups and groups who are willing to work with it. Most of the time, many political forces are co-opted and become collaborators. This collaboration allows them a semblance of autonomy and authority in a political structure which is largely under the military's domination. This form of praetorian cooptation, which turned to be praetorian democracy later worked well for both Zia and Musharraf.

Zia’s Islamisation to fulfill Pakistan’s supposed Islamic destiny was inverse of Musharraf’s mission of moderation vision, again trying to fulfill Pakistan’s supposed moderate and enlightened destiny. In both the cases, not surprisingly, there were very few group actors and factions, who were willing to lead Pakistan to a destination described by both the military rulers. It has never been difficult for regime to find allies in Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

It is no doubt a great literary work and the author has discussed military interventions in Pakistan in detail and its impact on civil society. However, in this article the researcher would try to emphasize role of civil society in

more detail and will take into account Turkish case as well keeping in view the writers' point of view.

“In Pakistan: Democracy, Terrorism and Building of the Nation” Malik (2010) explains that consequences of the US led "War on Terror" continue to destabilize the countries of the Indian subcontinent. Therefore, Pakistan and its fate are seldom out of the headlines though it's an open secret that how Pakistan reached this critical state.<sup>4</sup>

This comprehensive book describes complex issues being faced by Pakistan, while remaining optimistic about future of a pluralistic nation caught between civil and military imperatives. Professor Malik makes analyses of the country's geo-political position, legacy of partition main actors who have shaped the nation and role of civil society as a vehicle of change. He has also discussed the jihadis extremism and role played by political Islam, and West by using Pakistan as a buffer state.

### **Research Questions:**

Main research questions are:

1. What are the different factors which are responsible for strengthening Military Regimes in Pakistan
2. Can and how Turkish Model of democracy is applicable in case of Pakistan?

### **Hypothesis:**

The external support provided to the Military regimes by the West & the US to achieve their own interests in the region. The Military has been very influential in Pakistan's Politics because of strong support from groups within the society and the institutions of the state. It remains part of the process of decision making either directly or indirectly.

### **Justification of the study:**

The findings of the project would target international community think tanks to develop strategy and contain lessons for other countries to follow the path. It would be also beneficial for countries organization and

devising strategies to deal with countries undergoing massive restructuring in terms of democracy, policy making and development.

Most of the researches in Pakistan have not focused on present topic and there is much need for current research because of the fact that democracy can become representative only in the presence of an effective and vibrant civil society otherwise it remains only an electoral one.

### **Research Methodology**

In the present research writing primary and secondary sources were used. Primary sources used include interviews, diaries, letters, journals, original, hand written and manuscripts, and magazine clippings, government documents, etc.

The secondary sources include; textbooks, review articles, bibliographies, historical films, music and art, articles about people and events from the past. The methodology which would be used will be quantitative and qualitative method analysis. Mostly the present research study used historical approach. Data collection comprised of documents (Magazine, bulletins, newsletters, policy statement, etc. and responses in interviews.

The study recruited people from different sections of the society comprising of teachers, parliamentarians, military personnel, lawyers and students aged between 25 to 40 years, as sample for field survey.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Few of the scholarly and semi scholarly works have been used for theoretical framework to explain Military regimes and future prospects of long term democracy in Pakistan. There are many theories like dependency theory; developmental theory; realism and neo-realism have also been used. However this study has used Liberal Democratic Model as theoretical framework. The various models accepted in the world are pluralist view, corporatist view and liberal democratic view which is accepted in the

western world as worldwide practice of politics. Its key constructs being; indirect or representative democracy in which political office is gained by success in regular elections. In Pakistan and Turkey regular elections take place.

It is based on competition and electoral choice. Electoral Choice is available to the voters in both the countries and there is a clear cut distinction between state and civil society. This also stands true for both the countries as well. This model is most appropriate, since it is applicable for both the countries, in order to understand and answer the above mentioned research questions.

### **Background**

In today's world politics Military intervention in politics has been a repeated practice. After world War-II more than two thirds of countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa have experienced varying degrees of intervention of Military in politics.<sup>5</sup>

Pakistan like many under developed countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa was born as a fragile nation state. It was loaded with ideological and ethnic cleavages along with administrative chaos. Moreover, there has been political and economic instability of the state. These above mentioned factors proved to be a real setback bringing frequent Military interventions in Pakistan in (1958, 1977 and 1999). In all the four martial Laws, the dictators managed to attain legitimization through civilization. The abrogation or suspension of constitution as well as abrogation of constitution remained a frequent practice by Military regimes in Pakistan, in order to gain legitimacy through legal and constitutional cover. Gen. Ayub introduced basic democracy system for presidential elections to expand his influence across the state. In the Military regime of Zia and Musharraf, the power was transferred from Prime Minister and legislature to the President. In the same context, Zia incorporated 8<sup>th</sup> amendment to the 1973 constitution of Pakistan. Musharraf introduced the Legal Frame Work Order

(LFO) and the institution of National Security Council to strengthen the regime.<sup>6</sup>

The direct and indirect role of Military into the politics of Pakistan has been discussed in detail by many analysts. The writers like Rizvi, Mahmood, Siddiqua, Veena, Cohen and Kukreja have defined the Military ascendancy in Pakistan. The relations between the judiciary, the executive and the Military have hardly been accommodative; rather the mistrust between each other has continued paving the way to instability of democratic system in Pakistan. In reality one of the biggest challenges of Pakistan is to maintain balance between institutional pillars and let the executive to take ascendance, as has been mentioned in the constitution.<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi writes that legislatures and Political Parties are mere fake democratic institutions with the help of whom non-democratic institutions rule. For the survival of some rulers, the force of traditions legitimacy from religions or other sources may play a vital role. In order to maintain power any democratic or dictatorial ruler it is necessary that they build coalition.<sup>8</sup>

Keeping Gandhi's assertion in mind the paper explores the sources that played a vital role in the sustenance as well as survival of Military regimes in Pakistan. The role of Intelligence agencies and Military in politics has also been probed in this study. The ways Judiciary, Political Parties and Mullah have joined hands with Military in prolonging the regimes has been discussed in this paper. The paper also depicts the ways political parties have derailed the democratic system by launching strikes and protest against the government. In this study role of West and the US regarding the Military regimes of Pakistan has also been taken into account.

### **Role of Military in Politics of Pakistan**

The founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared democracy as the basis of Political System of Pakistan, with the inception of the state. The ruling elite began to cultivate and strengthen Military

after the death of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948 and assassination of P.M Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951.

Governor Ghulam Mohammad was encouraged by Military support to dissolve first Constituent Assembly. Afterwards he included many senior Military personnel's in his cabinet, signalling that there had been a shift of real political power from the Parliament to Governor General and the civil service with backing of army. It was confirmed when Ayub Khan in 1958 led a Military coup'et'atat and became the first dictator of Pakistan.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime army in collision with civil bureaucracy stopped development of parliamentary democracy envisioned by the founding father. After the Military took over in 1958 role of Political leaders from pioneer structure of the state was excluded and the army was given a free hand to rule the country. Article 173 of 1962 constitution was introduced which prohibited army personnel's from contesting the elections as member of a political party. The Political Parties Act, which was passed in July 1962 allowed only limited political activities.

The dictators in succession continued such practices which limited the activities of the political parties. Several laws and regulations were introduced which banned or restricted political activities and political parties by which their military rule could likely be threatened.<sup>10</sup>

Afterwards in 1977 when second coup by General Zia was launched some articles of the constitution were held in abeyance which dealt with fundamental rights of the constitution. Martial Law order No.31 was promulgated in June 1978. He also setup tribunals which were assigned the responsibility to inquire into corruption charges against the contestants of 1977 elections. The basic aim was that of disqualifying PPP members who were successful in 1977 elections. During Zia era all types of political activities were controlled by him and disagreements met extreme suppression by the regime through the legal system which was designed by him. For nine years Musharraf remained in power. Same manner of suppressing democratic forces was used which could likely impose threat to his regime

and rigging national and local elections. By passing 17<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution in December, 2000 Musharaff stabilized his power. By virtue of this amendment power was transfer to president from the PM to the President. The power to dismiss the P.M was also grasped by the President.<sup>11</sup>

### **Intelligence Agencies**

The intelligence agencies have often been employed by Military of Pakistan to control, destabilize and monitor political parties of Pakistan and other institutions along with media with an objective to perpetuate its power and liquefy any opposition to the regime. In most of the Military regimes operations have been carried out against, dissenting Politicians, objective intellectuals and other activists through disinformation campaigns, tortures, kidnappings, assassinations, systematic harassments and factious trials.<sup>12</sup>

Ayub Khan in 1958 introduced political role of ISI Pakistan politicians, media and politically active segments of the society were monitored by the agencies. Social organization likely to influence politics like student organization and trade unions were kept under strict control. The Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB), also called internal wing was created during Ayub regime, aiming to collect political intelligence. The Intelligence Agencies were involved actively in domestic politics during all Military regimes. Yahiya Khan and East Pakistan politician suspected of polluting a secessionist movement at that time was ISI, first victim.<sup>13</sup>

Civilian leaders made negligible effort to bring army under their control. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to minimize on the Military in law and order situation created political cell of ISI and also created Federal Security Force (FSF) with a purpose of strengthen civilian regulatory apparatus.<sup>14</sup>

Bhutto also made efforts to dilute political influence of Military, like, according to 1973 constitution, the armed forces were strictly put under the “command and control”

of the Federal Government (Article 243). In addition Military officers were required to swear that they will not engage in any sort of political activities. The constitution also imposed death penalty for those abrogating constitution.<sup>15</sup>

Zia then disbanded the Federal Security Force but role of ISI was expanded to collect domestic intelligence on religious and political organizations opposing the regime. After a plane crash in which General Zia died, Military agreed to transfer power to the PPP and its leader Benazir Bhutto in 1988, after ensuring, to retain its exclusive monopoly as well as institutional autonomy over important external and internal areas including foreign affair and defense.

After Zia, Military frequently derailed democratic functioning between 1988 and 1999-relying on election manipulation, bribery and coercion. Various elected governments were dismissed by the Presidents at behest of the Military. The Civilian governments were not even allowed to complete their full five year tenures. During Musharraf regime ISI was given funds specially to weaken major political parties to ensure loyalty of the ruling coalition.<sup>16</sup>

### **Factors for the survival of Military regimes in Pakistan**

The Military regimes in Pakistan have been able to survive and have been prolonged because of strong support from some internal and external sources. The detail of these sources is given below:-

#### **The Religious Groups and the Army**

In a deliberative process of depolarization during Ayub era, Politicians and Political parties were discredited. Democracy and democratic norms were questioned and depicted as against the cultural traditions and Muslim character of the state.<sup>17</sup>

The moderate politicians became target of Ayub Khan who opposed dictatorship through maintenance of Public Order Ordinance (MPO) of 1960. During his era

ulema showed extreme resentment over Waqf properties Ordinance 1961 and Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO) but as soon as the Presidential elections became nearer, Ulema supported Ayub Khan. Declaring Fatima Jinnah as Madr-e-Millat was against Sharia and claiming she was backed by agents of US, India & those favouring Pukhtoonistan. They also gave their Fatwa declaring it Un-Islamic for a women to be head of an Islamic state paved the way for Ayub Khan to win the presidential elections in 1965.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly in late 70's, General Zia introduced Islamization program for reforming the society and helped Ulema to play active role in politics. They were given important posts in state political set-up in return for strongly supporting the regime.<sup>19</sup>

General Musharraf, the Military dictator also had same opinion that it was not the religious parties but secular politicians, who were major rivals for his political power and continued supporting religious parties in order to achieve his limited personal and political interests and continued to suppress the moderate political parties.

On one hand during Musharraf era, graduation condition was imposed to contest elections and on the other hand Madrassa degrees were declared equivalent to formal system of education. The entire development opened the door of politics for the Madrassa students who contested elections under the banner of Muttahida-Majlis-e-Amal (M.M.A) a political alliance consisting of six political parties. The MMA came up as the largest opposition in the National Assembly but helped Musharraf to sustain regime by accepting controversial legal frame work order and institutionalizing the presence of the Army in politics of Pakistan through establishing National Security Council. The coalition served as a weak opposition and many times was blamed as B-Team of Musharraf it gained political importance at the cost of liberal political parties.<sup>20</sup>

### **Submissive Judiciary**

Most of the time influence of Military in politics of Pakistan has been strengthened by compliance of Judiciary. The Supreme Court of Pakistan on October 27, 1958 approved that regime in a ruling that a successful coup d'etat was an internationally recognized legal way of amending the constitution. In this manner judiciary made attempts to justify its failure to protect the constitution with the help of self-defined doctrine of necessity, which was on the unconvincing argument that interference of army in politics of Pakistan and take over could be justified because of the need for political stability.<sup>21</sup>

Whenever crises or political instability have emerged in Pakistan, judiciary has been consulted. Act of Zia-Ul-Haq to depose Bhutto was challenged in the courts in a constitutional case entitled "Begum Nusrat Vs Chief of Army Staff". In 1999, when again the military leader imposed martial Law and declaring himself as the Chief Martial Law Administrator, the act was again challenged in the court in a constitutional case with the Title Zafar Ali Shah and General Musharraf Chief Executive of Pakistan.

In both the cases judiciary justified Military intervention by invoking the "Doctrine of Necessity". The dismissal of Junejo Assembly was declared illegal but the assembly was not restored by the court. The government of Benazir was dismissed twice in 1990 and 1996. The Presidential Orders were upheld by the courts. In 1993 the dismissed Assembly of Nawaz Sharif was restored but unfavourable circumstances created by military and political parties forced him to resign. In 1999 when Musharraf came to power, the Judges were forced to take oath under Presidential Constitutional Order (PCO) through which the court granted unlimited powers to the President. When the courts declared president decision to impose emergency as illegal in 2007, the judiciary, was sacked.<sup>22</sup>

The Judiciary was not independent enough to give fair decisions and which are helpful to sustain democracy which could lead to political stability. A ray of hope could be seen during Lawyer's movement during Musharraf era

when retaliation was noted from the public against the decision to restrict suo moto actions of Chief Justice. The Judiciary was reinstated under the extreme pressure of the Civil Society. The judiciary kept on making bold decisions even after restoration. They also gave bold statements against Military and the powerful political leaders while hearing different cases. Despite all, there is perception that the judiciary spares Military even in cases of violation of human rights in Pakistan.

### **Political Parties**

The major political parties have suffered at the hands of the military in the struggle for restoration of democracy under dictatorship in the past political history of Pakistan. After forming governments, the parties are often blamed for not meeting standards of democracy. Most of the time the elected governments have been alleged of; corruption, incompetence, partisanship and patronage. Moreover, it is also claimed by the observers that democratic standards have hardly been followed by the leaders of the political parties within their parties, despite keenness for such reforms from rank and file members.

Small number of party elite tends to dominate their party leadership using their position and increasing personal wealth instead of serving the people or the party. Instead of open contests, the nominations for elected officers are most of the time determined by the party leaders. Rather than being selected or elected on basis of merit, office bearers are appointed. The party policies and platform rarely involve input from members.<sup>23</sup>

The party system has been weakened by the role played by some politicians. The elected governments have been thrown by their collaboration of Military by accepting bribes for division of parties into factions, by becoming intelligence agency informants and by crossing the floor.<sup>24</sup>

Like the Pakistan National alliance (PNA) which was formed in 1977 consisting of political parties having different ideologies just before the elections against PPP the election results were rejected by Pakistan National

Alliance (PNA), boycotted Provincial Assembly elections. Their protests turned into clashes all over the state resulting in interference in politics. Similarly, PML-Q in 2002 elections showed good performance. PML-N and PPP, the two major political parties were left behind in elections results.<sup>25</sup>

It was believed to be formed on instigation of Establishment of Pakistan. The Intelligence agencies & Military collaborated with some willing parties against their political opponents had been a key to the objectives of military maintaining control of the political process by weakening popular political parties.

In addition to PNA there were united democratic front and Grand Democratic Alliance were established to discuss the democratic governments by the opposition parties. In the Past, the efforts of governments to suppress and the protests of the opposition parties created unrest in the state which led to direct involvement of actors of state in politics.

In the past, political parties have also exerted pressure: on democratic governments by organizing long marches. In the mid-1993, PPP led opposition tried to launch a long march but it was aborted by the government. According to plan, the March was to be initiated from Rawalpindi but the Leader of Opposition was not allowed to go there to lead the long March and large number of protestors were tortured and beaten by police.

The long March was not successful it was planned shortly after dismissal of Government of Nawaz Sharif. Then Nawaz Sharif launched Tehrik-e-Nijat against government of Benazir in 1996 and as a part of his Tehrik he embarked on a train march from Lahore to Peshawar resulting in dismissal of the PPP's government.<sup>26</sup>

### **Support for Pakistani Dictatorships from the West**

In order to achieve their own interests in the region the US and the West have supported Pakistani Military regimes. Pakistan experienced long spells of brutal authoritarian rule which provoked resentment against the

west and the US among public which was acknowledged by the US Secretary of the state Clinton that US supported successive dictatorial regimes in Pakistan.

An opportunity was provided during Zia era, when the soviet invasion of Afghanistan took place, to legitimize his regime. On the international level, Pakistan served as a frontline state in the War on Terror to serve the interests of the US and West after 9/11 incident. Money again started flowing from the US to Pakistan treasury and US sanctions imposed on Pakistan after the nuclear test in 1999 were lifted. Musharraf's control over the state institutions was strengthened by the 2002 general elections which were declared rigged by the international as well as local observers. Musharraf's stance was that Pakistan was not yet ready for full fledged democracy, was fully backed by almost all foreign governments. During Zia and Musharraf era US Policies towards Pakistan strengthened religious extremism. The Military dictators marginalized, weakened and victimized all forms of demands for democracy during the same periods.

Under the umbrella of the global powers, Musharraf used policy of "enlightened moderation" as a camouflage to hide the human rights' abuses and suppression of political rights in Pakistan. Suppression of Political forces during the period was declared as a subject of internal issue by the international community. They believed the political parties were feudal, corrupt and unable to deliver on war on terror as Musharraf could.<sup>27</sup> From 2002 till his ouster from power in 2008, Musharraf accepted billions of dollars from Bush regime playing a double game and also turned a blind eye to religious extremist groups that were known to be involved in terrorist activities in the region.<sup>28</sup>

### **Are There Prospects of Long term Democracy in Pakistan?**

Turkey has been successful in democratizing its own political system and military has been assigned the role to integrate it within the political fabric. An

environment has been promoted by the state where holding a coup is accountable.<sup>29</sup>

In Turkey traditionally Military was quite influential in politics of Turkey, similar to the case in Pakistan. But now productive relationship has been established between its military and political wing and Turkey can proclaim itself successful in democratization.<sup>30</sup> Economic stability and improved service delivery are perhaps among the most important factors which have contributed in promoting political stability: and subsequent balance in Civil-Military relations in Turkey. An important part has been played by Turkey's decision to join the European Union in gaining political stability. Later on better service delivery and stable democratic government were a result of economic growth. The Army Officers were also put on trial for previous coups and served as "*Deterrence against future military interventions.*"<sup>31</sup>

In addition, some institutional arrangements like National Security Council in Turkey have also contributed a lot in leading civil Military role towards stability. This body has rationalized balance of Civil and Military leadership. The Council openly discusses all aspects of secretariat including armed conflict, energy, terrorism, education, logistics, food security and cyber security etc.

The system is still being stabilized and reformed. The policy makers think that "Communication among all stake holders and feedback is critical whether it is the masses at the grass root level or institutions like the Military."<sup>32</sup> This is where the strength of Turkish model lies.

The Civil-Military relations can be improved in Pakistan if Turkish model is followed. In all contemporary regimes some decision for the economic growth of the state are taken. Pak China Corridor can be the equally beneficial for Pak as Turkey decided to join EU. The outcomes of these long term projects can improve service delivery in Pakistan which as a result can be helpful to sustain the democracy. Establishment of institutions as National Security Council with similar powers as in Turkey can help

to improve political stability in Pakistan. It is believed that present government has quietly accepted the role of Military in politics especially in national interest and foreign affairs. Some limited roles and balancing role of military can be better institutionalized to promote frequent communication among civil governments and military as done in Turkey. Like this direct role of Military can be prevented.<sup>33</sup>

Pakistan faces multifarious issues which derailed democratic process and enhanced Civil Military relations. Military in Pakistan can most effectively take part in important foreign policy decisions and country's security policy.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Conclusion**

The military claims to be the saviour of the state. It had often taken over the control of government in the past. There had been external and internal forces which had helped military regimes to rule for long time. The Mullahs had always been supporting the Military regimes in the past overtly or covertly, in return enjoyed some advantages. Judiciary also for most of time had declared the regimes legal and hardly ever challenged any controversial decision of the military regimes except once during Musharraf era.

As a result judges of higher courts were deposed. The political leaders and the political parties had also for most of the time collided with Military specifically when they were in opposition. Certain external forces like the US and the West had largely supported the Military regimes in Pakistan in the past to serve their Western interests. The study concludes that the state needs to make certain institutional arrangements and replicating Turkish model of democracy which assigns role of army in politics within its constitutional framework.

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