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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL AGITATION AGAINST ZIA-UL-HAQ'S POLICIES

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ABSTRACT:

The political history of Pakistan is filled with much instability and has remained very turbulent since 1947. It has remained oscillated from democratic government to a military dictatorship. First military government in Pakistan was set up by General Ayub Khan in 1958 which was extended by General Yahya Khan till 1971 and in 1977 country was once again under Martial Law government of General Zia-ul-Haq. He implemented Martial Law because of the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's autocratic nature and his wish to cling the power. He could not satisfy his political opponents regarding the results of 1977's general election and pushed country into the unending political and constitutional crisis. General Zia-ul-Haq considered it the golden opportunity to fulfill his ultimate goals of ruling over Pakistan. None the less, general public, political parties and other welfare organizations started to resist against the rule and policies of General Zia-ul-Haq who scrubbed all the activities which were against his Government by force or by law. This paper is an effort to uncover the significance of the resistance of political parties and public regarding their efforts to restore of democratic Government. Moreover, the issue of women rights had also gained

the importance of high level as many women and NGOs were submitting their protests regarding the laws of Hudood Ordinance. Therefore, this article critically analyzes the role of public and political leaders for the restoration of democracy and women rights issues in Pakistan. In this article the role of those famous poets is also discussed who criticized the rule of Zia-ul-Haq through their poetry.

INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of Pakistan, the political set up and constitution has blown up several times by imposing Martial law. The imposition of martial law had always created a sort of political and social imbalance in Pakistan for the time being and it was the case with the martial law of 1977 which was implemented by General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan in 1977. This third martial law was imposed in Pakistan due to political uncertainty and law & order situation, prevailing that time. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto during his rule adopted autocratic nature which was not acceptable for other political parties and gradually he began to lose his grip on the political ground of Pakistan. Many political alliances started to begin in against him like PNA (Pakistan National Alliance) which was an alliance of nine political parties was formed against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Moreover, to counter his ideas and secular nature PNA also joined hands with Nizam-e-Mustafa Movement (a drive for the implementation of the Order of the Prophet (PBUH) and Islamic system) and started to campaign against the policies and mind set of Pakistan People's Party. Due to political assassinations, bad economy and prolonged rule of Bhutto, all political alliances made against him started to gain popularity. Public was giving positive response to the vigorous campaign of PNA and it was hopeful for their victory in the upcoming elections. National elections were held in 1977 but unfortunately the result was not acceptable for the parties who were against PPP as the result was in favour of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. PNA considered it rigged and fraudulent election so they waste no time to denounce it and demanded resignation of Bhutto. (Mazari, 2006) They boycotted the provincial elections which were about to contest on March 1977 and demanded free and fair re-election for national assembly. National strikes, civil disobedience and political arrests started throughout the country which enhanced the rifts between opposition and Government (Mazari, 2006). From March 1977 till July 1977 efforts were made to break the political deadlock in the country but indecisiveness of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his wish to cling to power resulted in the imposition of martial law (Rizvi, 1991). After martial law, Zia-ul-Haq had to conduct election within 3 three month according to the constitution of Pakistan, but he delayed it for years. After assuming charge of Chief Martial Law Administrator he told in an interview " I don't have any intention of staying in power for years" But ironically, he extended his martial law for years

After the imposition of Martial Law and delayed elections, once again the country was drawn towards series of protests against military dictatorship like many movements for restoration of democracy were started. Many political alliances were made to challenge the government of Zia-ul-Haq. He not only faced political opposition but social resistance was also there from the female section of society as many laws like Hudood laws, Zina laws, Diyat laws etc increased the sensitivity of the women and they challenged these laws by

submitting their opposition. It is interesting to note that the resistance against Zia-ul-Haq was in many dimensions as it was also depicted through poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib.

Movement For The Restoration Of Democracy (MRD)

Martial Law was declared suddenly, which created confusion among PNA, PPP and other opposite leaders and they could not prepare any strategy. Zia made promise of holding up elections within ninety days but this promise was not fulfilled. The main concern of all political parties was the organization of elections and only for this sake they made alliances and started civil disobedience but Zia used this situation with shrewdness as he gained the support of Islamic parties by adopting Nizam-i-Mustafa. From 1977 to 1979 the Jamat-i-Islami was in full cooperation with Martial Law regime as they considered it an opportunity to win the election and rule over the country but unfortunately this alliance between Zia and Jamat remained cordial for very short time as the announced date of elections was once again postponed by Zia regime. This made Jammat and other political parties critical towards policies of Zia-ul-Haq and they warned him about the consequences. In fact Zia-ul-Haq's main concern was just to rule over the country and for this purpose only hurdle in front of him was popularity of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, therefore he got support of Jammat and PNA to eradicate him. Once Bhutto was executed, not only he became carefree of the Jamaat and PNA but also started to tighten up his grip over the country. Zia did not pay attention about the gulf between the supporting parties so most of the parties who were in the favor of Martial Law initially, now has become the partner of MRD with PPP (Khan M. A., 2008).

PPP were remained against the military government and elimination of Bhutto put down the position of PPP. Uncertain cases register against the members of the PPP and severe punishment given to them. It was entirely possible for PPP to organize a movement with the assistance of other radical groups. The efforts for the reinstatement of Republic Government had given another chance to PPP to regain its position among the society. It was an alliance of nine parties and maximum of them launched a movement against Bhutto government. PPP left behind the execution of Bhutto and focus on the restoration of democracy with help of these parties (Burki & Baxter, 1991). JUI, NAP, Muslim League, Qoumi Mahaz Azadi, PPP etc. parties were in the alliance of MRD against military rule except Jamaat e Islami and Muslim league Pagaro group. Jamaat e Islami is considered against Zia regime because they did not support MRD, but some leaders of Jamaat e Islami like Prof. Ghafoor and Munawaar hussan criticized the Zia (Arif, 1995).

As Zia promised to hold election within 90 days but he himself created such situations that election became impossible. He wanted to extend his rule over Pakistan because many parties were not in his favor to give him more time because he postponed the elections twice. Zia created such circumstances which would strengthen his rule. Zia sensed that no other parties are willing to support, he decided to hold election non-parties bases. Major demand of MRD was to clean and unplanned election in country (Khan H. , 2008). After the demand of election, the 2nd major demand of MRD was to reestablishment

of 1973 constitution which was not acceptable for military government because according to the article no. 6 which tells that:

“Any person who abrogates or attempt or conspires to abrogate, subverts or attempts or conspires to subvert the constitution by use of force or show of force or by other unconstitutional means shall be guilty of high treason. Any person aiding or abetting the acts mentioned in clause 1 shall likewise be guilty of high treason.”(Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973)

It could close the rule of Military over Pakistan. The damnation was death price. According to the Article no. 6 Zia has done high treachery. Under such circumstances, he did not willing to restore constitution which was 2nd high demand of MRD. Zia said in press conference held in Tehran said,

“What is the constitution? It is the booklet with ten or twelve pages. I can tear the up and say that from tomorrow we shall live under a different system. Is there anybody to stop me?

Today the people will follow wherever I lead. All the politicians including the once mighty Mr. Bhutto will follow me with their tails wagging”(Khan D. H., 2022).

Zia was fearful from the constitution of 1973. He wanted to do amendments in the constitution to secure his leadership. He also aimed to change the system of Pakistan to presidential sort of government (Khan R. , 1998). He changed the system of Pakistan by raising slogans of islamization. MRD criticized government foreign policies and relationship with America. MRD opposed the alliance Pakistan with America and dissented to consider the country as non-aligned government (Ziring, 2005). MRD proposed 31 points and asked to fulfill it to zia government on 31 May 1983. Some points were like strong and better provincial or regional independence, fair judges, fundamental rights, independent and free press, reduced tax burdens on workers, Pakistan as non-aligned state etc.(Ziring, 1997)

These groups had main objective to end the government of Zia. Some got against Zia due to his religious policies. On 26 March 1981, MRD passed a resolution against the amendments in law. Likewise some judges denied taking vow under interim legal directives(Khan M. A., 2008). Students, lawyers, doctors, poets and locals gave lot of support to MRD from all over the Pakistan. The movement against Zia regime spread city to city which aware about the unfair rule of military over civilian(Bhutto B. , 2014). There were also some flaws in MRD as the lack of central leadership, lack of unity which slow down the speed of this movement.

Violation of Women Rights and their Agitation

Gen. Zia-ul-Huq imposed martial law due to law & order situation in Pakistan and promised to hold fair and free hand election within nine days but consequently, he banned all sorts of activities of political parties and postponed election(Aziz, 2012). During all of this, he began his plan of

Islamization and passed Hudood ordinance in 1979. After one year of this ordinance, he organized Women Division as constituent of Cabinet Secretariat. He also initiated judicial reforms in 1982, but Islamic scholars were against this reforms that women cannot recruit for the seat of Qazi but later on Attorney General justified that there is no any kind of restriction is found in Islam (Jalal, 1990). According to the all constitutions 1956, 1962 and 1973 Pakistan became Islamic Republican but the nature of system was remaining secular in nature. After the separation of East Pakistan, the new constitution defines as the law will be according to the Islamic law but it was not still imposed. Zia ul Haq by using its power, added a series of ordinances in constitution. Before hudood ordinance adultery and fornication did not considered as major crime according the law of Pakistan but this ordinance cancelled all the sections of Pakistan penal code which were over-looking the relevant cases. For example, if a married person does adultery and four trustful male give witnesses then the guilty person will stone to death. This ordinance was firmly opposed by the secular society like civil society and women rights activities. This ordinance had not only shaken the Pakistani women but also those women who faced the allegation of adultery from society. The process of Islamization was not just the mental torture or women but they were dragged out from public spheres (Anita, 2012). Many women criticized this ordinance by saying that some of sections of this ordinance is unclear and ambiguous (Quraishi, 1999). Zina ordinance was also the part of hudood ordinance which could set free the perpetrator if a raped woman could not find eye witness of that brutal incident and the blame could fall upon the victim herself. In such situations, at that time many female victims thought twice before registering case against any culprit (Talbot, 2009). This ordinance got attention of media and society and was criticized severely. According to Ayesha Jallal, Zia used female card to persuade men towards his support so that the majority male population see him as great leader. Zia knew that the male population will not hesitate to like this ordinance (Jalal, 1991). More than fifteen hundred cases of rape had register but the main culprits set free because women were unable to provide witnesses of the account. A very important case of Safia bibi who filed a case against her employer and his son in Sahiwal which is 80 km away from Punjab capital Lahore in 1983. She was blind girl and couldn't bring four male as witness then the culprit set free. The pregnancy of Safia Bibi considered as evidence of fornication. Court imprisoned her for three years, fifty lashes and fine of one thousand charged her due to lack of evidence. Court also said that the punishment is not severe because she is young and blind (Imran, 2005). This case was highly criticized because of which the decision was changed later (Shehnaz, 2010).

To protect the rights of women, some women organized a party 'Khawateen Mahaz-e-Amal' in 1981. This party worked politically for the rights of women. At some point Zia-ul-Huq understood that women could not develop under such harsh laws so he ordered special courts for women to deal all such matters (Rahat, 2005). Law of evidence known as Qanun-e-Shahadat was introduced to in 1985 which again put women on the top of the gun. It reduced the witness right of women by saying that two female witness can-not be equal to two male witness. This law again discouraged women of Pakistan (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

The law of Justice (Qisas) and Law of Blood money (Diyat) also unboxed new controversy in Zia regime. Women Action Forum (WAF) protested against the above laws Qisas and Diyat which were then postponed. In 1983, Ansari commission was formed which explained and gave a report which tells that the head of state must be Muslim, male and age for members of parliament must be more than fifty. Women member of parliaments can only be eligible if her husband gives his legal consent. This law was again opposed by WAF by adding that this law is out of Islamic law and completely biased. President Zia-ul-Haq also opened a separate university for the female. Sharia bill was also introduced in his regime which was again opposed by WAF (Hassan, 1995). He passed a lot of laws in his regime as women were not allowed to go outside without veil and address code was also introduced at that time (Rathore, 2015).

Resistance through Poetic Expression

As noted that Zia did not want any resistance from the society against him so that he gagged the media and banned all the parties from every sort of activities. He also banned some poets for their freedom of expression in Pakistan. Many poets like Habib Jalib and Fiaz Ahmad Fiaz were very famous for their poetry in which they described their expression about Zia government. Like Faiz Ahmed Faiz poem "Hum Dekhien gay" is most prominent in which he gave new hope to people to be free from the government. Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz was a communist in nature which is considered as anti-nationalist, anti-Muslim. According to the Zia consideration, the mode of poetry of Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz is communist and socialist in nature so he wanted to ban the poetry of him but failed miserably. The words of Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz were sung everywhere in Pakistan like:

"When crowns will be thrown off- and over turned will be thrones, We shall see
Certainly we, too, shall see
That day that has been promised to us..."

In these lines, he tried to express his sorrow and mentioned that the unjust and unfair rule will end soon. He just gave hope to the people of Pakistan. The communist behavior of Faiz is considered as anti-Muslim therefore, Zia tried to ban the poetry of him (Mirza, 2020).

Habib Jalib one of the most famous Poet also captured the attention of society and refused to accept the repeat dictatorship in Pakistan. He wrote about the military government and martial law in his works.

"Sar sar ko saba, zulmat ko Zia
bande ko khuda kya likhna"

Habib Jalib did not like Zia regime and he was in support of Pakistan People's Party. For PPP he wrote:

Darte hain bandooq wale ek nihatti ladki se (Rehman, 2020)

There was another poet named Ashiq Buzdar who expressed his criticism against Zia-ul-Haq in the form of poetry, though his work was banned by the Government of Zia-ul-Haq but his poetry remained successful in creating a stir (Ashiq Buzdar: The poet who rebelled against the Lahore Throne, 2014)

Zia controlled all those persons, parties, media and poet which could be found unhealthy for his reign. Until, his death 17 August 1988, the situation of Pakistan society and politics remain in chaos.

CONCLUSION

The dictatorial era of General Zia-ul-Haq was more happening and delicate in terms of public and political participation. Imposition of this Martial Law was not welcomed at all in social and political spheres as after fall of Dhaka in 1971 the political and democratic culture in Pakistan was more deep rooted than the previous years. Moreover Zia's longing for utmost power and introduction of extreme religious and political policies made people more furious that they left no stone unturned to resist against the rule of this military government. Zia-ul-Haq had to face the criticism throughout his rule till eleven years until he was died in plane crash in 1988.

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