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THE TRAGEDY OF ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO: THE FINAL PERIOD 1977

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Abstract
This research attempts to evaluate rise and fall of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The methodology involved is logical reasoning and evaluation based on secondary data. Z. A. Bhutto emerged as one of Pakistan's most influential and charismatic political leaders, gaining immense popularity through the slogan of "Roti, Kapra aur Makan" (food, clothing, and shelter). During his nearly six-year rule, Bhutto consolidated significant political power, while implementing reforms such as land redistribution, nationalization policies, and the 1973 Constitution. However, despite his achievements, his government became increasingly associated with corruption, authoritarianism, and suppression of opposition. In 1977, Bhutto announced general elections, believing that his popularity and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would ensure victory. In response, nine opposition parties united under the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), using Islamic ideology and anti-government sentiment to challenge Bhutto's rule. Although the PPP won a large majority in the elections, the opposition accused the government of widespread rigging, leading to nationwide protests, strikes, and political unrest. The agitation intensified as religious leaders mobilized public support against Bhutto, forcing the government to impose martial law in major cities and introduce further Islamic reforms to regain legitimacy.

Introduction:

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was an extremely capable man. He won a clear majority in West Pakistan by transforming the popular demand of food, housing and clothing into a slogan. Bhutto was chief martial law administrator but at the same time he also had the support of the majority of the members of the Assembly.

During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto role which lasted for almost 6 years, he had become so powerful that neither the opposition had the courage to challenge him nor anyone with his party could does criticize him and expect to maintain his position however, during the final years of his role, there was a sharp decline in his popularity and the movement which was started against him was more forceful and more vigorous than all the previous anti-government movements.

The Election 1977 The Beginning of Bhutto End:

On 7 January 1977, Bhutto announced that elections would be held in March.[1] the president of Pakistan then dissolved the assemblies, and the

Election Commission was appointed 7 and 10 March for National and Provincial Assemblies respectively. Bhutto was still popular and many people thought he was the fittest person among the politicians to hold the reins of government but his party was as sick with corruption and factional strife in 976 as it had been during the preceding four years.[2] Bhutto was much aware of the fact that his mandate from the 1970 elections had been changed. Success was not enough for him. He was satisfied that he and his party PPP's were well prepared for the elections.

The oppositions were divided according to Stanly, "the reported helplessness of the opposition leaders even so much as to attend a meeting on time encouraged Zulfi to believe that the moment had finally come to call new elections".[3] Bhutto was confident that he overcome the opposition by appealing to the masses, which had benefited from various Socio-economic reforms introduced by the period.

(PNA) The Rise of Opposition Politics in Pakistan:

After the announcement of General Elations, Pakistan National was abruptly formed with the blessings and encouragement of some hidden hands to fight to elections.[4] Most of the opposition parties with their different religious and ideological orientations came together due to their common programs against Bhutto government. Nine opposition political parties joined together under the umbrella of Islam to form the PNA.[5]

Among the nine constituents of the PNA, the Jammat-i-Islami, the Jamiat-u-ulema-i-Islam and Jamiat-iUlema –i-Pakistan were religious political parties which stood for the enforcement of the Islamic system. The Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan Democratic Party were Islamist modernists. The National Democratic Party's rank and file was secular and inclined to socialism. The Khaksar Tehrik and Azad Kashmir Muslim conference and tehrik-i-Istiqlal.[6] The PNA appointed Mulana Mufti Mahmood, as its president and Rafiq Ahmad Bajwa of the JUP and Nawabzada Nasrullah of the Pakistan Democratic Party as its secretary General and vice President.[7]

Initially Mr.Bhutto did not believe that this collation with the diverse views of nine Political leaders could get together. He was sure that the long-standing inter personal rivalries; different religious and ideological orientations would make it very difficult for them to unite and support candidates to contest each constituency and ultimately support only one of them to run for Prime Minister.[8]

The Downfall of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and final period (1977):

It was not a single party and it second hard to believe that Aghar Khan, Pir of Pagaro and Mufti Mahmood not to mention all others, could really even pull the PNA, not to speak of Pakistan, in the same direction.[9]

Election Manifestos of the PPP and the PNA:

Pakistan people's Party election Manifesto announced on 24 January 1977 was different in style and content from its election manifesto of 1970. Its 1977 manifesto claimed that the Party had kept this pledge by taking a series of measures in the course of the past five years, including a drastic reduction in the ceilings of land holdings. Together they have brought an end to feudalism in Pakistan and ushered in a new era of progress for our rural community.[10]

There was no doubt no revolutionary or radical socialist rhetoric that characterized the People's Party ideology in late November 1967, when it was funded. While socialism and even " Islamic socialism" were underplayed both in the 1977 election and in the Party's official pronouncements, Islamic was main point in PPP manifesto in this connection the manifesto promised to hold high the banner of Islam.... Ensure that Friday is observed as the weekly holiday, teaching of Holy Quran compulsory, established a federal Ulema academy.[11]

On the other side, the PNA announced its manifesto on 8th February 1977 which was a masterpiece of compromise and replete with clichés and slogans. PNA used Islamic rhetoric to promise many of the same populist socioeconomic policies and programmes that the PPP had done.[12]

The PNA manifesto called for termination of Bhutto's rule. It called upon the Pakistan People to rise up and replace Bhutto Government.[13] The main trust of their argument was that:

(1) Bhutto had only given lip service to Islam;

(2) There was not change for the common people under Bhutto period

(3) Political corruption, a sense of civil insecurity, and the prices of daily necessities had all moved toward the worst and his rule was practically worse than the military rule of Ayub Khan.[14]

Election Campaign:

As the election campaign started, the PNA being denied access to the mass media by the government, devised the successful strategy of holding meetings at very well-know and popular places, organizing a large crowd, and promise to "enforce" Islamic system throughout Pakistan, if elected, and to ban the sale of wine and gambling of every kind, the payment of interest, and the use of "obscenity" was seen as a serious matter for Bhutto and the popularity of his Party.[15]

Seeing the Islamic thrust of the PNA's successful election strategy, Bhutto instructed his party's workers to drop all references to even Islamic socialism, and use the more appealing from of Musawat-i-Muhammadi instead.[16]

Pakistan People's Party and the PNA realized the potency of Islam in establishing legitimacy and mass mobilization; it is not surprising that Islam become one of the major themes of the 1977 election campaign.[17] In 1977 election Islam was common slogan of both PPP and PNA. The PNA election campaign was successful and had begun to draw unexpectedly large crowds. These massive public gave the PNA a sense of self-confidence and power, that they could win the elections. Bhutto was in a strong position to contest the elections.

During his election campaign he could confidently point to the stabilization and revitalization of Pakistan after the creation of Bangladesh; Pakistan's regained honor and prestige in the world as a result of hosting the second OIC conference; the numerous Islamic programmes that he had instituted while in office; the improved the economic condition of Pakistan as a result of his best foreign Diplomacy; the populist nationalization policies, land reforms and abolished of the Sardari system that had broken the back of the rich and strong industrial, commercial and landed elites; the making of 1973 constitution on which there had been consensus by the major political parties in Pakistan.

Bhutto election campaign emphasized this and many of the traditional PPP ideas cloaked in Islamic rhetoric for greater acceptability, and promoted by a collection of less radical candidates. In contrast, the opposition was a divided, mutually antagonistic collection of groups lacking time, money, organization, talent, and media-access. The PNA presented a platform of political compromise replete with promises and platitudes, channeled into an anti-Bhutto Islamic best. As such, their promises contrasted markedly with the PPP's demonstrated delivery.[18]

Elections Result:

The results of the March 7, 1977 elections Pakistan People's Party won merely four-fifths of the National Assembly seats. The PNA win less than one –fifth, while the remainder went to the independents. In fact, the PPP's success was more impressive than the table suggests, since the eight independents candidates from the "tribal areas' were all quari-PPP candidates.[19]

Pakistan people Party won 155 of 200 seats of the National Assembly including 19 unopposed, while the PNA got only 36 seats. PPP relieved less than 60 percent of the popular votes but won more than 75 percent of the two hundred elective seats in the National Assembly. On the other hand the PNA with more than 35 percent of the popular vote to its credit, was allowed to translate that into less than 17 percent of the seats.[20]

The magnitude of PPP victory was even more surprising as compared to its performance in the 1970 elections. At that time, it could not secure more than 39 percent of the votes, although PPP was popular at that time. First March 1977, after six year of highly controversial rule, People Party was confronted by a broad opposition and powerful alliance. It was amazing that the

opposition drawing unprecedentedly large crowds at the public meetings and processions obtain only 35 percent of votes, [21] therefore, PNA leaders refused to accept the results.

Political Agitation and Cases pertaining to Election Rigging:

After the announcement of the election result the PNA refused to accept the results, charged that the election were rigged by the government, and boycotted the provincial election.[22] Opposition parties made following demands: on March 09, 1977,[23]

PNA's leaders declared elected were to resign from the National Assembly, immediate resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner was demanded, fresh elections were demanded under the supervision of army and judiciary, They also announced a boycott of the elections to the provincial Assemblies. The PNA's strike call for 11th March produced a massive response in major cities. In main cities like Karachi and Lahore, were stopped completely. Even transport were off the road.[24]

The response of the people during the provincial elections and the strike, on 12 March 1977 the PNA resolved to launch a mass movement to secure Bhutto's resignation, dismissal of the newly elected assemblies, and demand of new election under the supervision of the Army and the judiciary.

Thousands of city-dwellers, spirited, determined and incensed by the news of elections fraud, answered the PNA's call. Police used to lathi charge and gas, nor the imposition of martial law in the major cities. In April, it spread to smaller towns and by the time the PNA called if off in the first week of June. Large number of people had been killed, many more injured, and tens of thousands jailed. Properly worth hundreds of millions of rupees was destroyed and business slumped.[25]

The results surprised all parties .The PNA last in three of the four provinces. PNA won a majority of seats in only one main city, Karachi, it was defeated everywhere. The PPP's success in the Punjab, Where it won 93 percent of the seats.[26]

Bhutto describes the elections as "free and fair" and refused to accede to any demands of PNA. [27]

opposition criticized Bhutto promise of Roti Kapra aur Makan for everybody by saying that "instead of bread people got bullets, instead of clothing they got a burial shroud and instead of shelter they were given a burial site to shelter them forever ".PNA criticized Bhutto had only paid lip service to Islam and there was no charge for the development of common people under Bhutto period.[28]

As the PNA led movement drew upon the very large reservoir of genuine Islamic sentiments among the majority of Pakistanis the anti government movement snow balled in late march April 1977.The PNAs agitational politics resulted in some deaths with thousands seriously wounded and imprisonment of many volunteers. Losses of more than $200 million occurred because of the destruction of government property and a national economy that had been slowed by work stopped. [29] Bhutto was aware of the fact that the movement was taking momentum because of the participation of the religious leaders. In one of his letters, Bhutto wrote to kausar niazi:

The pulpit is playing an important role in the PNA agitation and the maulvis including those employed by Auqaf, by and large, are its mainstay .it is time that a counter force of the maulvis is mobilized in favour of the government starting with weaning away from the PNA of the maulvis employed by the Auqaf department. Some of important religious leaders who supported US during the elections have faded into the background they should be brought back on the scene and encouraged to give us the same support which they gave us during election period.[30]

A meeting of the religious leader was held at Lahore on April7, 1977, which advised the opposition leadership to negotiate with the government in order to solve the crisis.[31] The PNA, including all religious political party did not agree to this suggestion. The PPP failed to dace this agitational politics. The way was thus paved for the partial imposition of martial law in the major cities like Karachi, Hyderabad and lahore[32].

The imposition of martial law was declared unconstitutional by the Lahore high court on 2nd June 1977. At that time Bhutto kept close

contacts with the army and held regular meetings with the army generals. There was a time when he felt that he could no longer count on their support [33]. Bhutto government decided to commit itself to a more Islamic system. Drinking, gabling and night clubs were closed; religion was made a compulsory subject in educational institutions. The weekly holiday was changed from Sunday to Friday, and Bhutto declared that within six months the shariat would be enforced in the country [34]. He believed that the laws of Islam were higher mightier than the laws of any land [35].

According to Masoom Abidi, "Bhutto by accepting all demands of PNA[36]. Bhutto took a number of additional steps but he was too late to take these measures. These moves did not check the result of his support nor did they break the momentum of anti government movement. Yet they implement Islamic reforms that could not be readily rescinded. He had thus ensured the place of Islam in the politics of Pakistan [37].

Negotiations between PPP and PNA:

Z.A. Bhutto believed that the agitational movement could not be sustained for a long period, the government policy of stiff suppression of some of the top PNA leaders cold change the situation, these expectations of Bhutto did not materialize. At that time, the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan, the foreign minister of UAE, Kuwait and Libya persuaded the antagonistic Parties on negotiating table, to solve their differences.

The Islamic solidarity committee appealed to all leaders, for the settlement of issues in accordance with the Islamic spirit and brotherhood [38]. The PNA accepted the pleas of the Arab envoys and began negotiations with the government [39]. Negotiations started on June 3rd between government and the PNA at that time situation in Pakistan was better and the agitations was no more in the existence.

The government team was represented by the prime minister along with Abdul Hafeez Pirzada and Maulana Mufti Mahmood, Nasrullah and Professor Ghafoor Ahmad. Both political forces were in a good mood to arrive at settlement [40]. PNA had reached on accord and a final meeting would take place on 3rd July 1977. Bhutto had conceded to the holding fresh election, yet he refused to give any constitutional accord. The PNA council met on July 2nd 1977 and decided that the PPP proposals could not be accepted for the lack of the constitutional status of the accord. Its said that without constitutional authority, the implementation committee of the supervisory council were powerless to ensure the implementation of its decisions.[41].

In facts opposition leaders, Sherbaz Khan and Begum Nsim Wali Khan were not interested that an accord should be signed with Bhutto, instead they preferred the imposition of martial law in the country.[42]. In this lengthy letter addressed to the chiefs of staff three services, Air marshal Asghar Khan argued the officers were not duty bound to obey the orders of the Bhutto. He suggested to them [43].

Bhutto has vitiated the Constitution and he is guilty of a grave crime against the people. It is not your duty to support his illegal regime nor can you be called

Upon to kill your own people so that he can continue a little longer in office. Let it not be said that the Pakistan armed forces are degenerated police force, fit only for killing unarmed civilians. As men of honor it is your responsibility to do your duty and the call of duty in these trying circumstances is not the blind obedience of unlawful commands. There comes a time in the lives of nations when each man has to ask himself whether he is doing the right thing. For you that time has come. Answer this call honestly and save Pakistan. God be with your [44].

Some of Government Ministers and Party notables were also against settlement on PNA's terms. Hafiz Pirzada acted as a tough negotiator. In his advice to the Prime Minister, he exaggerated the latter's support within the Army and masses. The Ministers, who had won recent election b rigging, voted against concessions to the PNA. Still others remained on yielding to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in order to remain intensely loyal to him.

Military Take-Over by Zia:

On July 05, 1977, Army Chief General Muhammad Zia Ul Haq staged a bloodless

operation, and Army arrested the famous leadership of the PPP and PNA. Bhutto was remove and General Zia Ul Haq-[45] become the leader of the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan." The Political leaders could have avoided the imposition of Army rule had the members of both PPP and PNA been less rigid in their views. Both had made it a point of their ego not to soften their stands. This indicates the lack of political foresight on the part of both the PPP and the PNA's leadership.[46]

In the evening of 5th July 1977, Zia explained the reason of declaring Martial Law. (1) The Army period is never a good act, because the army of country genuinely desires the administration of county to remain in the hands of representatives, of the people. The people exercise their right through their leader, who are elected through democratic process. I feel that survival of Pakistan likes in democracy and democracy alone. I want to make it absolutely clear that I have any political ambitions nor does the army want to be taken away from the profession f soldering..... I was obliged to step in, to fill in the vacuum created by the political leaders. I have accepted the challenge as a true soldier of Ilsam.[47]

According to a leading scholar, the PNA's political agitation had three main consequences, first, the military high command became fully aware of the fact the Bhutto Government popular base had evaded and it was now dependent on the army's support for its survival. Second, the continued use of the army against the civil population tarnished the image of the Military as an independent force. Thirdly, the PNA which demonstrated its strength in the streets was making overtures towards the Military to dissuade the commanders from supporting the Bhutto Government [48.] The Army take over was not an instant happening various factors contributed to this event.

Murder Case Registered-Bhutto Arrested:

When General Zia could not get any case filed against Quaid-E-Awam in Sindh, the Military Junta managed to get a complaint filed on July 30, 1977 by Ahmad Raza Kasuri, about his father murder Ahmad Muhammad Khan, in which Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was named as the principal accused. The former Prime Minister was arrested in such a disgraceful, and degrading manner that not even the worst criminal would be arrested that way.[49]

Hanging and Morning:

The man who had served his country must, had to suffer mart in jail he was confined in a steel walled and steel floored room. Zulfikar Ali Bhuttowho was born with golden spoon in his mouth. Brought up like princes, lived with dignity and mass popularity, was now in the worst possible Jail custody. At that time Bhutto did not lose his courage and the quality of his generosity [50].

The last moment of his life arrived, the beloved leader of the People's was soon going to be assassinated by a judicial order, Bhutto stronger than all the dictators of the world taken together and most merciful to his humble creature, who has tried to serve, and elevate his downtrodden humanity and gives his blood for the poor people of this country. Bhutto strove all his life incessantly to serve the poor and his homeland.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged exactly at 2:04 am on April 4, 1979. The coffin was taken to his hometown Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto and the body was buried in his ancestral graveyard where his parents and relatives were buried, but he is still alive in the heart of the people, and the undying memories of his glories are still dazzling [51].

Not only were Bhutto relatives weeping but even the high Government officials could not stop flow of tears from their eyes. The whole Pakistani were weeping, men and women, young and old were crying, cursing Ziaul Haq and raising slogans against the Zia regime. It was not only a personal loss of Bhutto family, but an incalculable national loss [52].

What American Press Said:

The news week wrote "about Bhutto courage" he refused to make a personal a plea for clemency to Zia and told friends and lawyers that he was not afraid of death. He said I can face him with a confident and tell him that I rebuilt the Islam State of Pakistan from ashes into a respectable

nation.....Bhutto death deprives the Pakistan of one of the most effective leaders it has ever had. About grief, agony and wailing of the people, the news week wrote: in the hours before execution, prisoners in the Jail chanted verses from the Koran.....in Islamabad, employees of Government wept openly in their offices and one elderly women said bitterly " this is the disgraceful day in Pakistan history. Large number of Bhutto supporters, defying Martial Law regulations imposed by General Zia [53].

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