

### Post Colonial South Asian States-(Pakistan)

It was in October 1958 that the Pakistan military high command moved in conjunction with the President and the higher echelons of the civil bureaucracy to directly take over the levels of power. The coup had been preceded by a phase of military -bureaucratic dominance that can be traced to as early as 1951, when the first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated. Liaquat's exercise of executive authority came to be resented by the predominantly Punjabi federal bureaucracy and army. It was only by delaying the drafting of the constitution for nine long years and postponing of general elections that the civil-military axis, in conjunction with segments of dominant social classes in the western wing, managed to forestall Bengali dominance. Primarily concerned with raising an effective shield of defence against India, something a resource -crippled state was in no position to guarantee, civil and military officials preferred to bolster their international connections.

The very fact of a military takeover suggests that the internal structures of the state were still too fluid and uncertain to ensure the dominance of the civil bureaucracy and the army. As long as Pakistan maintained the façade of a parliamentary system of government, nothing could prevent any number of political configurations from passing concerns diametrically opposed to those of the non-elected institutions. Only by dismantling a political system that was never really given a chance to function in the first place could the military and the civil bureaucracy assert themselves decisively. Pakistan remained under military -cum -bureaucratic dispensation until its disintegration in 1971. Drawing support from mainly Punjabi army and civil bureaucracy the military regime of General Muhammad Ayub Khan pursued a strategy of controlled politics aimed at extending differential patronage to carefully vetted segments of society. The very groups who were virtually disenfranchised from the late 1950s helped engineer

Ayub's downfall while his successor General Yahya Khan, reaped the whirlwind of regional dissent in eastern Pakistan that the strategy of partial mobilisation had been designed to forestall. Ayub's 1962 constitution conceded official status for the Bengali language. The Bengalis formed just over 50 percent of the population of undivided Pakistan, but were poorly represented in the two main non-elected institutions of the state-the military and the civil bureaucracy. The strategies of economic development pursued by the military regime of Ayub Khan in the 1960's widened regional disparities. The politics of exclusion and the economies of inequality gave impetus to Awami League's campaign for provincial autonomy. In the 1970 elections Awami League derived mileage from the growing economic disparity between the two wings and the inadequate representation of Bengalis in the two main non-elected institutions of the state. A common religious bond, abused and distorted to serve the interests of authoritarian rulers snapped all too easily as the Mukti Bahini ( Liberation Army ) fought a war of resistance and the army of the Indian state crossed the lines of 1947 to liberate one Muslim majority region from its tormentors in others.

After 1971 both Pakistan and the newly created state of Bangladesh experienced brief phases of parliamentary democracy and populism, followed by direct spells of direct or quasi-military rule. Zulfiar Ali Bhutto (1971-77) seemed well to start a fresh chapter in its history. However in ordering a military crackdown to quell a tribal uprising in Baluchistan, an opportunity to claw back the influence it had momentarily appeared to lose in the wake of military defeat at the hands of the country's premier enemy, not only were the provincial autonomy provisions of the 1973 constitution ignored, but also no headway was made in redefining centre-province relations to better accommodate the social changes in the various regions. On 5<sup>th</sup> July 1977 Bhuttos's picked army chief General Zia -ul Haq assumed control of the state. Assured of support from the army and a substantial proportion of the bureaucracy, federal as well as

provincial, Zia was eager to expand his support among anti-Bhutto elements. It was not the regime's credentials but the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 that enabled Zia to use an external threat to Pakistan's survival to consolidate his hold on power. The Eight amendment helped to make 1985 a watershed year in the politics of post 1971 Pakistan. A deterrent to martial rule, it was incorporated in the constitution to allow for the continuance of Zia's authoritarian rule with all the democratic paraphernalia. After 1985 the Eight Amendment was used five times until 1996 to oust prime ministers and dissolve elected national and provincial assemblies. Elections were held within the ninety days prescribed in the constitution. November 1988 elections had brought success to Benazir Bhutto (Prime Minister, 1988-90, 1993-96), The beneficiaries of the Zia era, was represented by the Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif (Prime Minister 1990-93, 1997-99, 2013-2017). The fiscal bankruptcy of the state had made it very difficult for Benazir with her support base in Sind to risk anything. On the other hand Nawaz Shari scrapped the Eight Amendment after winning by two third majority in the February 1997 elections. But Sharif intruded on the military turf when he sacked the army chief on 12 October 1999. General Pervez Musharraf immediately overthrew the government, dissolving Parliament and suspending the constitution. Musharraf elevated himself to the presidency and like earlier military autocrats reiterated his commitment to restore genuine democracy in Pakistan.

In October Benazir Bhutto had returned home after eight years, in defiance of Musharraf's advice to come after general elections scheduled in January 2008, but was assassinated at a public rally in Rawalpindi. PPP emerged as the largest single party, Musharraf resigned a few months later and Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's husband became the President. There were lot of corruption charges levelled against him. On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010, Pakistan adopted 18<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution, stripping President Asif Ali Zardari of key

powers. In 2013 Nawaz Shariff became the Prime Minister for the third time and during his time Mamnoon Hussain became the President. Later in 2017 Nawaz Sharif was forced to resign after being disqualified on corruption charges by Supreme Court. He has been convicted and still serving jail sentence. Former international cricket star Imran Khan become Prime minister in 2018 on a pledge to end corruption and dynastic politics, after his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf becomes the largest party in the July general elections.

Thus Pakistan oscillates between military rule and democratically elected governments.

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