Politics of PPP in a Post-Election 2008 Era:  
An Evaluation of Policies Impact

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Abstract
Pakistan has survived the sixty two years of its life and passing through  
the phases of different latent and apparent crises which challenged the  
legitimacy of its political process. After its birth in the 20th century  
Pakistan witnessed democratic and authoritarian rule which were the  
result and consequence of bad governance or the imbalance nature of  
institutional development. The ultimate option of all kinds of  
governments was to return to democracy but they had their own forms  
which were labeled as controlled to participatory forms of government.  
From political philosophers to political activists all have consensus  
over it that social contract is the way by which rule is executed and it  
could be prolonged if this contract is refurbished according to the  
needs and desires of the people. So often elections had been the source  
of change of incumbency of political office in Pakistan and their  
routine was intermittently.

Keywords: Praetorian democracy, Substantive democracy, Social inequality, Political  
opportunism

I. Introduction
Democracy always seeks people participation in the political activity to make the  
political process more legitimate and justified. People’s engagement in the process keeps  
the four corners of the political chess tight. It develops the process of governance and  
accountability side by side which provides the system a smooth sailing.

In the realm of politics the elections are considered one of the most suitable means  
to change the office bearers from one party to other. So in the context of Musharaff  
regime, elections were the medium to transfer the government from one office holders to  
another first in 2002 and then in 2008. The distinction between politics and democracy is
understandable empirically in the context of Pakistan’s polity after assuming the charge of government by PPP-P. However, structures of Pakistan’s society have been considerably democratized - in terms of greater access by lower social classes in the activity of election. Moreover mere formal democracy is necessary though not sufficient to build a more substantive and real democracy in Pakistan due to dichotomy in saying and practice. At best, Pakistan's democratic form will be a praetorian democracy, which will continue to be controlled, ruled, manipulated and determined by the military, its institutions and their interests (Zaidi, 2005, p.5174).

Here the nature of the system is being evaluated which had been developed after 2008 election. The nature of the political system determines the form of polity, and political values of the society, which are transformed into the political institutions partly response to the public desires and needs into polices and decisions. Such ideals always remained on the priority agenda of the political parties which took part in the political process for the development of the country and betterment of the people. With this goal most of the political parties of Pakistan participated in the election 2008 but seven or eight ended up with seats in the National Assembly. Other regional or smaller parties showed their existence in provincial domain. It was the tragic scene in the political history of Pakistan when the leader of popular political party—Pakistan Peoples Party, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto was shot dead on 27th December,2007 after ending her election speech at Liaquit Bagh stadium Rawalpindi(Dawn,29th December,2007). Her son, Bakhtawar was made the chairman of the party and Asif Ali Zardari, husband of Benazir Bhutto worked as the co-chairman of the party.

Table 1: Election Results of National Assembly (Feb-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>NA-general Seats</th>
<th>Minority + Women</th>
<th>Percentage of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>04+23</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML(N)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>03+17</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML(Q)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>02+10</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQM</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>01+05</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>00+03</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP(A)</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00+00</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MMA—Muttahida Majlis Amal</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>00+01</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP-S</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0+0</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-F</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>00+01</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others Parties</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0+0</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0+0</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 269 10+60


Before the general election Pervaiz Musharraf had put off the military uniform in November 2008 and he was not powerful as he seemed before. He got himself elected second time as the president of Pakistan by administering the vote of the national and provincial assemblies of Pakistan in October 2008(Dawn,18th August; 8th Sept, 2008). His qualification for the office of the presidency was challenged in the court and in
People of Pakistan showed their confidence and trust in political system and its electoral setup for the change of the incumbency and transfer of power to the duly elected representatives of Pakistan. The turnout of this election was an indicator of this confidence and it remained much better as compared to that which was below the average in 1997 when it was around 36%. In 2008 it was 44% while it was 42% in 2002 (Adney, 2008, pp.158-63).

II. Process of Government Making

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians’ manifesto focused on just society and declared that “we want Pakistan a moderate economic country, as we are living in global world in order to fulfill its requirement and have to change our thinking that is only possible if the constitution is held supreme and the judiciary is independent and the democracy prevails” (IPRI, 2008, p.9). PPP-P and PML-N signed a charter of democracy in May 2006 at Dubai and resolved to work jointly for the restoration of democracy under the true spirit of 1973 constitution of Pakistan (IPRI, 2008, p.20). In the wake of election, PPP-P made the coalition government with PML-N, MMA (JUI-F), ANP and MQM under the premiership of Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani on March 24th, 2008 by the support of 264 members of National Assembly (Dawn, 25th March, 2008).

In the provinces coalition governments were also formed. Punjab government was headed by Dost Muhammad Khosa who was elected un-opposed as Chief Minister by the support of the coalition partners—PML-N, PPPP, PML-F, and MMA. PML-N has 109 in the house of 297(excluding reserved seats) (Dawn, 12th April, 2008). Later Shahbaz Sharif assumed the office of Chief Minister after being elected from Bakhar in bye-election. In Sindh PPP-P formed the government with the coalition support of MQM and ANP headed by Syed Qiam Ali Shah as Chief Minister and Ishaarat Ibad was appointed as Governor (Dawn, 8th April, 2008). In Baluchistan Aslam Raisini was made the Chief Minister with the support of independents, PPP, MMA (JUI-F) and defected members of PML-Q. Awais Muhammad Ghani, retired lieutenant general, was the legacy of past government under the patronage of general Pervaiz Musharaff, to be there as Governor of the erstwhile NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) while Zulfiqar Ali Magsi was appointed the Governor of Baluchistan. In erstwhile NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), there was coalition government of ANP, PPPP and PML-N. Amir Haider Khan, scion of Hoti family, was appointed the Chief Minister by the support of 113 members (Dawn, 1st April, 2008).
III. Governability of PPP-P and Challenges to Political Government

Every time in the political history of Pakistan, democratic setup have to face daunting problems and colossal challenges. Some of them are the legacy of the past regimes and entrenchment of these problems is related to the instability of the political process due to interior turmoil of multifaceted. Economic survival and security challenges threatened the state and along with them the problems of constitutional and political kinds made everybody alert about the future of the government and survival of the state. Some of these issues are being discussed to evaluate the performance of the government on different fronts and it will facilitate us to label it that how far political democratic government was concerned with the issues of public importance.

Among the major challenges which Pakistani society had to face in the decade of 2000s was the terrorism and institutional instability that manifested in the form of poor governance in spite of government claiming to have good growth rate of economy which was averagely stating as about 6% in their terms of office. This could be said that foreign factors contributed in the form of foreign remittances, aids and loans which formed the substantial part in the expansion of the economy but it could not touch the level of productivity where it could meet the needs and requirements of the population of Pakistan. This challenge remained the part of each government which reined the country during this period and it remained the priority agenda of the political governments to set all the resources and state machinery against this threat which destabilized the polity of Pakistan. The issues of economic stability, poor law and order situation, judicial crisis, constitutional revamping and social rehabilitation demanded the attention of government functionaries, and it was the plank of their political agenda which they have to fulfill in their tenure. These crises threatened the polity of Pakistan and remained a big challenge to the government of Pakistan Peoples Party.

A. Challenge of Integrity of Politicians’ Character

The government had to face a colossal task of running the affairs of the state in which the most daunting problem was the war of terror which could be fought only by the political will. Politicians were to show their determination in their practical matters to resolve the issue of public importance and it was possible by their collaborative efforts and impeccable character. In the political environment a new issue of degrees was taken to the courts. In which it was reportedly said that among the total 1173 representatives of all houses, 143 had their degrees fake. It made the politicians a laughing stock among the public and judiciary openly remarked that how they can decide the fate of the nation who are themselves liar and cheater. It also created the problem of political legitimacy of whole political system and fears were simmering out in some of the houses where major parties could lose their majority. It could derail the political setup for which leadership of the political parties had sacrificed their lives and imprisoned for years. It showed that political values were jeopardized by the politicians themselves instead of having regret to all this. Chairman of HEC was pressurized to not take up this assignment, and education minister of state Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali warned that it is not the mandate of HEC to put the degrees in checkup(Geo TV,21-07-2010). Chairman of higher education commission (HEC) Javaid Legari was the committed person of Pakistan Peoples Party, he remained senator in this new setup at the platform of PPP before assuming his new responsibility.
He vacated the seat of senate for finance minister, Shoukat Tareen to qualify him for the said ministry. His brother, Farooq Leghari was District Coordination Officer and a case of corruption of 200 million rupees was framed against him to put pressure on the chairman to abstain him from the activity of degrees examining(Dawn,20th July,2010).

This shows that politicians have no iota of shame while doing mischievous acts which have brought a stigma on their character. They were only interested to come into power by any means and to get their pie of the cake. So their opportunism did not serve the democratic values but only kept alive their vested interests. Like S.Akbar Zaidi, S.M.Naseem has had the same view about Pakistan’s democracy. According to her ‘There are no credible elements in society who are interested in fostering a democratic polity and that there is no real constituency for democracy in Pakistan’ (Naseem,2006,p.756).

B. Challenge of Economic and Security Concerns

Pakistan’s political leadership sensed the gravity of the situations which engulfed the Pakistan from inside and outside the country and compelled the leadership to arrange their priorities to steer the nation away from any turmoil and incensed the world of their sovereign character. From the day of its birth to the time of 21st century, Pakistan cultivated its relationships with technological advanced countries, particularly with the United States of America for financial and military assistance. It as well relied on financial institutions for financial bail out in the time of its resource scarcity. Prime minister of Pakistan after assuming the office declared 100 days plan for the development of Pakistan but at the same time government of Pakistan made it request of 650 million dollars to Asian Development Bank a bailout package for budget 2008-09(Dawn,30th April,2008). This state of economy was the litmus test of government to control the rising volume of debt and to improve the indicators of trade and fiscal deficit which proved contrary to what was pledged. Pakistan in the fiscal year 2009-10 was indebted to $52billion and its inflationary trends were wavering between 10-12%. Pakistan in the year 2009 faced trade deficit of more than $11billion and fiscal deficit was around 5.2% of GDP. On the trade side its export of value $18.7 to $19.2billion and its import in this period was $30 to $31billion. The other measuring gauge is human development index which also did not give the blossoming picture. In Pakistan it was estimated that 100million people were living below the poverty line—living on less than Rs165/day($2/day). Pakistan’s economic growth rate was averagely 2-3% in the period of three years of this political government which was very abysmal. The causes of this low turnout of economy were numerous but the striking ones were the energy shortage which touched 3000megawatt and the deteriorating law & order situation of the country.

In the month of September 2008 at New York a special forum in the name of friends of Pakistan was formed to avert the economic collapse of Pakistan. It realized more the grim economic situation of Pakistan. The countries which attended the forum were following: The United States, Britain, Italy, Germany, France, Japan, China, Australia, Turkey, Canada, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. While European Union and the United Nations sent their representatives to attend the meeting. At that time Pakistan’s economy was in shambles. It was noted that Pakistan’s foreign currency reserves were falling fast and if forward liabilities were included, the real reserves might go down to $3
billion. This amount cannot meet the import bill of one whole month (Dawn, 27th September, 2008). Government of the day addressed the poverty by starting Benazir Income Support Program, Wasila Haq and to undertake community development projects through the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (Khabr-o-Nazar, 2010, p. 15). Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme, Farzana Raja started this programme in 2008 for the reduction of poverty with the amount of Rs. 7.2 Billion. Peoples work programme was also started with the amount of Rs. 35 billion to reduce the poverty and enhance the structural capabilities for the support of transition of society from one phase of its development to another.

C. Challenge of Judicial Crisis

There were many issues which challenged the polity of Pakistan and most of them were the legacy of the past government in which most striking was the reinstatement of the higher judiciary which had been ousted by president, general Pervaiz Musharaf in March 2007, having fears that it may challenge the election of Pervaiz Musharaf as president of Pakistan. In this context a movement for restoration of judiciary started in the country by the joint efforts of the political parties, civil society, and lawyer community. A Supreme Judicial Commission was convened under the chairmanship of Justice Baghwan Das which reinstated the justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry as Chief Justice of Pakistan. It was a blow to Pervaiz Musharaf’s strategy and he unheded reacted and removed the justice Chaudhry by imposing the emergency in November 2007. Justice Farooq Dogar was appointed as new Chief Judge of Supreme Court under the Provisional Constitutional Order.

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani during his first speech in the parliament announced the relieving of Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry from his house arrest and later due to some suspicions in the mind of government about judicial activism relating to the issues of NRO delayed the reinstatement of court of Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry. National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) was issued in 2007 by Pervaiz Musharaf as president of Pakistan as a relief for the political opponents in exchange for political indemnity to the deeds of Pervaiz Musharaf. Pakistan Peoples Party was the direct beneficiary of this deal through which its leadership came back in Pakistan after expunging its self imposed exile. Judiciary sent back the issue of NRO to the Assembly for legislation but Assembly could not gather the support of representatives of different parties on this issue. Government withdrew the NRO and after that it issued the list of personnel who were the beneficiaries of this ordinance. State minister of law Afzal Sindhu issued the list of affecters which was consists of 8041 people including 34 politicians, bureaucrats and three ambassadors (The Post, 22nd November, 2009).

Pakistan Peoples Party was reluctant on the issue of judiciary and most of its pledges proved hollow slogans. It made a new agreement with PML-N at Murree, a sub division of Rawalpindi with the leadership of PML-N. Leadership of both parties was confident of this advancement on political fronts but its delaying procedural execution made all this worthless. It was being argued that next constitutional amendment will settle the issue and agreements are not the words of Hadith (prophet saying and practice), that should be acted upon compulsorily. So in March 2009 a long procession of people was lead by the leadership of PML-N and under the pressure of the establishment, judiciary was reinstated by the executive order of the Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani.
After passing the 18th Amendment by the parliament it was challenged in the Supreme Court for some of its amendments which were considered to affect the judiciary’s autonomous and independent stature. It was the matter of judiciary’s appointment which came under the authority of parliamentary commission. Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Choudhry appointed a full bench of Supreme Court consist of 17 judges to hear the petition, challenging 18th Amendment.

The parallel of this was the crisis of law ministry which was being headed by Dr Babar Awan on the cases of corruption related to Bhuttos’ family. Court often ordered the government to proceed the cases within and outside the country which had been stooped under the National Reconciliation Order without any exception. In this regard three attorney general of Pakistan had either been removed or they resigned from their post when they thought that they are under the duress of government or the law ministry to work in a way which was seemingly more delaying to implement the orders of the higher judiciary. In the case of NRO, the attorney general Mr Mansoor who stayed in his office for little over three month told to the Supreme Court that law ministry was preventing him from carrying out the court orders of implementing the December 16th verdict on NRO(Dawn,3rd April,2010). In the backdrop of this, Court finally called the law minister, Babar Awan to appear before the Court himself on 22nd of May 2010 and provide the explanation in the delay of writing the letter to the Swiss government to reopen then cases of corruption.

IV. Conclusion

Pakistan’s democracy is still in the phase of gestation which is requiring not only political commitment but also the integrity of the character of politicians to uphold it. In many ways, as a consequence of the social and economic changes taken place in Pakistan, democracy has become a far more participatory but is still weaker. Emerging challenges to the stability of Pakistan were manifold like that of economy, terrorism and guarantee of constitutional rights which were addressed by the legitimate government. The implementation and execution of the decisions were to be the role of institutions like that of bureaucracy which was seemingly not in harmony with the government, and resultant working remained as in-effective.

It could be posited, while taking view of some preferential treatments to some challenges of the democratic government, a gap existed between what is being promised and what is practiced. It is through the partial lens of judgment, can be demonstrated that governance of the government was much more personalized rather than institutionalized. It is seemingly found that Pakistan moved further on the scale of development but availability of the resources not allowed it to achieve its targets. The regime of PPPP demonstrated the same kind of face which has been given by S.Akbar Zaidi that ‘there always has been and will continue to be, a great tradition of active politics, even electoral politics, in Pakistan, there has not been and is unlikely to be, a process of the democratization of politics’(Zaidi,2005,p.5174).

References

*Daily Express* (Multan, Urdu), April 16, 2010.

*Daily Express* (Urdu) April 28, 2010.

*Daily Express* (Urdu), June 22, 2010.

*Dawn*, April 1, 2008.


*Dawn*, December 29, 2007. The investigation of Benazir murder was conducted by the Scotland yard under the executive order of president of Pakistan, Pervaiz Musharraf which was not found satisfactory by the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party. After forming government in the centre by the Pakistan Peoples Party, investigation of the murder of Benazir was started afresh under the authority of United Nations. Ban-ki-Moon, Secretary General of UN constituted a three member commission consisting of members from Chile, Indonesia and Ireland. The ambassador of Chile, Herald Monoz was the head of the commission who first handed this report on 31st March 2010 and it was publicly announced on 15th April. The delay was on the request of president of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zaradari to avoid the repercussions and the consequences of the report. In that report government of Pervaiz Musharraf, provincial government and Rawalpindi administration was held responsible for providing inadequate security to the PPP’s leadership.

*Dawn*, February 26, 27, 2009. Protesters accused president Zardari of dictating the court ruling and of foul play by imposing governor’s rule in the Punjab for two months for possible horse-trading in the provincial assembly where the PML-N is the largest party, instead of allowing it to elect a new chief minister immediately.

*Dawn*, February 27, 2009.

*Dawn*, July 20, 2010. Later Chairman HEC had been called upon by prime minister and gave him assurance that he will not be disturbed in rendering his duty lawfully and nobody will interfere in the matter of degrees checking. His brother was arrested but later he was released on bail by the court.
Dawn, March 25, 2008. Ch. Pervaiz Elahi was the nominee of PML-Q for the office of the prime minister and he was defeated by getting the vote of 42 members in the sitting house of 334.

Dawn, November 4, 2007. Farooq Dogar was appointed chief justice in November 2007 when Pervaiz Musharraf imposed emergency and newly reinstated justice Iftikhar was once again removed.

Dawn, September 27, 2008.

GeoTv, Dated 21-07-2010.


IPRI (Islamabad Policy Research Institute) Factfile, Vol.,X, February 2008, p. 20. In the text of charter of democracy it was stated that “the 1973 constitution as on 12th October 1999 before the military coup shall be restored with the provision of joint electorates, minorities and women reserved seats on closed party list in the parliament....” General Elections 2008.


The Post (Lahore), November 22, 2009.