

Benazir Bhutto's Struggle and Sacrifices for Democracy

Imran Shahzad

PhD Scholar International Islamic University Islamabad,

Corresponding author imranshahzad509@yahoo.com

Dr Akhtar Hussain

Assistant Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies,
International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Abstract

Benazir Bhutto, the youngest and first woman prime minister of Pakistan, is considered one of the prominent champions of democracy in the country. In spite of several constraints, she chose to devote herself for the promotion and protection of democracy. Her quest for democratic norms and struggle for a just society internees a whole generation of political activists in Pakistan. She stepped into the thorny field of politics owing to the arrest and later demise of her father. Benazir refused to yield before Zia and his junta; ready to sacrifice everything. Her exile could not prevent her to stop struggle for democracy. The reward for her struggle was that she was twice elected the prime minister by the people of Pakistan; but twice her government was dismissed; a great sacrifice that she had given for the sake of democracy. She wholeheartedly worked for the deletion of controversial article that empowered president to dismiss the civilian government. It was due to her consistent struggle against General Pervaiz Musharraf that he was ready to allow the Heads of both main stream political parties to participate into active politics. She was principled enough that when she observed that the true opportunity to restore democracy had arrived, she at once decided to return Pakistan in spite of life threat from Musharraf regime. She strongly believed on democratic norms and rituals as compare to any other political leaders in Pakistan. The objective of writing this article is to demonstrate the political struggle and sacrifices of Benazir for the sake of democracy.

Key Words: *Benazir Bhutto, Democracy, Military, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*

Literature Review:

A number of books and research articles are available on the political struggle and sacrifices of Benazir for the sake of democracy. But being an accomplished author, Benazir narrate her story in a very interesting way in her autobiography "*Daughter of the East*." The book deals with her political struggle since the arrest of her father in 1977 to the unnatural death of Zia ul Haq in 1988. The book provides firsthand knowledge about Benazir and her political struggle. The book exposed the brutality of martial law regime against Benazir, the other members of Bhutto family, PPP leader ship and workers. The book was highly appreciated among the academic circles and several editions have been published so far. Benazir also authored another valuable book shortly before her assassination with the title "Reconciliation: Islam Democracy and the West." In this book, for the first time, she enumerates her political philosophy vividly. She also highlights her political struggle during the era of Nawaz Sharif and Pervaiz Musharraf. Iqbal Akhund who was the member of foreign services contributed a valuable book with the title "Trial and Error; the Advent and Eclipse of Benazir Bhutto." The book largely focused on the period upon which Benazir was the prime minister of the country. In this book the author highlights the multifarious causes of the downfall of her government. Lawrence Ziring, an expert in south Asian history wrote several pages about the politics of Benazir in his book "*Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*." The author largely criticizes Benazir and called her a corrupt and incompetent leader. According to Ziring, Benazir was largely responsible for her downfall and dismissal of her governments. Sartaj Aziz who is the close friend of Nawaz Sharif and the political opponent of Benazir depicts some other version regarding Benazir in his famous book "Between Dreams and Realities: Some Milestones in Pakistan's History." Although the writer seems to be bias against Benazir yet being the eye witness of political rivalry of both Nawaz and Benazir, he revealed some secrets which were covered up before. The author appreciates the role of Benazir in making the Charter of Democracy successful.

Bhutto Family: an Overview

Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007), the elder daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979), belonged to a renowned Rajput Sindhi family named Bhutto. Her forefathers were converted to Islam during the reign of

Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and migrated from Rajputana to Sindh where they got a large chunk of fertile land in Larkana. They further expanded their holdings in Jacobabad and Sukkur districts. Bhutto family developed cordial relations with the then rulers of Sindh and performed a key role in politics of Sindh. Sir Shah Nawaz (1888-1957), the grandfather of Benazir, was one of the most influential politicians of Bhutto family. Apart from remaining on different key positions, he also rendered his services as Prime Minister of Junagarh State. However, the person who prevailed on the politics of Sindh was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He started his political career by joining the cabinet of SkindarMirza as Minister of fuel, power and natural resources in 22 October 1958.(Burki, 1980, p. 36) Later he was appointed foreign minister in Ayub's cabinet in 1963. A wide gulf was created between him and the president on the issue of Tashkent Declaration. He resigned from the cabinet and formed his own political party in 1967 and named it Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The party emerged the largest party of West Pakistan in the general elections held in 1970. After the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, he was appointed Chief Martial Law Administrator, President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. Z.A Bhutto was overthrown by martial law government of General Zia-ul-Haq on 5th of July 1977 and was later hanged on 4th of April 1979.

Bhutto took special interest in the education of his children. Benazir was sent to Ms Jennings Nursery school when she was barely three years old. Later Zulfi was settled in Rawalpindi so she was admitted there in Presentation Convent and then to boarding school at Murree. After the resignation from Ayub's cabinet in 1966, Zulfikar moved towards Karachi with his family where again Benazir got admission in convent of Jesus and Mary. Here she did her O level exam in 1968. After that she applied for admission in Harvard University and also took admission in Karachi Grammar for A level. When her admission was confirmed at Harvard, she left the Karachi Grammar school and set for United States of America along with her mother(Bhutto, 1988, p. 40). Here she obtained the bachelor degree of arts in comparative government. After graduation, she wanted to continue her education in USA, but on the behest of her father she took admission in Lady Margaret Hall Oxford. She obtained the graduation degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Zulfikar encouraged her daughter to achieve a one year diploma in foreign affair(Bhutto, 1988, p. 67) which she completed in 1977, the year her father government was overthrown by military regime.

Struggle against Zia Regime

Z.A Bhutto was satisfied from the performance of his government. So, he decided to hold the elections before time in 1977. Within a week, after the announcement of the elections, the nine splinted opposition political parties forged an alliance against the Z.A Bhutto with the name Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The elections for National Assembly were held on 07 March 1977 in which PPP secured overwhelming majority in. It won over 155 seats of National Assembly out of 200 seats while PNA secured only 36 seats. The Alliance rejected the outcomes of elections and alleged Bhutto of mass rigging. A violent protest was started by PNA against the government that provided an opportunity to Zia ul-Haq (1924-1988), the then chief of army staff to impose Martial law on 5 July 1977. Z.A Bhutto was kept in preventive custody for some time at Murree. Later he was released for a short interval but arrested again; this time never to release again. A murder case of a politician's father who was once the member of his political party reopened in which he subsequently sentenced to death by the Punjab High Court and Supreme Court. Bhutto was hanged on 4th of April 1979. (Farwell, 2012, pp. P, 67)

During the period of Z.A. Bhutto trial, the role of Benazir was very important. She made strenuous efforts for the survival of her father in a case which she always thought was politically motivated. She spoke for her father at every available forum. Her two brothers set for self-exile on the advice of their father. (Farwell, 2012, p. 65) Only Benazir and her mother were in the ground to fight for him. She was hopeful that her father would be free one day. She fought his case with great devotion. She discussed the various aspects of her father's case to the panel of lawyers. She also visited the far flung areas of the country to rally support for her father and to build up pressure on General Zia. She also approached to USA and the West to play the role for release of her father. She pleaded the case of her father in Pakistan and abroad in such a way that the World largely came to believe on Benazir's stance that Z.A Bhutto's death was judicial killing.

Entrance into Politics

Benazir opens his autobiography with this declaration: "I did not choose this life; it chose me." (Bhutto, 1988) When Bhutto was hanged, Benazir and her mother were in police custody at Sihala, a police training centre near Rawalpindi. They were not allowed to attend his funeral prayer. They were released for a short interval after the burial of Bhutto. Some days after the assassination of Z.A Bhutto, a meeting

of PPP core committee was convened in which it was decided to nominate Nusrat Bhutto (1929-2011) the chairperson of the party while Benazir as its co-chairperson. Benazir did not want to be a politician rather she wanted to join foreign services.(Benazir, 1988, p. 100)But the circumstances forced her to accept that position in the party, willingly or unwillingly. Although she was the co-chairperson yet she proved herself the real legacy of Bhutto.(Kharal, p. 207) It was hard time for Benazir as her mother was in deep grief and on the other hand she could not meet the ordinary people as she was in *iddat*. So, it was Benazir who had to attend the large number people who came from all over the country for condolence. After the assassination of her father she began to openly criticise the military regime and declared to fight for the restoration of democracy in the country. The military regime could not overlook the activities of Benazir. So, she was continuously kept in house arrested or in solitary confinement for several years. But she continued the mission of her father and tried for the restoration of democracy from the jail.

Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD)

In 1981 the leaders of several political parties gathered at 70 Clifton, the residence of Bhutto at Karachi. They formed an Alliance with the name Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD). Their demands were the restoration of the constitution of 1973 in its original form, holding of General elections, transfer of power to public representatives and the end of martial law. Beside PPP, there were nine other political parties in that alliance. It is worth mentioning that those political parties who consent for the death sentence of Bhutto were also the part of that Alliance. These parties alleged Bhutto of rigging in the 1977 elections and welcome the martial law government. *Tehrik-e-Istiqal* was one them, its head Asghar khan (1921-2018) was great political opponent of Bhutto. Once he declared in public gathering to hang Mr Bhutto. Benazir recalled his feelings about the meeting of MRD leaders in 70 Clifton in her autobiography:

“I looked at my father’s former opponent now sitting in his house to strike a political deal with his widow, the chairperson of PPP, and his daughter. What a strange politics is. Nasrullah khan, the fez-wearing leader of the Pakistan Democratic Party sat on my mother’s right. Opposite me sat Kasuri, the fleshy faced representative of Asghar Khan’s moderate *Tehrik-e-Istiqal*. Bearded leaders from the religious party *jamaat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* were on the one side of the room.... I

found it difficult to watch the politician drinking coffee...using his telephone to make excited call to friends”(Bhutto, 1988, p. 145)

It shows that how much sincere Benazir was for the restoration of democracy. She made alliance with those who appreciated the killing of her father merely for the sake of democracy. It also shows her statesmanship, that there is no permanent foe in politics; to achieve your goal you could make alliance to everyone.

The movement turned a new shape when on 14 August 1983; it started a practical resistance on a large scale. The rural population of Sindh was more active in that movement. During Zia's tour of Sindh his motorcade was stoned by the protesting crowd. (Waseem, 2007, p. 393) In the first week of the movement two thousand people were arrested and 189 were killed while 126 were badly injured according to government reports. During that time Benazir was in jail and the severe pain started in her ear. The doctor advised for surgery from abroad. According to Benazir, Zia was afraid from the present protest of MRD. He thought it proper to allow her to get treatment from abroad so that the aggression of protesters may be minimised, after almost six and half years of imprisonment she was allowed in January 1984 to go to London for her treatment.

Life in Exile:

Benazir underwent an operation of her ear at London in 1984. She claimed in her autobiography that military physician had mistreated her ear. Further delay could cause of permanently deaf. Her mother invited to join her at Switzerland after operation but she preferred to stay at UK and started a campaign against Zia government. London became the centre of activity and many sympathisers and worker joined Benazir there. Among them most prominent were Bashir Riaz a UK based journalist, Yasmeen, the close friend of Benazir, Naheed Kahn and many others. The group built up pressure on military junta through different ways. Articles were written on the atrocities of government and meetings were convened to highlight the real situation of Pakistan. The world was informed about the human rights abuses in Pakistan. Efforts were made get the support of prominent politicians in UK; the members of the House of Commons were approached which amounted a positive result for Benazir. The Senators and the members of the House of Representatives in USA were also approached to build pressure on military regime for the restoration of democracy.

Under the pressure of USA and political parties in Pakistan, Zia decided to hold the general elections. On 12 August 1983, he declared

the constitutional framework, the schedule of elections of local bodies on non-party basis; followed by the election to the Provincial Assemblies, the National Assembly and Senate.(M.G.Chitkara, 1996, p. 98) But before elections he held the presidential referendum on 20 December 1984. The wording of the referendum was very interesting “whether the people of Pakistan endorse the process initiated by General Zia al-Haq, the president of Pakistan for bringing the laws of Holy Quran and *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).” A yes, it means the person casting vote in favour of Zia, a no vote tantamount to voting against Islam. PPP boycotted the Presidential referendum and succeeded to persuade a large number of voters in favour of boycott. The world came to know that the presidential election was merely fraud and an act of deceiving the world. Zia was more careful in general elections; he decided that the elections would be held on non-party basis. PPP and other political parties in MRD wanted to boycott the election process. Benazir was in exile during that time. She did not consider it better to vacate the field vacant for its enemy. She wrote “I will always think the movement’s decision to boycott these elections, as unfair and unfree as they were, was a tactical mistake, A political party in any democratic or even a quasi-democratic system, needs continual testing.”(Bhutto, Reconciliation: Islam Democracy and the West. , 2008, p. 190) Because of the pressure of MRD she declared the boycott of election however, inwardly, she allowed her party members to contest the election in their personnel capacity. Due to the policy of Benazir, six out of nine members of Zia cabinet met with humiliating defeat.

Lifting of Martial and Arrival of Benazir in Pakistan:

Martial law was lifted in the second last day of 1985 and the constitution of 1973 with addition of Eighth Amendment was restored on that day. Muhammad Khan Junejo, (1932-1993) a politician from Sindh was elected as prime minister. After the restoration of so called political processs, Benazir decided to return to Pakistan for the restoration of true democracy in the country. She explained the reasons of her arrival to Pakistan. “.... I recognised that my fight for democracy in Pakistan could not continue to be run from abroad. If I were to win the battle against dictatorship in Pakistan, it was time for me to return him and confront the Zia ISI-jihadist axis.”(Bhutto, Daughter of the East, 1988, p. 56) Benazir finally returned to Pakistan in 1986 and landed at Lahore airport. About one million people were gathered to welcome the daughter of former prime minister of

Pakistan. A great welcome in the history of Pakistan for any political personality; the only parallel in the history of the region is the great Iranians Shia scholar and reformer Imam Khomeini (Shaikh, 2000, p. 100) (1900-1989); after his returned from exile due to the downfall of Iranian monarch.

Benazir visited the different parts of Pakistan to accumulate support against the military coterie and to inspire the people that PPP was the real political party of the country. Meanwhile she was able to create a wide gulf between Zia and his prime minister. Benazir reserved all her criticism for Zia and spared his front man Junejo. (Fazal Hussain Rashid, 1990, p. 99) Meanwhile Junejo invited Benazir in All Parties Conference to discuss Geneva Accords. Zia was furious and he sacked Junejo from the premiership. Zia announced the new date of election but before the arrival of election date he died in an aeroplane crash on 17th of August 1988 along with other military high officials and USA ambassador.

Elections of 1988 and the Role of Benazir Bhutto

Soon after the demise of General Zia, a corps commander meeting at General Head Quarter (GHQ) was called by Vice Chief of army staff General Mirza Aslam Baig (b, 1931) in which it was decided that army will not take over and the power would be handed over to civilian government. It was also decided that election would be held as per schedule on 16 November 1988. Aslam Baig was elevated to the post of the Chief of Army Staff while Ghulam Ishaq Khan, (1915-2006) the then Chairman Senate was appointed as acting president. (Saeed Shafqat, 1996, pp. 655-672) Benazir was expecting the birth of a child at that month and many people had assumed that she would not be able to carry on electioneering campaign. (Weaver, 2002, p. 74) Because of excessive and mental strain her child Bilawal was born premature on 21st September 1988. She started her election campaign little bit late on 30th of October 1988 by addressing public gatherings in the vicinity of Malir and Lyari. Time was as short as fortnight so she decided to launch her election campaign through train. Her election campaign proved fruitful and PPP obtained a considerable victory in spite of rigging in the elections. It emerged as the single largest party while securing 93 seats in the National Assembly as compare to 54 seats by nine party alliances. General Hamid Gul (1936-2015) the then Director General of ISI played a key role to minimise the victory of PPP. He was instrumental in forming *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad* (IJI), a nine party alliance that opposed PPP in elections. In

spite of the opposition of ISI, President Office and the establishment, the result of the elections was beyond the expectation of everyone. No one could accept that despite the rigging PPP emerged as a single largest party in the National Assembly.

Struggle for Democracy during Prime Minister Ship

Delayed practices were adopted to hand over power to PPP. However, after some hesitation power was handed over to Benazir but with some compulsion. It was decided in an agreement between PPP and military establishment that foreign office would be run by military. Meanwhile, the government would have no say on nuclear programme and civil government would not cut the defence budget. (Talbot, 2009, p. 292) Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan (1920-2016) who was the choice of establishment and elected senator on IJI ticket was appointed Foreign Minister. Benazir accepted the terms for the restoration of democracy in the country.

Immediately, after assuming power, Benazir lifted up the ban on Students Unions and Trade Unions. The media was given freedom and the restriction on NGOs was completely lifted. Human rights groups and women rights activists were free to do their work. Ministry for women was formed and many women were included in the cabinet. (Getting away with Murder: Benazir Bhutto's Association and the Politics of Pakistan, 2014, p. 60) A women bank was also formed during her government. She opened the state media for the first time in the history of Pakistan to regular, frequent and uncensored access by the political opposition. Like a democratic leader she announced the release of all political prisoners. Clemency was granted to all political personalities. (Getting away with Murder: Benazir Bhutto's Association and the Politics of Pakistan, 2014, p. 60) Similarly, cases against political exiles were withdrawn (Waseem, Politics and the State in Pakistan, 2007, p. 441) and Baloch leaders in exile were invited to return to Pakistan. Resultantly Nawab Khair Bux Murree (1924-2016) and others returned to Pakistan from Afghanistan. Those who were awarded death penalty by the military or civilian courts, their punishment were commuted to life imprisonment. (Khan, 2012, p. 403)

Benazir entered into agreement with military establishment and accepted their undesired demands for the sake of democracy. She wanted to look her country as a democratic one. She well knew that if she did not reach on the compromise with army the later will impose

the martial law again. She gradually wanted to marginalise the political role of establishment. For this purpose, as a first token, Hamid Gul, the powerful Director General of Inter Services Intelligence, was transferred to Corps Commander Multan and a retired general Shamsur-Rehman Kalu (1932-1994) was appointed in his place. This shows the great courage of Benazir; it was not easy to sideline the powerful general like Hamid Gul. Benazir also tried to restore the constitution of 1973 in its original form but IJI was not ready to support her on that issue. She also made effort to improve the financial situation of the country by adopting the privatization policy.

Benazir was welcomed as the first Muslim women prime minister in the world by the West. This also led to increase of foreign assistance. Though she had little say in the foreign affairs yet she tried to build cordial relations with India. An agreement was signed between her and her counterpart Rajiv Gandhi to refrain from attacking each other's nuclear installations. (Iqbal Akhund, 2000, p. 91) Benazir also agreed on the framework of an agreement on Siachen with Rajiv Gandhi. The defence secretaries of both countries issued a joint statement that provided for a comprehensive settlement based on redeployment of forces to positions conforming to the Simla agreement. (Kasuri, 2015, p. 483)

The major handicap for PPP government to make a meaningful legislation was the lack of two third majorities in the parliament. PPP's relation with IJI remained sour during the whole tenure. It failed to repeal article 58 (2b) which allocate discretionary power to president to dissolve the Parliament. In addition to, it failed to establish cordial relations with president. The relations with the president further turned sour on the issue of the appointment of judges and chiefs of armed forces. Finally, PPP government was dismissed by the President Ishaq Khan on the charges of corruption, nepotism and mismanagement on 6 August 1990. (Ziring, 1990, p. 113)

Role as Opposition Leader

Benazir Bhutto was elected as the leader of opposition after the elections held in 1990. As an opposition leader she tried her best to contribute to people of Pakistan by raising the voice for democracy. She gave tough time to Nawaz government and his soft policy towards religious political parties was severely criticised by Benazir. She also mobilised the masses against the president and government by exposing their inefficiency, corruption and rigging in the polls. (Saeedshafqat, Civil Military Relations in Pakistan: from

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).P, 240.).

Consequently, Nawaz Sharif government retaliated with to file a number of cases against Benazir and her husband Asif Ali Zardari (b, 1955). The ministers of Nawaz cabinet issued strong statements against Benazir and her husband. For instance the minister of religious affair publically declared her *Kafir* and the Nawaz Sharif close ally in Sindh; the chief minister called her a terrorist.(Talbot, 2009, p. 322) These were the harsh and insulting words for any political leader. Asif Zardari was arrested with short intervals in different cases. The family life of Benazir was greatly disturbed; she and her children suffered a lot due to imprisonment of Zardari. He was arrested in 1991 on the charges of fraudulently taking bank loan. When the court acquitted him in that case he was booked and detained in another case. It was accused that he was involved in killing of his political opponent.

As opposition leader, Benazir gave tough time to President GhulamIshaq Khan. In December 1991, he was faced a heavy protest from opposition bench during address to the joint session of the parliament. Benazir staged protest inside the parliament by raising the slogan "*Go Baba Go*(Khan R. , 1997, p. 111)" for one and half hour. It was not easy for him to complete his written speech in such a loud noise. He looked towards treasury benches but Nawaz League was silent and could not come for rescue of the old president in that difficult situation. That was the first seed in parting of the ways between Prime minister and the president. The president was furious on the passive role of Nawaz Sharif and his party members during his presidential address. The gulf was further widened due to the politics of Benazir on eighth amendments and on the discretionary powers of president. The conflict between Prime Minister and President ended on the dismal of Nawaz government and the resignation of Ishaq khan. Benazir was able to get rid of her two key political opponents.

The Great Betrayal:

When started her second tenure as a prime minister on 17 October 1993, she had already decided that she would not co-exist with the army and would not challenge its authority in certain vital sectors. The trauma of her dismissal by Ghulam Ishaq Khan only twenty months after she sworn in was probably still fresh in her mind (Aziz, 2009, p. 147). She came to know through political experience that the role of army in politics could not be eradicated at once due to its long

involvement. It could be reduced slowly and steadily. Benazir was the victim of notorious article 58 (2b) that gave president discretionary power to dismiss the government. Now, she was more conscious and nominated Farooq Ahmad Lughari (1940-2010) as PPP candidate for presidency, who ultimately won the election. Further she tried to repeal the aforementioned article from the constitution. However, the main hindrance was that she did not possess two-third majority in the parliament. She again approached to political parties in the parliament for their support but unable to get much success.

When Benazir took over the charge of executive, the country was passing from financial crises. She approached to International Monetary fund (IMF) and World Bank for financial assistance. She wanted to initiate development projects especially mega ones which were the dire need to the country. (Dursameen Naqvi, 1994, p. 207) She focussed to solve the energy crises and strengthen the private sector. (Bhutto, Speeches and Statements, Vol-II, p. 327) Almost eighteen thousands villages were provided the connection of electricity. Health and Primary education were placed on top priority. Thirty three thousand lady health workers were recruited while twenty one thousand new primary schools were opened in different localities. (Riaz, 2007, p. 206) Different programme was launched for the empowerment of women. For the first time in the history of Pakistan women police stations and women bank were established. Women were also recruited in the superior courts. (Riaz, 2007, p. 207)

The opposition was not happy with the economic and political decisions of PPP. The difference between PPP and PML (N) widened when a movement of no- confidence was presented against the Chief Minister of NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and carried on. In retaliation PML (N) initiated *Tehrik-e-Nijat* to dethrone Benazir government. On the other hand her relations with the president turned sour. She was informed by her close confident that Farooq Ahmad Lughari could dismiss her government. On 20 September 1996 a tragic incident happened when Mir Murtaza Bhutto was brutally killed by police near his home in Karachi. Lughari found it suitable opportunity and dismiss the government of Benazir Bhutto on 5 November 1996 to which once he said:

“If the military puts gun to my head I will not sack the government. My entire life I have spent against the eighth amendment and how can I ever use the eighth amendment. I have been elected against the eighth amendment. She is my sister, I am a Baloch. How could I do

this with my sister?"(Shaikh, Benazir Bhutto a Political Biography, p. 226)

The main grounds for the dissolution stated by Lughari were the corruption, extra-judicial killings, non-implementation of the orders of the Supreme Court and the government's involvement in the murder of Mir Murtaza Bhutto.(Hamid, 1998, pp. 247-47) Benazir challenged the dissolution order in the Supreme Court. The court adopted the delayed practice and gave judgement on 29 January 1997. The court, by majority of six to one upheld the order of the president.

Caretaker Government and Elections 1997:

After the dismissal of Benazir's government, Lughari announced the date of next elections. A caretaker government under the premiership of former PPP leader Miraj Khalid was formed. Miraj had severed relations with PPP leadership so he ordered to place Benazir in protective custody while detained Zardari on suspicion of illegal commercial transactions and on account of the need to investigate his role in Murtaza's killing. The government initiated the accountability of the corrupt among the politicians and bureaucrats. The president promulgated the Accountability Ordinance, 1996, which envisages the setting up of an *Ehtesab Commission* under a serving or retired judge of Supreme Court. The commission publically stated that it had been unable to gather enough evidence against the corruption of Benazir and her husband.(Khan R. , 1997, p. 214) It was indeed the great injustice on the part of the president to dismiss a democratic government without any solid proof. However media trial was started before the elections to manipulate the fame of Benazir and her husband. According to Benazir Inter-services intelligence (ISI) sent her a message to boycott the elections otherwise the establishment would give two-thirds majority to PML (N). Benazir declined to do so because if PPP boycotted the elections, there could be martial law.(Benazir, Faith in People, 2014, p. 84) Resultantly in 1997 elections the performance of PPP remained poor and PML (N) was able to secure two-third majority in the National Assembly.

Politics of Struggle during Nawaz Government

Benazir accepted the result and announced to give hands to new elected government. Benazir severely criticised the formation of the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS) during caretaker government and demanded for its abolishment.(Lawrence, 2004, p. 244) The CDNS empowered the president to take vital decisions and

bypass the parliament and cabinet. Benazir wanted the supremacy of parliament and could not like that the power of parliament be reduced in any way. She also supported Thirteenth Amendment to the constitution which was introduced by Nawaz government. The amendment deleted the most controversial Articles 58 (2b) and 112(2b). (Aziz, 2009, p. 173)

However the relations between government and Benazir could not run smoothly. The government appointed a controversial person as chairman National Accountability Bauru(NAB) who filed a number of corruption cases against Benazir and her husband. Due to these cases Zardari had to remain behind the bar and only released in 2004 after eight years of confinement. State TV was also used for the character assassination of Benazir and her family that envisaged their bad image among the masses.

Nevertheless Nawaz government could not fulfil its tenure in spite of his precautionary measurement albeit the repeal of 58 (2b) and appointment of his favourite Army Chief. Musharraf was appointed as the chief of army staff upon the resignation of General Jahangir Karamat. On Kargil issue a rift was created between the government and the military establishment that ended on the dismissal of Nawaz government. General Musharraf (b, 1943) took over the charge on 12 October 1999 and imposed emergency in the country. He kept the head of PPP and Muslim League outside the politics. Benazir was neither allowed to enter in Pakistan nor to contest parliamentary elections held in 2002. False cases were initiated with the charges of corruption against her. Benazir was pressurised to deal with military regime which she refused to do so. Resultantly, her husband Asif Ali Zardari was kept behind the bar as long as eight years.

Benazir remained outside the country till 2007, but continued her struggle to oust Musharraf from power and to restore democracy in Pakistan again. She succeeded to form an alliance of different political parties against Musharraf with the name Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD). In 2006, she signed on the charter of democracy with her former political rival Nawaz Sharif. Different other political parties were also included in this agreement that mounted pressure on Musharraf regime.

Meanwhile, Musharraf was suppressed by USA to negotiate with PPP and restore the political environment in Pakistan as the country had become the centre of terrorist activity. On the behest of USA a deal between Pervaiz Musharraf and Benazir took place according to which

Benazir would come to Pakistan soon after the general elections. However, she returned to Pakistan before the elections; to launch the election campaign of her party. Musharraf regime threatened her and told her that government will not be responsible for her security. It was stated by government official she was on the hit list of *Tehreek-e-Taliban*. In spite of all these threats from state and non-state actors she showed tremendous courage and arrived in Pakistan on 18 October 2007. (Farwell, *Pakistan Cauldron: Conspiracy, Assassination and Instability*, 2012, p. 41) She received tumultuous welcome at Karachi Airport. Unfortunately her procession was attacked by a suicide bomber in which hundreds of party worker died and injured.

All these ill action could not stop Benazir from slow down its election campaign. She showed tremendous courage and denied to bow before state and not state actors. She launched an aggressive election campaign. Musharraf and his PML (Q) were severely criticised during election campaign of PPP. Taliban was given the message openly that Pakistan would be no more save heaven for them if Pakistan PPP came into power. The people in large number amassed in the gatherings and it seems that PPP would be the winner of upcoming elections. Like previous mass gatherings, a large number of people accumulated at *Liaquat Baagh Rawalpindi* on 27th December 2007 to listen the scheduled address of Benazir. (Farwell, *Pakistan Cauldron: Conspiracy, Assassination and Instability*, 2012, p. 135) There Benazir delivered a very emotional speech. At end of the session, when she was returning back, a large crowd of party worker and masses gathered on her way and shouted slogans. She responded the slogan of her party workers and came out from the sun roof of her Land Cruiser. Meanwhile a man among the crowd fired upon her twice and then exploded himself. Benazir fell down in her Land cruiser seat unconsciously. She was taken in General Hospital Rawalpindi where she was pronounced dead. The government alleged Bait ullah Mehsood (1974-2009) the Head of *Tehrik-e-Taliban* Pakistan for ordering his men to assassinate Benazir. However, the Taliban commander denied any such accusation and stated that he could not raise his hand on a woman as it is against the principal of Islam and their tradition as well. According UN report, several people and factors were involved in the assassination of Benazir. She was not provided adequate security by the government while her way was also blocked by the police personnel. The lack of interest and uncompromising attitude of government personnel reveals that establishment was involved to some extent in the killing of Benazir.

Conclusion:

Many people in Pakistan consider Benazir as one of the most influential leaders who played a pivotal role for the strengthening of democracy by emphasising on the political empowerment of the people. For instance, she made strenuous struggles against Zia regime by ensuring mass participation in MRD and encouraged the people to defy the military junta of the time. To her, democracy, not dictatorship was the panacea for all socio-economic ills of the society. That is why her governments were toppled down twice but her opponents failed to keep her aloof from the politics and the people at large. Thus, she remained the centre of political landscape of the country and even lost her life during a political campaign.

Since the inception of her political career, like her father she vehemently opposed the military interference in the politics. Later, she developed strain relations with the civil and military bureaucracy because she directly blamed the then military government for de-seating and hanging of her father. At the same time, the mysterious death of her younger brother Mr Shah Nawaz in France in 1985 further made her relations worse with the regime since she accused Zia for that in her autobiography (Bhutto, Daughter of the East, 1988, p. 254).

Benazir Bhutto sacrificed her life for the sake of democracy. Not only she but her father, and two brothers had also laid their lives during political struggle. Benazir could live a luxury and comfortable life like her sister Sanam. But she chose the intriguing path of politics for the sake of downtrodden people. Her sacrifices for the restoration of democracy could not be forgotten for a while. It was she, the young lady of early thirties who compelled General Zia to conduct the general elections. It was due to her strenuous efforts and sacrifices that military regime had restored the constitution of 1973. Her compromising policy paved the way towards democracy. She could take revenge from those members of judiciary and the establishment who were involved in the killing of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto yet she avoided to do so. She pardoned those who were directly or indirectly involved in the killing of her father.

As a prime minister she did considerable work to strength democratic norms. It was her political sagacity that in spite of knowing that military did not like her, she made an agreement with military for the nourishment of democracy. She agreed that foreign policy, nuclear programme and Afghan War policy would remain in the hands of army and her government would not intervene. She also agreed to elect

Ghulam Ishaq Khan as the president from the parliament. It could be criticised as wrong decisions and many people call her power hungry woman. Even her brother Ghulam Murtaza severely criticised her agreement with military establishment. But if we study deeply it came to know that her decision was based on wisdom. If she did not fulfil the demands of generals they could directly rule the country for next few years or established the puppet democratic government. The PPP members who were now tired after long efforts against martial law regime for eleven years might join hands with the military. Benazir well knew the psyche of her party members, she knew that most of the winning candidates are fair weather friends and they had joined the party mere to seek power. It was inevitable at that time for PPP to obtain powers otherwise it could be divided and lose its strength. After an agreement between the generals and PPP, the democracy was implemented though it was considerable weak yet it paved the way for democratic norms.

On 12 October 1999, Musharraf promulgated emergency in the country and later held election in 2002 in which his favourite party PML-Q came into power. Nawaz Sharif and Benazir were neither allowed to come into Pakistan nor could they participate in political activities. It is hard to imagine the end of Musharraf's rule. He was succeeded to suppress all the political parties. On the other hand, his relations with USA and the Western countries were up to the mark due to his support against war of terrorism and extremism. The leaders of almost all the prominent political parties were disappointed and disheartened. But Benazir was hard nut to crack. She gave tough time to Musharraf regime. She launched a worldwide movement against the military rule and told the world that Pakistan is deprived of democracy which would be harmful for the whole world. She delivered lectures and wrote articles in different newspapers to show the real situation prevailed in the country. It was Benazir who brought Musharraf on negotiation table otherwise he was not willing to talk with any political personality. It was due to the strenuous efforts of Benazir that pressure built up against him to leave the position of army chief. Nawaz Sharif and his family members were not allowed to enter Pakistan and to participate in active politics. He and his brother Shahbaz Sharif made effort for coming back Pakistan but were deported from airport. The agreement between Musharraf and Benazir paved the way for the return of Sharif family and their participation in active politics. After the arrival of two mainstream political parties heads, a healthy political environment had emerged in Pakistan. Benazir was killed before the

2008 elections, yet it was due to her efforts that the elections were held free and fair. She did not allow Musharraf to do pre-poll rigging in the election on miniature scale; and got the result in favour of his favourite PML-Q. PPP emerged into power fourth time as the result of 2007 elections. Later Musharraf had been forced to resign from president ship during the tenure of PPP.

The political and democratic culture was further strengthened. Benazir started struggle for democracy since the very inception of her political career and she lose her life for the sake of democracy. It cannot be denied that it was due to her struggle that the nation had get rid from the two dictators namely Zia ulHaq and Pervaiz Musharraf.

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