

Challenge and Response: A Case Study of Benazir Bhutto's Twin Prime Ministerships

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Abstract:

Benazir Bhutto happened to be the first constitutionally chosen female leader of any Muslim country in Modern times. She ascended to office amid the legacy of General Zia-ul-Haq's regime and civil-military bureaucracy that prompted diverse deterrence for her governments and abstained her from the application of her constitutional power. The essence of challenges was mostly political, but the grounds that created these abysses were political and gender partiality. Based on the above discourse, this article attempts to underline the torments confronted by Benazir being the new chapter in our political society. This is the empirical account of Benazir's twin governments grounded on the views of important politicians who sight and accompanied her in her journey of power. To ponder the reasons that refrained Benazir from having true legal authority the study is divided into the following parts: (1) Challenge and response encountered by Benazir in the first tenure of her Prime Ministership (1988-90), (2) Challenge and response encountered by Benazir in the second tenure of her Prime Ministership (1993-1996). The PPP government had made some new political strides in general, but it was persistently controlled by the army. In the first government, the brass leadership and opposition and in later government civil-military bureaucracy and opposition impaired the democratic traditions. However, amid all this Benazir succeeded to do some pragmatic politics and defying the anti-PPP mindset.

Keywords:

Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Challenge, Response, democracy, government, Army, PPP, PML

Introduction:

In the political culture of Pakistan, the rise of Benazir Bhutto as the first female Prime Minister only after few years of enactment of a law that shrinks the status of a *and opposition damaged* leader but the male gender was not ready to accept it just because she was of the opposite gender. Despite all the hardships that she faced in her life she was unable to improve certain policies of Pakistan (Shaikh, 2001, p.43). The legacy of Zia-ul-Haq had severed as a bottleneck for both her governments. The religious-political and male mindset in power arena such as civil-military bureaucracy was reluctant to work under the women leadership.

This study has a striking point to apprehend the ups and downs in the political lifeline of Benazir. The questions of transferring power happened to be more grim and dire when it came to her for it had to be exercised by the new gender in the politics of Pakistan and the Muslim world. The new era was coarse to the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) too, it had to counter the moves of several sections of society and politics. The substance had been manifested by the Benazir and repeatedly she came out of the political traps of the opponents with little or no impairment. By keeping in view, the theme of the article this study is the historical narration of strategies and counter-strategies to get her down to power (by the establishment) and stay in power (by PPP) respectively.

The methodology used in this research is descriptive and critical. Since the research is based on actual historical events hence the historical narrative style is used. The nature of the research is qualitative. The study comprised data collected from print media, government reports, Debates of National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, autobiographies, articles in journals and magazines, and archival material declassified by Radio Pakistan and the National Documentation Wing, in-person, broadcasted and published interviews with politicians and civil-military officials.

1. Challenge and Response: 1988-90

The National and Provincial Assemblies elections were held in November 1988 on 16 and 19 respectively under the command of Ishaq Khan (who sworn as the President following Zia ul-Haq's demise.) (Raza, 2001, p.45)

In these elections, numerous politicians had disjuncture themselves from old political affiliation and joined new political parties due to their vested interests. No party happened to win the elections of the National Assembly with an absolute majority. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) enabled to secure the utmost representation share of 45.59 percent in the Parliament (Waseem, 1989, p.443) (Election Commission of Pakistan, 1997, p.vi.) (Election Commission of Pakistan, 1997, p.vi).

1.1 Challenge 1: Army's Attitude:

The army, a powerful institution at that time, had serious concerns about the transmission of power to the PPP. Thus, Benazir could only form the government after reaching a deal with the military. As per Javed Ashraf, the deal was made because Benazir was young and immature and there was a general impression that she would try to take revenge from the army. The deal spread on the following points: Benazir would abstain herself from inducing any revenge from Zia's family; Status quo would be maintained on Kashmir and Afghan policy; and foreign policy matters would be decided with the consent of the army (Javed Ashraf, Personal Interview, September 16, 2011). Afterward, the high army command negated the idea of the accord and declare that it had recommended just some suggestions to the PPP (Salim, 1990, p.14-15). This deal took place on the behest of the establishment (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011). The PPP agreed with the proposals for two reasons; firstly, it believed that over time the political process would get strength; and secondly, the nation was eager to have the PPP government (Aftab Ahmad Sherpao, Personal Interview, May 12, 2011).

Response 1: The deal was nailed between the army and PPP. The electoral process had been undermined for this act since PPP did not desist the army from being a kingmaker party. Besides, PPP did not have the political means to refrain the army from the political maneuver. It got hold of adequate political power since the vintage of the 1950s. (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

1.2 Challenge 2: Delay in Transfer of Power:

Benazir met with Ishaq Khan and Aslam Baig when the transfer of power was being delayed

without any reason. At this point transfer of power was not possible without the assent of the army (Razi & Shakir, 1989, p.81-82). Ishaq Khan deliberately delayed the transfer of power, as it was hard for him to acknowledge the PPP in place of the Islami Jamhoori Ittihad (IJI) (Aftab Ahmad Sherpao, Personal Interview, May 12, 2011). The international community mainly the USA, which had anticipated reinstallation of democracy, also put pressure on the President. Ishaq Khan, at last, nominated Benazir as the Prime Minister on December 1, 1988 (Kamran, 2008, p.140). She was the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Pakistan and any Muslim country (Government of Pakistan, 1990, p.7). On December 2, 1988, an agreement was reached between the PPP and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM); and Benazir became Prime Minister with the support of MQM and 21 members of Tribal Areas. Ishaq Khan got elected as the President on the said day too (Dawn, December 3, 1988, p.3) (Singh, 2007, p.100).

Response 2: The PPP conceded the agreement proposed by the army which had attributes that Sahibzada Yaqub should be given the office of Foreign Minister and Ishaq Khan should be nominated for the Presidency. (Qureshi, 1994, p.19) The army choice of Yaqub was for the reason that it did not authorize the PPP to execute the nuclear policy and foreign policy, especially connected to the Kashmir issue and India. The PPP consented to the mentioned particulars to shun the politics of retaliation with the power hub. (Aftab Ahmad Sherpao, Personal Interview, May 12, 2011).

1.3 Challenge 3: Rule of Law Situation in Sindh:

Since 1983 the rule of law in Sindh was terrible but after the “Movement for the Restoration of Democracy” (MRD) an extensive “*dako raj* phenomenon” cropped up. The PPP government was unable to restore the normalcy in Sindh as ethnic sectarianism and violence erupted (Akhund, 2000, p.282). The army had pressed the PPP for extensive powers to cope with the situation but the PPP refused to grant these authorities to the army for it was of opinion that power show would further worsen the situation (Bahadur, 1988, p.124-125).

The Sindh circumstances carried the government to the skirt of fall (Anjum, 2000, p.205). The differences between the PPP and Muttahida Qaumi

Movement (MQM) expanded which brought about more ethnic viciousness in Sindh. The PPP and army had diverse designs to manage the situation. They had no trust in one another from the beginning of the Clean-Up Operation in the Paka Qilla in Hyderabad on May 26, 1990. The provincial administration had instigated the operation on the ground of the information that illegal armaments and ammo were stored at the site (Dawn, May 27, 1990, p.1).

When the police raided the hideouts, the cadres took cover, and a couple of women and minors carrying the Qur’ān on their heads came forward (Shaikh, 2000, p.182). (Salim, 1990, p.16-17) (Dawn, May 27, 1990, 5). During the operation, the army entered the city without the consent of the civilian administration and confronted the police and the Sindh government (Iqbal Haider, Personal Interview, October 16, 2011). As indicated by Article 147 of the constitution, the military could intercede in regular citizen matters if the provincial government with the consent of the central government could ask the military for help. The military could also intervene in federating units under Article 245 of the Constitution. The army intervened in politics without the recommendation of government which was a synonym for challenging the writ of the government (Shaikh, 2000, p.183-184).

In case, when the army was summoned at the government's request under article 245, it was similar to martial law, as the High Courts managed to lose jurisdiction over the area until the army could exercise its power (Shaikh, 2000, p.184). The army asserted powers within Article 245 of the Constitution (Rashid, 1990, p.32) and Benazir was willing to collaborate in compliance with Article 147's regulations. The government did not intend to grant powers within Article 245 because it would lead to the imprisonment of its ministers in Sindh, who were convicted of supporting dacoits (Rashid, 1990, p.32).

The National Assembly debated Sindh's rule of law. The government has also been chastised by the opposition for having failed to reestablish the law and order in Karachi (Government of Pakistan, 1989, p.380-381). Throughout debates on the circumstance in Sindh, the environment in the National Assembly remained tense, and the

proceedings often ended with opposition walkouts (Rashid, 1990, 32). Referring to the PPP sources, Benazir was capable enough to grip the situation in Sindh very well if Aslam Baig did not intervene in the process of negotiation with the stakeholders (Iqbal Haider, Personal Interview, October 16, 2011).

Response 3: The PPP leaders reprimanded the army for supporting the females and children that repudiated to abide by the curfew whereas the army had blamed the PPP for its plans to pulverize *Mohajirs* (Migrants) (Dawn, May 27, 1990, 7) (Salim, 1990, p.16-17) (Shaikh, 2000, p.182). Even Benazir turned down to act under the strategic plan of the army and cope with the situation through its party politics (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

1.4 Challenge 4: Centre-Punjab Relations:

By February 1989 confrontation between the Centre and the Punjab increased. Nawaz Sharif was against the initiation of the People's Program by the Centre and asked the President to get it closed (Haque, 1989, p.36). Punjab and Federal governments also had serious disagreement on the wheat issue; blaming each other for the deteriorating wheat situation (Khan, 1989, p.36). With the appointment of Nawaz as President of the IJI on February 11, 1989, the confrontation between Centre and Punjab intensified (Dawn, February 12, 1989, 5). Benazir even connived to initiate a vote of no-confidence against Chief Minister Punjab (Nawaz). On March 6, 1989, the opposition had requested the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Mian Manzoor Watto to call upon the meeting to table a no-confidence motion against Nawaz. The 80 MPAs were signatories of the request. The support of a few members for the motion was attained through horse-trading. Ishaq Khan called Benazir to meet him immediately to tackle the situation. On March 6, 1989, Benazir met Ishaq Khan, who in the presence of Gen. Aslam Baig, told her that the members of the PPP were involved in horse-trading and federal ministers were staying in Punjab conspiring to oust Nawaz from the office and that such conduct would further harm relations between Centre and Punjab. Benazir mentioned that her party would not support the Chief Minister of Punjab in the upcoming election, citing Nawaz's improper and inappropriate behavior as the reason for this. Ishaq

Khan and Aslam Baig advised Benazir to abstain from conspiring against Nawaz and in return they would try to convince the IJI to collaborate with the federal government (Ahmad, 1989, p. 327-329.) (The Nation, 1990, p.7). Later Nawaz met Benazir and both agreed to cooperate in the national interest. The PPP and IJI approved the mandate of each other in the Punjab and the Centre to form government respectively (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

The reconciliatory situation did not last long and confrontation restarted when he announced the launching of the Punjab Bank and Punjab Television Network to make Punjab more self-governing (Shad, 2001, p.123). Nawaz went beyond all the constitutional confines in asserting the notion of full autonomy. He envisioned a pattern of refusal of central power for the smaller federating units (Akhund, 2000, p.292). Nawaz advised the bureaucrats in Punjab to shun any kind of cooperation with the Federal government otherwise they would be thrown out of Punjab. Benazir declared these orders a mutiny against federal authority (Shad, 2001, p.123). The Punjab government was constantly demanding provincial autonomy (Kamran, 2008, p.144).

Punjab couldn't declare that the Central Authorities was doing disparity with it for Punjab was probably the chief affluent province and had an appreciable illustration in national politics, bureaucracy, and armed forces (Newberg, 1989, p.572)

It was said that the main cause for the federal-Punjab confrontation was that Nawaz had inadequate political insight and he projected a phony view that Punjab is the strongest province. Benazir also disapproved of the flux misuse of power by Nawaz. This also inhibited the proper working relationship between the federation and federating units. Nawaz was also influenced by pro-confrontation forces (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

The relationship deteriorated to the extent that Nawaz declined to abide by the federal government transfer orders of the Chief Secretary (Waseem, 1989, p.446). The President however supported the Punjab government and the issue ended with the withdrawal of transfer orders by the Federal Government (Nasir, April 1990, 30).

Another controversy arose when the IJI objected

to the cultural policy of Benazir; asserting that the policy was contrary to Islamic values. The IJI expressed feelings of mistrust in the PPP policies; and even went to the extent of saying, after the SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) Conference, that Benazir had the plan to sell out Pakistan to India (Waseem, 1989, p.455).

Response 4: The federal government started to challenge the writ of the Punjab government. It embarked on the mission to destabilize the Nawaz Chief Ministership as a counterstrategy. Benazir also used the federal government's authority against Nawaz, including corruption cases against his Punjab MPAs to persuade them to oppose Nawaz (Mahmood, 2003, p.390).

1.5 Challenge 5: No Confidence Motion Opposed to Benazir:

The presence of the Combined Opposition Party (COP) in the National Assembly was a threat to the PPP. On 23 October 1989, the COP officially tabled the no-confidence motion against Benazir signed by 86 Members of National Assembly (MNAs). At that time, she was in Kuala Lumpur attending the Commonwealth meeting (Dawn, October 24, 1989, p.4). The MQM was also associated with the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) in supporting the no-confidence motion. It was alleged that Aslam Baig had tendered his services to get MQM on board as he was intimated with Altaf Hussain. He made phone calls to Altaf to discuss the plan for the defeat of Benazir in the no-confidence motion. The role of Aslam Baig in soliciting the support of the MQM was later revealed by Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan (one of the confidants of Nawaz and top-ranked leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) (Shaikh, 2000, p.173). According to MQM, Aslam Baig had not contacted the Party but Brigadier Intiaz had offered money. The COP was confident about its success in the motion. Leaders of the COP had warned the government that if unfair means were used against the motion, then countrywide anti-government demonstrations would be called (Dawn, November 1, 1989, p.6).

On October 31, 1989, Benazir and Ishaq Khan met to discuss the arrangements about the no-confidence motion. (Bukhari, 2004, p.158) The total strength of the House was 237. Wali Khan of the Awami National Party (ANP) and Mumtaz Tarar of the PPP were out of the country whereas Malik

Meraj Khalid (Speaker) had to chair the session. The PPP claimed to have the support of 131 MNAs (Dawn, November 1, 1989, p.5).

The resources of the Punjab and Balochistan were employed by the IJI in the no-confidence motion and the Chief Ministers of both the provinces supported the no-confidence motion too (Bukhari, 2004, p.158). The Punjab government had seized a few of the Federal legislators of the PPP from departing for Islamabad; afterward, they are incarcerated under numerous charges. Just before voting on the no-confidence motion eight MNAs of the PPP (belonged to Punjab) were missing. It was alleged that they were under the custody of the Punjab government. Besides four MNAs of the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) were held on at the Shalimar Hotel (Lahore) and later shifted to the residences of the IJI leaders until they finally agreed to support the no-confidence move (Shaikh, 2000, p.173-174).

The PPP's legislators were connected and persuaded by the IJI to get their support in its move. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) had secretly recorded meetings between the leaders of the IJI and the PPP from September 28 to October 6, 1989, to gain their support for the no-confidence motion. The IB had recorded meeting minutes on twelve cassettes. It became evident from the record that the high command of the Intelligence agencies was not a part of the conspiracy that hatched against the Benazir government.

The IJI transported 90 MNAs in Murree before the day of voting. Some MNAs of the PPP were also transported like Fazaldad and Atta Muhammad. The required number for the success of the no-confidence motion was 120 whereas the IJI had 90 MNAs with them. Nawaz had asked Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to organize their stay in Murree (Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Personal Interview, September 14, 2011).

On November 1, 1989, voting took place on the no-confidence motion. The total attendance in the National Assembly was 232 and the PPP won by a margin of 12 votes. After the no-confidence motion, the opposition became more active against the PPP (Dawn, November 2, 1989, p.1-3). The IJI had 55 members in the House of 237 and it claimed 107 votes against the ruling party in the no-confidence move (Ahmad, 2005, p.77). The vote of confidence

in favor of Benazir had fulfilled the legal requirement that the elected legislative body had faith in her leadership (Iftikhar Gilani, Interview in Herald, April 1990, p.38). The success against the no-confidence motion was due to unity within the PPP (Aftab Ahmad Sherpao, Personal Interview, May 12, 2011).

Response:

After voting Benazir addressed the National Assembly in which she stated; “a no-confidence motion is not a joke. It shakes the entire nation and not only does it shake an entire nation, the working of the machinery of that nation, but it also gives rise to fears about the democratic institution and indeed about its implications on the integrity and the unity of Pakistan. Therefore, I would appeal to the opposition not to oppose us for the sake of opposition”. (Dawn, November 2, 1989, p.1-3). She also said, “I have no rancour, nor any ill will, against those who have moved the no-trust motion against me.” (Dawn, November 2, 1989, p.1-3). Benazir succeeded in this move due to unity in her party. Any offer from the COP to PPP did not emasculate the integrity of the party in favor to vote for Benazir (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

1.6 Challenge: 6: Dissolution of the Assembly with the Axe of 58 (2) (b):

On August 6, 1990 *Nawa-i-Waqt* and *The Nation* had published the news that the assemblies would be dissolved today (Nawa-i-Waqt, August 6, 1990, p.1) (*The Nation*, August 6, 1990, p.1). Benazir government was unaware of any such development. Benazir considered it disinformation and a conspiracy of the IJI (Qureshi, 1994, 27). It is said that the decision to oust the PPP government was taken in the corps commanders’ meeting that was held in Rawalpindi on January 21, 1990 (Akhund, 2000, 305).

On the same day, Ishaq Khan issued the dissolution order of the federal government with the axe of Article 58 (2) (b). Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sindh Assemblies were also dissolved (Dawn, August 7, 1990, p.4) (Bukhari, 2004, p.162). Following accusations were made against the dismissed government: horse-trading, (Raza, 2001, p.45) corruption, (Pirzada, 2004, p.117) (Nawa-i-Waqt, August 7, 1990, p.5) (Baxter & Kennedy, 1998, p.28-29), nepotism, (Qureshi,

1994, p.27), administrative malfunctioning, disgrace towards the Upper House and judiciary, political skirmish, (Bukhari, 2004, p.162) not abiding with constitutional provisions (Munir, 1999, p.321-332) (Raza, 2001, p.45). Ishaq Khan also imposed an emergency under Article 232 (1) however the Constitution did not abrogate. The emergency was justified because domestic and foreign powers had placed Pakistan in jeopardy, and it was appropriate to impose the emergency to deal with the situation (Nawa-i-Waqt, August 7, 1990, p.3).

Response: The PPP decided to file a petition against the order of dissolution. The order of dissolution of the National Assembly had challenged in all the four High Courts vis a vis; Lahore High Court, Sindh High Court, Balochistan High Court and Peshawar High Court under Article 199 (Dawood, 1994, p.84) (Shaikh, 2000, p.196). Two petitions were filed in the Sindh High Court; one challenging the validity of the dissolution order of the National Assembly and the other the dissolution order of the Governor of Sindh and the President concerning the dissolution of Sindh Assembly and National Assembly respectively. The petition filed in Quetta High Court was moved to the Sindh High Court while the writ petitions pending in Peshawar High Court were shifted to the Lahore High Court at the command of the Supreme Court. In Lahore High Court the petitions were heard by the full bench which validated the dissolution order on October 14, 1990 (Dawn, October 15, 1990, p.3). In Sindh High Court the petitions were heard by the full bench comprised of four judges and the Chief Justice. (Dawood, 1994, p.92). The hearing of petitions that commence on September 24, 1990, was concluded on October 14, 1990, and the decision was reserved by the Court. The ruling was announced on October 18, 1990, and the petition was dismissed by the unanimous order of the Court (Dawn, October 19, 1990, p.5). It decided that the federation and Sindh had not carried out their mandates according to the provisions of the Constitution and in this case the call to the electorate was necessary. (Dawood, 1994, p.92-102).

2. Challenge and Response: 1993-96

National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies elections were announced on October 6 and October 9, 1993, respectively (Shah, 2001, p.141) (Dawn,

July 19, 1993, p.4). The election results revealed a split mandate. The PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) PML (N) won 86 and 72 seats in the National Assembly, respectively (Dawn, October 8, 1993, p.1).

On 19 October 1993, Benazir was elected as leader of the House by obtaining 122 votes in a house of 205 and Nawaz as leader of the opposition securing only 72 votes (The News, October 20, 1993, p.1). The triumph of Benazir was due to the support of the PDA, the JWP, independents and minorities. The Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF) and Islami Jamhoori Mahaz (IJM) abstained from voting (Sayood, 1993, p.19).

2.1 Challenge 1: Federal Government-Opposition Relations:

The attitude of the PML (N) and the MQM were hostile towards the PPP since the setup of the Central government. Nawaz Sharif has been critical of the government's Nuclear Technology Energy Program and Kashmir policy multiple times. He said Benazir was taking instructions from the United States on crucial national issues (The News, Islamabad, December 2, 1993, p.1).

The PML (N) caused hindrances from the commencement for the newly formed PPP-led coalition government could not function smoothly. Nawaz started attacking the PPP leadership on every possible front; i.e., having connections with the drug mafia; (The News, December 2, 1993, p.3) providing concessions to India on Kashmir issue compromised on the nuclear program; and dictatorial approach and removal Nusrat Bhutto from the chairpersonship of the PPP without taking her into the confidence. Through formal letters, the government invited the opposition for constructive dialogue. Benazir repeatedly urged Nawaz to avoid confrontational politics, specifically in the National Assembly (The Pakistan Times, January 4, 1994, p.1-4).

The PML (N) criticized the hundred-day performance of the PPP, which mainly focused on economic and foreign policy issues. The Central Information Secretary of PML (N) Mushahid Hussain charged that due to wrong foreign policy, the country was being isolated and that its economic policies were leading towards instability and decline in growth (The Pakistan Times, January 12, 1994, p.1).

Shahbaz Sharif did his utmost to extract maximum advantages from political crises. He communicated with some high-ranking officials of the army and also sought to have a meeting with Waheed Kaker (the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS)); the call for a meeting was formerly declined but subsequently, he managed to meet him. Shahbaz publicized the meeting which produced embarrassment to the COAS and he was annoyed with Shahbaz. The military affirmed that it had no intention to get involved in the political arena of the country (Salahuddin, March 1, 1994, p.3). This maneuver of Shahbaz had initiated no political gains to the PML (N) and was pondered as an undemocratic action. Nawaz had projected the notion that he and the army shared alike views related to defense issues of Pakistan. Benazir stated that just because the army was a part of the government, Nawaz had fully agreed with the ruling party on its defense policy. Realizing the significance of his declaration she cautioned that opposition would be dealt with an iron hand in case it attempted to subvert the constitution; in other words, making it clear that in case the opposition dragged the army into politics or contrived a plot to undermine the government then it would not be spared (Dawn, April 8, 1994, p.4). The senior MNA of the PML (N) disclosed that certain PPP MNAs had approached the opposition and vowed to support them in every attempt to overthrow the PPP (Sehbai, April 11, 1994, p.2). The PML (N) believed that if the PPP were not immediately removed, the political process would be compromised and that there would be no other choice but martial law. Benazir believed that Nawaz was indirectly making it obvious to her that the army could easily topple her rule if the opposition encouraged it (Syed Talat Hussain, 1994, March 6, p.4). At this stage accusations and counter-accusations and undemocratic practices intensified. Horse-trading and floor-crossing prevailed on every level; floor-crossing took place in the Senate elections; and parties gave tickets for Senate seats to those party members who either did not win in the last general elections or were ineligible for the National Assembly (Syed Talat Hussain, 1994, March 6, p.4). However, neither PML (N) nor even the PPP governments had enforced any legislation prohibiting people trying to cross the floor.

Nawaz blamed the PPP for its support of army bureaucracy in the ouster of his legal and constitutional government in 1993; (Dawn, July 26, 1994, p.3) suggesting that high treason case would be filed against Benazir and Farooq for toppling his government (Dawn, July 31, 199, p.4). Leghari had decided to give up his party status since becoming President to demonstrate his neutrality as the country's president (Farooq Leghari, Interview in Newline, June 1994, p.44). Bank accounts fraud cases were filed against Nawaz and His relatives, which the PML (N) mitigated by releasing many accused PPP criminals (which mostly would include numbers of those PPP lawmakers who were elected from Sindh). (Dawn, June 12, 1994, p.4) (Dawn, June 15, 1994, p.7).

Response: Quadratic times Benazir asked Nawaz to talk about national issues, but Nawaz refused both invitations. Farooq Leghari twice contacted Nawaz to have a meeting with Benazir in his presence (once in Islamabad and again in Lahore), but he declined both times (The Pakistan Times, 30 January 1994). By January 22, 1994, at least six times Nawaz was called upon by the executive (premier and president) to discuss the future working relationship between the government and the opposition; and each time he declined. As a consequence of Nawaz's stance, the government and opposition have reached a stalemate (The Pakistan Times, Islamabad, January 22, 1994).

The PPP governed the country through ordinances instead of following the proper practice of obtaining the approval of the National Assembly in the first instance owing to the no cooperative attitude of the opposition. According to the constitution, ordinances could only be issued if the session of the National Assembly was not scheduled in near the future; yet the ruling party had issued seventeen ordinances just a day before the scheduled session (Qureshi, 1994, p.8-9)

2.2 Law and Order Situation in Sindh:

In Sindh, such crimes as dacoits, abduction, and assassinations were prevailing and the government also planned to prolong the army's stay in Sindh until June 1994. The extension was made to ensure that all criminal elements were removed fully. (Dawn, March 12, 1994, p.4). The discussions between the PPP and the MQM were conducted about power share in Sindh, but no fruitful outcomes were gained due to disagreements over two portfolios (Baber,

March 31, 1994, p.4). Nawaz attempted everything he could to undermine the government's credibility and inflame the nation against it. Operation Clean Up, according to Nawaz, was a plot by the PPP against both the MQM and the army. Nawaz had advised the army to call a halt to the action (Dawn, March 28, 1994, p.4).

The army had initiated forceful action against the MQM's management and staff. Many important leaders of the MQM were imprisoned (Waseem, May 9, 1994, p.4). The MQM pressed on instant withdrawal of cases against its leaders (Dawn, May 15, 1994, p.5) as the operation had endangered the presence of the MQM. The MQM was disturbed by the PPP's harsh criticism of Altaf Hussain, and it accused the PPP of Sindh's bad situation. Since the organization (MQM) had accumulated automatic weapons, the military and government won't trust it (Waseem, 1994, p.171). Eventually, Benazir abandoned that idea to discuss Sindh issues with Altaf Hussain (Dawn, May 27, 1994, p.3).

By the end of 1996, the security situation had worsened even more, and the rate of violence had boosted (Dawn, January 3, 1996, p.4). In Karachi, approximately 2000 people died in 1995. Vehicle snatchings and killings were daily practices (Askari, January 3, 1996, p.8). The central and Sindh governments have done nothing but condemn the killings on the MQM. The parties were concerned with cashing in on the situation for their gain. In reality, both parties (the MQM and the PPP) used the Karachi issue to damage each other.

Response: The PPP accused that the MQM was a militant group that existed through control people through force. The PPP tried to differentiate between the MQM militant wing and the MQM political wing; justifying that the PPP had launched an anti-terrorist operation against militant elements due to which relations between the PPP and the MQM became sour. Later the operation in Sindh was extended till the December of 1994 at the request of Chief Minister Sindh (Dawn, July 10, 1994, p.3).

On December 2, 1994, the operation in Sindh was terminated. (Dawn, December 3, 1994, p.1). The end of operation caused serious problems related to public security and safety (Dawn, December 3, 1994, p.2). The government strived hard to find the solution through dialogue with the MQM but it declined the offer. Leghari himself

wanted the Sindh situation should be discussed with all the political forces (Dawn, July 16, 1995, p.3). Finally, deadlock between the MQM and the PPP ended; but just within four days (July 11-July 14, 1995) after the resumption of talks following incidents against the MQM occurred: MQM leader Saeed was abducted and later assassinated; party workers were regularly raided by police; five workers killed; members of All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMO) were arrested; and law enforcing agencies arrested 18 MQM workers (Dawn, July 16, 1995, p.1). Benazir tried to justify by stating that the law-and-order problem in Karachi existed since 1985 and it did not improve because of the criminal wings of political parties (Benazir Bhutto, Interview in Dawn, August 27, 1995, p.7-10). Several meetings took place between the MQM and PPP but in vain. The problems of Karachi were multi-dimensional. It had political, economic, social and ethnic issues which were not possible to resolve without the participation of the MQM. But at the end of 1995, the law-and-order situation in Karachi became normal and people appreciated the efforts of the PPP. But with the start of the year 1999 an inauspicious rise of violence had been propagated in Sindh which finally led to the toppling of the government. (Safdar Abbasi, Personal Interview, January 10, 2011).

2.3 Challenge and Undemocratic Demands of the Opposition:

Nawaz had demanded that the Head of the State and Government resign until September 11, 1994, and that new elections be held. The PML (N) and its allies told the government that if elections were not held under a temporary arrangement, anti-government protests would begin (Dawn, August 17, 1994, p.4). Since September 11, 1994, Nawaz has led a train march from Karachi to Peshawar, accompanied by opposition leaders and political workers, to compel the government to resign. When Nawaz arrived in Peshawar on September 13, 1994, he proclaimed the movement's performance as far beyond expectations and a huge demonstration of the PPP's unpopularity (Nawaz Sharif, Interview in Dawn, September 14, 1994, p.5). The launch of agitation by the PML (N) was a replica of PPP's strategy against Nawaz's government in November 1992. He may have reasoned that if he succeeded in widening the political schism, the army would

interfere and seize power (Wassem, September 12, 1994, p.4). As a response, on September 12, 1994, he declared a nationwide strike against the government, which would be followed by a public meeting in Karachi. The strike was deemed a semi-success in Lahore and Rawalpindi, a great success in Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi, and a failure in Islamabad, according to government sources (Dawn, September, 21, p.1994, p.4). Nawaz scheduled his next public meeting in Karachi but the Sindh government had banned his entry in Sindh till October 7, 1994. Nawaz did not abide by the verdict and mentioned that he would arrive at the venue on September 29, 1994, under any circumstances and he made it (Dawn, September, 29, p.1994, p.6).

On October 11, 1994, a wheel-jam strike nationwide was announced by the opposition. The government had arrested a considerable number of MNAs and Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) previously the strike. Nawaz had told the police not to follow the government's orders because they were unlawful and unconstitutional (the government had ordered the kidnapping and detention of opposition figures) (Dawn, October 12, 1994, p.3). Nawaz urged the police force not to follow the government's instructions. In reality, he intended to create a rift among the institutions to disrupt the government. Violent clashes as a consequence of the protest, resulting in the deaths of 12 people (Dawn, October 12, 1994, p.6). The strike had a nationwide effect on trade and industrial activities (Dawn, October 12, 1994, p.2). The country also lost billions of rupees as a product of the protest (Dawn, October 19, 1994, p.4).

Nawaz also produced tribulations for the government internationally. During one of his public sessions, he declared that Pakistan owned a nuclear bomb. When he was interviewed by "The Washington Post" he stated that in the former government of PML (N) the military and ISI had provided him a blueprint for narcotics smuggling. He mentioned the names of Aslam Baig and General Durrani as the architects of the blueprint. (Dawn, September 13, 1994, p.6). The USA had exhibited serious observations on this disclosure of Nawaz (Dawn, October 2, 1994, p.5). Later the PML (N) leadership expounded that no such kind of an interview has transpired with Nawaz by the said news agency. (Dawn, September 14, 1994, p.7). In

the light of the interview, the USA Congressmen proposed the review of USA policy towards Pakistan. (Dawn, October 28, 1994, p.3). Such statements exhibited irresponsibility and insincerity; reflecting the immaturity of a person who had earlier held the high position of Prime Minister.

Nawaz was not willing to augment the working functioning with the federal government. (Dawn, October 28, 1994, p.4) To avoid unrest in the National Assembly's upcoming session (scheduled on October 29, 1994), the President opted to order the release of political prisoners. (Dawn, October 27, 1994, p.3). However, the yelling and aggressive actions persisted during the conference. Benazir, Leghari, Asif Ali Zardari, and Zulfiqar Mirza were the key targets of the opposition's wrath. The opposition benches refused to allow the PPP leaders to respond to the opposition's attacks on the House floor.

Response: Sometimes the PPP kept persistent silence on the lofty claims of the Nawaz which fashioned more questions for him to tackle from all sections of the Pakistan society. His venomous words had made more complications for the PPP in the international community. The government had so many matters to cope with that did not allow it to focus on the advancement of Pakistan but even though it tried to restrict the actions of the opposition but all in vain. The government had also adopted the policy to condemn opposition from initiating street protests against it which led to blame game from both the side. (Iqbal Haider, Personal Interview, October 16, 2011).

Conclusion:

During the PPP governments, the role of opposition was more undemocratic than in earlier periods. The aggressive attitude of opposition, particularly Nawaz kept the government on the defense all along and the government could not focus on the national issues. The opposition disrespected the PPP's mandate to rule and followed one-item agenda, namely, the removal of the Benazir government by any means. The politics of confrontation from the army, civil bureaucracy and ANP, PML (N) and the MQM had weakened the government and created a rift in the PPP and damaged Benazir's reputation.

Benazir had tackled her opponents with silence and fortitude but at some time she also took the stance to nail down decisions as per her political

understanding and wisdom. The most substantial part of her strategy to sustain her government was to initiate the "process of dialogue" with the anti-PPP elements. In a broad sense, her tenures could be sum up as a "whirlpool".

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