

# **Role of Leadership in Political Development (A Case Study of Benazir Bhutto (PPP) in 1988 Elections)**

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## **Introduction:**

The year 1988 was a landmark in Pakistan's political history. The entire political scenario of the country as drastically changed. It was a year with one important event followed by another. The longest era of General Zia-ul-Haq came to an end on August 17, 1988, with his sudden death in an air crash near Bahawalpure. The year also saw the return of Butto's family into power, which was one of the most important developments towards the democratic rule in the political history of Pakistan. Beside, the return of party politics, other important events also signifies 1988 in history of Pakistan<sup>1</sup>. These events include the Local Body Polls on November 30, 1987, Round Table Conference of March 5, 1988, Geneva Accord on April 14, Senate Elections of March 3, the dismissal of Chief minister Syed Ghos Ali Shah of Sindh on April 6, the Ojhri Camp incident on April 10, the dismissal of Junejo on May 20 and appointment of the Caretaker Cabinet on June 9, 1988.

So these were the events, which revolved around one point that to bring political parties into politics. The political parties were also ready to come into active politics instead of drawing-

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<sup>1</sup> Lubna Rafique, Benazir and British Press, (Lahore: Gautam Publisher, 1994) p.20.

room politics, and it became possible only when Zia-ul-Haq disappeared from the scene.

### **Return of Party Politics:**

After the dismissal of Junejo government, Zia-ul-Haq announced that elections would be held within ninety days according to the constitution. Later, he gave his own interpretation to these words. Once he said, "ninety days mean announcing the date of elections and not holding of the elections within this period<sup>2</sup>."

On July 20, 1988 he declared that polls would be held November 16, 1988 on non-party basis<sup>3</sup>. This created great concern among political parties; they apprehended that non-party based polls would be mere eyewash and would not change the inherent autocratic character of the Zia's rule. Before this announcement, the All Parties Conference (APC) was held on June 17, 1988 at Lahore, It was called by Mr Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo. The APC appealed to all democratic forces of the country to unite on one point agenda, in order to save Pakistan from further chaos, instability and disintegration<sup>4</sup>. The conference also demanded that elections should be held in conformity with PPP-PNA accord of 1977. The APC was also ready to take part in the coming elections. Bizenjo said, "This time we shall not boycott, and if some body does it, it will be him (Zia) and not us"<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, On July 20, all political parties denounced the date and non-party elections. They termed it as deviation of the President from the

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<sup>2</sup> MB Naqvi, "after President new initiative", View Point, June 16, 1988. P-9

<sup>3</sup> Pakistan Times, July 21, 1988.

<sup>4</sup> Muslim, June 18, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Jung, June 18, 1988.

constitutional obligation. All political leaders had a unanimous stand on this decision. They thought that party-less polls would negate their existence and endanger national unity and security<sup>6</sup>. The debates about the polls were continue that people heard an astonished news on August 17 that Zia's areoplane had been crashed and the Chairman of the Senate Ghulam Ishaq Khan Became the Constitutional head of the country. In his maiden speech he assured that elections would by held in November as announced before<sup>7</sup>.

The decision of non-party election was challenged by Benazir Bhutto and filed a petition in the Supreme Court on August 28, 1988. This Supreme Court also accepted PPP's petition about political parties act, and struck down ' he registration clause of the political parties act after three week of Zia's dismissal of Junejo cabinet. Similarly on September 27, the Lahore High Court declared the dissolution of the N.A unconstitutional but also endorsed the decision of polls in November 1988. This decision was a moral triumph of Mr. Junejo<sup>8</sup>. Beside this decision, the Supreme Court also decided in favour of party based elections of the petition of Banazer Bhutto. Various political leaders also appreciated this udgment they were of the view that it raised the prestige of j diciary and vindicated the democratic right of the political parties<sup>9</sup>. After this decision, political leaders become active. They starte negotiations with like-minded parties, and they made alliances.

<sup>6</sup> Zahid Hussain, "Count down to confrontation" Herald, August 1988. P-44-47.

<sup>7</sup> Mashriq August 18, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Prof. Ghafoor Ahamad, Wazere Azam Banazer Butto Namzedge sa Barterafe tak, (Lahore Alqamar Enterprise, 1995) P.41

<sup>9</sup> Hussain Naqi, "Elections prospects", View Point, October 13, 1988.P.9

The two alliances, were very popular capital which included all most All Religio-political Parties (ARP), one was Islami Jamhori Ittehad, consist of six RPP. The other was Pakistan Awami Ittehad in which Jamiat Ulama-i-Pakistan was an important religio-political group. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam (F) and PPP contested with out any alliance<sup>10</sup>. These alliances and parties also published there manifestoes and gave hope of better future to their workers. Similarly all political parti in alliances also started their elections campaign. They held meetings and big rallies in every corner of the countr. The objectives of such meetings were to prove themselves innocent and to get the favour of voters. The elections campaig came to an end on November 14. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan addressed to the nation. He urged the voters to exerci e their right of votes, which would pave the way for a stable, democratic and Islamic government in the country<sup>11</sup>.

### **Analysis of Election Results:**

In the elections of November 16, for Natioanl Assembly, showed that IJI and PPP became to major political parties. The following table<sup>12</sup> shows the total number of successful candidates, their votes and percentage.

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<sup>10</sup> Ghafoor, P-38.

<sup>11</sup> Dawn, November 16, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> Election Commission of Pakistan, Report on General Elections 1998. (Islamabad: Printing Corporation of Pakistan press, 1994)

**Table: 1**

Party / Alliance	No of Candidates	The Total votes received	Successful candidates	The vote % age out of 204 seats
1.PPP	179	75,46,561	93	38.52%
2.IJI	165	59,08,742	54	30.16%
3.JUI (F)	38	360,560	7	1.84%
4.PAI	83	859,713	3	4.39%
5.ANP	25	409,555	2	2.09%
6. BNA	6	71,658	2	0.36%
7.NPP (K)	10	97,990	1	0.50%
8.PDP	5	80,473	1	0.41%
9.PPI	6	12,013	-	0.52%
10.JUI (D)	8	44,964	1	0.23%
11.PMAI	7	546,562	-	0.24%
12.TNFJ	12	42,216	-	0.22%
13. Wattan Party	1	184	-	-
14.PML (Q)	4	2196	-	0.01%
15.Smaller Parties	28	198,751	-	0.01%
16.Independent	590	381,976	40	19.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>19591265</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100%</b>

Thirty political parties were given party symbols. While in results, only 15 parties were mentioned. In these 15 parties there were some parties like PPIS, PMA, TNFJ and PML (Q), who failed to get even a single seat<sup>13</sup>. Famous personalities who lost their seats were M. Khan Junejo (IJI), Liaquat Khan (IJI) Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad (IJI), Maulana Shah Ahmad

<sup>13</sup> Dawn, November 18, 1988.

Noorani (PAI), Pir Pagra, Asghar Khan (PAI), Yahya Bakhtiar and Sheikh Rafique of PPP.

The results were nearly acceptable to all sections of the people. Commenting on the elections, Abdul Wali Khan Said, that the elections were totally free and fair. Maulana Fazal ur Rehman also lauded the Care taker government. Due to impartial, smooth and peaceful elections, Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad and Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani also accepted the results. They called to it the verdict of the people<sup>14</sup>.

After N.A Elections, the political candidates accelerated their campaign for provincial elections. They arranged door-to-door contact with their voters. IJI conceived the majority of PPP in NA as a threat to itself. So in Punjab, the IJI exploited the slogan of *jag Punjabi jag* (Awake Punjabi Awake) IJI also reminded to the people that PPP won in Sindh, because it used the slogan of a Sindhi a Prime Minister in the country<sup>15</sup>. So Punjab should reject PPP on November 19, and should vote in favour of IJI. This strategy of IJI proved successful and IJI won majority of seats in Punjab. The results of provincial elections are given in the following table<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Frontier Post, November 18, 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Ghafoor, P. 122

<sup>16</sup> Report on General Election 1993.

## The Success of PPP:

The long era of Zia's martial law was a night of horror for the PPP. During this period the party was deprived from its leader (Z.A. Bhutto). PPP leaders were compelled to take asylum abroad. Many were sent behind the bars, but the continued their struggle against martial law. After the death of Z.A Bhutto, PPP leadership was assigned to his wife (Nusrat Bhutto) and daughter (Benazir Bhutto). Both the ladies also faced the hardships of martial law government with great courage<sup>17</sup>. However, Zia could not deviate both ladies from their mission. The resoluteness of the ladies won the hearts of the people. In response the people extended them their sympathies. This played a decisive role in 1988 election campaign of PPP<sup>18</sup>.

Benazir Bhutto was educated in Harvard and Oxford. She had fluency in English Language. So, as a good orator, she knew the tactics how to mobilize the masses. Besides, PPP was a component of MRD. Under the umbrella of MRD, big public meetings and rallies were held in which PPP leaders (Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto) also participated. They also addressed such meetings, and linked themselves with the masses before the elections. Similarly, MRD's meeting proved a fruitful experience for them. Through these meetings, they came to know the sentiments, behaviour and attitudes of a common man towards Z.A. Bhutto and his family. Both the ladies exploited it in the election campaign by recalling to them Z.A. Bhutto and his rule. They recalled them how their leader

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<sup>17</sup> Dr. Safdar Mehmood, Pakistan ki Siyasi Parteyan, (Lahore: Maqbool Accademi, 1988) p.109.

<sup>18</sup> Ayaz Amir, "A sweep for PPP", View Point, November 17, 1988.p.9.

(Z. A. Bhutto) was mercilessly hanged by martial law government<sup>19</sup>. They also recalled them other leaders who were exiled and detained by martial law government.<sup>20</sup>

The following factors also contributed to the victory of PPP in 1988 elections:

1. Z.A. Bhutto occupies a unique position in the political history of this country. He took politics to the masses and stirred the masses in a manner that no leader before him had ever done. This uniqueness remained in him upto his death. When he was imprisoned for helping in the murder plan of his political opponent, he repeatedly criticized the martial law government and remained defiant to the last. He did not bow his head and became a martyr for democracy in the eyes of Pakistanis. This legend made his name as the most potent election symbol for the PPP.<sup>21</sup> Besides. The fascinating and charming personality of Benzir Bhutto also became a sure shot formula of victory.
2. The second factor, which helped PPP's victory, was the disunity of their rivals. The dissolution of Junejo's government resulted in the disunity of the Pakistan Muslim League. The PML split in to two groups Fida and Junejo league. Although these groups again merged in a single body but the damage caused to the PML

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<sup>19</sup> Although Z.A. Bhutto was hanged after trial in "Supreme Court in which he had been provided an opportunity to prove himself sinless but PPP leaders are of the opinion that he was intentionally hanged by Zia ul Haq.

<sup>20</sup> Ayaz, p.9.

<sup>21</sup> Muzafar Hashimi, "Election 88 - Aik Jaiza". Nawa-i-Waqat, November 30, 1988; Mujeebur Rahman Shami, "Nia Warq", Ibid., December 6, 1988.



during this practice, was irreparable and this disunit in the ranks of PML proved fruitful for PPP.<sup>22</sup>

3. The third factor responsible PPP's victory was the death of Ziaul Haq. As he was against the political activities and parties and especially of PPP.<sup>23</sup> He suppressed them all. However, when he disappeared from the scene, the political groups emerged with great force and as the PPP had sincere workers, so Mrs. Benazir organized them at once without any hesitation.<sup>24</sup>
4. The fourth factor, which guaranteed the victory of PPP, was the verdict of Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in its verdict on October 2, 1988 approved the demand of PPP for party based polls. The credit of this verdict went to PPP, on the polling day the people gladly vote in favour of PPP.<sup>25</sup>
5. The fifth factor responsible for PPP's victory, were those ministers and members of Junejo's government who joined PPP. These ministers and members were worried about their success, so PPP's high command awarded tickets to them. Although it was unjust with PPP workers to nominate Zia's advisers and Ministers, but from practical point of view it proved very good for PPP.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Linesman, "A lie buried", View Point, November 24, 1988.

<sup>23</sup> The Announcement of party less polls by Ziaul Haq shows it that he was against party politics.

<sup>24</sup> Gull Chaman Shah, "Election 88 – Tareh Ka aienay may", Nawa-i-Waqat, December 10, 1988.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Editorial, "Ghade no ko ghade rafta se mukhtalef banaya", Takbeer, December 8, 1988. p.5

6. The sixth factor, which led to PPP's victory, was the anti PPP campaign of IJI against PPP's leadership. The IJI workers and candidates published such posters and pamphlets, which had obscene and objectionable Photos of Nusrat Bhutto. They also chanted slogans in their meetings against Z.A. Bhutto, his daughter and son. They invented such slogans, which decency does not allow mentioning. These factors changed the electoral scenario. It awakened the old workers of PPP who were passive in martial law period. They organized themselves against IJI. Besides, such campaign of IJI also created hate among people (especially women class), as a result the vote of women folk went to PPP.<sup>27</sup>
7. As IJI was the combination of those elements who had remained with martial law government directly or indirectly, the people were fed up with them. The people wanted a change, a change of faces and change of system.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, those elements did not play any significant role in the development of democracy when they were in power. While on the other hand, the leadership of PPP was quite new for the people. According to them, they wanted to root out the present system and establish democracy in the country. So, on the day of polls, people gave its verdict in favour of PPP.<sup>29</sup>
8. The economic policy of PPP also played an important role in the victory of PPP. It attracted people towards

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<sup>27</sup> I Hussin Naqi, "Vulgarity unlimited", View Point, November 17, 1988. P.18.

<sup>28</sup> Zia Shahid, "Peoples party keun jeti our ltehad keun ara?" Jang, November 21, 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Shahid, Jang, November 21, 1988.

itself. The young and new generation of the country was more interested in the economic affairs than political problems, and they considered PPP programme a solution of economic crisis. Thus the new generation of Sindh and Punjab voted in favour of PPP.<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

The PPP's victory showed that people were against controlled or guided democracy. They rejected a hybrid system that predetermined the electoral results. The most important outcome of the election, therefore, was the people's verdict that they were firmly wedded to the system of democratic government. They rejected, the people's verdict that they were firmly wedded to the system of democratic government; they rejected authoritarianism by historic verdict, made democracy more secure than before.<sup>31</sup>

Commenting on Benazir's victory, the daily Independent, London wrote on November 19<sup>32</sup> "Benazir Bhutto deserves her victory in the first democratic general election in Pakistan after 11 years, She moved with great skill who had suffered under the military regime of the late General Zia. The results showed and testified her claim to be Pakistan's only truly national leader."

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<sup>30</sup> Kalim Bahadur and umma singh, Pakistan transition to democracy, (New Delhi patriot publisher, 1988) p.121.

<sup>31</sup> Special Report, "She worked for it", View Point, November 24, 1988. p.29.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.