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Democracy Under Turbulence: Unraveling Political Challenges of Pakistan (1988-1999)
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes a turbulent period of civilian rule in Pakistan, from 1988 to 1999, which witnessed the hope of democratic revival but was actually marked by challenges to democracy. It examines the basic political problems that weakened democracy during this period by focusing on the factors as misuse of institutional powers, volatile party conflicts, electoral manipulation, political instability, the destructive role of opposition parties, and the frequent misuse of constitutional provision of Article 58 (2b). The paper contextualizes the fact that four consecutive elected governments were unable to complete their tenures using a historical analytical approach and based on recent scholarly analyses. The findings confirm institutional weaknesses and the grip of military power, along with political conflicts had repeatedly aborted the democratic process. The covert role of Military establishment and misuse of constitutional powers by presidents, as well as political conspiracies destabilized elected governments during 1988-1999. This research demonstrates the importance of that turbulent period in understanding Pakistan's efforts for democratic consolidation.

Keywords: Political Challenges, Power Struggle, Political Instability, Civilian Rule.

Introduction

The period of 1988-1999 in Pakistan's political history, is commonly referred as the 'Democratic period' but actually it remained under turbulence. Pakistan survived from eleven years of authoritarian rule with cautious optimism for a democratic revival after the death of General Zia-ul-Haq in 17 August 1988. This democratic phase in Pakistan experienced civilian governments headed by Benazir Bhutto from the Pakistan People's Party in (1988-1990) & (1993-1996) and Nawaz Sharif from the Pakistan Muslim League in (1990-1993) & (1997-1999) alternating in powers through four elected governments. The restoration of parliamentary government was supposed to usher in an era of stable governance. However, in practice this period was democratic in nature but reality is different, because all the four elected governments were prematurely dismissed before the end of their terms. A cycle of political crises steadily disappointed the hope that democracy would consolidate (Cheema, 2024).

During 1988-1999, political consolidation failed due to a combination of structural and behavioral factors. The constitutional arrangement at the structural level left critical imbalances, including the Eighth Amendment that gave the president the power to dissolve the National Assembly under Article 58(2)(b), which was a threat to every sitting government. Formal end of martial law did not end the role of the 'military establishment' that continued to exert a powerful role manifesting

itself as a manipulator on civilian politics. Behavioral factors were equally as detrimental at the same time. The constant struggle to gain the power between the two main political parties PPP and PMLN was prevailed. Instead of building democratic norms, both of the parties 'never tolerated each other' and 'did everything to disturb one another,' resulting in a state of perpetual confrontation. Ruling parties used repressive or undemocratic measures to weaken the opposition. Opposition parties were more interested in toppling incumbents than holding them accountable constructively (Ashfaq et al., 2023).

The focus of this article is to analyze the key political problems that unraveled Pakistan's nascent democracy between 1988 and 1999. First, it describes the research problem, then provides a detailed historical context of the era. The thematic challenges focused in the paper are repeated change of government, backdoor military involvements, the repeated use of article 58 2b, Political conflicts, government-opposition rifts, tensions between top executives, electoral manipulation, political conspiracies and the damaging impact of various political alliances. This period was also characterized by massive confrontations between the executive and the judiciary undermining democratic institutions further. The absence of political concurrence and the rising influence of various external intrusions led to the ultimate collapse of democracy during this period. The study revisits this turbulent period with updated perspectives and sources that draw on scholarly literature published over the last years. The aim is to explain how and why Pakistan's experiment in democracy failed from 1988-1999 and what this portends for democratic governance in Pakistan.

Historical Context (1947-1988)

The journey towards a stable democracy in Pakistan has been an experience of constant political instability and military interference. Since its establishment on 14 August 1947, the country has been failed to strike the right balance between civilian rule and military domination. The initial major setback on democracy was in 1958 when General Ayub Khan assumed power through military coup under the pretext of political chaos and instability. The regime of Ayub Khan, which seemed to be successful in the early days of providing some stability and economic growth, soon became authoritarian. In 1962's constitution he consolidated power of the presidency and marginalized the parliamentary system. These policies resulted in an increasing dissatisfaction, particularly with the political opposition (Mohammad & Kokab, 2016).

Dissatisfaction reached a peak in 1969 when Ayub Khan, under pressure of protests and growing opposition, relinquished power to General Yahya Khan. The reign of Yahya Khan is mostly associated with the tragic events of 1971, when the war against India resulted in the separation of East Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh. This defeat crippled the political integrity of Pakistan and the crisis was further increased. The failure of Yahya Khan to control the situation resulted in another change of leadership and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan People Party (PPP) came to power in 1971 (Qazi et al., 2023).

The rise of President Zia ul Haq in power on 5 July 1977, was an indication of the coming of a new era of military rule that was extended to a long period of eleven years. Political liberties were highly suppressed at this time and most political parties were either exiled or banned. Zia implemented a policy of Islamization, which altered the country's legal and educational systems. He also strived to increase the role of military in the state, limiting the influence of elected officials. In spite of these practices of authoritarianism, Zia government allowed limited political participation,

including the 1985 elections but elections were closely controlled to ensure that the military-maintained control of political arena.

As Pakistan headed towards the late 1980s, the political scene was unstable with a blend of military rule and the urge to restore democracy. There was a poor political infrastructure and divided parties as the years of military rule had built a strong political culture in the country. The hope of reforms through democracy revived when Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of the former prime minister came back to lead the PPP in the 1988 elections. Nevertheless, the political conditions remained to be turbulent. The military and conservative political forces still exercised huge influence which provided a shaky and unstable base for democracy (Ahmed, 2013). Political history of Pakistan prior to 1988 shows a trend whereby military interventions had interrupted the democratic process. Every change of power led by military weakened the political system and made it less resistant to the strains of the government. Military superiority and the absence of sound democratic institutions paved the way to a situation where democracy was always challenged, despite the restoration of civilian rule.

Unraveling Political Challenges of Pakistan (1988-1999)

The comprehensive overview of the political challenges to democracy that Pakistan faced during 1988-1999 is as following;

Role of state institutions

Pakistan's democracy in the period of 1988-1999 was disturbed by the onslaught of severe institutional constraints and the power struggle between the presidency, the military and the elected government. A constitutional structure left behind by General Zia-ul-Haq was an important obstacle, particularly the Eighth Amendment (1985) that gave the president the power to dismiss the elected government and parliament singlehandedly. The provision further created an environment of ambiguity and instability in which the presidents like Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Farooq Leghari were involved in politics, which undermined the sovereignty of parliament. Article 58(2)(b) was widely used to dismiss and worked against the development of parliamentary democracy, as well as paving the way for non-democratic interventions and undermining democracy (Khan et al., 2015).

Additionally, the military continued to exert power over important policy areas, including defense, security, and foreign affairs and intervening in politics. This gave the military a 'troika' power structure, alongside the Prime Minister and President and they often acted as a kingmaker in political disputes (Kumar, 2020). The result was an institutional setup which had created a state within a state, where the military and the civilian allies of the military had been able to exert a great degree of control over civilian leaders to the extent that their authority was often undermined (Aeka, 2000). Both the judiciary and power struggles were played out. The1 judiciary was manipulated to validate dismissals, or to get involved in power struggles in 1990, 1996 dismissals and 1997 confrontation.

The parliament remained ineffective within the civilian domain. The dissolutions of assemblies were so frequent as to interrupt continuity in lawmaking and reduce institutional development. The autonomy of parliamentary committees was weak and oversight of the executive was also weak. The anticipation of short-lived governments produced rushed policymaking, as is shown by Nawaz Sharif's 1997 constitutional amendments occurred with little debates This pattern of instability and the ineffective functioning of the parliament also contributed to the collapse of democracy in Pakistan during 1988-1999. In essence, thofe period was characterized by the lack

of consolidation of democratic governance as a result of the dominance of military and presidential powers, weak and fragmented parliament, all of which made the political sphere ineffective (Yasmeen, 1993).

Electoral Manipulation and Political conspiracies

During 1988-1999, Pakistan's democracy was severely weakened by electoral manipulation and political interference by non-democratic forces, particularly the military and the intelligence agencies. These entities intended to influence the outcomes of elections and therefore eroded the integrity of free and fair elections, which are the foundation of any democracy. One example of this interference was the formation of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) in 1988 as a joint venture by the military and ISI to compete against the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) (Ali & Zafar, 2024).

Despite having a typical feature of coalition politics this alliance was used by state resources in order to tilt the 1988 elections. The Asghar Khan case that emerged in 2012 proved that military officers illegally gave money to anti-PPP politicians for the electoral victory Nawaz Sharif win in 1990's election. The undemocratic interference did not stop only at general elections, rather it was extended to the appointment of caretaker governments as well. The tampering occurred at different stages of the election process: pre-election alliances, post-election political maneuvering, and so on. It eroded the legitimacy of elected governments and was used to charge government and opposition relations with rigging. This way, parties that used to enjoy military support had become dependent on it and their political legitimacy had become weakened. This interference eroded voter trust and also impacted the voter turnout in 1997's elections (Nisa et al., 2021). In the end, the accountability function of democracy was taken away by electoral manipulation, as political elites concentrated on keeping the military happy, rather than listening to the electorate. This hindered the formation of a stable and accountable political system which was a challenge to democracy.

Political Party Dynamics and Governance Issues

The period between 1988 -1999 was characterized by intense rivalry and dysfunction in Pakistan's political system. Instead of performing as a constructive opposition both of the political parties PPP and PML-N were more interested to weaken each other. An adversarial approach emerged and resulted in a 'politics of confrontation'. The parties focused to reverse each other's policies and pursuing political struggles over addressing long term issues for democratic betterment. The result of this political infighting turned out to be poor governance as economic reforms and social welfare did not become priorities for government (Hasnain, 2008). This environment did not help democratic growth but rather contributed to spur of instability and inefficiency.

The leadership of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif was highly centralized in their respective parties (PPP and PML-N) during which internal debate and accountability were highly restricted. It led to impulsive decision making and a lack of broad-based policy support due to a concentration of power in a few individuals. In addition, the two parties used regional and ethnic division to strengthen their political base and intensified the political tensions and created troubles for the good governance (Shah S. u., 2019). These parties failed to cooperate and address national issues and this helped weaken democratic institutions, which led to public disillusionment and contributed to the military intervention of 12 October 1999. It emphasizes the crucial need of institutional strength, political maturity, and cooperation in securing stable democratic governance during such a period.

The Islamabad Long March and Its Political Implications

Under Nawaz Sharif's leadership, opposition parties organized the "Islamabad Long March" in August 1989 to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and holding of fresh elections. This rally gathered public attention and mobilized large groups, thereby intensifying political tension within Benazir's administration. The march emphasized the deep political polarization of her tenure and posed a direct threat to her administration's stability and democratic reliability (Tudor, 2016).

The strategic planning of the Islamabad Long March aimed to exert maximum political pressure on Benazir's administration. The walk started from Lahore and progressed towards Islamabad. The protesters cited corruption and poor management as the primary causes of their discontent, demanding Benazir's immediate removal and the holding of fresh elections.

The Islamabad Long March exposed the significant political division that characterized Pakistani politics during Benazir's tenure as Prime Minister. The severe disagreement that exploded between the opposition IJI and the PPP reflected wider divisions in society and contributed to an atmosphere of political instability. The march and subsequent protests hindered Benazir's ability to lead effectively. The political disturbance created an atmosphere of uncertainty, making it more difficult to create and implement policies. The march's success strengthened the opposition and weakened Benazir's administration. Political conflict escalated during this time, contributing to the political challenges to the democracy during the entire period. (Bibi & Jalal, 2018).

The Destructive Role and Influence of the Opposition in Pakistan

During the period of 1988-1999 the opposition parties in Pakistan, particularly Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, played a disruptive role in democratic process. These parties acted as bad opposition, working to destabilize the incumbent government. They both tended to work through hostile tactics rather than promoting constructive policy debates. The outcome of this confrontational approach was political instability characterized by frequent parliamentary sessions boycotts, personal attacks and rejection of the legitimacy of the other government (Hussain A. , 2018). As opposition, Nawaz Sharif's PML-N, during Bhutto's rule, played a hardline role accusing her of electoral fraud and corruption without credible evidence. Beyond parliamentary debate, the opposition acted to destabilize Bhutto's government through protests and no confidence motion in 1989. The PPP also followed the same track when Nawaz Sharif was in power by accusing his administration of incompetence, and corrupt, and took to streets protests, tried to discredit the government (Khalid & Sajid, 2021).

This perpetual antagonism produced a political atmosphere in which the parties were not willing to work within the system, but instead would seek to delegitimize each other. There was the opposition's collusion with undemocratic forces which further weakened Pakistan's democratic institutions. Opposition parties did not follow constitutional means of gaining power, and invited military and presidency to intervene in political matters. It destroyed the concept of civilian supremacy and laid the ground work for the overthrow of governments by extra constitutional means (Khan & Ahmad, 2018). As a result, governance became increasingly challenging, to the point where political bargaining amounted to simple accusations and antagonizing, institutional solutions were increasingly ineffective and power struggles became preferred. This unconstructive opposition ended up undermining the development and stability of a functioning democracy over the long run. It represented that a democracy needs a loyal opposition for the healthy democratic process.

Political conflicts and its consequences

From 1988 to 1999, Pakistan's political leadership was characterized by pervasive undemocratic attitudes, which greatly inhibited the country's democratic development. On the one hand, political leaders publicly defended the democratic principles, but behind the scenes their actions weren't in the line of these democratic principles. Such undemocratic tendencies consisted of intolerance of dissent, concentration of power in the hands of the few, and disregard for traditional institutions. Often, they sacrificed democratic progress in order to obtain short term personal gains, thus making their moral authority questionable, and questioning Pakistan's democracy (Shah N. A., 2024). One such prominent case of this was the misuse of state institutions like the police, bureaucracy and judiciary for political purposes. These institutions were used by both PML N and PPP governments to cripple their political opponents and weaken their independence. This violation of the rule of law was most epitomized in the 1996 conflict between Benazir Bhutto's government and the judiciary, and even more so by Nawaz Sharif's attack on the Supreme Court in 1997. when the will of the Nawaz Sharif was more victorious over institutional integrity.

Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif kept almost total control over party decisions. Leadership, both in party and government was based, on personal charisma or on family name rather than merit and the party dissent was actively discouraged (Azeem & Ahmed, 2021). Additionally, as the political atmosphere of this time had been filled with personal attacks and character assassinations and not constructive dialogue.

Both leaders had been accused of corruption and a dearth of transparency, accusations of nepotism and misuse of state resources. Their failure to address these allegations undermined the public tide of trust in the democratic institutions which increased general disillusion that prepared the ground for 1999's military coup. During this period, there was developed two party system as these both political parties led the rest of the minor political parties. The both of them had the bitter relationship as they never compromised over each other which helped the counter perspective of the democracy in Pakistan during 1988-1999 (Khan et al., 2015). A strong example of political rivalry was, when Sharif gained a strong hold over the government, he started utilizing his position to target political rivals especially Benazir Bhutto and her family. When Nawaz Sharif was Prime Minister in the early 1990s the government created the Ehtesab (Accountability) Bureau, which was purportedly a body to fight corruption. Nevertheless, this organization was strongly viewed as a political instrument of victimization especially on Benazir Bhutto and her close associates. The chief of the bureau, Saif-Ur-Rehman, was a confidant of Sharif and he had a reputation of aggressive strategies against political rivals. Rehman because of his vigilance tracked down the family of Benazir Bhutto for corruption allegations, particularly, her husband, Asif Ali Zardari. This strategy has brought in allegations that the accountability process was being used to score political points instead of enhancing transparency and good governance (Arqam, 2018). This change of directions, where the emphasis was put on the reinforcement of democratic norms to the consolidation of personal power weakened the constitutional principles of Pakistan. Sharif instead of applying the accountability process to encourage transparency used it to score political points at the expense of the democratic institutions and also entrenching political conflict further (Azeem & Ahmad, 2021). The investigation into the Mehran Bank scandal (April 1994) ultimately harmed Benazir Bhutto's political standing, serving more as a tool for political retaliation than a genuine effort to tackle corruption. Nawaz Sharif instead of focusing on government of the country

and other major problems he used the investigation as a political revenge and weakened the democratic system of Pakistan. Such a change of priorities revealed the political instability in the country.

When one of them achieved the power, he/she put strong measures of accountability and charged different cases against the other. For example, when Benazir became the prime minister, she did not hold any meeting with her counterpart Nawaz Sharif. On the same way, Nawaz Sharif also did not compromise over such matters with Benazir. This personal rivalry was the main trigger of halting democracy during the period of 1988-1999 (Azeem et al., 2019). Nawaz Sharif even used unethical means during the first term of elections in 1990, when he was the head of IJI (Burki, 1998). Likewise, both of them knew that they could control the presidential powers to dissolve the assemblies with their mutual consensus but they neither controlled this issue nor provided free hand to run the government in smooth way. Contrary to that they helped president and military to dissolve the democratically elected governments in 1990, 1993 and 1996. This was the primary factor to derail the democracy during the 1988-1999 while the rest of the factors were secondary. The contradictory attitude of the political leaders was a promising factor in stumbling block of democracy in Pakistan. The period of 1988-1999 was significant in the perspective of such behavior as the attitude of both Benazir and Nawaz Sharif was so suitable. This period provided the chance to develop democracy in Pakistan but both of them failed in restoring the democracy just because of their arrogant and unresponsive attitude. The undemocratic means could be controlled through their mutual negotiations which could not happen and undemocratic means kept prevailing (Shafqat, 1998).

Sindh Governor's Rule (1998) The Central Government's Intervention in Provincial Affairs

Nawaz Sharif was Prime Minister of the country from 1997 to 1999. During this era, the democratically chosen government faced many challenges. Another challenge was the imposition of Governor-Rule in Sindh in 1998. This decision showed how hard it is to handle racial and political conflicts, the problem that exist between the central government and provincial governments made futile political environment and also this bitter relationship created a lot of hurdles for democracy. On the political scene in Sindh in 1998, there was a lot of chaos and violence, especially in Karachi, the major city. Karachi, a major financial hub, was hit by crime, political rivalry, and fights between different ethnic groups. A lot of people in Sindh were part of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which was one of many ideological groups that used the area as a starting place for their own movement. There was a hostile relationship between the MQM and the central government, with many disagreements' agreements (Pattanaik, S., 1999). The action taken by the federal government was a direct intervention in the matters of the provincial government which created grave challenge to democracy.

Because of the growing political unrest in Sindh, Nawaz Sharif's government put the Governor-Rule in place on October 30, 1998. By going around the provincial government, this action stopped the assembly and gave administrative power to the Governor's office. The government declared that imposition of governor rule in Sindh province action was inevitable to bring back peace, stop the rising violence, and protect the people and property of the area. Members of the Sindh Assembly thought that Governor-Rule was not democratic and put too much stress on province governments. It was called an abuse of executive power and a threat to the independence of provincial government. People thought that Sharif's group was taking this step to gain more power

and get rid of political opponents, especially the MQM and other Sindhi nationalist groups. The pushback was a major threat to Pakistan's democracy (Shabbir et al., 2021).

The imposition of governor rule badly effected that political environment required for the balanced political system. Hence, during Nawaz sharif's reign, the already strained relations between the Centre and the province especially in Sindh, were further deteriorated.

Article 58(2)(b) and its repercussions

The Eighth Amendment Article 58 2b of Pakistan's Constitution, introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1985, had a great impact on the political landscape. This clause gave the President the power to dissolve the National Assembly at personal will, rendering the governments unstable. This enabled Presidents Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Farooq Leghari to dismiss governments based on the pretext of corruption, mismanagement and lawlessness (Bibi et al., 2018). The repeated use of this clause (1990, 1993, 1996) made parliamentary terms dependent on presidential favour, and so diverted the focus of elected governments from governance to pleasing the President and military, rather than to fulfilling their electoral mandate. Article 58(2)(b) gave rise to a climate of instability and uncertainty, which discouraged long-term policymaking.

The effect of Article 58(2)(b) became massive which created the dynamics that changed the President from the person from a ceremonial character, into a strong political actor with a veto power over the democratic process (Rehman et al., 2017). The Constitution was not in the spirit of the fact that even if the Prime Minister had a majority support in Parliament, he could be dismissed by the President anytime. This meant that governance kept being compromised and this clause was often used to the extent of eroding the very core of democracy. It prompted the breakdown of civilian rule and was responsible for military interference (Hanif & Zahra, 2021). Nawaz Sharif's government asserted by passing the 13th Amendment of 1997 which took away the power of the President to dissolve the National Assembly. This was a victory of parliamentary supremacy but did not solve the problem of military influence in politics that eventually led to the 1999 military coup.

Strained Relations between top Executives

During 1988-1999 there was an imbalance of powers between the Prime Minister and President Office. Ghulam Ishaq Khan After assuming the charge of president on 17 August 1988, became the most powerful authority of the country which he exercised widely. Like military, he was also not in favor of powerful prime minister in Pakistan because the powerful prime minister could control both of them so he tried his best to derail the governments during his entire tenure of president. He did not have cordial relations with Benazir due to her tussle with military which is linked Zia-Bhutto episode. But as she became the prime minister, both of them had reservations especially the military that she might gain revenge from them (Ahmad Z. , 2022). This was one of the prime reason that all of her opposing elements collaborated against her and assisted president to use his power. So, president dismissed the PPP government during its first tenure in 1990. Soon after this episode, Nawaz Sharif came into power in 1990. He was considered the beloved prime minister of both i.e., president and military. But with the passage of time scenario changed and the president did the same with Nawaz Sharif, as he did with Benazir. Consequently, Ghulam Ishaq Khan proved another important factor to disrupt the democracy in the country. He gained such huge powers by chance and he too became the greedy in the hunger of power. He wished to remain as the president for the rest of life so he exercised his powers and realized that he was the most powerful

authority of the country. Benazir also assured him to make president after getting the second chance of the government (Shah N. A., 2024).

After the resignation of Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Farooq Laghari sworn as the president of Pakistan in 1993 and it was presumed that now circumstances would be changed. During the second tenure of PPP from 1993 to 1996, main rivalry started between Benazir and Laghari which aided in the dismissal of PPP government. Likewise, the president, Farooq Laghari too chose the same way of elimination of running government under 58 (2) (b) and dissolved the assemblies. In the next general elections held in 1997, Nawaz Sharif came into power with two third majority (Ashfaq et al., 2023). This was first time in the political history of Pakistan that a prime minister gained two third majority. This terrified all of the major stakeholders of the country including president because during his last tenure Nawaz Sharif had showed motivation to eliminate the powers of the president to dissolve the assemblies. Hence, Laghari was sure that this time presidential powers will be reduced and the same was done by Nawaz Sharif before the president could take the same step (Kokab & Iqbal, 2022). This was the peak time to empower the prime minister and the socio-economic development initiatives were also taken. In accordance of the situation, president Laghari resigned in December 1997. But the other side, the confrontation between Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto remained there.

Conclusion

In Pakistan during the period of 1988-1999, the aspirations to prevail democracy were challenged due to weaknesses in political system as well as by the malpractice of the political leaders. The period also witnessed undermined democracy in Pakistan due to the power struggle among state institutions and political leaders. Key challenges that led to collapse of the democratic process were an unbalanced structure of state, where the presidency and military enjoyed excessive predominance over a weakened parliamentary system. The conflicts & factions between major political parties became the reason of poor performance of elected governments and public disillusionment. Electoral manipulation, political conspiracies, and destructive role of opposition compromised democratic legitimacy and created political challenges. Unprofessional opposition, irresponsive attitudes of political leaders and undemocratic style of politics, put hurdles in smooth democratic process. Lack of respect for democratic norms, political parties conflicts, and destabilizing impact of Article 58(2)(b), the power of president to dismiss elected governments also created political instability in Pakistan during 1988-1999. These interconnected factors were a vicious cycle which made impossible to consolidate democracy

During the parliamentary period of 1988-1999, several elements contributed to the derailment of the democratic process. Institutions did not deliver within limits and there was a power struggle between the military, Presidency, and elected governments, which created unrest and undermined the sovereignty of parliament in Pakistan. Four elected governments did not complete their tenures during 1988-1999. Top political leadership of major political parties was involved to destabilize each other government. The prominent leaders were Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and Farooq Laghari. Unfortunately, all of them prioritized their personal gains over the national goals, which weakened the democracy and created political challenges in Pakistan during this period.

The political leadership, which was supposed to give birth to democracy, damaged the process by fighting for power while ignoring the constitutional framework. The political system was collapsed, and there was another military coup on 12 October 1999 under General Musharraf. The lessons

of the 1988-1999 were slowly being internalized and it would take nearly another period before Pakistan would have had a real opportunity for democratic governance.

This paper lays an emphasis on proper institution building and upholding of democratic norms to ensure the successful establishment of democracy. The message for contemporary Pakistan from this turbulent period is clear. Undermining institutions, encouraging political intolerance and the practice of undemocratic politics may offer short term political victories, but it is all at the cost of democratic development. Strengthening institutions, respecting constitutional boundaries and creating tolerance for opponent parties are Major steps for stability, success and consolidation of democracy in Pakistan.

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