



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Problems of Federalism and Provincial Autonomy in Pakistan under the Rule of Pakistan Peoples' Party (1971-1977)

<sup>1</sup>Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Abdul Basit Khan and <sup>3</sup>Sidra Ghaffar

1. Former Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Visiting Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

#### \*Corresponding Author

abdulbasit@gcuf.edu.pk

#### ABSTRACT

Various scholars agree that after the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, the remaining Pakistan was once again at the starting point rather somewhat behind the starting point (of 1947) since the country still had to face numerous challenges to survive and was being ruled under martial law without a regular constitution. It goes without saying that although the post-1971 Pakistan comprised of contiguous zones and enjoyed somewhat more territorial coherence, nevertheless, the building blocks of statehood and nationhood were still remarkably diverse in its cultural, linguistic and racial composition coupled with the asymmetric demographic and territorial demarcation of the constituting units of the federation. Furthermore, these administrative zones possessed different experience of administration and varied in their exposure toward political and economic modernization and development. In that Pakistan, the Bhutto regime enjoyed unhindered executive power at the centre; it had been viewed as a continuation of a strong unitary form of government which attempted to establish one-party system in the length and breadth of the country while suppressing the opposition political parties in general and political elite from the smaller provinces of Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in particular. As a natural consequence of this recurrent denial of regional autonomy to the different subnational groups of Pakistan, the civilian rule again failed to deliver and Martial Law was imposed in the country in 1977. In that background, the present research work reviews significant political developments in Pakistan with respect to the functioning of federalism and the problem of regional autonomy during the PPP rule (1971-1977) and finds that the unwarranted concentration of political power within very few hands and the enforcement of unilateral decision on the provincial governments from the centre led to the spread of chaos and unrest within the smaller units of Pakistan whose impacts are evenly visible over the political system of the contemporary Pakistan.

#### KEYWORDS

Federal Problem, Post-1971 Pakistan, Suppression of NAP-JUI Coalition, Regional Autonomy, Authoritarianism

#### Introduction

After the disintegration of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, Pakistan still had to face the challenges to its survival, for the country was without a constitution and being ruled under martial law. When the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 was concluded in December 1971, what was left of Pakistan faced its greatest crisis since 1947. In the opinion of some scholars, Pakistan had lost its "structural" and symbolic existence as

the one Muslim State in the Indian subcontinent (Tepper, 1974). Even the idea of Pakistan as the homeland for Muslims in South Asia no longer appeared valid to some observers (Laporte, 1972; Laporte, 1973; Kumar, 1978; Mankekar, 1972) and they came out with the argument that the disintegration of Pakistan through "Bengali nationalism" (Jahan, 1973) was an obvious negation of the two nation theory in British India. We do not agree with these scholars as they seem to overlook the fact that Jinnah had agreed in 1947 to the establishment of a United Bengal outside India and Pakistan on the basis of Bengali (Hindu and Muslim) nationalism; nevertheless, the idea was rejected by the Congress leadership except Gandhi. What happened in 1971 was a continuation of the efforts of Bengali Muslims to have an independent state, albeit after an unsuccessful trial to integrate themselves into a single nation with the Muslims of northwestern India within the framework of one state.

### **Literature Review**

Though, we do not agree with scholars who believed that Pakistan had lost its very foundation in 1971, nevertheless, it appears true that Pakistan was once again at the starting point, rather somewhat behind the starting point (Wilcox, 1970: in fact, Wilcox in 1969 had written this paper entitled "Pakistan in 1969: Once Again at the Starting Point" which was published in 1970 whereas the situation in 1971 was rather more delicate and complicated). Nonetheless, after the separation of East Pakistan, the remaining Pakistan comprising of contiguous zones with somewhat more territorial coherence, the building blocks of statehood and nationhood were still "remarkably" (Tepper, 1974) diverse in cultural, linguistic and racial composition, inequality in size, population and economic growth, possessing different experience of administration and varied in their exposure toward political and economic modernisation and development. Since 1947, this complication was ignored by the overriding preoccupation with East Bengal when as a solution the Punjabis and the Bengalis agreed and compromised that the provinces in the western zone should be abolished and they were unified into a single province of West Pakistan. The ruling elite in Pakistan, overwhelmingly dominated by the Punjabis and the Muhajirs, failed to distribute the goods to East Pakistan on the national level. They also treated the smaller old provinces of West Pakistan in the same way. Balochistan, Sindh and the NWFP had also suffered at the hands of the civil military bureaucracy which was dominated by the Punjabis, nevertheless, the NWFP had some representation in these institutions, thus experiencing less deprivation than the others.

### **The Pre-1971 Resentment in NWFP and Balochistan**

It may be recalled that in 1947 a mistrust and suspicion prevailed among the elites of Balochistan and the NWFP regarding joining the federation of Pakistan and the same feelings developed in Sindh just a few months later when Karachi was declared the federal capital and the provincial government was asked to shift its capital to Hyderabad. This mistrust and suspicion was due to the fear of domination by the majority provinces. These feelings of mistrust and suspicion among the three provinces of remaining Pakistan against the Punjab were accentuated by the working of the One Unit scheme among these provinces since 1955. The One Unit scheme had damaged the federation of Pakistan as a double edged sword because it caused a "progressive alienation" of East Pakistan without a "progressive unification" of West Pakistan (Ahmad, 1971:31). The grievances of the smaller provinces in a unified West Pakistan were two-fold, the domination of the majority province of the Punjab in West Pakistan and the domination of the majority at an overall Pakistan level. These provinces believed that it was Punjab which had occupied the dominating position at both of these levels (Interview of Wali Khan, London, September 1982, Zamurrad Hussain, Quetta, May 1982, & Bizenjo, London, September 1984, with

Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain, one of the writers of the instant study). Besides, Mr. Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain was told by an eminent political leader from Balochistan, the Chief of the Bugti tribe, that the situation was more explosive in West Pakistan than in East Pakistan in 1969 and if Yahya had not undone the one unit, what happened in East Pakistan in 1971 would have happened in West Pakistan even earlier (Interview of Akbar Bugti, Quetta, May 1982, with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). To understand the situation in Pakistan in 1971, one must refer to the circumstances under which Balochistan and NWFP joined Pakistan in 1947. Numerous studies have referred to these developments hence they need not to be repeated here. In short, 24 years after its creation, Pakistan in 1971 was still facing crises of "identity," "penetration", "integration", "participation", "distribution" and "legitimacy" (Coleman, et al., 1971) albeit in their aggravated and more challenging manner.

In such circumstances, the task of nation building and state building in post 1971 Pakistan comprising of the Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and the NWFP was more difficult than it was in 1947. In the united Pakistan, East Pakistan had 56% of the total population as against the four provinces of West Pakistan having 44% which made it difficult to reach a federal arrangement, while in 1971 the situation was even more complicated as one province, the Punjab had 63% of the total population leaving 37% for the rest of the three provinces and these three smaller provinces had their grievances against the Punjab for their domination by it in the past years. Bhutto did not exaggerate when, while addressing the people on 20 December 1971, he said that Pakistan was by then facing the worst crisis of its history and they (the ruling elite) had to pick up the pieces, very small pieces to make a new Pakistan (President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Speeches and Statements, 20 December 1971 to 31 March 1972. The Department of Films and Publications, Government of Pakistan, Karachi 1972, P.1).

### Party Positions in Legislatures after 1970 Elections

The above discussion suggests that the situation in 1971 demanded political vision, mutual trust and tolerance to reach any agreed and acceptable constitutional arrangement which ought to receive the consent of all the federating units. Before we discuss what kind of constitutional arrangement was made in post 1971 Pakistan and the problems of federalism from 1971-1977, it seems useful to mention the strength of different political parties in the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies as the result of the 1970 general elections. The PPP of Bhutto had won from 86 National Assembly constituencies out of a total of 144. Out of these 86 seats, the PPP had 85 seats from the Punjab and Sindh, only one seat from the NWFP and none from Balochistan. In the provincial assemblies of Sindh and the Punjab, the PPP had an overwhelming majority whereas it had only 3 seats out of 42 in the NWFP and none in Balochistan. The party position in post 1971 Pakistan's National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies was as follows:

**Table 1**  
**Overall Party Position**

Name of political Party	Seats in provincial assemblies				Seats in the National Assembly
	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	
Pakistan Peoples Party	113	32	3	Nil	86
National Awami Party	Nil	Nil	15	9	7
Jamiatul Ulama Islam (JUI)	2	Nil	4	3	7
Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Group)	6	5	10	2	9
Council Muslim League	15	4	1	Nil	7

Jamaat-e-Islami	1	1	1	Nil	3
Total	137	42	34	14	144

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

The PPP which had an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly and had obtained 41.66%, 44.95%, 14.28% and 2.38% votes from Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan respectively. During the Bhutto regime, NWFP and Balochistan were known as opposition provinces as his party did not have majority in these provincial assemblies. It shall be useful here if we mention the position of different political parties in these two provinces separately.

**Table 2**  
**Balochistan**

National Assembly	Total Seats 5	Provincial Assembly	Total Seats 21
NAP	4 (Including 1 Woman Seat)	NAP	9 (Including 1 Woman Seat)
JUI	1	JUI	3
		PML	2
		Independent	6
		Baluchistan United Front	1
Total	5	Total	21

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

**Table 3**  
**NWFP**

National Assembly	total seats 26	Provincial Assembly	total seats 42
NAP	3	NAP	15
JUI	6	JUI	4
PML(Qayyum)	7	PPP	3
Jamat-i-Islami	1	Jamat-i-Islami	1
PPP	1	PML (Qayyum)	10
Tribal Areas	7	PML (Council)	1
Vacant	1	PML (Convention)	2
		Independents	6
Total	26	Total	42

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

If we carefully examine the outcome of the 1970 general elections, it appears that in post 1971 Pakistan no political party could emerge as a national party, nonetheless, the PPP had a substantial majority in the National Assembly but all these seats were from two federating units of Punjab and Sindh while it had one member from the NWFP and none from Balochistan Fareed, et. al.2019). The second largest party in the National Assembly was PML (Qayyum Group) having nine members while the National Awami Party and the JUI had seven members each. In the provincial assemblies of Sindh and Punjab, the PPP had an overwhelming majority but it had no member in Balochistan and only 3 in the NWFP assembly. In the Balochistan provincial assembly, the NAP and JUI, if combined, (as they decided to form a coalition) had a clear majority of 12 members out of 21, and in the NWFP assembly, their coalition formed the largest group of 19 members out of 42 and needed only three members on their side to form the government. On the other hand, the PPP having only three members in NWFP needed 19 members on its side to form the government which meant that it should be supported by all the members except the NAP-JUI groups of 19 in the house. This sort of situation created a very interesting political problem demanding a political settlement and accommodation from all concerned but as it appeared from the study of this period that the problem was mishandled and aggravated

which consequently resulted in the breakup of the democratic process in Pakistan. Let us examine this problem in some detail.

### **Emergence of Bhutto versus NAP-JUI Confrontation**

When Bhutto came to power in 1971, he became the Chief Martial Law Administrator and the President of new Pakistan. This was the first time in the history of Pakistan that a civilian proclaimed to be the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Bhutto claimed to be the national leader of what was left of Pakistan because of his majority among the members of the National Assembly from the four provinces of former West Pakistan which now constituted the new Pakistan. But his opponents, especially the leaders of the NAP and JUI did not agree to his claim and argued that he represented only the Punjab and Sindh, as his party had all its seats in the National Assembly from these two provinces, and moreover, among the four provincial assemblies he again had a majority only in Sindh and the Punjab.

Bhutto's task after coming into power was two-fold. He did not have to rule the country only but had to achieve a constitutional arrangement agreed and approved by all the four federating units of Pakistan. NAP and JUI were claiming that as the PPP did not represent all the provinces, it could not give a constitution on the basis of its majority alone and the constitution must have the consent of Balochistan and NWFP from where they had a substantial representation. The argument of NAP and JUI had a great deal of weight behind it as Bhutto had fought on the same ground against unilateral constitution making and controlling the federal government by the Awami League owing to its majority seats in the National Assembly of United Pakistan in February-March 1971. He agreed that Mujib had the majority but it was from only one federating unit regardless of whatever its population was, and insisted that being an elected leader from West Pakistan, in fact from the Punjab and Sindh, he had every right to be taken into confidence before any constitution was framed and he must have some representation in the federal government on the basis of his majority from two federating units. This was the claim which Mujib did not concede and the Mujib-Bhutto talks failed in March 1971. It is often said that history repeats itself and it did after a few months when Bhutto took over as the Chief Martial Law Administrator in 1971. Wali Khan, who was at that time the leader of the National Awami Party, used Bhutto's own weapon against him, that out of four federating units of new Pakistan, Bhutto could speak only for the Punjab and Sindh as he did not represent the other two units i.e. Balochistan and the NWFP. Wali claimed that his party had a majority of 4 out of 5 National Assembly seats from Balochistan and he formed the leading faction in that Assembly from the NWFP in coalition with the JUI which had rendered its support to the NAP both in Balochistan and NWFP.

It is interesting to note that before the dismemberment of Pakistan, Wali supported Mujib's demand of unconditional transfer of power and his right to give a constitution to the nation since he (Mujeeb) enjoyed majority in the National Assembly, notwithstanding that it was from only one federating unit, i.e. East Pakistan. We can explain why Wali Khan supported Mujib in his demand. Wali's party since its formation in 1957, was confined to Balochistan and NWFP and had no support in the Punjab and Sindh. Being the leader of a regional party, he was attracted by the provision of maximum provincial autonomy under Mujib's constitutional formula and was interested in securing two provincial governments ignoring the fact that a federal arrangement had no conception unless all the federating units were collectively and effectively in control of the federal government. But, in post 1971 Pakistan, Wali had two-fold demands, provincial autonomy and a rightful and effective participation in the federal government. Bhutto could not but concede to Wali's demand. However, it appears from the study of this period that this concession by Bhutto

was short of honesty and sincerity. The circumstances leading to this conclusion are discussed in detail later in this study.

Bhutto initially conceded to the demand of the opposition that they must have participation in the decision making process. He promised two cabinet posts in Islamabad to NAP leaders, Khalil and Marri. In return, the NAP-JUI alliance committed Bhutto for cooperation to form PPP governments in NWFP and Balochistan. But, it appears that Bhutto was insincere in his compromise with the opposition parties. He was using a carrot and stick policy which reversed all the achievements made for integration of the different political parties from different provinces. If this attempt had been honest and sincere it seems that it would have brought some sort of national integration in Pakistan. What Bhutto presented with one hand, he took with the other. He appointed Raisani as Governor of Balochistan who was a non-Baloch and was not trusted by the NAP. This appointment set off a series of turbulences in Quetta, which escalated into a veritable wall of distrust between PPP and the NAP. The other incident which made the NAP believe that Bhutto was not sincere in his agreement, was the appointment of Qayyum as minister for interior affairs. It is needless to repeat here that Qayyum had his personal antagonism against the NAP and his appointment was quite an unfavourable gesture towards it by Bhutto.

The first consequence was the decision of the NAP not to allow its two members to join the central cabinet and the withdrawal of their offer to cooperate with the PPP to form the governments in Balochistan and NWFP on the grounds that the PPP had no seat in the Balochistan assembly and only 3 in NWFP, and therefore did not have any right to participate in those governments. Moreover, the opposition demanded that the elections to the local bodies be postponed till the provincial assemblies were convened and elections to the reserved seats for women were held. Bhutto showed some awareness of the situation by yielding to certain vital demands. He postponed the local bodies' elections and convened the provincial assemblies on 23 March 1972. The elections against the parliamentary slots reserved for women were also held which paved the way for the working of the provincial assemblies. Wali reiterated that he was in favor of the integrity of Pakistan and he had some good reasons for that. He was well aware that, in case of retaining their status as constituting parts of the federation of Pakistan, both the NWFP and Balochistan would get more benefits rather than by becoming independent entities as they would not be able to achieve economic development, prosperity and political and social modernization in the latter case (Wali, in his interview with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain London September 1982, argued that within the framework of Pakistan, the Pathans and Balochs if given their due rights had more prospects than to become independent entities. He said that there are one million Pathans in Karachi and a large number of Balochs as well).

In April 1971, Bhutto made an agreement with the NAP-JUI coalition, lifted Martial Law and replaced it with provisional constitution to which the alliance agreed, providing a presidential form of government at the centre and a parliamentary system in the provinces. Under this constitution, he called upon the NAP-JUI coalition to form their governments in NWFP and Balochistan and appointed Khalil and Bizenjo as Governors respectively regardless of the fact that they were active members of the NAP. As head of the state, he could appoint governors of his choice, preferably non-partisan persons as the agent of the federal government. This seems to have been a concession to the NAP-JUI coalition, but as has been mentioned earlier, he gave the important Home Affairs portfolio to Qayyum who was known as the sworn enemy of the NAP and his appointment had inevitable repercussions on the centre-province relationship. Actually, the PPP and NAP-JUI coalition had held the political balance in the state and the odd man in those circumstances was Qayyum. This confusion of concessions, checks and disadvantages can

be explained by the fact that while Bhutto yielded in giving power to the NAP-JUI in the NWFP and Balochistan, he did not allow their governments to function unhindered so preventing consolidation of their positions in these provinces. The other possible objective which Bhutto could achieve by including Qayyum in his cabinet, was to please him and pave the way towards a Muslim League-PPP alliance supported by some other independents in NWFP to form provincial government at some convenient time. Qayyum had 10 seats in the NWFP assembly and if the PPP with its 3 seats could manipulate 6 independents and 3 members from other factions of the Muslim League, it could oust the NAP-JUI government and form a coalition government instead (Later when the NAP-JUI ministry resigned, Bhutto formed a ministry in coalition with the Qayyum League, United Front and two other factions of the Muslim League). This is what happened in the province when Bhutto was able to tackle the situation the way he wanted.

### **Installation of NAP-JUI Governments**

However, the transmission of command to the NAP and JUI in the NWFP and Balochistan took place on the understanding that while the provincial governments would not endanger national integrity, or challenge the federal jurisdiction, Islamabad too would not interfere in the normal course of life in their respective provincial spheres. Hence, soon after taking the reins of provincial governments, the coalition started normalising political and social life in these provinces. For instance, immediately after the Governor of Balochistan sworn in, he withdrew section 144 from the areas where it was in force and ordered the reopening of all educational institutions. After a few days, the Balochistan government also adopted Urdu as the official provincial language (The NAP-JUI governments thus killed two birds with one stone. On the one hand, they saved the situation in Balochistan, a multi-linguistic province, where if any one of the native languages was declared as an official language could create tension and serious problems of law and order. On the other hand, they created a problem for Bhutto's PPP in Sindh where Sindhis were very much conscious of their mother-tongue and desired that Sindhi should be the official language of the Province). The government in NWFP just after assuming power, legally prohibited the drinking, storage, selling and distillation of alcohol. The most significant step taken by the government in NWFP was to withdraw the ban on the organization of Khudai Khidmatgars (Khudai Khidmatgars were headed by Abdul Ghaffar Khan who claimed that it was a social organization. They opposed the inclusion of the NWFP in Pakistan and boycotted the referendum which was held in July 1947. The organization was banned in 1947 by Qayyum Khan). The ban on the organisation was imposed by Qayyum in 1947, who, at the time it was lifted in 1972, was serving as the minister for internal affairs in the Bhutto cabinet. When Qayyum put the ban on this organisation, he dubbed them as traitors, foreign agents and disloyal to Pakistan. Immediately after its installation, the coalition government of NAP-JUI also imposed a ban on all sorts of strikes, lockouts and go-slow movements at the Tarbela Dam project. They invited the capitalists to come and invest in the province in an atmosphere free of labour unrest whilst they (capitalists) could enrich themselves and the province as well.

Thus, if allowed to work independently and unchecked for some time, the NAP-JUI alliance would surely have strengthened its place in both provinces and could possibly have been returned with even more seats in the next general elections. Besides this, with its success in NWFP and Balochistan, the alliance would definitely improve its following in the Punjab and Sindh which prospect was unacceptable to both the PPP and its ally, the Qayyum Group.

First of all, the Qayyum group's spokesman objected to the lifting of the ban on the Khudai Khidmatgars by the provincial government. Some PPP leaders in NWFP also

blamed the provincial government for the worsening law and order situation but such an allegation does not appear to be true, because there is no evidence in support. Moreover, on logical grounds, being the ruling parties, they had nothing to gain from the breakdown of law and order, rather their governments could be discredited by the federal government on this ground and could be dismissed by it. On the contrary, Wali Khan and Abdul Ghaffar Khan accused two PPP leaders, Tariq Aziz and Miraj for delivering provocative speeches in the province which caused the peasant-landlord clashes.

### **Strained Centre-Provinces (NWFP & Balochistan) Relations**

Two incidents which had serious repercussions on centre-provincial relationships took place in Quetta and Dir during the month of May, 1972. The Quetta incident took place on the occasion of the visit by Princess Pahlavi of Iran when Qayyum brought 40 armed men to Quetta, who boarded a truck fixed with loudspeaker. They raised slogans against NAP, which resulted in clashes killing one man leaving several injured (Interview of Wali Khan and Bizenjo London September 1982 and September 1984 respectively with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain. Zamurrad Hussain in his interview with Hussain (Quetta May 1982) supported the same view). The NAP-JUI government took the men and their arms into its possession. Bizenjo, who was Governor of Balochistan at that time, later revealed that he released those men and returned their arms at the request of Bhutto (Interview of Bizenjo with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain London September 1984). The same version had been told to Mr. Hussain by a high ranking bureaucrat who had a personal knowledge of the incident (The said officer was holding a responsible post in the government of Balochistan at that time. He did not agree to disclose his identity). In the other incident which took place in Dir district (NWFP), two men were shot dead and five suffered injuries when Wali and fellows were intercepted on the road and fired upon. It was suggested by the central government and its controlled media that the attempt was for reason of personal animosity against the Khan of Jandool and he was the chief target, but this suggestion did not carry any conviction among the people in the province and the country. Wali blamed Qayyum for engineering the attack and his accusation carried weight, keeping in view the past and the then prevalent political situation in the country. Wali blamed Bhutto for the violation of his agreement which he made with the NAP-JUI alliance before they formed their governments in the two provinces.

In the given situation, Bhutto should have either ensured that the allegations against Qayyum were baseless or removed him from the federal cabinet. But he did neither which suggested that he himself desired to discredit the NAP-JUI alliance in both provinces and prevent them working unhindered and consolidating their position. For this reason, it appears that Bhutto allowed Qayyum to disrupt the two provincial governments, thus creating a tense situation between the central and the provincial governments.

There was an additional method through which the NAP-JUI coalition felt the pinch of the federal authoritarianism, namely the constant propaganda against them by the National Press Trust newspapers. The Trust with an ownership of 12 newspapers, was created by the Ayub regime in 1964 to be used as the mouthpiece of his autocratic rule. The alliance had a constant complaint against the central government that it had started the drive of slander and insinuation to disrespect the coalition leadership through the Press controlled by the government.

In July 1972, the central government postponed by-elections to two vacant seats of the National Assembly from Swat and Peshawar constituencies due to be held on 20 and 23 July 1972, respectively, on the grounds that there was some law and order problem in Sindh. The provincial government in NWFP argued that the law and order problem in

Sindh had nothing to do with the conduct of elections at Peshawar and Swat but the central government did not change its decision. Wali said that the postponement of the elections despite the opposition of the provincial government, was an interference in the democratic process. The NAP-JUI alliance believed that the PPP was not prepared for the elections to obtain results of its own choice hence postponed it.

In September 1972, the central Government accused Wali Khan and his associates of hatching an intrigue to dismember Pakistan during their stopover in London. The alleged conspiracy was named the London Plan. The PPP and the Qayyum League leaders propagated this plan and questioned the patriotism and loyalty of the NAP leadership with reference to its past and present conduct (Kumar, 1978:171). Looking at the situation objectively, the accusation made little sense whereas the later events also proved that the charges against the NAP-JUI government for hatching a conspiracy to disintegrate Pakistan were baseless. It was also disclosed by Ghulam Jilani, a former Awami Leaguer, that the London Plan was an attempt to create some kind of link between Pakistan and Bangladesh (See the Daily Jang, London 20 October 1981). Furthermore, it appears from the political history of Pakistan that successive governments have accused Ghaffar and Wali of separatism but this was done for the fulfilment of their vested interest. Even the British government in India believed that after the referendum whether to join Pakistan or Hindustan was held in July 1947, Ghaffar and Dr. Khan including other congress leaders in NWFP were faithful to Pakistan and had no separatist designs.

If we analyse the allegation with reference to the 1972 situation, it does not carry any weight as the NAP at that time was a part of the political system, holding subtle political equilibrium in two of the four provinces. Even an ordinary political analyst might understand that it was the central government which wanted to undermine the provincial governments and not these provincial governments which were blamed for creating law and order problems in their respective provinces.

### **Undermining the Provincial Authority by the PPP**

Alongside, Bhutto used different other methods to undermine these provincial governments. For instance, when the one unit in West Pakistan was undone and Balochistan became a province in 1970, it was decided that technical and administrative personnel like the police, teachers and engineers had to be repatriated to their provinces of domicile. These persons overwhelmingly belonged to the Punjab. Now when the NAP-JUI government took over in Balochistan, the PPP government in the Punjab urged an immediate and en-bloc repatriation of the Punjabis, fixed a deadline of December 1972 and adopted a "now or never" policy, thus creating a vacuum and a problem of maintaining law and order in the province (Interview of Bizenjo and Zamurad Hussain with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain. Both argued that the PPP government wanted to fail the NAP-JUI Govt. in Balochistan by creating this vacuum and consequent law and order problem). The provincial government organized a force of local guards called Dehi Muhafiz which consisted of people from different Baloch tribes. This is why the provincial government was accused of creating a tribal force but they argued when there was no police force in the province, what else could they do but to employ their own people. Even Bugti, who played a major role in bringing down the NAP government (discussed later in this study) told Mr. Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain in his interview that Dehi Muhafiz was established to replace the police force and that it was not a tribal force to rebel against the central government. The other method which Bhutto used against the Balochistan government was to bring some Sardars to his side and play off the differences between these Sardars and the NAP leaders who were in power in the province. By January 1973, the Baloch Sardars opposed to the NAP government in Balochistan started a propaganda campaign against it while touring

the whole country and alleging that the NAP government had separatist designs. Akbar Bugti became very vocal against the provincial government and addressing a public meeting in Lahore alleged that they had created a law and order problem in the province and were working against the integrity of the country (Awan, 1985; also see Bugti's statements in the Pakistan Times, Lahore, dated 29 January 1973 and 1 Feb. 1973).

In the meantime, a significant event took place when there was an armed clash between the Jamote tribesmen from Lasbela and the Dehi Muhafiz force of the NAP-JUI government. Both the federal and the provincial governments furnished their own reasons for the clash. The White Paper on Balochistan issued by the Bhutto government charged that about 8000 Jamotes were surrounded and besieged by the NAP-JUI tribal forces in Bela to crush them and the Jamotes had informed the federal government about their apprehensions. The provincial governor complained that about 500 armed tribesmen had rebelled against his government (See The Pakistan Times, Lahore, 27 January, 1973). He claimed that these tribesmen were prepared and armed by the federal government to create law and order problems for the provincial government and to dismiss it on these grounds (interview of Wali Khan, Bizenjo and Zamurrad Hussain with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). It appears that the statement of Bizenjo carries some weight as it was the chief of the Jamote tribe who became the Chief Minister in the new government of Balochistan when the NAP-JUI government was dismissed in February 1973 and another Sardar, Akbar Bugti, who had spoken against the provincial government for some months, became the new governor. Bugti had condemned the NAP-JUI government for the law and order problem and armed clashes in Bela, urging the central government to intervene. He added that the struggle which the people of Bela were having was the same which the Marri, Bugti and Mengal tribes had in 1958 against the martial law regime of Ayub Khan (See The Pakistan Times, Lahore, 29 January 1973). The events which took place in Balochistan after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI government suggest that the Bhutto government had created the situation to take advantage of it. Bhutto sent the troops to Bela in spite of many protests by the provincial governor who said he did not call for army help (Bizenjo's statement in the Pakistan Times, Lahore, 1 February 1973. He repeated the same in his interview with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). Wali also condemned the sending of troops to Balochistan and he described it as a joke on provincial autonomy (See Wali's statement in the Pakistan Times, Lahore, 10 February 1973).

The last event was the discovery of some arms found in the Iraqi Embassy in Pakistan and the Bhutto government made good use of this while dismissing the NAP-JUI government on the charge that these arms were meant for Balochistan to launch a wide range rebellion. This allegation proved baseless afterwards and it was known that the arms' destination was another country and the Bhutto government afterwards failed to produce any evidence to suggest that the arms were meant for Balochistan.

### **Sacking the Provincial Government of Balochistan**

However, on these grounds, the Bhutto government dismissed the NAP-JUI government in Balochistan along with the governor on 15 February 1973, while in NWFP only replacing the NAP governor and leaving the ministry intact. Bhutto said that the recent developments in the country had made it imperative for him to have governors in whom he had full confidence and who faithfully carried out his directions. He added that the Mengal ministry was dismissed because it failed to control a worsening law and order situation. It is worth mentioning here that while Bhutto dismissed the ministry in Balochistan, the ministry in NWFP resigned as a token of protest against this action of the Bhutto government. In Balochistan, Bugti was appointed as the new governor and Jam Sahib of Lasbela became the Chief Minister. It is interesting to note here that Bugti himself

had admitted that he participated in a separatist movement for Balochistan (See Bugti's statement in the Pakistan Times, Lahore, 12 February 1973). If it was correct then there was no idea to replace a separatist with another.

Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain, one of the authors of the instant study, has interviewed several prominent Baloch leaders and others belonging to Bhutto's PPP and Wali's NAP to bring forth the truth of the actual situation. Even Bugti, during his interview with Hussain, defended the NAP-JUI government and said that they had no separatist designs and the charges of anti-state activities on the NAP were false and baseless. He stated that Bhutto failed to stomach provincial governments of NAP and he was a dictator by nature who did not like to share his power (Interview of Akbar Bugti, Quetta (Pakistan) May 1982 with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). Bugti had changed his opinion about the NAP-JUI government. Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain questioned Zamurrad Hussain (who was a prominent leader of the NAP in Balochistan and was a member of the Senate from 1973-77) about the role of Bugti. He admitted that Bugti had helped and supported the NAP to win the 1970 general elections but after coming into power, the NAP did not reward him in the way he desired and he turned against the NAP (Awan, 1985). Bugti's opposition to the NAP can be explained in terms of individual antagonism as described by Duverger (Duverger, M. (1979:123). *The Study of Politics* translated by Wagoner, (reprint) England: Nelson and Sons). Bugti played into the hands of Bhutto against the NAP but soon he outlived his utility and had to resign. Bhutto said that politics was a game of chess and Bugti had played his game badly (Sayeed, 1980:119).

Besides Bugti and Zamurrad, the Mr. Hussain also interviewed Raisani (PPP), Tahir Muhammad Khan (PPP), Hafeez Pirzada (PPP), Mustafa Khar (PPP), Wali Khan (NAP), Bizenjo (NAP), Gul Khan Naseer (NAP) and Khudai Noor (Tehrik-e-Istiqlal) to find out and analyse the actual situation in Balochistan. Even the prominent members of Bhutto's PPP did not support the suggestion that there were any anti-state activities. Pirzada, Raisani, Khar and Tahir admitted in their interviews with Mr. Hussain that the PPP had committed a mistake in dismissing the NAP government (Interview of Hafeez Pirzada, Mustafa Khar, (London December 1984 and June 1983 respectively) and Tahir Muhammad Khan, Quetta May 1982 with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain) and, in their interviews with a Pakistani journalist, Khar and Pirzada were apologetic regarding the situation in Balochistan during the regime of Bhutto (See the interviews of Pirzada and Khar in the Daily Jang, London dated Sept. 4, 1985 and Sept. 19, 1985 to Oct. 10, 1985 respectively). K.B. Sayeed, a scholar on Pakistan's politics believes that Bhutto used the tactics of divide and rule in Balochistan. He played one Sardar against the other and wanted every one of them to be discredited (Sayeed, 1980). We have not found any evidence to suggest that the NAP government was working for the dismemberment of Pakistan and it appears that Bhutto did not dismiss the NAP government for anti-state activities but for some other motives. Wali alleged in the National Assembly that his party's government was dismissed because the Shah of Iran did not approve of it. Wali's statement has been supported by a retired Senior Police officer and a prominent member of the PPP, Rao Rashid, who has granted an interview to a journalist later published in the form of a book. Rashid's statement seems reliable as he was in-charge of the intelligence service and was quite close to Bhutto (A.B. Awan, another high ranked senior bureaucrat during Bhutto government, also supported the same view). An additional piece of evidence to suggest that Bhutto's allegations against the NAP were baseless comes from none other than Bhutto himself, who wrote from the jail during his murder trial that he wanted to release the NAP leaders in exchange for a border settlement on the Durand Line with Afghanistan (Bhutto, 1982:107).

### **Post-dismissal Political Maneuvering by the PPP**

However, after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI government in Balochistan and the appointment of Bugti and Jam Sahib as governor and chief minister respectively, the Bhutto government could not succeed in forming a provincial government consisting of their allies, excluding NAP and JUI members. The Chief Minister ran a ministry with the support of 9 out of 21 members and the Governor kept the assembly out of its session. Bugti, the then Governor of the province, revealed to the author in his interview that time and time again he advised Bhutto to dissolve the provincial assembly and to hold fresh elections. He added that he believed that if fresh elections were held, the NAP and JUI could not win the majority of seats as they had in the assembly which was kept intact by the Bhutto government (Interview of Akbar Bugti with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). But Bhutto did not agree to the proposal and a campaign of murder, harassment, bribes and persuasion was launched to win the support of the majority, but the federal government was unsuccessful in achieving its target of creating a stable government in Balochistan. Shamsuddin, the Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Assembly belonging to the NAP, was ruthlessly murdered in this campaign. Besides this, some members of the provincial assembly were convicted on false and flimsy grounds and declared disqualified from membership of the assembly (Interviews of Wali, Bizenjo and Zamurrad Hussain with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain). Two of such members belonging to the NAP who were convicted, were spared by the federal government to use them for its own advantage. In his memo, the Secretary to the Prime Minister wrote: "The two seats in the Provincial Assembly could be used as a lever in obtaining a favourable settlement" and Bhutto's comment in his own handwriting was "Exactly" (See White Paper on the performance of Bhutto regime, Misuse of Instrument of State Power, Vol.3, Annex,1, PP.1A, A2, Islamabad, Govt. of Pakistan, 1979).

But the situation in Balochistan, after the dismissal of the NAP government, was not one where a parliamentary government with the majority support in the assembly could work anymore. Had Bhutto been able to win the support of the majority, even then he could not have installed a solid provincial government because an armed rebellion was started in Balochistan which forced Bhutto to send the military troops to intervene hence lost control of the province in favor of the military which was proved by the later events when, in 1977, Bhutto agreed to release the NAP leadership but General Zia, the then Chief of the Army Staff, opposed that move and refused to withdraw the army under his command from Balochistan. It is useful to mention here that when Zia came into power, he himself released the NAP leaders and withdrew all the cases filed against them.

It has been suggested by some scholars that it was Bugti who subjected the province to intertribal warfare and invited the army to his side on the plea that the Marri and Mengal tribes were secessionists (Kumar, 1978) but the situation was not that simple, as the armed tribesmen from the Marri and Mengal tribes had been active since the Bhutto government engineered an armed clash in Bela between the Jamote tribe and the Dehi Muhafiz force and sent the troops on the side of the Jamotes.

### **The Army Action**

By June 1973 there was an army action in Balochistan on a broad scale and the tribes had begun guerilla warfare. The opposition leaders described the situation as equal to that which was in East Pakistan and led to its secession in 1971. In these circumstances, Bugti had no option but to resign as he told Mr Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain that as a governor, he had no powers, was only a show boy and the army was in full control of administering and governing the province by its sheer force (Bugti told Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain that it was the army commander who issued all the orders and he was left with no powers as the Provincial Governor). After Bugti's resignation, Bhutto used another Sardar, Khan of Kalat, Ahmad Yar Khan, who was respected and held in high esteem by the people. In the

meantime, the three NAP leaders from Balochistan, Bizenjo, Mengal and Marri were arrested and jailed. In 1975, Bhutto sought an "ex-post facto approval" of the ban which he imposed on the NAP, arrested its leaders including Wali, and put them on a protracted trial. It is worth mentioning that the Bhutto government had offered many times the release of NAP leaders in exchange for a political settlement in Balochistan (International, 1977:41). Wali told Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain in his interview that even on 4 July 1977, i.e. only one day before his ouster, Bhutto sent an emissary to seek some settlement.

However, the detention and trial of the NAP leaders had worsened the situation in Balochistan. In 1976, federal rule was imposed in the province and the governor had to act under the direct instructions of the federal government. Throughout the period 1973-77 until Bhutto's ouster by Zia, there was a continuous war between the Pakistan army and the tribal insurgents and there were a large number of casualties and deaths. The details can be found in Harrison (1981) who has described this situation as a "miniwar" (Harrison, 1978: 139). During this operation even peaceful citizens were also harassed and suspected, their houses searched and the whole ground was dug to find suspected arms (Interview of Faiz Muhammad Yousufzai, a prominent Baloch leader, with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain, Quetta, May 1982).

### **The Case of NWFP**

Now we come to the North Western Frontier Province, where Bhutto dismissed NAP'S Governor, Khalil, while the Chief Minister Mahmud had resigned as a token of protest. As we have suggested earlier in this study, Bhutto included Qayyum in cabinet because he had 10 members in the provincial assembly and Bhutto having 3 seats and enlisting some of the independents and some members from other factions of the Muslim League could form the Government. He did this after the resignation of Mahmud, nevertheless, it took him a few weeks to attain the support of a required majority. Though, in the above mentioned alliance, Bhutto's PPP had only 3 members but being a party in power at the centre, he was able to govern the province as he wished. Only once did he put the province under Governor's rule when Hayat Sherpao, a PPP leader, was assassinated and he restored the parliamentary government after he was able to get Nasrullah Khattak elected and appointed him as Chief Minister. One can see, that in the alliance of 23 or 24 members, the party with only three seats was dominant and its nominee was the Chief Minister. Again, it is mentionable that Bhutto rendered a lot of attention to the backward areas of NWFP and allocated huge funds for their development. He conducted many tours of such remote areas where none of the rulers had gone in the past, but still one thing was lacking i.e. democratic self-rule in the province by the elected leaders (as it has been explained, the Bhutto government did not allow the elected leaders at the provincial level to exercise their powers in their own discretion under the provision of the 1973 constitution). To conclude, the principle of provincial autonomy and federalism were negated by the NWFP-centre relationship.

### **Punjab and Sindh under the PPP**

One may wonder that in this lengthy discussion we have left the Punjab and Sindh aside. In fact, this discussion was related to the problems of federalism in Pakistan and there is little to say about these two provinces in this respect.

There are two main reasons for this; one is that the PPP which had an overwhelming majority at the centre had a thumping majority in the provincial assemblies of Sindh and the Punjab. Secondly, the PPP was a hastily formed party and hardly had any hierarchical organization to allow decentralisation of power at the provincial level. As there were no

elected bodies within the PPP on the provincial and national level, so the whole business was conducted by its Chairman, Bhutto, who nominated the members of the central executive committee and other office bearers. For details Lodhi's thesis (1981) may be consulted.

Besides this, the party leadership did not choose to assign responsibility to local leadership at the provincial level and thus concentrated all political power in the Punjab and Sindh. Khar, who has been the Governor and Chief Minister of the Punjab, has disclosed in his interview with a Pakistani journalist in September 1985 (See Khar's interview with Haqqani, published in the Daily Jang, London, referred above) that how he followed the lines given by Bhutto and did not exercise independent judgment. These factors practically reduced the position of the Punjab and Sindh from a component unit of a federation to an administrative unit of a unitary state. Two chief ministers in the Punjab, however, expressed their differences from the top leadership but these were not on any policy matter and were related to the rights of the Punjab as against Sindh (Khar was dismissed when he disputed about the distribution of the water of Indus between the Punjab and Sindh, while Ramay got sacked when he took a stand against the allocation of the central revenue for the Punjab and Sindh). After their difference, both Khar and Ramay were harassed and victimised by the PPP government in the Punjab and at the centre.

It is interesting to note here that the PPP leadership violated both federal and parliamentary principles during their regime in the Punjab and Sindh. They violated the federal principle that they changed many chief ministers in these provinces and every chief minister was appointed by Bhutto thus denying the right of the parliamentary party of the provincial assembly to elect the chief minister under the provisions of the 1973 constitution. The Punjab had four chief ministers in 5 years and some of them occupied the position more than once. Another violation was the principle of parliamentary form of government in which the Governor is a figurehead and the Chief Minister has the real power. But Bhutto allowed the rotation in actual powers between the Governors and Chief Ministers in the Punjab and Sindh, according to the personal influence and political nuisance possessed by them. For instance, Khar had enjoyed the key position in the Punjab from both seats as governor and chief minister. While he was the governor and Miraj was the Chief Minister, it was Khar who used all the power, albeit under the instructions of Bhutto. Miraj was just a show boy though he occupied the most powerful office of the chief minister in the province. We can conclude that, under the Bhutto regime, the Punjab and Sindh were also denied their provincial autonomy just like their other two counterparts.

## **Conclusion**

During the Bhutto government, the provincial government of the NAP in Balochistan was not allowed to function. He wanted to dictate everything to them and, the bureaucracy, by virtue of its structure and organization was under the complete control of the central government. It often refused to carry out the orders of the provincial government. Besides, there is no doubt that Bhutto was quite generous in allocating funds for Balochistan during his tenure and this measure was acknowledged by Mengal in 1972 when he became Chief Minister of Balochistan (See Rejoinder in the Supreme Court of Pakistan to written statement of Mr. Abdul Wali Khan, President of defunct NAP in Reference by Islamic Republic of Pakistan on dissolution of NAP, Islamabad, Government of Pakistan, 1975). Although Bhutto abolished the Sardari system, Jirgas, tribal courts and jails but it appears that this distributive justice was not appreciable without a share in the power structure which Bhutto did not want to dispense with (Interview of Akbar Bugti, Wali Khan and Bizenjo with Fayyaz Ahmad Hussain cited above). More details about the centralisation of power by Bhutto and his PPP can be found in Lodhi's thesis (Lodhi, 1981).

The failure of Bhutto's policy of economic development proved that the people and the elite in Balochistan did not want economic development without having political power and, moreover, they emphasised that it was not enough that their province should have economic development but it was also essential that it was the provincial government and not the centre which had to plan and undertake such economic development. Ultimately in July 1977, it was the Balochistan problem and the army action in the province which contributed to a great extent to the countrywide agitation against Bhutto. Had Bhutto made an alliance with the NAP and JUI and allowed them to share political power, the situation between 1971-77 in Pakistan could have been different. We do not suggest that there was no possibility of military takeover as happened in 1977 (as there are many other factors involved in this development which are not germane here) but in the case of the PPP-NAP-JUI alliance, the military takeover could not have been an easy job and would have taken a different shape than it did in 1977.

In a nutshell, it can be observed that, though the four provinces of West Pakistan were restored in 1970 and the Bhutto regime in 1973 managed to frame a constitution unanimously agreed by the political elite of the four provinces, still the 1973 constitution provided a quasi-federal arrangement which was accepted by the smaller provinces with a hope of improving it. But for practical purposes, the Bhutto regime attempted to establish a one party system in Pakistan and the provincial governments run by the opposition parties were not allowed to function. The Bhutto regime, instead of responding to the regional demands, suppressed them with sheer force and resorted to an army action in Balochistan which was widely resented by the opposition parties and a situation of political unrest prevailed in Pakistan during this regime which ultimately led to a country wide agitation and the armed forces intervention. Martial Law was proclaimed in 1977.

**References**

- Ahmad, M. (1971). *Politics without Social Change*. Karachi: Space Publishers.
- Awan, A. B. (1985). *Baluchistan: Historical and Political Processes*. London: New Century Publishers.
- Bhutto, Z.A. (1982). *If I am Assassinated* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Coleman, J. S., Binder, L., La Palombara, J., Pye, L. W., Verba, S., & Weiner, M. (1971). *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fareed, G., Muzaffar, M., & Riaz, A. (2019). Enigma of Political Parties in Political Socialization of Pakistan: A Case Study of Muslim League, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3(II), 268-281
- Harrison, S. S. (1981). *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Harrison, S. S. (Fall 1978). Nightmare in Baluchistan. *Foreign Policy*. 32, 136-160.
- International, A. (1977). *Islamic Republic of Pakistan*. London: Amnesty International Publication.
- Jahan, R. (1973). Bangladesh in 1972: Nation building in a New State. In *Asian Survey*. XIII (2). 199-210.
- Kumar, S. (1978). *The New Pakistan*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Laporte, R. Jr. (1972). Pakistan in 1971: The Disintegration of a Nation. In *Asian Survey*. XII (2). 97-108.
- Laporte, R. Jr. (1973). Pakistan in 1972: Picking up the Pieces. In *Asian Survey*. XIII (2). 187-198.
- Lodhi, M. (1981). *Bhutto, the Pakistan People's Party and Political Development in Pakistan 1967-77*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. London: University of London.
- Mankekar, D.R. (1972). *Pakistan Cut to Size*. New Delhi: Indian Book Company.
- Sayeed, K. B. (1980). *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*. New York: Praeger.
- Tepper, E. L. (Spring 1974). The New Pakistan: Problems and Prospects. In *Pacific Affairs*. 47(1). 56-68.
- Wilcox, W. A. (1970). Pakistan in 1969: Once Again at the Starting Point. In *Asian Survey*. X (2). 87-93.