

---

**BENAZIR BHUTTO AND THE CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE THEORY\***

**Dr.Muhammad Azeem**

*PhD Scholar RO Office, University of the Punjab, Lahore*

*Email: [azeempu396@gmail.com](mailto:azeempu396@gmail.com)*

**Dr.Muhammad Iqbal Chawla**

*Professor & Ex-Chairman, Department of History, University of the Punjab Lahore*

*Email: [chawla\\_iqbal@yahoo.com](mailto:chawla_iqbal@yahoo.com)*

**Dr.Fatima Riffat**

*Lecturer, Depart of History, Government College University, Lahore*

*Email: [riffatima01@hotmail.com](mailto:riffatima01@hotmail.com)*

**ABSTRACT**

*This study estimates the leadership qualities of Benazir Bhutto, first female Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Islamic world. The life history of Benazir Bhutto also falls under the category of charismatic leadership as she displayed exceptional leadership qualities in the face of different personal and political challenges. Much has been written on the life, personality and political career of Benazir Bhutto but very few have made academic and in depth study of leadership qualities of Benazir Bhutto which were predominant and striking features of her political leadership during her second tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan (1993-96). Therefore, this article navigates on diverse Socio-economic, Political and Geo-strategic challenges and responses of Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister of Pakistan (1993-96). Further, it encapsulates her relationship with military, dwindling state of economy, revengeful role of opposition and various contradictions with President created a grave challenge not only for poor governance but also for the longevity of her premiership tenure. It was not smooth sailing for her as Prime Minister; however, it was a hard journey full of myriad challenges, inherited dwindling economy, overdeveloped state structure, strife torn society, volatile geo-political situation, regional disparities, vindictive politics of opposition and imbalance of power between Prime Minister and President required stupendous efforts from Benazir Bhutto as a Prime Minister. Further, this study presents a systematic and factual analysis of the socio-economic challenges and the arbitrary use of the Presidential power (58) (2B). Furthermore, theory of challenge and response has also been applied to have a better understanding of Benazir Bhutto's leadership qualities and administrative abilities. It also throws light on the circumstances that led towards her ouster from premiership. Besides, this study attempts to find what were the diverse challenges faced by Benazir Bhutto as a Prime Minister (1993-96)? How did she respond to various challenges as Prime Minister?*

**Keywords:** Benazir, Female Leadership, Pakistan, Prime Minister

---

\* This paper mainly is taken from PhD dissertation submitted to Department of History University of the Punjab Lahore under the supervision of Prof.Dr.Muhammad Iqbal Chawla. Dr.Fatima Rifat also gave her input in the editing and proof reading.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The tenure of Benazir Bhutto as a Prime Minister (1993-96) is an important era of Pakistani political structure and democratic stability. Keeping in view the socio-economic political and geo-strategic challenges which were being faced by Benazir Bhutto, during her second tenure as Prime Minister, the administrative responses, decisive priorities and managerial skills of Benazir Bhutto, as a ruler/Prime Minister of Pakistan can be gauged in the prism of Toynbee's theory of Challenge and Response. This theory is helpful to better understand the Benazir Bhutto's contribution and political lapses during her second tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan. The challenge and response theory explores the administrative skills, political acumen, revisiting socio-economic, political and geo-strategic challenges and Benazir Bhutto's responses as Prime Minister during 1993-1996, attitude and motivational factors of any leader in office of authority while delivering for public welfare, addressing the challenges of national importance and devising strategy to resolve the issues and to steer the country towards prosperity as well as democratic stability.

### **CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE THEORY**

In this theory, Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1884-1975) developed his own hypothesis regarding the genesis of civilization. He elaborated that the genesis of civilization is a combination of two conditions: the presence of a Creative Minority and the presence of an environment which is not conducive and favorable. The mechanism of the birth of a civilization in these conditions is formulated as interplay of challenge and response. Whenever man/woman is placed in a situation of difficulty, he/she has attempted with an unprecedented effort to overcome that difficulty. The difficulty of the situation is the challenge and the effort to resolve it, is the response. Challenges continue to present themselves and the human through its creative minority continues to respond.

The above mentioned assessment unfolds that Benazir Bhutto possessed exceptional leadership qualities as she displayed in the face of different personal and political challenges. The advent of Benazir Bhutto in the corridor of power was not a bed of roses, it was a hard journey which was full of myriad challenges. She exhibited exquisite response to the challenges by demonstrating political acumen, administrative and managerial skills. She acted, sometimes decisively,

to prove her authority and sometimes demonstrated compromises with the other political stakeholders in Pakistan. Thus, the challenge and response theory can be helpful for the readers to peep into political leadership of Benazir Bhutto keeping in view the socio-economic, political and geo-strategic challenges which were being faced by Pakistan during her second tenure as Prime Minister and the administrative responses, decisive priorities and managerial skills of Benazir Bhutto, as a ruler/Prime Minister of Pakistan during 1993-96.

**MAJOR CHALLENGES DURING BENAZIR BHUTTO'S PREMIERSHIP (1993-96)  
CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP**

In 1993 general elections, Benazir was re-elected as Prime Minister on October 17, 1993. Gen. Abdul Waheed was the Army Chief at that time. Further, as compared to her first tenure, Benazir Bhutto's relations were not hostile or bitter with Army in her second term (Interviewed, Barrister Ch.Aitzaz Ahsan, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2018). Gen. Abdul Waheed was a non-political and professional general who enjoyed good reputation in the army (Interviewed, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2018). During her second tenure as Prime Minister, Army followed the policy of aloofness and remained detach from interfering in political affairs of Pakistan (Hussain, 1996:29). However, in September 1995, it was revealed that a group of generals and officers within army were planning to overthrow Benazir Bhutto's government. In this conspiracy, four senior army officers; Maj. Gen. Zaheer Abbasi, Col. Muhammad Azad Minhas, Brigadier Mustansar Billa, as well as Col. Inayatullah Khan who wanted to plot coup attempt, were arrested (Talbot, 1996). These officers were extremists; wanted to eliminate entire military elites, assassinate Farooq Laghari as well as Benazir Bhutto. In this way, these disgruntled officers were willing to bring Islamic revolution (*Dawn*, November 15, 1995). Benazir Bhutto stated that these evil foes have been created by Gen. Zia who, then wanted, to eliminate the cream of armed forces elites and, even, to attack military institution of Pakistan (*Dawn*, December 1, 1995). This incident seriously damaged the confidence and prestige of army. As a result, in October 1995, army officers were arrested; under the charges of intentions to overthrow the government of Benazir Bhutto. Later on, little evidence and open fissures of this conspiracy led to the retirement of Gen. Abdul Waheed (Shaikh, 2000). After the retirement of Gen. Abdul Waheed, Farooq Ahmad

Laghari, the then President, without consulting Benazir Bhutto, appointed Gen. Jahangir Karamat as Army Chief (Ziring, 1996). The appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat, by President Farooq Laghari, was purely on professional grounds and seniority based. However, differences arose between Benazir Bhutto and Farooq Laghari on the appointment of Army Chief because Benazir wanted to control military establishment by appointing the Chief of Army Staff through her own choice. On flip side of coin, the appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat as Army Chief was applauded and commended by the opposition parties. The opposition also blamed that Benazir Bhutto was willing to appoint a *Jiyyala* General as the Head of the Army. In these circumstances, the professional appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat restored confidence with army, because it was done purely on merit. As far as her relations with military is concerned, her second tenure was cordial and based on better understanding as compared to her first tenure.

#### **DWINDLING STATE OF ECONOMY**

Benazir Bhutto, during her premiership (1993-96) faced major economic challenges i.e. inherited dwindling economy, internal and external public debt, inflation, endemic unemployment, rampant poverty, pervasive illiteracy and economic bankruptcy.

In 1993, her government faced guerilla war and increasing ferocity when MQM adopted the policy of violence. It is pertinent to mention here that each call of strike given by MQM received a massive outcome of public with overwhelming response. It is estimated that during 1993-94, almost 6000 persons were killed along with two hundred security personnel. As far as the economic condition is concerned, there was almost 35 million rupees loss on a strike of single day and it crippled the economy of Pakistan. During the year of 1995, in few months, the city experienced 60 billion rupees loss and country experienced almost 180 billion rupees loss (Shafqat, 1997:94).

Benazir Bhutto started process of privatization with the help of outright actions, gave public offerings and ushered strategic sale of almost 26% equity to investors. This process was successful to help the government and increased its income efficiently and profitably. During the era of 1993-96, 28 public sector units were given to the private sector that enhanced the sale of key utilities. Further, lack of proper information and transparency and the interference of

opportunists led towards different difficulties and problems for her government in the process of privatization. Therefore, potential buyers were left no choice but to withdraw their bids. Further, the process of privatization raised many questions and different allegations of corruption, nepotism and violation of rules were leveled. As a result of this process, foreign direct investment and privatization led towards large scale corruption and created different problems for the process of privatization. After analyzing the aforesaid issues, Ian Talbot in his research work, *Pakistan: A Modern History* elaborated that the anarchy and violence in Karachi created problems for investors and production; discouraging international investors. Therefore, Berlin international transparency report labeled Pakistan with 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt country of the world (Talbot, 1996). Ian Talbot, further, pinpointed that financial crunch weakened the foundation of her government; shook the process of privatization and stalled investment reluctant attitude to provide any economic assistance. Therefore, privatization was not only stalled but Pakistan Telecommunication Company also faced problems in its sale as well. Deteriorating situation of economy was catalyzed by dramatic decrease in foreign exchange reserves. The government of Benazir Bhutto, during June 1996, was making utmost efforts to bring the problems of economy under control. Even, the spiraling defense budget created more problems for Benazir Bhutto, that reached almost 131.4 billion as compared to previous year which was almost 14 percent.

Political protest continued for new taxes, particularly and the lack of effective agricultural tax. Further, increased general sales tax also created problems for common man and increased the cost of living. Benazir Bhutto could not appease the domestic opinion and IMF. In her meeting with IMF representatives during her visit to New York, she was unable to convince Stanley Fischer, the then Deputy Managing Director of IMF, for softening IMF stance regarding Pakistan. Later on, the dwindling foreign exchange reserves compelled the cabinet to succumb to the IMF conditions to receive third tranche of loan of \$ 80 million. Therefore, imposition of new taxes became suicidal and it increased public discontent.

Benazir Bhutto's government also experienced the rising trends of poverty, unemployment and budget deficit. It was also estimated that budget deficit increased poverty during the era of 1993-96.

Unfortunately, the government was unable to deliver massive allocation of budget for development projects; related to social sectors. Therefore, unemployment increased because of privatization program, closing of manufacturing units and less availability of development funds for various projects and to launch employment generation program for youth (*The News*, October 19, 1996).

In short, Benazir Bhutto faced multifarious economic problems, like increasing budget deficit, decreased GDP growth as well as lack of foreign investment. Beside this, the containment of inflation, rampant poverty, unchecked unemployment and absence of balance in trade as well as current account deficit were the major challenges related to economy when Benazir was in the office of Prime Minister.

#### **REVENGEFUL ROLE OF OPPOSITION**

The saga of confrontational politics was not confined to her short lived first tenure as a Prime Minister. However, vindictive and opposition politics continued its tale to create hurdles and challenges for Benazir Bhutto during her premiership when she was re-elected in 1993.

Nawaz Sharif levelled severe charges against Benazir that she not only hatched a conspiracy with President Ishaq Khan to facilitate his ouster as a Prime Minister in 1993 (Craig Baxter & Charles Kennedy, 1998:73). Nawaz Sharif exploited Benazir Bhutto's interview on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1994 with BBC skillfully while delivering his speech in National Assembly. As Benazir stated that she has helped Rajiv Gandhi against Sikh separatist movement in Indian state of Punjab, this interview ushered a storm in Pakistan political scenario and opposition blamed her government for not consulting with Parliament and political parties regarding her assistance to Indian government during her first tenure (*Pakistan Observer*, February 26, 1994).

In September 1994, Nawaz Sharif gave a nationwide strike call and declared to launch *Karwan-i-Nijat* (March for deliverance) (Muhammad Ali Shaikh, 2000). Nawaz Sharif also gave nationwide wheel jam strike call, with full support of business community; however, these tactics remained un-successful to force Benazir's government to resign (*Dawn*, October 12, 1994). Nawaz Sharif also disclosed that Pakistan has nuclear bomb which not only embarrassed

Benazir Bhutto's government but also jeopardized relations with United States (Talbot, 1996).

Nawaz Sharif did not let to waste any opportunity to create hurdles for Benazir's government. He accused President Farooq Khan Laghari for getting benefits from Mehran Bank against worthless land while receiving money from the aforementioned bank (Shaikh, 2000:223). This oppositional politics diverted the people's attention towards PPP government. Nawaz Sharif also carried journalists to Dera Ghazi Khan to show that piece of land which Farooq Laghari used for his benefit (Ziring, 1996:557). In these circumstances, it was very difficult for Benazir Bhutto's government to settle house in order and to go for solo flight for development and prosperity. For this purpose, Benazir Bhutto appointed two judicial commissions for investigating Mehran Bank matter as well as Habib Bank scandal where Rs.4 billion were usurped in almost four years (*The Muslim & The Nation*, June 13, 1994).

Nawaz Sharif rejected the constitution of judicial commission and stressed to constitute special Parliamentary Committee to probe into the matter (*Newsline*, June 1994). Nawaz Sharif also blamed the government for corruption, while enjoying the support of business community which was not satisfied from Benazir Bhutto's policies. Benazir Bhutto ordered for immediate arrest of Brigadier Imtiaz Ahmad, former head of Intelligence by declaring accused for plotting to overthrow the Benazir Bhutto's first government during Nawaz led regime (Ziring, 1996).

Furthermore, in NWFP (Now Khyber-Pakhtunkhawa), PML (N) established coalition government and also got the support of ANP. However, central government under Benazir Bhutto imposed Governor rule. Later on, PPP formed government in NWFP. Nawaz Sharif called for country wide agitation from Peshawar to Islamabad to defame the government of Benazir Bhutto. Hence, Nawaz Sharif did not waste any opportunity to spare Benazir Bhutto's administration from leveling charges, creating hurdles and staging agitation countrywide.

During her second time, as Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif replicated and rendered same kind of politics; based on simmering passion of revenge and to destabilize her government which he practiced against her during her first tenure. These problems not only weakened her government but also diverted her attention from

planning and development towards counter strategies for controlling revengeful opposition politics.

**IMBALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT**

In her second tenure (1993-96), after getting victory in elections and elevation as Prime Minister, her nomination of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Laghari (1940-2010) belonging to Pakistan Peoples' Party as presidential candidate gave a reasonable satisfaction to Benazir Bhutto in early days. No doubt, Mr. Farooq Laghari enjoyed trustworthy association with Benazir Bhutto and these strong relations facilitated his choice for the coming President. PPP's political stalwarts launched a vigorous campaign for Farooq Ahmad Khan Laghari to facilitate his victory as a President in election of 13<sup>th</sup> November 1993 (Talbot, 1996). However, history is evident that time turns the tides dramatically and the cordial, trustworthy and mutually deep ties between Farooq Laghari and Benazir Bhutto became bitter and smoky (Shaikh, 2000:214).

The appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat as a new Army Chief after the retirement of Gen. Waheed created misunderstanding and apprehensions between Benazir Bhutto and Farooq Laghari. Benazir expressed his concerns that President Laghari did not consult her regarding the appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat as Army Chief. This appointment led towards various doubts and astonished Benazir Bhutto about the behavior and response of Farooq Laghari towards her government. However, her relations with the President, even, in second tenure became again challenging and demonstrated the impression of parting ways as well (Ziring, 1996:566-67). Not only President Laghari started to criticize Benazir Bhutto's policies but also communicated to Prime Minister Secretariat, through various letters and inquired different policies of her government like Ghulam Ishaq, former President (Shaikh, 2000:223).

In the month of August 1994, Benazir appointed 20 new judges in Punjab High Courts, mostly belonging to the sympathizer groups with her party. These appointments were clear violation of merit. Four or five judges, out of twenty, were those who never practiced as advocate High Court. This was showing that appointment of the judges lack requisite experience; demonstrates nepotism and shows needless administrative decisions to strengthen her party position. Even, Governor of Punjab was able to appoint his younger brother and an

MNA got his son appointed as a judge without any law practice. Initially, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah was convinced, however, later on, he resisted government interference in judicial matters (Khan, 2005:785). Later on, Supreme Court passed the judgment on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1996 on a filed appeal regarding aforesaid appointments of judges, disallowing Benazir Bhutto to make any appointment promotion or transfer in judiciary. Benazir refused to implement the verdict of Supreme Court. Then, Supreme Court asked President, Farooq Laghari to intervene for implementing the court orders. This needless interference in judicial matters created hurdle and raised the question of meritorious practice of her government in decision making related to the national institution. Therefore, the credibility of her government was tarnished which led towards again her earlier ouster, from premiership. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, President Farooq Laghari also filed reference in Supreme Court, by seeking opinion that President can also appoint the High Court's judge, while consulting to Chief Justice, under article 193 of Pakistan constitution (Talbot, 1996).

The position of Benazir Bhutto's government further weakened when her brother Mir Murtaza Bhutto was murdered on 20<sup>th</sup> September and President Laghari accused Benazir's government for hatching conspiracy to kill her brother Murtaza Bhutto (Padrino, 2004).

All these misappropriations, allegations against judiciary and misunderstanding with President created different political, administrative and judicial challenges for her government in second tenure (1993-96) as well. Even, in foreign policy, she also faced different challenges.

#### **FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES**

Benazir Bhutto also faced many challenges at the international level especially about foreign policy in her second tenure of premiership. At that time, Pakistan was facing volatile and unsmooth bilateral relations with India. Allegations, covert warfare, aftermaths of *Babri* Mosque incident and border skirmishes remained active to aggravate the bilateral ties with India. Moreover, Kashmir dispute was also a challenge for her government in order to establish lasting peace and normalization of relations with India. The relationship with Afghanistan and formulation of foreign policy was also a great challenge for her government. Pak-US relations, in context of Pressler

amendment and its pressure on Pakistan to roll back its atomic program, was a huge challenge for her government.

**RESPONSE TO CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS DURING HER SECOND TENURE (1993-96)**

In 1993, Benazir Bhutto was re-elected as Prime Minister and she gave a more prudent response to handle the military affairs. She was quite willing to avoid influencing military affairs. Therefore, she responded actively to bring agencies under civilian control. She also appointed her supporters and sympathizers on key posts in bureaucracy during her second tenure. The appointment of Masood Sharif as Director General, Intelligence Bureau was a proactive response to handle or to check any intrigue against her government in 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure. Even, military's decisions regarding winding up operation clean up in Sindh received approval and positive response by Benazir Bhutto. Besides this, she did not give any confronting response to MQM regarding its demand of withdrawal of military from Karachi. In these circumstances, Benazir Bhutto was careful enough to protect several corporate interests of military and she also procured the supply of arms from different resources like United States. She did not try to decrease defense budget. It was her response, as a Prime Minister, to counter Indian defense budget allocations. Further, India was consistently allocating more budgets for defense expenditure which gave serious concerns to her in the office of Prime Minister (Shafqat, 1996).

Her government fully cooperated regarding Afghan problems as well as to uphold Pakistan's stance on nuclear issue. She appointed her likeminded officers on key posts in three branches of military i.e. Army, Air Force and Navy. Therefore, in her second tenure, there was a better civil-military relationship which received more mature understanding based on the response of Benazir Bhutto (Shafqat, 1996).

Over all, in her second tenure, comparatively, the Civil-Military relations were smooth and Benazir Bhutto's response was more cooperative in nature and collaborative in approach. Even, she actively responded to remove the sanctions which military was facing regarding US aid to Pakistan. Benazir also received appreciative nod by military in her second tenure regarding the revival of US aid for military and making of efforts to waive Pressler Amendment in 1995-

96. However, one can perceive that during her premiership she was desirous enough to take measures and actions decisively; sometimes using compromising chip and actively working. One can assess, as a Prime Minister, she adopted two pronged strategy; trying to bring armed forces under civilian control and working as a political leader for the revival of military aid from US to update Pakistan defense capabilities. Therefore, her response to civil military relations was courageous enough; to revive civilian supremacy and to participate in different strategies with military, to bring political stability and to transform strong defense of Pakistan.

#### **FOCUSING ON ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Upon re-election in 1993, Benazir Bhutto's government adopted a response to dwindling economy of the country with three pronged strategy. She focused to expand foreign direct investment to introduce privatization program vigorously and carried out structural adjustment programs; reduction in budget deficit, broadened tax base and made efforts to improve tax collection.

Benazir Bhutto's government improved the country's GDP growth rate to 4.3% in 1994-95 in comparison with 3.9% in 1993-94. This improvement was the result of increase in agricultural output which was 2.9% in 1993-94 and it increased to 5.9% in 1994-95. The industrial as well as service sectors also increased during her second tenure (GoP, 1995:2). Besides this, agricultural sector also experienced a major increase in its different crops. Wheat production was also increased. Cotton, sugarcane, maize, gram as well as tobacco went up except the production of rice. In 1995-96, economic recovery was accelerated and it increased to the GDP growth rate from 4.2 percent to 4.6 percent (GoP, 1997:1-2).

#### **ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT**

Benazir Bhutto, in her second tenure (1993-96) attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) in different infrastructures and projects; like oil exploration, energy production, road construction, telecommunication as well as development of various ports. In 1994, her government declared a major power policy in order to encourage foreign as well as local investment to improve energy sector both in hydel and thermal projects. For this purpose, the government of Benazir Bhutto signed various MoUs of heavy worth, US \$22 billion

of investment in the aforesaid sectors (particularly energy) to convince foreign investors (Shafqat, 1996:246-47).

#### **INTRODUCING PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Benazir Bhutto wanted to provide basic necessities of life i.e. pure drinking water, houses for homeless and also to ensure the provision of education for all. In these circumstances, Benazir Bhutto gave a response with acute planning and commitment. Although, it was an arduous task yet it required a fiscal discipline and a focused policy for the provision of these facilities to the people of Pakistan. However, she tried her level best to shrink unemployment and to curtail poverty. On the other hand, budget deficit and declined social sector in education, health and social welfare projects reduced the speed of social sector services and welfare projects (*The News*, October 19, 1996).

However, her government, in-spite of squeeze funds, tried to launch employment scheme for common man. Lack of revenue collection and useless expenditure kept pressure to the smooth deliverance of social services for her government. In these circumstances, country's debt reached to more than 80 percent in 1993-94. While making the analysis of social sector services and response of her government was active enough to usher various employment schemes.

#### **RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF INFLATION**

Benazir Bhutto, during the period of 1993-96 introduced various economic strategies to minimize the high rate of inflation. People were facing difficulties because of inflation and saving was discouraged. Further, this phenomenon led towards the inequitable distribution of funds and created tension for her government. In this scenario, her government slowed down the inflation rate. Even, food price inflation was declined from 16.7 percent in 1994-95 to 10.1 percent in 1995-96; similarly, consumer prices remained under pressure. In addition, her government excessively relied on direct taxes, made several adjustments in different service charges and also imposed the regulatory duty for contributing higher production cost and the cost to push inflation (GoP, 1997:4). Overall, her government controlled the inflation during her second tenure with effective reforms and revenue collection strategies.

According to the situational theory, leaders use their authority to transform the situation while influencing on external environment. As her government was facing acute inflation, therefore, she used her discretionary powers and ordered to slow down inflation rates in Pakistan. This decisive action of Benazir Bhutto demonstrates her personality that acted according to the demands of the situation for the welfare of the people of Pakistan.

#### **RENDERING EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE POVERTY**

During her second tenure, the poverty continued to rise trends due to many problems and political instability. In post Zia era, various government and successive elections diverted the attention of the politicians towards political gains rather than focusing on public needs. However, PPP government, in 1993-96, made some positive improvement to reduce poverty. There is no denying the fact that poverty reduction required committed as well as sustained efforts. At that juncture, government introduced poverty reduction program through fiscal discipline, credible strategy and efforts to absorb labor in various projects to increase income level (*The News*, October 19, 1996).

Benazir's government made serious efforts to address the causes of poverty and tried to raise the income opportunities for the general public, for this purpose, various programs were introduced to generate job opportunities and to minimize corruption which was a major cause of poverty. Therefore, the response of government to the issue of poverty was based on; provisions of jobs to unemployed labor, to generate more job opportunity and to provide skill based education to all people. Hence, skill based education was also introduced to minimize the unemployment as it was a major factor behind poverty in that era. Economic growth and arrival of foreign direct investment reduced the poverty. Therefore, the 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure of Benazir Bhutto brought various programs to uplift the state of economic affairs of Pakistan with different strategies: like expanding the tax collection base, adjusting structural reforms and focusing on domestic production.

#### **EFFORTS FOR IMPROVING THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN**

Female gender, in Pakistan, historically, faced repression, male chauvinism and various barriers of social customs which debar them

from economic uplift and social participation. Benazir Bhutto, during her second tenure (1993-96), kept her determination for the uplift of women in far flung areas of the country. Benazir Bhutto considered it important and gave special focus to the economic independence of Pakistan's women folk; living in far flung and rural areas of Pakistan. She resolved that it is the responsibility of her government to ameliorate the economic conditions of women and to create jobs for providing them economic independence; to eradicate gender economic disparities in Pakistan (Shaikh, 2000:80-81).

Benazir Bhutto inducted women in National Airline. She opposed any discrimination against women which was gender based. Therefore, the induction of two women as Pilots in Pakistan International Airline (PIA) in flying passenger aircraft exhibited her determinism to bring women in national mainstream to remove socio-economic hurdles for women in Pakistan (Shaikh, 2000:80-81).

#### **RESPONSE TO THE OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS**

During her second tenure (1993-96), the relationship between opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto were not cordial. Benazir Bhutto rejected various allegations which were leveled by opposition like misuse of Gen. Asif Nawaz Janjua's death and her interview with BBC related to help Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi to suppress Sikh Separatist Movement. However, Benazir Bhutto responded to the opposition and answered all the allegations and explained her position on different issues. In these circumstances, opposition politics was creating problems and alleged that she interfered in internal problems of India. However, it was her confession in her interview with BBC which provided an opportunity to opposition to pin-point political weaknesses and shortcomings. The response of Benazir Bhutto was courageous enough and she denied all the negativities related to her administration (*Pakistan Observer*, February 26, 1994).

In September 1994, Nawaz Sharif started a *Karvan-i-Nijat* (March of deliverance) and ushered his appeal to the public for nationwide strike. However, Benazir Bhutto faced agitational politics with resilience and dealt with the situation politically. Although, opposition was willing to use different tactics to overthrow her government or forced her to resign, yet, she exhibited steadfastness and demonstrated patience in difficult times (*The News*, September 18,

1994). Nawaz Sharif stated that Pakistan possessed nuclear bomb, however, this announcement embarrassed Benazir's government and military establishment. Benazir dealt this challenge cautiously and showed political maturity regarding her opponent's irresponsible statement. These kinds of tactics and political maturity were a more wise response by Benazir Bhutto to face the climax of agitational politics of opposition as compared to her first tenure (Amin, 1995:143). Comparatively, in her first tenure, she responded to avenge the opposition. However, in her second tenure, she exhibited political acumen and patience response while facing oppositional politics.

Nawaz Sharif used his political cards tactfully and diverted the attention of the people towards Mehran Bank issue and role of Farooq Laghari in this scandal. For this purpose, Nawaz Sharif guided the journalists and showed them the piece of land at Dera Ghazi Khan which was sold by Farooq Laghari (Ziring, 1996:557). This was a critical situation for Benazir Bhutto because President Laghari belonged to her own party. On the contrary, Benazir did not become sympathetic to Farooq Laghari; however, she ordered to appoint two judicial commissions for investigating Mehran Bank matter as well as Habib Bank scandal separately. Benazir Bhutto became a more rational and responsible Prime Minister while responding to various allegations leveled by opposition (*The Muslim*, June 13, 1994).

In NWFP, the PML (N) established coalition government in collaboration with ANP, Benazir Bhutto imposed the Governor rule in the province and tried to install PPP's government. On this action, Benazir Bhutto faced country wide agitation of opposition. However, her government evolved a strategy to deal the matter of opposition politics and instituted different cases of corruption and misconduct against different political leaders of PML (N) like Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif and Sheikh Rashid (Shafqat, 1997:241).

Even, in her second tenure of premiership, Nawaz Sharif was her political rival and vindictive politics was also in full swing. She responded and answered to the allegations of opposition, exhibited political acumen and faced agitational politics with steadfastness and resilience.

#### **BENAZIR BHUTTO'S RESPONSE TOWARDS FOREIGN POLICY**

Benazir Bhutto's response to foreign policy was proactive and she prioritized regional challenges and smooth relations with

neighboring countries. Her response towards Pakistan India relations was peaceful in approach, patriotic in outlook and visionary as a Prime Minister; to promote regional peace and to steer the poor public towards prosperity. As far as Pak-US relations are concerned, she tried to remove misconceptions and apprehensions regarding nuclear program and signing non-proliferation treaty. She convinced the US authorities, with more mature response that Pakistan had no intention of nuclear proliferation beyond peaceful purposes. This was strategically both a mature and visionary response to this important issue. Additionally, Benazir Bhutto aimed at convincing the US authorities that Kashmir should be regarded as disputed territory and plebiscite should be held according to UN resolution to determine the fate of Kashmiri people. Besides this, it was the successful foreign policy of Benazir Bhutto that led towards the removal of Pressler amendment. Regarding its relation with Afghan, Pakistan government under Benazir Bhutto realized the potential of Taliban. For this purpose, the visit of Naseerullah Babar, the then Interior Minister was an effort to give gesture for the promotion of bilateral trade.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The study conducted the leadership of Benazir Bhutto, a woman Prime Minister of Pakistan, with the lense of Challenge and Response theory as expressed by Arnold J. Toynbee. The study has observed that during her second tenure of premiership, Benazir Bhutto faced multidimensional challenges including political, socio-economic and geo-strategic which destabilised her administratively and politically. She specifically encountered challenges like poor economy, volatile geo-political situation, regional disparities within state of Pakistan, revengeful politics of opposition and existence of imbalance of power structure between President and Prime Minister shortened her period as a Prime Minister during her second tenure. On the other hand, she developed better understanding with army. Besides this, she, inherited economic problems, inflation, unemployment, poverty and economic bankruptcy in the country. The vindictive politics of opposition also created many hurdles for her administrative skills and decisions at international fronts, Pakistan was facing many foreign policy challenges as well. At that time, Pakistan was facing volatile and unsmooth bilateral relations with India. Kashmir dispute was also a challenge for her government in order to establish lasting peace and normalization of relations with India. The relationship with

Afghanistan and formulation of foreign policy was also a great challenge for her government. Pak-US relations, in context of its pressure on Pakistan to roll back its atomic program and Pressler amendment was a huge challenge for her government. She also faced the challenge of Centre-Provinces relations, one of the country's oldest unresolved issues with all provinces in Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto exhibited determined and exquisite response to various contemporary internal and external challenges that Pakistan was facing at that time. During her second tenure, the civil military relations were smooth and she successfully developed a better understanding with military. Further, she contributed to uplift the economy of the country and was disagreed with the policy of nationalization. Benazir Bhutto also introduced economic growth policies, attracted foreign investment and introduced public sector service program. Her response to foreign policy was proactive and she prioritized regional challenges and smooth relations with neighboring countries. Moreover, she contributed with her efforts to internationalize Kashmir issue and showed grave concerns on human rights situation in Kashmir. She also focused on smooth relations with Afghanistan and showed her willingness for direct dialogue with Taliban. Besides this, it was the successful foreign policy of Benazir Bhutto that led towards the removal of Pressler amendment. She tried to remove misconceptions and apprehensions regarding nuclear program and signing non-proliferation treaty. She convinced to US authorities with more mature response that Pakistan had no intention of nuclear proliferation beyond peaceful purposes. Despite her best efforts, she could not fare well and country continued facing challenges and this situation was exploited by anti-PPP and anti-democratic forces that brought about her downfall.

As per theory of A. J. Toynbee, Benazir Bhutto belonged to 'a small creative community' who shaped the future of Pakistani nation because of her leadership qualities which is still a rare phenomenon in the Islamic societies. A male chauvinistic society coupled with religious fervor, a woman struggles against state, society and family for her fundamental rights. The study has vindicated that Benazir belonged to the 'creative minority of Pakistan' and became twice the Prime Minister of Pakistan after great political struggle. She encountered several challenges and responded them accordingly. She as Prime Minister of Pakistan re-emerged with more valour, courage and determination despite being a woman in an Islamic State and society.

## REFERENCES

- Ahsan, Ch. Aitzaz, Interior Minister during Benazir's Premiership (1988-90), interview by the researcher, 6-Zaman Park, Lahore, on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018.
- Ali, Sardar Asif Ahmad (2018). Foreign Minister during Benazir Bhutto's Premiership (1993-96), interview by the researcher, Kachi Kothi, Thokar Niaz Baig, Lahore, on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018.
- Amin, Tahir (1995). The Politics of Confrontation, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35, No. 2:140-46.
- Barki, Shahid Javed (1986). *Pakistan: Fifty Years of Nationhood*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York-London.
- Baxter, Craig & Kennedy, Charles (1998). *Pakistan in 1997*, The American Institute of Pakistan Studies, p.73.
- Dawn*, Karachi November 15, 1995.
- Dawn*, Karachi, December 1, 1995
- Dawn*, October 12, 1994.
- GoP (1995). *Annual Report of State Bank of Pakistan 1994-95*, Islamabad: Ministry of Finance, June 1995, p.2.
- GoP (1997). *Annual Report of State Bank of Pakistan 1995-96*, Islamabad: Ministry of Finance, October 1997, pp.1-2.
- Hussain, Zahid (1996). The President's Dilemma, *Newsline*, August 1996.
- Khan, Hamid (2005). *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.785. Retrieved: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645022>
- Newsline*, Karachi June, 1994.
- Padrino, Mercedes. (2004). *Benazir Bhutto*, Chelsea House, ISBN-10:0791077322.
- Pakistan Observer*, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1994.
- Pakistan Observer*, Islamabad, February 26, 1994.
- Porte, Robert La (1996). Pakistan in 1996: Starting Over Again, *Asian Survey* Vol.XXXVII, No.2:118-125.
- Shafqat, Saeed (1997). *Civil Military Relation in Pakistan: From Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto*. USA: West view Press.
- Shaikh, Muhammad Ali (2000). *Benazir Bhutto: A Political Biography*, Oriental Books Publishing House, Karachi.
- Talbot, Ian (1996). *Pakistan: A Modern History*, Oxford university Press.
- The Muslim & The Nation*, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1994.
- The News* (Islamabad), October 19, 1996.
- The News*, Rawalpindi, September 18, 1994.
- Ziring, Lawrence (1996). *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, Oxford University Press, pp.566-567.