
**SINDH AGAINST THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OF
GEN. ZIAUL HAQ REGIME: A STUDY OF MRD MOVEMENT 1981-88**

Zahid Ali Mangi

Assistant Professor, D. J. Sindh Government Science College, Karachi

Email: prof.zahidmangi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

On 5th July 1977 Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Ziaul Haq overthrew an elected government of Z.A. Bhutto imposed martial law and assumed the post of Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA), dissolved national and provincial assemblies, arrested the political leadership of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) and promised to nation that elections will be held within 90 days but he deviated from his promise and continued military rule. This research article will investigate how democratic political forces united under one umbrella for restoring democracy and ending military rule. All democratic political parties allied and formed a Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in February 1981. The alliance started the civil disobedience movement in two phases 1981 and 1983 unfortunately, the movement was restricted only to Sindh. The movement forced the landed gentry to participate in the agitation if they had not participated they would have lost the elections, this fear dragged them into agitation which was against the wishes of rulers. The democratic movement constrained military authorities to restore democracy, and people avenged dictatorship through balloting and defeated pro-military candidates in general elections. The struggle successfully restored democracy.

Keywords: Dictatorship, Democracy, MRD Movement, Military, Sindh

INTRODUCTION

The military directly ruled the country for more than half of its existence. After the fall of Dhaka, the military army lost its control over political institutions and civil administration and temporarily withdrew from power. The military commanders reluctantly decided to replace Gen. Yahya Khan with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as President and CMLA. Bhutto was the first who assumed the title of civilian CMLA. Throughout the Bhutto era, the army was uncomfortable with civilian authorities. Slowly and gradually military regained its lost power and prestige. Bhutto's popularity graph was high in rural Sindh and Punjab; he had no fear of defeat in elections. To defeat Bhutto all anti-PPP religio-political parties formed an election coalition named Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The elections were held in March 1977, and PPP swept the elections of the National Assembly and two provincial assemblies-Sindh and Punjab. PNA rejected election results and blamed rigging and started an agitation demanding the resignation of Bhutto

and re-election. Mr. Bhutto did not concede to PNA demands and believed coercive power to crush the movement but his assessment was wrong, violent actions and oppressive measures encouraged protesters.

COAS Gen. Zia in one of the meetings with Bhutto had advised Bhutto to resolve the issue politically and avoid using force against PNA workers and leaders, if he failed martial law would be imposed. Unfortunately, Bhutto ignored his advice and claimed that the senior hierarchy of the army was with him. The dialogues between the government and PNA started with the distrust phenomenon, trust deficit convinced the army that there was no hope of agreement between them. A small but powerful section of the army still considered itself the sole guardian of national interests (Muqem, 1963:63), these feelings rise in the army at a time when civilian authorities' performance is very low and failed to restore government writ. The restive army approved 'Operation Fair Play' and argued that the disintegration of the Pakistan army was unacceptable to Gen. Haq (Arif, 1995:155). On 5th July 1977 army moved out of barracks seized democratic institutions and imposed martial law. National, provincial assemblies, and Senate were dissolved, and banned political parties. COAS Gen.Zia became CMLA and assured the nation that within 90 days elections will be held and powers will be transferred to people's representatives. In addition, he assured the nation that neither he had political ambition nor did the army go to be taken away from its profession of soldiering. Justifying the coup military leadership claimed that imposing martial law was to save the country from catastrophe both sides were armed to the teeth had the army not intervened Pakistan has become another Lebanon (Guardian, London, 24 July 1977). Eric Nordlinger describes in his book, that the military has more evidence against the ill performance and failure of civilian governments. It becomes easier to justify the overthrow of governments whose performance failures have lost the respect of soldiers and civilians alike.....the military only acts against less than legitimate governments. (Nordlinger, 1977:193). To administrate the state affairs with civilian color CMLA Gen. Zia included PNA and anti-Bhutto forces in the cabinet.

On 30 September 1977, Ms. Nusrat Bhutto, wife of Z A Bhutto in one of the election campaigning threatened martial law authorities that if democracy derailed it would harm the country. She claimed PPP would sweep the polls and would remove Gen. Haq from his post. PPP leadership succeeded in winning the sympathies of the masses. On 1st October 1977 CMLA Gen. Haq suddenly deviated from his promise and announced the postponement of October elections for an indefinite period. PNA welcomed while PPP condemned the decision. The decision eroded the credibility and reputation of the government and lost confidence in the masses. Mr. Bhutto called the postponement an act without justification (Arif, 1995:149). The postponement decision also confirmed the doubts that the rulers are not sincere in transferring powers to elected peoples' representatives.

FORMATION OF MRD

In the first quarter of 1980, the leaders and workers of democratic parties realized the fact that no political party was in a position to start anti-government agitation. PPP leadership under workers' pressure forgot past wrongdoings of its rival parties in the larger interests of democracy and agreed to forge a coalition against military rule. PPP chairperson Nusrat Bhutto called the CEC meeting at 70 Clifton Karachi attended by 23 delegates and drafted the terms and conditions for a coalition. The participants approved the draft unanimously and authorized the chairperson to amend it when needed. Ms.Nusrat Bhutto asked Piyar Ali Allana to contact leaders of anti-government parties to find out their reaction to the draft. Allana met Asghar Khan, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Mufti Mehmood, Pir Pagara, and Khawaja Khairuddin, all agreed on PPP's draft, Pir Pagara and Shah Ahmed Noorani declined to become allies against the regime. Allana also met PNP Chief, Ghous Bux Bizenjo and, NDP chief Sherbaz Mazari both demanded the inclusion of provincial autonomy in the draft (Ilyas, 1985:20), PPP rejected the demand for provincial autonomy. Allana convened the meeting to finalize the terms and conditions of a coalition. Some leaders objected first and last points of the draft later these points were amended (Weekly 'Mayar', Karachi, 28 June 05 July 1986), all participants signed the amended draft but Muslim League (Pir Pagara) represented by Muhammad Khan Junejo and JUP leader Shah Ahmed Noorani turned down to sign. Pir Pagara viewed the coalition would benefit PPP and the Bhutto family (Ilyas, 1985:28-29). Thus, the diverse political parties formed a coalition called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). Khawaja Khairuddin General Secretary and Mairaj Muhammad Khan became its joint Secretary, Nusrat Bhutto its permanent head, and its president would rotationally be changed each month among the component parties. MRD also set up its branch in London in 1981; Ghulam Mustafa Khar was its first president.

MRD was a temporary alliance of eight later the number reached 11 like-minded political parties with the object of ousting the military from power and restoration of democracy. The alliance provided extraordinary strength to leaders and workers against dictatorship. Making political coalitions is never to end the separate identity of a party. Bhutto's execution grew the popularity graph of the Bhutto family and made it a symbol of resistance against the military dictatorship. The anti-Bhutto elements including Jamaat-i-Islami propagated against MRD and called it an attempt to revive Bhuttoism and destabilize the process of Islamization.

SET BACK TO MRD AT INITIAL LEVEL

The MRD managed countrywide protest rallies and demonstrations to mobilize the masses forcing Gen. Zia to suspend martial law and hold elections. People's enthusiasm for democracy was on the rise. The huge

participation of the masses was proof that they want the restoration of democracy and an end to military rule. The mass protests had upset the military junta and challenged its legitimacy.

The first severe blow to the movement was the hijacking of the PIA by the Al Zulifqar Organization (AZO) led by Mir Murtaza Bhutto on 2nd March 1981. The hijackers forcibly diverted the route to Kabul, the Capital of Afghanistan. Mir Murtaza Bhutto accepted the responsibility but PPP leadership disclaimed involvement charges. The government skillfully linked it to a conspiracy against Islamization and blamed India provided logistic support to the AZO. The incident disarrayed MRD ranks Sardar Qayoom in a press conference blamed PPP was involved in a hijacking causing a severe blow to the movement. So remove PPP from the alliance because its destructive activities not only damaged the efforts of restoration of democracy but also threatened the security of the country (*Nawa-e-Wakt*, 21 March 1981). In addition, he declared PPP security risk and dissolved MRD, later Qayoom left MRD. If terrorism is committed in the name of democracy it only benefits the dictatorship. The martial law authorities thrashed the incident to crush the movement. Within the week following the hijacking, one thousand people were rounded up and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment (Amnesty International, MSS.34/4/1/Pk12, p.2). The incident caused a lot of damage to the movement. The political workers were scared to participate actively, avoiding arrests. Even if there was a little resistance continued in Sindh and the leaders and workers of other provinces separated from agitation the authorities temporarily suppressed the movement.

MRD'S CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

After two years the second phase of the movement started with a new spirit and series of a demonstrations had been started in May 1983. On 10th May 1983 in a press conference MRD leaders announced the schedule of the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement against the government starting from 14 August. On the 5th of July the day Gen. Zia brought a military coup that was observed as black day, countrywide demonstrations and rallies, and sit-ins were given at various locations in the country, and police arrested several people and leaders who later were granted bails. Following were the main points of the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements:

- a) The people will be asked not to pay Zakat, Usher, and government due,
- b) Travel without a ticket on railway and government buses,
- c) Hold meetings, observe strikes, wheel jam strikes,
- d) People will not say to resign from government jobs.

On 14 August 1983 MRD started the civil disobedience movement from Jinnah's mausoleum in Karachi under the leadership of veteran Sindh politician Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the acting Chairman of the PPP. The protesters broke all the barriers and reached *Jalsagah* (meeting place). At Jinnah's tomb, the scoundrels of Zia Hamayati Tahreek attacked unarmed MRD workers. Police reached late on the spot and fired tear gas shells to disperse the mob, controlled the situation and MRD leaders addressed the participants.

The leaders of MRD also adopted the 'Court Arrest' strategy of leaders first then workers. The sole purpose of this strategy was morally pressurize the military authorities for holding free, fair, impartial, and transparent polls. Jatoi became the first who gave court arrest in Karachi. In Lahore, 16 political leaders including Farooq Leghari and Major (Rtd) Ejaz Ahmed were arrested from Minar-i-Pakistan (Viewpoint, p.14). The head of NDP, Khan Wali Khan, and Begum Naseem Wali Khan gave court arrest in Peshawar. In Quetta, Ali Ahmed Kurd, former Secretary-General of PPP-Baluchistan, and Rehman Bugti were arrested (Ibid). In Peshawar, 70 persons were detained at the Masjid Mahabat Khan (Ahmed, 1984:32). In the initial days, the intensity of the movement was at its peak in the whole country later Sindh became the center of agitation. The momentum was purely a Sindh fervor. The law enforcement agencies arrested hundreds of agitators and flogged them masses' morale did not go down even after violent actions.

First time in history, rural Sindh participated in agitational politics. However, in the anti-One Unit movement educated Sindhis participated which increased political awareness in Sindh, but in MRD educated and uneducated people stood against dictatorial rule. The military rulers were confident that Sindh Waderas and Jagirdars would not go against their wishes but their participation put water on their expectations. It was people's pressure that pushed them to support the movement. The minority of landlords, pirs, and Gadi Nashen separated themselves from agitation and supported the military ruler. The farmers at many places refused to work in the fields that belonged to pro-military landlords. According to Abdul Hameed Jatoi, a Sindh nationalist the Waderas is basically 'Buzdil' [timid] pushed into this agitation due to pressure from the people, so it is essentially a question of survival for him (Mushahid, 1990:46). There was much resentment against the regime in Sindh as compared to other provinces.

Law and Order Situation in Sindh

In Sindh PPP, Tahreek-e-Istaqlal (TI), Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI F), and Sindh Awami Tahreek (SAT) observed huge rallies. The regime had no idea about the intensity of the movement which was beyond expectations. SAT arranged hefty rallies in the districts of Thatta, Dadu, Larkana, and

Sanghar hundred of its workers were arrested and sent to jail. On 22 August 1983 police fired on protesters in Khairpur, killed one person, and arrested 32 within two days including four PPP women- Noor Jahan Soomro, Farida Khanam, Suraya Patel. The workers of Sindhiyani Tahreek (a women's wing of SAT) Fatima Kousar, Kulsoom, Maryam Rahoo, Shabana Palejo, Ruqaya Palejo, and Sakina also gave court arrest in Hyderabad on 8 and 9 September 1983. Chairman SAT Mr. Rasool Bux Palejo exploited the current situation and demanded legitimate provincial rights and provincial autonomy, due share in the central jobs and authority in decision-making power in provincial matters, and allocation of due share in financial resources for Sindh.

Military Operations in Sindh against Agitators

In August 1983 the angry mob damaged government property, set fire to government records, destroyed railway lines, blocked roads, and challenged government writ in rural Sindh. The blockaded highways and railway routes caused a 30% drop in goods delivered to Punjab (The Muslim, 3 October 1983). To restore peace and bring the situation to normalcy President Gen. Haq deployed 45000 army troops in Sindh. In upper Sindh Cantonments and check-posts were built. The army commandos started targeted guerrilla operations in Sindh, the troops searched house to house to flush out agitators whom they referred to as 'dacoits and miscreants'. The first military operation took place in Tayyab Thaheem village near Sanghar and Khairpur Nathan Shah. The air force dropped bombs and shot (Talbot, 1988:134) several people received major and minor injuries. The second tragic incident happened in Punhal Khan Chandio a small village near Sakrand where some 500 villagers had taken out a protest rally on 29 September 1983 against the recent bombing of the air force. The villagers blocked National Highway and recited the Holy Quran. Suddenly a convoy of the army passed by the demonstrators chanted antigovernment slogans which made the troops fury and opened fire on unarmed villagers killing 16 villagers on spot, 54 were injured (<http://criticalppp.com/archives/46103>) several were arrested and trucks drove over their dead bodies (<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/pakistanis-sindhi-struggle-democracy-1981-1984>). The third tragic incident took place on 17 October 1984; the students of three universities situated in Jamshoro politically affiliated with Jeay Sindh Students Federation (JSSF) were on their way to Larkana. When buses reached Thori Phatak near Manjhand, district Dadu, the troops gunned down four students and 15 wounded survivors were arrested. TI leaders condemned the army's torture against unarmed agitators and warned president Zia that brutal maltreatment of the people could pose a serious threat to the country (*Dawn*, 23 August 1983). During military operations, the houses were burnt and cattle were taken into custody by the

army (Lamb,1991:86, 127). The corpses did not carry out an autopsy; the print media hid the actual data on dead bodies. In addition, many agitators were arrested and convicted in false cases; they were awarded severe punishments from military summary courts. The agitators were declared robbers and killed in fake police encounters. The extra-judicial killings and fake encounters spread a wave of panic and fear in rural Sindh. The nationalist parties of Sindh and MRD condemned the army's brutal actions and protested. Following the protests, hundreds of Sindhi nationalists were arrested and trials began in military summary courts and were awarded severe punishments including flogging publicly. The prisons of Sindh were overloaded. The army cruelly assaulted innocent, peaceful, and armless Sindhi protesters. Gen. Ziaul Haq used the army to crush the movement ruthlessly. To ensure the safety of highways connecting Sindh with the Punjab army had been deployed. The army removed the obstacles encountered in goods transportation. The army arrested more than 20,000 agitators and restored peace.

Sympathizing with Sindhis Indian PM Indra Gandhi in parliament expressed great concerns over the merciless killings of innocent Sindhis and criticized the military's brutal actions, saying India would support all democratic movements in Pakistan (Sayeed, 1991:223). The statement healed the wounds of the Sindhi people and gave them enthusiasm but was widely condemned by military authorities, the ruling elites were suspicious that India strategically assist the agitation albeit it was purely a national movement run on its resources.

President Zia's Efforts for the Political Settlement

In December 1983 MRD suddenly called off the civil disobedience movement. PPP changed its strategy from confrontation to reconciliation. The first initial step of reconciliation was the release of Benazir Bhutto from solitary confinement on 10th January 1984, Nusrat Bhutto was already released and sent to London for treatment. S.M Abbasi the Governor of Sindh later in an interview revealed that her release was a result of a secret understanding between Benazir and the military president. The main points of understanding were: (a) Ms. Benazir Bhutto would not criticize Zia, (b) She would not call his name. She would not make a character assassination of the armed forces, and (c) She would not issue statements for the restoration of democracy (*Nawa-i-Wakt*, 17 November 1986).

Gen. Arif had confirmed Abbasi's version (Arif, 1995:196) but Benazir Bhutto denied the charges of any secret deal (India Today, February 15, 1984). In another interview, Benazir Bhutto expressed concerns that She was also astonished at her sudden release and claimed that she still did not understand the mystery (The Times Magazine, 17 January 1984). Her

departure frustrated PPP workers. She revived the MRD London chapter and stated I decided to mount an international campaign to expose the regime's maltreatment of the 40,000 political prisoners in Pakistan (Benazir Bhutto, 2008:255).

The military authorities realized that brutal actions against agitators caused disgrace for the government and sympathies for the victims. Some PPP leaders had secret contacts with military authorities. Zia had a soft corner for Jatoi and believed that Mr. Jatoi could play the role of mediator. There was a lot of flexibility in Jatoi's attitude after being released from jail. He stated politics of brotherhood and tolerance should be preferred over politics of violence and intimidation (Ilyas, 1995:151). On 18th December 1983, Jatoi demanded releasing of all political prisoners. By May 1984 all detained MRD leaders were released from jail. Talking to the press president Zia said, continuity in the political process was a precondition for achieving political and economic stability of the country in the future (*Dawn* 27 September 1983). The only way to get the country out of the crisis was meaningful negotiations acceptable to both, the government and MRD.

The sudden departure of the Bhutto ladies to London created a leadership crisis because no one was nominated by them and workers accepted the Bhutto family as their leader. The martial law authorities attempted to settle the matters with MRD, but there was little chance of success. Some hardliners in MRD, the leaders of small parties, discouraged the dialogue process because they had fear that PPP might get a big share in the next government if an agreement arrived. PPP was a powerful component in MRD and believe people's power would compel military authorities for holding general elections soon. The purpose of the movement was to defeat dictatorship politically and persuaded authorities to restore political institutions. The military regime knew that talks with anyone other than Bhutto ladies could not be productive and excluding PPP a sustainable democratic government could not be viable.

President Zia's Visit to Sindh

The volcano of loathing feelings against the military establishment had ripened and erupted in 1983. Amid the resistance movement, President Haq toured Sindh and faced severe resistance at several places; the protestors had attempted to kill him people did not allow him to land in Dadu (Chandio & Ahmad, 2011:5-6). President Haq during his visit to Sindh reiterated his claim that the government creating a healthy climate for the peaceful transfer of power from the military to the elected representatives of the people....political process should take place within a political framework there was no room for violence, disruption or subversion in politics (*Dawn*, 26 September 1983).

President Zia was briefed that the Sindhi youths had reservations against the policies of the central government controlled by the military establishment. The central government continuously exploited Sindh's financial resources and denied their due share in government jobs. Higher unemployment ratio, less allocation of financial resources, and economic deprivation increased poverty in rural Sindh. On the Sindh quota, non-Sindhies had been recruited for federal and provincial jobs. The Sindhis have fears that the increment in interprovincial migration will convert them into a minority in their province. They sought redress for their injustices. In the Bhutto era, they gave them legitimate rights to end their years-old deprivations. They were being deprived again in the present government.

Zia-GM Syed Meeting

To counter PPP's growing popularity and influence in rural Sindh military authorities needed the support of Sindhi nationalists and PPP deviators. GM Syed head of Jeay Sindh Tahreek (JST) was an arch-rival of PPP who had vociferously opposed the MRD movement. Sindhis completely felt alienated and helpless since independence. This sense of deprivation brought Sindhis close to the nationalist political party 'Jeay Sindh Tahreek'. Sindhis extremely felt that their interest was not safe in the current regime. Syed also claimed that if martial law was maintained, the country's age will decrease; maybe the present government wanted it (*Daily Jang*, 6 May 1983). In December 1984 President Gen. Zia met GM Syed in Liaquat Hospital Hyderabad. Syed expressed concerns that Punjab was exploiting Sindh's resources and the military killed innocent unarmed people in various fake encounters and demanded redresses of all sorts of injustices. President Haq persuaded GM Syed to support him in the referendum, and Syed assured him of maximum support. Syed had no sympathy for Zia, but in PPP enmity he favored him, in addition, in past the Punjabi establishment used PPP for diluting nationalist sentiments in Sindh. GM Syed appealed to the Sindhi youths to join and support Jeay Sindh Tahreek (JST) a movement to make Sindhu Desh, the movement for independent Sindh. The slogan of Sindhu Desh appealed to Sindhi-educated youths, but rural Sindhi upheaval for the restoration of democracy reduced the significance of Syed's struggle for Sindhu Desh (Korejo, 2000:109-110). Sindhis people always struggled for democracy and played a vital role against dictatorial rule, whether Ayub's martial law or Zia's brutal rule never hesitated to give sacrifices for the restoration of democracy. The majority of the Sindhi population disassociated from GM Syed and favoured PPP. The workers of SAT were the fuel of MRD in 1986 and were arrested on the charges of firing on law enforcement agencies.

Table-1
ANALYSIS OF ARRESTS MADE IN 1983 AND 1986
PROTEST MOVEMENT IN SINDH

Sr. #	Party	1983	1986
1	PPP	72.39%	65%
2	SAT	13.45%	21.70
3	JST	9.5%	13.3

Source: Compiled from Daily *Muslim*, Islamabad, August-September 1983 & 1986.

SUCCESSSES OF MRD MOVEMENT

The movement forced the military president to hold the elections and compelled powerful military leadership to transfer the power to elected representatives of the people. Free, fair, and transparent elections are prerequisites for the smooth transfer of power to the people. President Zia assured the nation that partyless elections would be held in March 1985. Ansari commission suggested a partyless election which meant to strengthen the military's grip on state affairs if democracy is restored. MRD opposed partyless elections, PPP and TI favored contesting partyless elections., On 19 January 1985, at a meeting of MRD's CEC held in Abbottabad it was unanimously decided to boycott partyless general elections. PPP reluctantly accepted the decision. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi represented PPP, Khuwaja Khairuddin of Muslim League, Ghous Bux Bizenjo of Pakistan National Party, and Moulana Fazalur Rehman favoured partyless elections, while Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan of Pakistan Democratic Party, Khan Abdul Wali Khan of National Awami Party, and Asghar Khan of Tahreek-i- Istaqlal opposed (Hymen, Ghayur & Kaushik, 1989:52).

The MRD wanted to use the boycott decision as a weapon to put more pressure on the regime to declare party-based elections; however, it did not work out like that (Mirza, 1986:78). PPP was the strongest friction in MRD with a commanding majority of voters supporting the boycott decision to maintain integrity and solidarity of alliance but affected its credibility because other components were small groups that had little chance to win few seats in elections and were regional. For them, the partyless election was deaf and dumb because public meetings or processions had been proscribed. (Rizvi, 1986:106). On the other hand, Zia was preparing himself an extra layer of pseudo-legitimacy through elections on a non-party basis. These elections were meant of institutionalizing his authoritarian rule (Massom, 1985:195).

The decision to boycott also bothered ruling elites they persuaded MRD leaders to review its decision. MRD declined and argued that partyless elections had no credibility they would participate only if elections would be held under the 1973 constitution. Some members of PPP belonging to Punjab

disagreed with the party's decision to boycott, left party allegiance, and contested elections as an independent candidates. The Sindhis PPP members disfavoured it (Mirza, 1986:83).

The first ever partyless general elections under Gen. Zia were held on 25 and 28 February 1985 for National and Provincial Assemblies respectively. The election results disappointed ruling elites, the majority of pro-establishment candidates lost their seats in the new parliament their defeat indicated the unpopularity of the military regime (Ramu, 1991:137). The defeated individuals were more loyal to the military establishment. According to BBC, some 40 former PPP members who contested and won the seats (J. Henry & Maskiell, 1985:598) were expelled from the party later they joined the ruling Muslim League. President Zia had fear of PPP's popularity, holding partyless elections to restrict PPP in the national assembly. Partyless parliament was easy to control as compared to a politically affiliated assembly. The elections were free and fair the army did not interfere the proof was the defeat of ministers and members of majlis e-Shoora.

MRD Boycott Decision was a Political Blunder

The boycott decision was a blunder; left the ground empty for pro-establishment candidates. Sartaj Aziz stated the election boycott of 1985 was wrong because the boycott left substantial political space for the political coalition Gen. Ziaul Haq was trying to build (Aziz, 2009:69). MRD failed in putting a negative impact on turnout as it did in a referendum; the people rejected the boycott call and actively participated in the election. The higher turnout in National Assembly was reported at 53.69 percent while for provincial assemblies, it was 57.37 percent disappointed MRD leadership (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/565678-class-1985>). But in constituencies where PPP or MRD leader's influence was high, the turnout was below 20 percent.

DEMOCRACY RESTORED UNDER THE SHADOW OF MILITARY ELITES

The 1985 elections provided more or lesser legitimacy to military rule. On 23rd March 1985, the new parliament elected a Sindhi politician Muhammad Khan Junejo as leader of the house. Junejo ensured parliamentarians that in December martial law will be lifted to maintain the credibility of the entire civilization process (Richter, 1986:211). Eventually, the president lifted martial law on 30 December 1985 but retained two posts COAS and president, the real power was in uniform which he did not shed off. Though military elites agreed to restore political institutions and transfer power to elected representatives but were not ready at any cost to lose grip over internal and external affairs. The Military president did not allow

elected representatives to change the course of policies (Siddeqa, 2007:87). Junejo's government paid a heavy price for lifting martial law and passed Eighth Constitutional Amendment in September 1985 for the restoration of democratic rule. The amendment had misbalanced the power equation between the president and prime minister and empowered the president to dissolve the national assembly. The amendment permanently weakened democratic institutions and made a rubber stamp parliament without authority. All powers were centered in the president's office prime minister became titular. Junejo and his team without coming into confrontation with the president performed their responsibilities. Every dictator reduces the role and powers of elected institutions.

After the rigged referendum Zia was allowed to continue as president in military uniform for five next years. The semi-civilian president constituted a politician-military coalition so that he could remain in power and rule the country for a long time. Junejo also pressurized President Haq to relinquish the post of army chief and continue as civilian president but he declined. Not shedding a uniform confirmed the doubts that he had unknown fears from his constituency and needed maintenance of connections with an armed force, a real power base, without a uniform, he was no more in power.

Prime minister Junejo's Five-point program enhanced his image and popularity. To counter the growing popularity of Junejo PPP leaders demanded midterm elections. MRD regretted its decision to boycott of 1985 elections, now it kept a bird's eye on the performance of the Junejo government. It arranged demonstrations and demanded a midterm election. PPP mobilized its voters and arranged public rallies to exert pressure on the ruling party in order to hold mid-term elections. The mid-term elections could be held if the following conditions had existed:

- a) There were complaints of widespread rigging in the elections.
- b) The voter turnout was short,
- c) As a result of the elections, the government failed to solve the problems of the people.

There were no such situations existed, and no rigging complaints were registered, Junejo enjoyed the confidence of the parliamentarians to complete his constitutional term but unfortunately, the military president removed him using 52 (B) of the eighth amendment of the 1973 constitution in May 1988.

CONCLUSION

The existence of the country can be maintained through democracy only, but sadly it was brutally destroyed by the non-elected institution which had made the political institutions barren. Democracy is the continuous process of gradually moving towards political maturity but when it reaches maturity a military dictator strangled it. It is critical to say that all non-

elected forces are allied and closed all roads leading to democracy, here a question arises why are political forces dispelled against dictatorship.? For a sustainable democratic process maximum provincial autonomy is essential.

Pro-democratic political groups allied under the banner of MRD to restore democracy and get rid of military dictatorship. The use of brutal force against agitators could not reduce the morale of democratic forces. The movement highlighted the 'National Question' with great intensity. The movement enhanced political consciousness among rural and uneducated Sindhi people who stood against dictatorship for their due rights and provincial autonomy, but PPP exploited the strength of the Sindhi people for regaining lost power. The continuous struggle against dictatorship proved that the Sindhi people remained steadfast in restoring democracy and their sacrifices never went in vain.

The PPP's growing popularity caused a tremendous loss to nationalist politics of GM Syed in Sindh that disassociated the majority of Sindhi people with his program of Sindhu Desh and they continued the struggle for the restoration of democracy. The movement helped in growing and strengthen PPP's political base. The movement united the Sindhi people against the center's exploitation and military dictatorship under the PPP umbrella which trembled the foundations of the power corridors.

In this movement, the Sindhis politically accepted their existence from the military establishment. The movement awakened the Sindhi people politically and recognized their legitimate due rights. After the success of the movement, PPP and Sindhi nationalists used the 'Sindh Card'. The term Sindh Card referred to the struggle for the acquisition of Sindh's legitimate political and economic rights. After the 1970 elections, the 1985 elections to some extent were transparent and without the intervention of the military establishment, the proof was that pro-military candidates lost their seats. The people's participation in the movement compelled military dictators to transfer power to elected representatives. The restoration of democracy was not the issue of Sindh province. The future of the country lies only in democracy with full provincial autonomy.

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