



LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS OF EXPLAINED GOALS OF BASIC DEMOCRACIES OF AYUB'S ERA

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ABSTRACT

Devolution of power from the central to the local level is arguably one of the most significant features of the democratic system. In Pakistan, the military regimes surpassed the democratic government in establishing the local governments and Ayub Khan was the pioneer for introducing the system known as Basic Democracies. Launching the system, he explained various goals to empower the people, devolving the authority at the grass-root level. In practice, a setup with bureaucracy's central position and interference was developed, which generated reservations among the democratic circles. The study has raised the question about the explained goals, which were designed to empower the masses, but could not achieve this agenda. Here is the question about the mechanism of the system, why not it supported to gain the desired goals and what were the drawbacks in their implementation? Looking at empirical evidence and examining the existing body of literature, the study has hypothesized that the regime used the Basic Democracies to prolong and legitimize the rule, promoting politics of patronage. The findings suggest that explained goals were designed to save the regime's face, not for empowering the people; however, they created a little bit of awareness, but curtailed the political culture that proved fatal, generating the resistance against the regime.

Keywords: Electoral College, Legitimacy, Decentralization, Basic Democracy, Bureaucracy

INTRODUCTION

Local government is a broader concept, referring to the administration of local affairs by the residents of the area through the representative bodies. Being a local unit, it is authorized to manage a relatively small area, which is a well-defined part of the subdivision of a federating unit or central government. Its authority is restricted to a local territory, which comprises of a village, or group of adjacent villages, a town, a city, or a district. It decentralizes the power, sharing the liabilities with lower offices for delivery of public services. Thus, the system performs different functions in hierarchical order with other

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organizations and institutions for the uplift of the local community. In this system, the center does not lose any of its power, but only delegates certain powers to local units for better administration and efficient management. It's crucial attribute is its representative and responsible nature, which makes it accountable to the local community. The system is aimed to resolve the social and civic problems of the residents of a specific area, but the same solution may not necessarily be appropriate for other such areas. The system works for development and empowerment of the masses, focusing on respective territorial units to gain the desired results. It provides opportunity to determine choices of masses at the grass root level, influencing the direction of change with their ability to have control over tangible and intangible resources. Local government "indicates the management of local affairs and services by popularly elected councils, even within the area administered by a council" (Jackson, 1965:23).

This institution also provides leadership for the higher levels' positions and work as a nursery to train the future leadership. It assists to improve and exhibit the personal abilities. The work experience of local bodies is helpful for qualifying to the higher assemblies (Jabeen, 2019:87). The system helps in the articulation of public needs with the manifestation of microscopic interests of the locality. The administrative liabilities of the higher levels (provincial and central governments) are lessened by assigning the local tasks to the local units, sparing their time for focusing the crucial matters of the national interest (Agarwal, 1991).

The study is divided into different headings to discuss the local government system, known as Basic Democracies. After introduction, literature review is included. Next heading is research methodology and theoretical framework. Role of local government in the subcontinent and local government in Pakistan are the subsequent headings. After it, the structure of the basic democracies is explained. Last part provides discussion and findings with conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A wide range of literature has been reviewed to cover the local government and decentralization of authority. The literature review highlights the causes, achievements and failures of the system. In a democratic system, the local bodies offer an option to the masses to

become the part of nation-building process. It also provides chances for active participation in decision-making process (Muttalib and Khan, 1983). Oates (1972:55) viewed that “each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalize benefits and costs of such provision”. His propositions identify that local government is in the position to understand the concerns of local residents and work for their wellbeing with service delivery. The intentions and motives behind decentralization are to empower the regimes at central level and getting legitimacy through local bodies, but in Pakistan, provincial governments were resentful about transfer of funds and authority through this system as their role was curtailed (Sulman, 2019). Zaidi (2005) analyzed that decentralization of any federal-level power was never made by the military regimes. They share responsibilities with the district level instead of provincial level. In fact, rather than devolving authority, it is actually centralized and empowered the central institutions only. Ironically, in the history of local government, the reforms reveal that all the three military regimes introduced them for prolonging the control of the country. Observing the Basic Democracies, Jahan (1972:112) commented, instead of linking the government to local level, the officials in the councils controlled the system. Thus the expectation of working of this institution as the political parties never accomplished. President Ayub regarded the system of BDs as the most important democratic reform, while the same feelings were shared by the subsequent military regimes (Cheema et.al., 2005). The BD-1959 invigorated and strengthened the meaningful status of the civil bureaucracy, whereby the district authorities became the lynchpins of the administration (UNDP, 2014). Ayub Khan was the first leader after independence, who established Basic Democracies in an organized manner (Rizvi, 2009). Ziring (1971:24) observed that instead of empowerment, the public was disenfranchised by the BDs and wanted to change it, before it enshrined in the constitution. The system is generally considered a representative institution, having the liability of enforcing the essential policies and programmes for the administration of local governance. However, the system faced different challenges in Pakistan, including poverty, under-development, economic crisis, instability and unsustainable development (Quddus, 1981). Zia-ul-Haq promulgated the system through the 1979 Ordinance and Pervaiz Musharraf brought

the Devolution of Power Plan. The plan also introduced significant reforms in LGS as it had been facing multifarious problems since the inception of Pakistan (Anjum and Ahmad, 2001; Paracha, 2003). Mahmood (2001) assessed that the military governments' economic and public administration reforms' agenda was to bring change, particularly empowering people at the grass-root level. Reviewing the political system of country, the author has identified a number of external and internal challenges to the system like un-structured development, lack of funding, security, public accountability and economic decline.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The study is based on qualitative research, using the case study method to explain decentralization under the Basic Democracies. The case study approach focuses on organization, agency, group or individual instead of dealing with variables (Schwandt, 1997). According to Yeager (2007:855), "A case is description of a management situation based on interview, archival, naturalistic observation and other data, constructed to be sensitive to context in which management behavior takes place and to its temporal restrains." Yanow et.al., (2008) called the case study as a detailed examination of single phenomenon to get knowledge of processes, having causal inferences, testing hypothesis, theory-building and testing them. These theories are helpful for proving and justifying the hypothesis. A single in-depth case study is discussed here. The collected data through different sources is subjected to an interpretative analysis. The study has employed the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources mostly based on Local Government Ordinances and other orders released by the governments. The secondary sources include books, scholarly journals, reports, newspapers, etc.

The study has examined the system of BDs through the framework of its explained goals and structural changes in consequences of their implementation. These goals have been taken from the different statements and speeches of Ayub Khan. The first explained goal was introduction of a brand of democracy that would be launched from lower side and gradually moving upward (Mellema, 1961). Advocating this idea, Ayub called Western democracy as inappropriate for masses of Pakistan due to their illiteracy and unawareness about such institutions and a weaker government would

be established in pursuing the representative democracy (Khan, 1967). The second was decentralization of authority in hierarchical order and the formation of the institutions to acquire local participation for socio-economic development of the country. The third was to integrate the local aspirations with national objective. The system was assumed to increase an overall quality and effectiveness of the governance (Jahan, 1972). Fourth goal was the empowerment of people at the grass-root level, enabling them to get services at door-step. In choosing their representatives, the people would not travel to neighbouring areas to cast their vote for the persons, with whom they were not familiar. They would be able to have direct access to the elected representatives (Rahman, 1963). The fifth was the responsiveness of the system to public demands, making sustainable development, through closer contact between the governing bodies and local authorities (Khan, 1967). Apart from these goals, it was claimed that system would ensure economic growth and equitable distribution of benefits for local communities without urban and rural division. No party-politics, or party intrigues, and politicians' pressures would be there, which were part of the former assemblies (Rahman, 1963: 4). In next part, the study has addressed the question about the explained goals and to what extent they motivated the masses for self-governance. For this purpose, implementation of each goal has been reviewed.

ROOTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN SUBCONTINENT

In the subcontinent, the system of village self-government has been existed since the ancient periods. Prior to British rule, Panchayats (council of five) were working in villages and they were active even in Vedic period (Sharma, 1965). In those days, village was taken as the basic unit of administration and epicenter of social activity as the agriculture was the prime source of income. The British established municipalities in a few areas in 1870. However, the change occurred when the share of the Indians was increased in legislative councils under the Indian Councils Act of 1882, introduced by Lord Ripon, viceroy of India. His resolution of Local Self Government promulgated the basic principles for the development of local bodies.²

² Lord Ripon's system was not enacted through any act, but a resolution was passed in 1882 to introduce the principles of LG. The self-rule was shared with the Indians for the first time. Ripon brought a series of rules for empowering the masses through local self-government in both rural and urban bodies and also granted civic rights.

In coming times, the resolution served as a basic reference in numerous constitutional and legal documents of local bodies (Venkatarangaiya and Pattabhiram, 1969:109-10). Finally, municipalities became free from the district officers' control and Indian politicians were enthusiastic about this change. It increased the tax-amount for the LG, reducing the number of nominated members. The idea of provincial autonomy received a strong impetus in the post-1919 era for solution to constitutional problems. The provincial autonomy provided an opportunity to strengthen local bodies in British India. However, the local bodies could not deliver under the Ripon scheme and aspired results were not attained. The prime cause was the excessive control of the center on financial matters and resources (Sekar, 2008). In coming times, different reforms increased the local share and the system became free from the official control and Indian politicians were enthusiastic about this shift. Government of India Act 1935 brought the subject of local government in the provincial domain and provided constitutional guarantee for it (Pandey, 2018). The Act transferred the system from British bureaucracy to Indian political leadership. Provincial autonomy provided an opportunity to strengthen the local bodies in India.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan inherited a modern local government system, but indifference and the poor performance of the successive governments did not allow this institution to flourish in the country. Under the interim constitution (Government of India Act 1935), provinces were entitled to make laws for the local government. The system continued with the British legacy and no specific efforts were made in this direction. The old system with its disarray shape remained in practice. Democratic regimes allegedly failed in making a true representative structure of LG, which was later engineered by the military regimes. Pakistan is included in those developing countries that have been occupied by the military repeatedly. Military take-over is generally due to weaker political institutions. In Pakistan, the system was already working with a combination of political elements and civil - military bureaucrats, the later had the key role in decision-making and controlling the political leadership as well as institutions.

In October 1958, the military took-over the rule, exploiting the political situation that was worrying, cumbersome and dispersed.

Pakistan was facing crisis of leadership, which pushed the country into the political quagmire, invoking martial law. The military operation was completed in the two phases. On October 7, President Iskander Mirza dissolved the assemblies, abrogated the 1956 constitution and dismissed the cabinets. He appointed General Muhammad Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator and supreme commander of forces. After 20 days, Iskander Mirza was forced by the military generals to resign from the president office and Ayub Khan became the president, taking control of the country as an undisputed master (Rizvi, 2009:88-89).

The system of the local government with the name of Basic Democracies (BDs) was introduced. The system was multifunctional-institution, having power to control the LGS and was shaped as a substitute to universal suffrage as it served the purpose of Electoral College for the elections of president, members of legislative assembly and provincial assemblies. The system worked till 1969 (Quddus, 1981). The next military regimes of General Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf proceeded with this legacy and introduced the system under Local Government Ordinance 1979, and Devolution of Power Plan 2000 respectively. In subsequent sections of the paper, the details of Basic Democracies of Ayub Khan have been discussed, analyzing its explained goals and their role for empowering the people.

BASIC DEMOCRACIES OF AYUB KHAN AND ITS STRUCTURE

Declaring decentralization of power at the grass-root levels, Ayub Khan established the Basic Democracies, under the Basic Democracies Order 1959 and Municipal Administration Order 1960. He was the first ruler after independence, who introduced the institutional framework of the local bodies at the patron of Lord Ripon's scheme. The system was to seek a new class of loyal and passive citizens as encapsulated by Lord Ripon (Islam, 2015). A five-tiered hierarchical structure was introduced, but four tiers had governing bodies. The fifth tier was a Development Advisory Council at the top of the pyramid, having power to advise the governor about BDs' affairs. However, the council was abolished after execution of the 1962 constitution and formation of the national and provincial assemblies (Friedman, 1960:107; Inayatullah, 1964:51).

Union Council was the lowest tier in rural areas, consisting of minimum two villages, usually having population of 10,000, but

varying from 4000 to 15000. However, sparsely populated areas like Kalat in Baluchistan were exempted of this condition. Its member was representative of 1,000-1,500 persons and each council had 10-15 members, elected through adult franchise for five years. They chose a chairman among themselves (Quddus, 1981). In urban areas, union committees were established with more than 14,000 persons, while semi-urban areas had town committees with less than 14,000 persons (Inayatullah, 1964). This tier had the authority to levy the tax, a prerogative that was only shared with the district council. This tier served as school of democracy to some extent as it ensured local participation in local affairs.

The next upper tier was tehsil/thana council, while municipal committee was designed for union committees (Inayatullah, 1964:42). A tehsil/thana is considered traditionally as police, administrative and revenue unit for its respective territory. The municipal committees were established under the MAO 1960, which repealed 14 previous enactments regarding municipal government. The upper three tiers comprised of official members, appointed members and public representatives. The chairmen of lower councils were given representation in next higher tier. These chairmen collectively occupied half of the seats of the respective tier. Tehsildar or assistant commissioner was chairman of the council without any specific power and the deputy commissioner was responsible to provide necessary funds for its functioning (Islam, 2015). Actually, divisional councils and tehsil councils were without financial and administrative powers.

In British India, the most effective administrative unit for public policies, social activities and maintenance of law and order had been the district council for one hundred years. A common villager in the subcontinent had the image of elf-rule through this tier. The deputy commissioner was *Raja* (ruler) of the area and Pakistan pursued this legacy and it seemed that deputy commissioner possessed 'magical qualities' (Afzal Khan, 1964). However, in Pakistan, deputy commissioner of Ayub's era and District Coordinative Officer (DCO) of Musharraf's regime are two entirely different examples as the former was 'raja' while the later was under the control of elected authority. The deputy commissioner/district magistrate was the chairman of the district council. The Fourth Schedule of BDO placed the responsibility of compulsory and optional functions on the district council, making it operative and coordinative institution. The

obligatory duties in many instances were coincided with the previous practices of the district administration, while the new-one were added as per the need of the community. The list had 28 compulsory and 70 optional functions like social activities, economic welfare, public works, etc. However, focus was to perform compulsory functions, whereas optional functions were conditioned with the availability of funds (Ziring, 1965:398).

At the top of pyramid was the divisional council. The West Pakistan had 12 and East Pakistan had four divisional councils under the chairmanship of divisional commissioner. The chairmen of district councils, divisional level officers of governmental departments, chairmen of municipal bodies and cantonment boards were its members. All councils at all levels have "local funds" assigned to their jurisdictions, but only the Union Council and the District Council have authority to levy local taxes. The funds were provided from official sources as the local taxation was insufficient for the needs. The revenue-amount was limited owing to poor population. This aspect was a significant departure from the previous practice of local government (Friedman, 1961:19).

ELECTIONS OF BASIC DEMOCRACIES AND ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Elections reflect the mood of the voters of a constituency. They provide the opportunity to political parties to highlight their programmes and policies, which are publically acceptable. The elections held under the BDs were different from the western democracies' elections, which rarely chose the candidates on the basis of their personal qualities or talent, but through the support of political party with its public image or policies (Heywood, 2013:200). In BDs' election, no party affiliation was there to support the candidates of the union councils and no trend or pattern was favourable for political influence. The nature of the polling itself had a political effect on the voting. The first nation-wide BDs elections held in various phases from December 26, 1959 and completed in January 1960 on the basis of universal adult franchise. In February, 1960, the elected Basic Democrats, who numbered almost 80,000, resumed their duties. The candidates belonging to various classes contested the elections across the country and the majority of them belonged to middle or lower classes, but wealthy landlords supported them. A specific characteristic of the system was formation of the Electoral College,

comprising on these elected members. The college was to elect the president, members of provincial and national assemblies. The second elections of the BDs held in November 1964, bringing back the wealthy group to power; the new rural elites. The old elite class was the landed aristocracy, while newly elected Basic Democrats were wealthy farmers and petty landlords, generally from non-traditional rich families (Jahan, 1970:122).

Presidential elections held on January 2, 1965 and Basic Democrats elected Ayub Khan as the president of Pakistan for the second term. The elections for the National Assembly and provincial assemblies held in March and May 1965 respectively. Fatima Jinnah, sister of founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was contesting the presidential elections against Ayub Khan, who won the elections with the help of Basic Democracies (Mujhid, 1965). The system supported the survival of the regime for one presidential and two elections of assemblies, but the way the process was adopted, generated hostility among the political circles. There was also inconsistency in the voting patterns of the two wings. In West Pakistan, 73 percent of votes were polled for Ayub Khan, while he got 53 percent of votes in East Pakistan for the National Assembly (Jahan, 1971:288).

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

This part has discussed and reviewed the explained goals of BDs, looking at their implementation and practice. Theoretically, the system was designed to empower the people, bringing a significant change in the political setup of the country. In theory, it seemed perfect, providing vigor and enthusiasm to liberate the moral and intellectual forces from the undue subjugation of the regime. Practically, the real power was never resided with the public, pursuing the colonial legacy, authoritarian behavior in decision-making remained dominant. Enactment of the system was to gain political agenda rather than administrative arrangement or empowerment of the masses.

Analyzing the explained goals, first goal was creation of democratic culture, bringing the system at foot-step of the people. There was no truth in regime's claim of performing each and every function through people's participation as all was imposed from upper levels. Time and again, Ayub's regime propagated that people would not go far away from their neighborhood to elect their representatives, but ignored the fact of curtailing the public authority through this

process. These locally elected members disenfranchised the masses in the national electoral process. Instead of public representation, the BDs became regime's instrument and elections of the president and assemblies with a few thousands, was mockery of popular participation. Ayub discarded the western democracies, calling it inappropriate for rural and illiterate population of Pakistan, while his adopted system was limited to elect the political elite or 'opinion leaders' for the higher-level elections. Ayub himself wrote, "It was a system to suit the genius of the people" (Khan, 1967:186).

As far as the decentralization of power in hierarchical order was concerned, it was never transferred as per need of LG. The institution neither formed a national body nor devolved the authority and remained centrally-administered under the tight control of the civil-military bureaucracy. Even the institutions of the two provinces had no horizontal link between them. No built-in mechanism was developed to make a consensus on national integration for settlement of disputed matters (Jahan, 1970:287). In the absence of political parties, no role for political leadership could be determined and the promotion of national-level leaders was never encouraged. The system had its limitation and participants were either council chairmen or government's officials. In structure, except for the lowest tier, all other tiers had official and appointed members, which out-numbered the elected members.

The claim of ensuring economic growth through the decentralization was not accomplished as it did not provide equitable access and distribution of benefits to local communities without urban and rural division. In practice, the system mobilized the masses in the rural areas. The BD members had to work in cooperation with the bureaucracy and no link was created between the urban areas and the countryside. The urban community expressed its annoyance several times (Jahan, 1972:112). The regime's monopoly over franchise rights enraged the urban communities, particularly the middle class, who had feelings of isolation due to the system. Rural Works Programme (RWP) of Ayub Khan further strengthened this discrimination as it was aimed to enhance the human capacity in rural areas, redressing the imbalanced development in remote areas and engaged the surplus manpower in this project (Ziring, 1965:421-23).

As far as the goal of public representation was concerned, that was not achieved. The system was inextricably under bureaucracy,

conferring it the decision-making power. The bureaucracy linked the lowest unit to the top most level with its vested authority. Except the union council/union committee, all above councils' chairmen were bureaucrats. Only chairmen of the district boards were elected members in East Pakistan. Following the British tradition, bureaucracy had immense power in executing the system. It possessed the authority to suspend, prohibit or pass the resolutions. The issuance or cancelation of any order related to local body was through its directives (Singhal, 1972:95). This excessive authority created a negative impact in public. Neither the elected nor the nominated members denied the supremacy of bureaucracy for instructing them in councils' working. Even the oath of divisional commissioner demanded the monitoring of elected members' tasks (Gauhar, 1993).

Despite having doubts about the bureaucracy, the villagers were not in a position to resist its encroachments in local affairs or challenge its authority. No doubt, there were reports that the bureaucracy was might unaware of the villagers' resentment and was alien to the rural traditions in many cases (Ziring, 1965:407). However, officials were powerful and well-organized and their working techniques/tactics were beyond the comprehension of the village community. Above it, BDs had instruction to dispense with accepting the bureaucracy as it was comprised of 'patriotic citizens' whose agenda was nation-building (Ziring, 1965:407).

Basic Democrats never dared to annoy the official members, despite victimization sometimes. They required officers' approval in all matters. A big flaw was inexperienced BD members, dependent upon the officers to run the union councils' affairs. This reliance widened the disparities in the class structure and a paucity of new ideas (Firdman, 1961:19). The government was aware of these problems, but did not bring any alternative to the policy. In East Pakistan, eighty-one percent of the chairmen and seventy percent of the BD members confessed that they got assistance from the circle officers for budget-making. According to a report; officers took the responsibility of the works program and in many union councils, even a single meeting was not held in the project areas to discuss the audit reports, while in other cases, only one meeting was reported (Rahman, 1963:59).

The goal of self-governance at the grass-root level to undermine the landlords' influence could not be achieved and the peasants

remained under their control. Contrary to it, bureaucracy extended its control to eliminate the all pockets of resistance and independence. The union councils were not autonomous in making their decisions as a study of those years identified that 85 percent agenda-item in their meetings were initiated under the instruction of written letters or oral statements, made during official visits. Mostly council's resolutions were a "face saving device" (Jahan, 1972:112).

The goal of integrating the local aspirations with national objectives, were attempted to fulfill through the Electoral College. Here is important to point out role of Electoral College as the electoral body became the most controversial aspect of the BDs, which was to prolong the military regime only (Cheema et.al., 2005). The members were manipulated and they voted under the government's pressure. It was further discredited due to massive irregularities in the presidential elections of 1965. Fatima Jinnah's defeat and Ayub Khan's victory was a big question-mark on the credibility of the electoral system. Ayub won the elections, manipulating the role of Basic Democrats during the polling process (Mujhid, 1965). However, this exposed the credibility of the system under the military rule, which concentrated authority in single personality. The elections were also aimed to provide legitimacy to Ayub's regime, endorsing his presidency (Ziring, 1965, 394). A little bit legitimacy was gain through the 1962 constitution and the working of assemblies, but presidential election of 1965 eroded it. The elections were neither transparent nor impartial, indirectly challenging regime's legitimacy. From 1965 to 1969, the continued emergency rule was a sign of the losing legitimacy. The formation of the national institutions was at the cast of public representation as Basic Democrats were only eligible to cast their votes in national elections.

Analyzing the BDs, Jahan (1972:126) stated that the system achieved only limited goals and was not succeeded to eliminate the widening disparities between the elite classes and masses. In fact, the regime used the system as a device for overhauling the political structure of the country. Dr. Mahbubul-Haq, an economic expert left the World Bank to join Ayub' regime, reported in 1968 that 80 percent of economic power and wealth of the country remained in hands of a few families. However, they were mainly from industrial class, but dictatorship nurtured them (Alvi, 1983).

Reviewing the positive aspects, the regime's claim of rural development through BDs was true to many extents as the former regimes never paid a little attention to rural population and showed concerns for urban development. Despite limited powers, the union councils generated awareness among the masses about their right to self-rule. A study observed that the union councils did a useful task in upgrading the living environment of the rural areas, constructing culverts and several other projects. However, they did not free themselves to work as the official 'agency'.

Finally, the system almost lost its worth after the presidential elections and the Indo-Pak war of 1965. A popular reaction surfaced after the Tashkent Declaration of 1966, which was to settle the disputes with India. The violent protests and processions erupted in 1968-69, which ended with Ayub's resignation on March 25, 1969. A decade-long system collapsed like a house of cards, abrogating the 1962 Constitution and dissolution of all assemblies. The state was once again under the Martial Law. Ayub Khan remained reluctant to power-sharing with political elements, and concentration of authority led him to decline. The farewell broadcast of Ayub on March 25 was much similar to the dismal picture of October 7, 1958, when he justified the military's take-over due to "total administrative, economic, political and moral chaos in the country." After 11 years of rule, he himself admitted that the country was once again at the brink of collapse and stated, "I cannot preside over the destruction of my country," reported by *Dawn* newspaper on March 26.

The power was once again transferred to the military and General Yahya Khan, commander-in-chief of the military, became the Chief Martial Law Administrator. He announced the general elections, which were held in December 1970. In East Pakistan, Awami League won the elections and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) got majority in West Pakistan. The clashes and conflicts between the two parts resulted in secession of East Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh in December 1971.

The successive elected government of PPP announced formation of the LGS and the Constitution of 1973 explained in its Article 7, "The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of elected representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation will be given to peasants, workers and women". The government abolished BDs and introduced the Integrated Rural

Development Program (IRDP). The government halted the basic unit under IRDP on July 1, 1972, launching the programme in proper way. Its aim was to provide service-delivery to small farmers in the rural areas, improving their living standard and reducing the urban-rural gap (RDF, Evolution). Later, People's Works Programme replaced it, having the same objectives. The provinces promulgated the programmes under 'the People's Local Government Act 1975' in their respective jurisdictions, but the system never gained ground and remained on papers only (Cheema et.al., 2005). This Act was subsequently revoked through the Local Government Ordinance 1979 of General Zia-ul-Haq, who came in power in July 1977 through a military coup. Following Ayub, Zia attempted to legitimize his regime with decentralization of authority from the provinces to the local level, while maintained centralization at federal level. LGS was consisted of three-tiers and its elections were conducted in all the four provinces in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1991. Zia also tried to reduce the influence of political parties, thus increasing power and getting popularity for military regime (Jabeen, 2019:76). He used old colonial strategy of 'divide and rule,' and generated a competing group of 'collaborative local-level politicians' (Jalal, 1995). Zia also used tactic of disqualification in 1979, ousting the large number of candidates, having affiliation with PPP.³ However, Zia reduced bureaucratic control, appointing the 'elected members' as heads of local councils. Contrary to BDs, Zia had the urban perspective and mobility of resources was restricted from urban to rural areas. During the democratic decade (1988-99), the LGS remained inactive and non-functional. Ultimately, the next military regime revived the system to get legitimacy like its predecessors.

General Pervez Musharraf was the third military ruler, who reconstructed the LGS through Devolution of Power Plan 2000 and implemented it after a series of elections in 2001. Practically, the

³ In 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister, promulgated PRODA (Public Representative Offices Disqualification Act) to prevent misuse of power. In March 1959, Ayub Khan replaced it with PODO (Public Offices Disqualification Order), but changed it with EBDO (Elective Bodies Disqualification Order) in August, which disqualified a large number of politicians on the charge of corruption. Zia repealed the previous laws and introduced two presidential orders in 1977 known as PPO No 16 and 17. All these laws institutionalized the corruption only (Wasim, 1989).

system was different from previous systems as administrative, financial and development powers were transferred to the elected members. The district departments were accountable to the district council. The devolution abolished the designation of deputy commissioner, curtailing its power and replaced it with District Coordination Officers (DCOs), under the subordination of district Nazim. DCO was no longer the authority as district magistrate or the district collector. All this was a great blow to bureaucratic powers (Cheema et.al., 2005:14). The 18th Constitutional Amendment transferred the subject to provinces. After expiry of LGS in 2009, provinces opted different structures for LGS and pursued political options, taking positions suitable to their interests and no proper system is working currently.

CONCLUSION

The system of Basic Democracies was established on Lord Ripon's scheme of local government in theory, and the explained goals of the system were to empower the masses at the grass-root level, but in practice, they could not be achieved. Ayub Khan rejected the western democracy and strategy was to bring democracy from lower to upward, but it never happened, instead of public representation, the elected bodies became instrument to empower, prolong and legitimize the regime. Constituting this institution as the Electoral College was nothing except a mockery, providing a license for next five-year to the president and assemblies. Organizational structure and scheme of BDs were neither democratic nor representative and limited powers were at the discretion of the people. Economic development was made to some extent rather than the political uplift. However, the system strengthened land lords and industrialists as the statistics of those year showed. Decentralization or devolution of power did not prove an effective tool for empowering people due to bureaucratic authority. The controlled democracy allowed the bureaucracy to override council's proceedings, resolutions and decisions. The officers were "controlling authority" not a supportive tool. Borrowing the features of the LGS of British India, particularly a mixture of elected and appointed representatives, distorted the spirit of self-governance. Having various laps and discrepancies, the system increased corruption under bureaucratic umbrella. The promised goals remained in offering, not in implementation. Bypassing the provinces in the

system, made them hostile to it and this practice led the provinces to pressurize the elected governments for not restoring the local bodies. That is why, after expiry of the tenure of LG, neither extension was granted nor elections held through any legal provision. Apart from it, the study has observed that basic democracies generated awareness more or less among the people, realizing them of their role and right to administer their affairs. The feelings of ownership led the people to express their views openly, which were incorporated in decision-making to some extent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has a few recommendations regarding the LGS for empowering the masses. A degree of autonomy of local bodies built confidence in the community to conduct their local affair. The purpose of these bodies must be to manage the local affairs efficiently, providing amenities to the masses. It is possible only when official agenda is the delivery of services not legitimacy of regime or concentration of power. Local governance lies with the elected bodies, not in bureaucracy as it is beyond the spirit of the system, which should not be practiced.

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