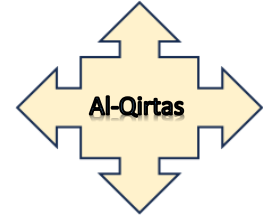


The Politics of Reconciliation between the PPP and PML-N (2008–2013)



Waqar Un Nisa

Lecturer Pakistan Studies Mirpur University of Science and
Technology Mirpur AJK at-nisa.edu@must.edu.pk

Abstract

Democracy cannot coexist with tyranny, martial law, or illegitimate governance. Consequently, alliances for democracy restoration emerge in response to undemocratic conditions. Given Pakistan's multi-party system, political alliances hold significant importance within its political culture. As a result, coalition politics plays an important role in modern governance systems by encouraging collaboration among smaller political organizations and minimizing the likelihood of conflict. This study examines coalition politics in Pakistan from 2008 to 2013, taking into account the country's multi-party democratic system. By focusing on this specific period, the study hopes to provide academic insights into the mechanics and repercussions of coalition arrangements in a transitional democratic state like Pakistan. The research article examined political coalitions, regional parties, alliance dynamics, governance, and the issues that coalition governments face. Qualitative research is being done to examine the coalition government's performance between 2008 and 2013. The article revealed the relevance of coalition politics as a cornerstone of democracy in Pakistan, allowing for the depiction

Keywords: PPP, PML-N, Coalition, Government, Pakistan

Introduction

Political parties serve as a vital link between the government and the people, serving as channels for the expression of public interests and concerns. Despite the rise of regional political parties and pressure groups, their ability to gain a majority in elections remains restricted. Prolonged periods of opposition often diminish their influence, potentially eroding voter support. Consequently, these entities find themselves compelled to pursue coalition-building strategies as a means to attain governance and address the socio-political needs of their constituencies. These imperatives highlight their necessity to negotiate alliances in order to secure a meaningful stake in governance (Qasim, 2019). In situations where no single political party commands a sufficient mandate to form a government independently, coalition formation becomes imperative. Coalitions, whether transient or enduring, are formed not only to achieve specific policy objectives but also to navigate the complexities of governance (Budge, 1986). Such alliances may be short-lived, focusing on achieving a singular objective within a limited timeframe, or they may endure over several years to pursue multifaceted policy agendas.

Coalitions offer numerous advantages, including the facilitation of extensive networking opportunities, the sharing of valuable information, funds, and resources among participating entities. However, they also entail certain drawbacks, such as the potential loss of autonomy, the need for consensus-building which may lead to compromises, and the formation of cohesive groupings with potentially conflicting interests. Successful coalition-building necessitates several key elements: a shared common purpose, the establishment of pre-agreed rules and limitations, competent leadership, the pooling of resources, the involvement of influential decision-makers, and the formulation of effective strategies (Bawn, 2003). Various types of coalitions exist, each tailored to specific objectives and contexts, including electoral coalitions aimed at enhancing electoral prospects, office-seeking coalitions striving to attain governmental positions, opposition parties' coalitions uniting against incumbent authorities, and policy-based coalitions focused on advancing particular policy agendas.

The adoption of a democratic system was dominated by the prevalence of weak political institutions, leading to prolonged military rule in the country, with democratic intervals being notably shorter than periods of military governance (Rizvi, 1991). Despite the registration of approximately 127 political parties with the Election Commission of Pakistan only a handful can

assert national status, with the majority being regional, religious, ethnic, or racially oriented. At certain stages, a party-centric electoral system was implemented (Rais, 1985), while persistent concerns regarding the potential dissolution of assemblies by the President following elections hindered the effective functioning of democracy over an extended period. Military involvement notwithstanding, other contributing factors to democratic fragility include demands for provincial autonomy, traditional systems of governance, bureaucratic influence, political infighting, the ineffectiveness of political activists, nepotism, and the failure of national parties to fulfill their societal responsibilities.

While Pakistan emerged as a result of intensive political endeavors, its democratic framework was inherently underdeveloped, particularly due to the low levels of education among its populace, which hindered informed electoral decision-making (Jalal, 2014). Initially, opposition to the dominant Muslim League was minimal, given its pivotal role in the country's creation. However, the influence of elites and landowners on decision-making processes, coupled with neglectful governance in East Pakistan, exacerbated tensions. Despite East Pakistan's significant contribution to foreign exchange through its economic productivity, resources were disproportionately allocated to West Pakistan. The centralization of military and governmental institutions in West Pakistan consolidated power in the region, marginalizing the interests of East Pakistan (Ahmed, 2010). The preference for a secular constitution among non-Muslims in East Pakistan was disregarded, exacerbating socio-political rifts. Furthermore, the limited political environment established by the 1962 constitution prevented the creation of new political parties, creating an environment conducive to coalition building.

Literature Review

Shaista Gohar and her co-authors in their article "Role of Pakistan People's Party in Political Alliances of Pakistan Against Military Regimes (1967-2008): An Assessment" highlight the pivotal role of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in political coalitions formed against military governments in Pakistan's history, emphasizing its contributions to the restoration of democracy. The PPP proved a commitment to democratic principles by forming in response to Ayub Khan's dictatorship and then participating in uprisings against successive military administrations. Despite hurdles such as repression and imprisonment under military governments, the PPP remained committed to democratic governance and joined alliances such as the Movement for

Restoration of Democracy. However, the researcher also criticizes the PPP's leadership for perceived inconsistencies and fails to accomplish meaningful change (Shaista Gohar, 2023).

Karim Haider Syed and Naudir Bakht in their article "Impact of the Performance of Pakistan's People Party on the General Elections of 2013" emphasises the PPP's decline in the 2013 General Elections, attributing it not just to rival parties' popularity but also to the PPP's poor performance throughout its reign. It emphasizes the party's departure from its ideological roots and failure to meet the interests of its historic supporters, which has resulted in dissatisfaction among party members and voters. Despite maintaining power in Sindh due to a lack of viable alternatives, the PPP's leadership under Asif Ali Zardari was chastised for perceived ineffectiveness and disengagement from the populace. This study investigates the ramifications of the PPP's performance in the political setting, highlighting the electorate's preference for actual achievements over slogans and ideology (Karim Haider Syed, 2020).

Ayesha Malik et al. in their research paper "Governance in Pakistan: A Case Study of Pakistan Muslim League-N" examines governance and political dynamics in Pakistan, with an emphasis on the performance and problems of political parties such as the PPP and PML-N. It examines the role of political alliances in opposing army governments, the impact of governance on development, and the assessment of party performance in elections. The literature discusses leadership dynamics, ideological movements, and public views of governance efficacy. It emphasises the critical role of good governance in Pakistan's long-term growth and political stability. Overall, it provides insights on the complexity of the country's governance and political processes (Ayesha Malik, 2023).

Muhammad Qasim and his co-author "History of Coalitions in Pakistan (1947-1973) and the Factors Shaping It" investigate Pakistan's political environment, focusing on the historical relevance and impact of political alliances and coalitions. It focuses on the transition between military and civilian governments, regional hostility, and the quest for national identity. The study emphasizes the issues of governance, resource allocation, and the intricacies of federating units in Pakistan. It examines the creation and implications of pre- and post-election coalitions, demonstrating their importance in altering political power relations and fighting military authority. Overall, the literature study sheds light on the various processes of coalition politics throughout Pakistan's turbulent history (Muhammad Qasim, 2019).

Research Methodology

The approach employed in this article features a descriptive qualitative and analytical methodology. It delves into examining the politics of reconciliation between the PPP and PML-N (2008–2013) via an exhaustive review of pertinent literature. To uphold the integrity and reliability of the results, primarily secondary sources is used. These secondary sources encompassed diverse materials, such as scholarly articles, newspapers, and reports from non-governmental entities.

Exploring Political Coalitions: Types and Classifications

Political alliances are collaborations between different political parties or organizations aiming at achieving common aims. The nature and intensity of such alliances typically vary, influenced by the prevailing political environment within a society. Additionally, the number of participating parties plays a significant role in shaping the formation of alliances. Given the diverse forms that political alliances can assume and the dynamic nature of the political scene, attempts to categorize them consistently are inherently challenging and subject to change. Consequently, existing models of political alliances can be loosely segmented into the following categories, although this classification remains fluid and subject to evolution.

1. Oppositional coalitions

2. Parliamentary coalitions, that consist of: a. Governmental Alliances; b. Opposition Alliances;

3. Electoral Coalitions;

These groups can be more classified as both short- and long-term coalitions (Hussain, 2008). A notable characteristic of coalitions is their occasional concurrent operation across multiple categories or their ability to overlap with more than one classification. For example, an electoral alliance may encompass various oppositional groups. The dynamics of alliances undergo evolutionary changes over time, with powerful alliances occasionally disbanding and weaker alliances gaining strength (Rasool, 2017).

Political dynamics and the prevailing national political climate exert significant influence in this regard. Democracy contends with challenges posed by dictatorship, martial law, governmental instability, and illegitimacy, leading to ineffective avenues of communication. When institutional frameworks and procedures fail to balance opposing demands and carry out intended policies, crises occur. Consequently, alliances emerge with the aim of challenging the

perceived illegitimacy of the existing system, which lacks legitimacy in the eyes of the majority. These alliances take various forms, some aimed at opposing undemocratic and unrepresentative governments, others formed for electoral purposes, or within legislatures to consolidate legislative power. Sometimes coalitions are formed to confront specific national situations of essential relevance. Even ruling elites and opposition factions may band together to form a national government in times of national emergency or severe crisis. Such alliances operate on both short-term and long-term bases, depending on the circumstances. Pakistan has witnessed a spectrum of alliances, as well as governmental, electoral, and oppositional coalitions, with oppositional alliances being particularly active during periods of military dictatorship (Shaista Gohar S. J.,2023).

Background of Political Alliance of mainstream parties

In Pakistan, only a handful of political parties hold the position of national political parties, while the majority are limited to specific federating units. During the 1990s, amidst a fragile democratic environment, a notable development emerged with the evolution of a novel design of party politics. The weak majorities obtained in 1988, 1990, and 1993 elections necessitated political parties to forge coalitions to gain the requisite majority for régime formation, a common occurrence in a multiparty-political system. Whether in the context of electoral alliances or post-electoral collaborations, one national party typically served as the focal point around which voters rallied. This trend effectively recognized a quasi-two-party system, with the PPP and PML-N engaged in direct competition with one another (Mahmood, n.d).

The All-India Muslim League, formulated in 1906, was the pioneering political party in the struggle for Pakistan's independence. Following the Pakistan creation, it was retitled the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). However, later the untimely demise of its formation leader, the ruling Muslim League encountered internal factionalism, which eventually escalated into intra-party skirmishes and division. The dominant leadership became fragmented into various factions, impeding its ability to effectively moderate and mitigate factional disputes within the parliament and across provincial levels.

This political party was frequently utilized by dictators as a tool to maintain power transitions from military to civilian rule. For instance, during Ayub Khan's regime, politicians aligned with the autocrat rebranded their party as the PML (Convention). However, during the

1970 general elections, the PML failed to assert its existence due to internal divisions, primarily centered around individual personalities. Subsequently, in the general elections of 1977, the PML participated as part of an electoral coalition known as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), which played a pivotal role in initiating a mass movement against Bhutto's government, ultimately resulting in another imposition of martial law in 1977.

The Muslim League was resurrected in the lower house of the parliament following the 1985 party-free elections, led by then PM Mohammad Khan Junejo. By 1988, its leadership transitioned to Mian Nawaz Sharif, and the party branded as the PML-N. Throughout the post-Zia period, PML-N predominantly held influence in Punjab, the largest province, in successive elections. The party secured power twice during this period. Its support base encompassed the middle class, minor businesses, industrialists, and workers, while the PPP enjoyed significant backing in the feudal southern Punjab region (Talbot, n.d.). However, issues such as insecurity, centralized governance, the Kargil conflict, and growing distrust between the PML-N and General Musharraf, led to the ouster of the PML-N administration and the establishment of military government for the 4th time in the country in 1999.

Following the exile of Nawaz Sharif and his family, and the rise of the novel PML (Quaid-i-Azam), the PML-N found itself marginalized in the political environment after the 2002 elections under the military dictatorship of General Musharraf, who assumed the presidency. However, the PML-N experienced a resurgence with the return of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan in 2007. Learning from past experiences, both the PML-N and PPP signed a Charter of Democracy to jointly oppose the military dictatorship. Subsequent to the PPP's victory in the 2008 elections, the PML-N assumed the role of a friendly opposition for over two years. However, growing disagreements eventually reignited hostilities between the two parties. Despite heightened tensions, both parties refrained from actions that could jeopardize democracy, thus avoiding confrontation with the establishment.

The PPP, established as a mainstream political entity, achieved significant success in the 1970 elections in West Pakistan, just three years after its formation. However, it functioned primarily as a regional party within the unified Pakistan, as it solely contested and won seats in West Pakistan, without participating in elections in East Pakistan. The PPP won 85 seats out of 138 designated for West Pakistan, predominantly from Sindh and Punjab provinces. Following

the secession of East Pakistan, the PPP emerged as the dominant party in the newly formed Pakistan. Its primary support base resided in rural areas of Sindh and Punjab, although it preserved an existence in the other two federating units of the state as well (Election Commission of Pakistan, n.d.).

General Zia-ul-Haq executed martial law, resulting in the legal trial and execution of elected Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto. In response, the PPP became a noteworthy player in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy, a coalition of eleven parties aimed at pressuring General Zia to restore democratic administration. Following Zia-ul-Haq's presidency, the PPP won the general election, securing a narrow majority and constituting the government. However, its government was sacked twice, once in 1990 and again in 1996. The PPP operated as an opposition party from 1990 to 1993 and again from 1997 to 1999. The PPP won the 2008 elections after its chairperson, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated. It holed power as the ruling party in coalition with partners such as the ANP, MQM, and JUI-F group.

Ideologically, the PPP has positioned itself as a left-of-center political entity with socialist inclinations regarding economic policies. Despite its extensive efforts to advocate for the Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan, the PPP has faced challenges in practicing internal democracy within the party structure. Notably, the leadership position of the party, specifically the chairpersonship, has consistently remained within the Bhutto family, with non-Bhutto candidates not being granted the opportunity to assume this role.

Similar to the PPP, the PML-N has been characterized by familial dominance throughout its tenure. Since its inception, the party has been closely associated with the Sharif family. The prominent existence of individuals such as Mian Sharif, the father of Nawaz Sharif, his brother Shahbaz Sharif, and currently their sons Hassan Nawaz and Hamza Shahbaz, as well as their daughter Maryam Nawaz and son-in-law Capt. (R) Safder, in leadership positions underlines the dynastic nature of the PML-N. The PML (Q) emerged as a faction dissociated from the PML, consisting of competitors of Nawaz Sharif within the PML-N ranks and individuals apprehensive of persecution under the military government. When Musharraf called for the PML restoration as the ruling party in 2000-01, they seized the opportunity and joined the reconstituted party. However, despite its representation in all provincial assemblies, the PML (Q) experienced a decline in political influence with the eventual restoration of civilian rule in 2008 under Gen.

Pervez Musharraf. In response to political expediency, the PML (Q) aligned itself with the PPP-led coalition. Some political figures endeavored to reunite the PML-N and PML (Q) for the purpose of strengthening the PML as a unified entity. Despite these efforts, the division within the party persisted, and attempts at reunification proved unsuccessful.

Regional Parties and Alliance Dynamics

Along with the big national political parties, there are powerful regional-based parties in Pakistan's minor provinces, a pattern that has existed since independence and continues to this day. These regional parties serve as a reflection of the ethnic and regional diversity within the country. The era of alliance politics, prominent during the periods of 1988-99 and later reinstated in 2008, aimed to accommodate local political interests alongside mainstream national parties, thereby ensuring representation of various ethnic and regional groups at the national level and mitigating feelings of deprivation and alienation (Ziegfeld, 2010). Both major alliances of the 1990s, namely the Islamic Democratic Alliance and Pakistan Democratic Front (PDF), consisting primarily of the PML-N and the PPP respectively, adopted the principle of including smaller regional parties as their allies. This principle extended to the formation of coalition governments, although regional parties often capitalized on this opportunity to advance their own agendas rather than integrating their ambitions into mainstream politics and aligning their demands with national objectives. Instead, they frequently resorted to rhetoric of deprivation and exploitation, threatening to withdraw from coalitions if their demands were not met, thereby contributing to political instability. Furthermore, both mainstream parties, with power bases in diverse federating units, employed distinct slogans tailored to appeal to the ethnic and provincial feelings of voters, exacerbating existing ethnic divides in various regions.

PPP Governance in Pakistan (2008–2013)

Following the removal of General Musharraf from the presidency in August 2008, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the 11th President of the State. A significant legislative milestone during his tenure was the passage of the 18th Amendment, which aimed to enhance provincial autonomy and reinforce democratic principles in Pakistan. A key constitutional reform included the abolition of clause 58(2)(B) of the constitution to rebalance powers between the president and prime minister. The 18th constitutional amendment restored parliamentary supremacy, which had previously been overshadowed by authoritarian forces, with past parliaments serving as mere

puppets. Additionally, the judiciary underwent restructuring to align with the original provisions of the 1973 constitution. Previously, the president held the authority to appoint judges for both the Supreme Court and High Court, raising concerns about judicial independence. However, a new mechanism was proposed whereby a parliamentary committee suggested a judicial commission composed of seven members to propose names to the parliamentary committee. Following confirmation, the appointments would be finalized by the president (Khan, 2021).

Furthermore, the 18th Amendment contributed to the empowerment of the Election Commission by establishing a transparent appointment process for its members in Pakistan. Additionally, the Senate underwent reforms aimed at diversifying representation by growing and allocating seats for numerous groups, including minorities and women. This was particularly significant given the limitations on women's participation in the political process during the earlier years, particularly following the Islamization initiatives of General Zia's regime. In addition to these progresses during the PPP's tenure, it is noteworthy that the party prioritized completing its term in office, with a primary focus on political survival rather than governance. Consequently, it can be argued that the period witnessed a democratic change rather than a comprehensive democratic conversion of the state.

Coalition Government Dynamics: Politics and Governance

The primary task of the alliance administration was to restore the judges, as well as Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, who were dismissed by President Pervez Musharraf during the state of emergency declared in November 2007. However, differences emerged between PML-N and PPP regarding the process for restoring the judges. Sharif insisted on their complete restoration within 30 days through a resolution after the formation of the federal government. However, Zardari reneged on this commitment after assuming office, delaying the matter for political reasons. He was anxious about a possible clash with the military if the reinstated justices questioned Musharraf's commands. Zardari also believed that prompt restoration of judges would improve the PML-N's political image.

In May 2008, the PML-N left the coalition administration, but continued to support it in parliament. The coalition government collapsed amid widespread anticipation that both leaders would reach an agreement to secure the continuation of the democratic process. The Daily Times portrayed Pakistan's political dilemma as bringing the country to "the brink of disaster" (Daily

Times 2008). The discrepancy among the PPP and the PML-N over the judiciary has an influence on Punjab politics, where the PML-N wields significant power. Following Khalid Maqbool's resignation as Governor on May 15, 2008, the nomination of PPP stalwart Salman Taseer as Punjab Governor was seen as an effort by the President's camp to weaken the Punjab Administration after worsening to manage the PML(Q) leadership. This technique replicated the PPP's activities as the party in government in 1988, when General (ret'd.) Tikka Khan was chosen Punjab Governor to impose control over the Nawaz government. Salman Taseer's appointment sparked tensions between the PPP and the PML-N, with the latter accusing the former of conspiring against the Punjab administration (Kanwal, 2017). Nawaz Sharif and other political figures of his party boycotted Governor Punjab's oath-taking ceremony as they rejected his selection. The political condition escalated further when the Governor pledged to revitalize PPP in Punjab, aiming to transform it into a new stronghold akin to Larkana, and expressed intentions to invite PPP President Bilawal Bhutto to contest elections from Punjab.

Despite signing the Charter of Democracy in 2006, both parties used identical techniques against one other to further their personal goals, as they had in the late decades of the twentieth century. Taseer's nomination as a Punjab governor was one of the aspects that aggravated the tense relationship between PML-N and PPP. The formation of a political alliance was deemed necessary to address the country's crises. In an effort to garner support from PML-N, the government established a committee tasked with resolving the judges' issue through a resolution. The committee comprised members such as Sherry Rehman, Raza Rabbani, and Farooq H. Naek. However, the reply from other alliance partners regarding the judiciary matter varied. While ANP reinforced PML-N's stance and uttered inclination to back the resolution, Fazlur Rehman of JUI deemed Sharif's position on the judges' issue unreasonable, asserting that reinstating judges was not as crucial as addressing other pressing matters in Pakistan (Nation, 2008). Despite these discussions, the committee proved ineffective and failed to present the resolution for debate in the Assembly. Additionally, the government proposed resolving the problem through the subsequent constitutional amendment.

Despite tensions amongst alliance members, the administration was successful in forcing President Musharraf to quit under the threat of impeachment. In response to the growing crisis, the PML-N offered that the next President come from smaller provinces, however this proposal

received little backing from parties representing those regions. The PPP nominated Zardari as its nominee for president. Asfandyar Wali regarded the PPP's demand justified, citing its status as a key party in the coalition administration (Nation, 2008). As a result, Zardari was elected president of the country on August 26, 2008, with the sustenance of the PPP, MQM, JUI, ANP, and additional alliance parties (Nation 2008). Pakistan's political atmosphere was first formed by the impression that Zardari, as Co-Chairman of the PPP and President of the state, had tremendous power. However, he continually contravened with significant power centers, such as the courts, military, and opposing political groups.

Months of rising tensions between the both ruling parties over the reinstatement of the judges ended on February 25, 2009, when President Zardari enforced Governor's rule in Punjab following the SC expulsion of the Sharif brothers from office. Zardari's conduct appeared to be a preemptive measure to quell political opposition from the PML-N while also facilitating the PPP's efforts to seize power in Punjab by circumventing them. Meanwhile, a lawyer movement to restore judges gathered traction in the country, involving attorneys, civic society, and political parties such as the PTI and JI. Nawaz Sharif organized an effective long march on March 15, 2009, to show unity with the cause. The lawyer movement-imposed tension, Nawaz lengthy march, and the military forced the administration to reinstate the judges on March 16, 2009. The involvement of the middle class in the long march represents a reasonable shift in the political process (Dawn, 2009).

Conditions that brought PPP and PML-N together

A unifying front opposing Pervez Musharraf

In 2006, the leaders of PML-N, Nawaz Sharif, and PPP, Benazir Bhutto, joined forces to oppose the incumbent President Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf had assumed power following a military coup in 1999. Despite conducting national elections in 2002, he marginalized PML-N and PPP by establishing breakaway factions, such as PML-Q and PPP-Patriot group, to establish a military-backed government at the federal level. Nawaz and Benazir endorsed the CoD, comprising 36 points delineating procedures for the reinstatement of civilian democratic governance ((Chauhan, 2024).

Condition after General election 2008

The most parliamentary number was won by Pakistan People's Party which became the largest party in the general elections of February 2008, but it did not win the absolute majority necessary for its independent formation of the government. Therefore, the south of other parties needed the support. Thus, in this the decision of the situation the Co-Chairman of PPP Zardari entered round the table negotiations with PML-N, ANP, Muttahida Majles-e-Amal, and JUI-F. At the time, Zardari, Co-chairperson of the PPP, stated that his party would strive to build a consensus administration that would include all parties, even those outside of parliament (Muhammad Rizwan, 2014).

Cultivating Harmony to Revitalize Democracy in Pakistan

Former, in the military regime of Musharraf, the two majority parties, the PML-N of Nawaz Sharif and PPP in the leadership of Benazir from their self-exile in London, signed CoD in May 2006, forswearing to fight against the authoritarian government and reinstate parliamentary democracy in Pakistan (Dawn, 2006).

Benazir Assassination

The assassination of Benazir has created mass resentment against President Musharraf and PML (Q). A noticeable drift was observed in the popular support in favor of PML (Q) to PPP and PML-N. If these trends persist, there is no reason why PPP and PML-N could not eventually emerge as the leading political parties. The possible odds of electoral embarrassment for PML (Q) have left concerns that the government might delay the elections. This will be a do or die election for Musharraf. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine how the political future of PML (Q) can be saved without these elections (Ahmad, 2013).

Challenges

Judicial activism

The leaders of the two major political parties, Zardari, co-chairperson of the PPP, and Nawaz Sharif of the PML-N, inked the 'Murree Declaration'. This agreement required the reinstatement of the judges who had been ousted on November 3rd, particularly CJ Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, within 30 days of the establishment of the federal administration. However, with the creation of the alliance administration, the two parties struck a deadlock over how to reinstate the deposed justices. The PML-N resigned from the federal cabinet in May 2008 due to a quarrel

over the judiciary, but it sustained to sustenance the PPP-led alliance administration created in assembly (Khan H. , 2012).

Power Crises

During the PPP-led alliance administration, the issue of power crises in Pakistan remained unaddressed. Industries faced closures due to power shortages, prompting workshops to shut down operations. Karachi experienced up to four hours of continuous load shedding, leading to public protests. While Karachi received additional power from other sectors, there was no strategic planning for power generation. The summer months particularly strained the populace, with families capable of affording UPS and generators opting for alternative energy sources. However, economically disadvantaged families were left without recourse.

Poor Planning and Incompetency of Coalition Government

The major challenges faced by coalition government, included poor planning and incompetence, leading to a lack of popularity among the populace. Institutionalization was low, and planning efforts were hindered by low levels of Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Despite circulating well-defined manifestos before elections, the focus shifted upon assuming power, with the government grappling with grave issues such as financial crises, poverty, terrorism, feeble institutions, societal inequality, and power shortages. As a coalition administration, efforts were primarily directed towards appeasing allies, relegating the party's own manifesto to a secondary priority. There was a lack of collective endeavor within the party to address key issues, except for the implementation of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

Corruption

To sustain a parliamentary majority, the PPP depended on coalition partners, leading to a period marked by corruption. Accountability systems in Pakistan were lax, allowing individuals to act without consequences. With so many parties involved in government and lawmaking, nepotism and weak governance thrived. The PPP prioritised individual exposure and party recognition, using newspapers, posters, and protests to enhance its image.

Security Issues

Swat Valley, formerly known for its beauty and tranquilly, experienced serious security issues as extremist groups seized control with little pushback from law enforcement. Musharraf's acts, such as the Lal Masjid operation and the management of Baluchistan, degraded the army's

credibility. As a result, before beginning operations in Swat, the army requested legal authority from the Zardari government. Prime Minister Gilani publicly announced the army's action against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Swat, indicating civil-military collaboration during the Rah-e-Rast operation. Through this military intervention, the government was able to restore its authority in the region. However, the failure of the political government to engage in dialogue with the people of Swat and pursue peaceful alternatives raises questions. The substantial expenditure incurred and damage inflicted on local property during the three-week operation highlight the need for a more effective and humane approach. Additionally, efforts to negotiate with figures like Maulana Fazlullah were seemingly lacking. While the restoration of government authority is crucial, military action should be a last resort. It is imperative to distinguish between the approaches of a political government and those of a dictatorship (Faqir, 2021).

Political Turbulence

Internal political divisions and power struggles between the PPP and PML-N, as well as with other political factions, hindered the coalition government's ability to enact coherent policies and effectively govern the country. Infighting, disagreements over policy priorities, and competing agendas often paralyzed decision-making processes and undermined public confidence in the government (Muhammad Imran, 2023).

Conclusion

The coalition administration led by the PPP from 2008 to 2013 was notably successful, despite initial shortcomings in ensuring coalition sustainability. It demonstrated the importance of respecting coalition partners, making decisions through consensus, and fulfilling promises to maintain stability. The inclusion of multiple parties in government allowed for diverse regional and ideological representation, potentially yielding better results compared to autocratic rule. While coalition governments are generally perceived as weak, this coalition managed to govern effectively for five consecutive years, indicating its strength. However, it also highlights the need for defined limitations and rules within coalitions to prevent one party from gaining disproportionate benefits, thus fostering a more progressive coalition environment. Furthermore, Political parties, constrained by Martial Law regulations, found political alliances to be their sole viable option. These opposition alliances were crucial in exerting pressure on authoritarian administrations and hastening the country's democratic transition. The fourth military

dictatorship, led by Pervez Musharraf, severely restricted political activity, particularly that of the major parties, the PPP and the PML-N. In response, these competing parties formed the political Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy to oppose the Musharraf dictatorship. PPP played an important influence in ARD, with its head in a prominent position. However, due to its ineffectiveness against the Musharraf dictatorship, ARD was eventually dismantled. Throughout, the PPP retained support for democracy restoration; yet, its leadership's numerous switches in coalitions damaged popular trust and failed to effect significant political reform. The future of democracy in Pakistan depends on the democratic goals of existing lawmakers, and unity is vital.

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