

Alliance of Islamic Forces in the Politics of Pakistan: A Study of Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad

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Abstract

In order to challenge the existing political setup of Pakistan, an alliance of Islamic forces titled Islami Jamhoori Ittehad was formed in year 1988. Leadership of the Ittehad agreed to confront the democratic and socialist agenda many political parties including Pakistan People's Party. The composition of nine rightist parties was also known as centre-of-right political alliance. Although Pakistan Muslim League, National Awami Party and Jamat-i-Islami apparently presented a moderate standpoint, yet an Islamic identity and provision of Islamic democratic system was presented as the main objective behind the formation of Ittehad. Present study will try to analyze that how a religio-political alliance was mainly motivated by the Islamic values in order to attain political objectives.

Keywords: *Islamic values, democratic values, social justice, alliance, political objectives.*

Introduction

Like most of the Third World countries, time and again struggle for a sustainable democratic system in Pakistan took years for survival of the system. In-fact, democracy can be practiced in various forms but it will always be a non-starter if we do not accept and tolerate political opposition. Democracy is, no doubt, the best political system introduced by man but it can't survive and bear fruit in our barren and colorless land unless we develop political infra-structure, the maturity and foresight to nurture its

withering sapling with sweet water of tolerance, restraint and equality. After the debacle in 1971, the temptations of ruling elite slanted towards the new Pakistan and the time put the responsibility of nation building firmly on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto headed Pakistan People's Party which was a heterogeneous assembly of different people. The PPP broke new ground in Pakistan's Politics and of its trail and tribulations. PPP inspired strong passions and also evoked fear and hatred among its opponents. The party was gawped by other sections of society, especially the establishment as a threat to the social and political system. Consequently, we have gone through an interminable struggle from alliance to alliance formed from the diminution of popularity of PPP. The eleven years military rule also played due role in it. Meanwhile, the intelligence and anti-people's party propaganda campaign started stirring up memories of Bhutto's "reign of terror" in the 1970 and exhorting Islamic groups to defend the gains made by Zia and the Afghan War, but people's party failed to bury the hatchet with the Islamic groups. The military and intelligence establishment also wished to keep PPP out of power. At that time, only a strong national coalition rooted in Islam and support of Zia-ul-Haq could challenge the PPP. In this way, the Islami Jamhori Ittehad (IJI) appeared on the political horizon of the country. In a sense, the IJI was a reincarnation of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The elections held in 1988, the PPP returned with majority in lower house and with full control of one of the four provinces. The IJI relentlessly excoriated PPP for its failure to act. In October 1990 elections, the IJI assumed the power and Nawaz Sharif was elected as the new Prime Minister. The component parties parted from the alliance and the government was succumbed to instability. Once again, the president backed by the guide of military establishment removed an elected government from power. This process of political instability is a common phenomenon in Pakistan politics.

FORMATION OF ISLAMI JAMHORI ITTEHAD (IJI)

The then President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq told a group of journalists at the presidency that a caretaker government would be named by him and announced the dissolution of the National Assembly under the constitution and of the Cabinet. Zia had taken the decision to dissolve the National Assembly on May, 29, 1988 under Article 58(2) (b) which empowered him to dissolve the lower house of Parliament if he thinks, "a situation has arises in which the Government of the Federation can't be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and an appeal to the electorate is necessary".¹Mr. Muhammad Khan Junejo, former Prime Minister of Pakistan adversely criticized the dissolution of National Assembly and said that the dissolution of lower house by president of Pakistan was an action taken solely by him. That action was against the fundamentals of democratic process. Junejo disputed with the charge the President that

nothing much was done by his government with regard to Islamisation process and said, "rather than blocking the process of Islamisation, we sought to speed it up but through consensus between various Fiqas and schools of thought."²

General Zia's decision to dismiss the government reflected the Pakistan military's frustration. It is believed that both Zia and Junejo had failed to defuse their conflict which was not of personalities but of ideology and constituency. His allegiance was to Islam and then to democracy and by Islamic democracy he meant the Presidential government and his constituency was wrong but Prime Minister Junejo was in favor of Parliamentary democracy and his constituency was the Political electorate and he had no desire to promulgate Islam by state edict.³

No doubt, Pakistan Political Parties seemed unanimous in demanding general elections after President Zia's dissolution of the government but their differences continued to work to the advantage of the President Zia-ul-Haq. All Parties conference in Lahore on 15th of June was attended by fifteen opposition political parties and their demand was, of course, general elections. The purpose behind All Parties Conference was to expand the alliance by including religions and Political Parties and Pakistan Muslim League (PML) of former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, in a broader anti-Zia coalition.⁴ Eight MRD (Movement for Restoration democracy) Parties join the conference including ANP, JUI, PNP, QMA, PDP, NAP, Pakhtoonkhawa and MKP. Among other parties were Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafferia, Jamat-e-Ahlesunnat, Jamat-e-Ahle Hadith, Pakistan Socialist Party, Muslim League (khawaryaddin group), Pakhtoon Milli Ittehad and National People's Party.⁵

DEVELOPMENT DURING THE POST-ZIA ERA

President Zia-ul-Haq's death in August 1988 created a vacuum which, it was thought, other generals might be keen to fill as quickly as possible. But the generals viewed that they never intervened unless there had been a complete breakdown of government or a popular perception that the military needed to take the country out of a political disorder.⁶ When General Mirza Aslam Baiq arrived back in Islamabad from the site of the crash, he asked Chairman Senate Ghulam Ishaq Khan to take over as the President in accordance with the constitution and made him sure of full military backing.

Then General Aslam Baiq sent some recommendations to Ghulam Ishaq Khan which was:

- a. Upholding the glory of Islam;
- b. Total support to government programs;
- c. Rule of Law and Justice;
- d. Support to policy on Afghan issue;
- e. Restoration of democracy in the country.⁷

All politicians of Pakistan were trying to choose their teams for general

elections to held-on November 16th. The betting was still on Ms. Benazir Bhutto, but the odds were shifting. While her dialogues with other opposition parties came to nothing, her political opponents were building an alliance with the help of country's growing ethnic violence. Formation of alliances had begun when Junejo faction joined two smaller parties, i-e. Tehrik-e-Istiqal and Jamiet-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan. There political parties' leaders determined to field joint candidate and joint agenda. After that cooperation eight religions parties formed Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) to put up joint candidates under one agenda and manifesto during the November 16 elections. Among these coalition parties were;

National People's Party(NPP)

Pakistan Muslim League(Fida group)

Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam(Darkhwasti group)

Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle-Hadith(Lakhvi group)

Jamiat-ul-Mashaikh(SahabzadaFazleHaq Group)

Hazbe Jihad

Nizam-e-Mutafa Group

Azad Group.⁸

The IJI adopted seven points agenda which included further Islamisation of Islamic Laws; equal economic opportunities for all sections of the society; cheap justice for the public; protections of women's rights; full support to the Afghan Jihad; development of nuclear energy; and non-aligned to Palestine cause and cooperation with third world countries.⁹

MOVING TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS

Mr. Justice S.A Nussrat, the Chief Election Commissioner, announced on October 8, that nomination for election to the national assembly would be received on October 15, and to the provincial assemblies would be received on October 18. Jammat-e-Islam on October 10 joined the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad. The decision of joining IJI came after three hours long meeting held between Jammat-e-Islami Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed, senator professor khursheed Ahmed and the leaders of IJI Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, Nawaz Sharif and General Fazl e Haq etc. Jamaat-e-Islami had accepted the offer of secretary ship of the alliance.¹⁰

Moulana Sami-ul-Haq proclaimed, "I offered the secretary ship to the Jammat-e-Islami because we wanted to unite all the right wing religious parties on a single platform. Our main objective was the "Nifaz-e-Sharia" in the Pakistan".¹¹ Talking to media personnel Qazi Husain Ahmed said Mr. Nawaz Sharif and his co-partners had fully assured them that all the cases against Jamaat-e-Islami leaders would be withdrawn". He said that "all IJI parties would fight under one flag and election symbol". He further told that "the color of their flag would be green with "nine stars" and if some other parties joined the alliance, then still no change would be made in stars.¹² Qazi Hussain Ahmed also explained his purpose of joining IJI and said:

Joining the Islamic Democratic Alliance of Jatoi and Nawaz Sharif was our compulsion as we know that we would not achieve anything if left isolated. We have convinced our students (Islami Jamiat Tulaba) that it would ultimately help us both politically and administratively. We have tried to hammer out some workable formula to join the alliance of former Prime Minister Junejo but we could not succeed, were later accommodated by Jatoi, Nawaz Sharif alliance.¹³

PML (J) had withdrawn from the PPA on October 19 and formed a part of the IJI followed irresolvable differences with the Tehran-e-Istiklal and JUP over the issue of distribution of tickets between the IJI and the PPA.¹⁴

The IJI distributed tickets for the provisional assemblies on 23rd October. Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Nawaz Sharif and Maulana Sami-ul-Haq were trying to resolve the crisis in IJI through mutual adjustment.¹⁵ Ultimately they succeeded through the mutual adjustment over the provincial Assemblies seats.¹⁶ The IJI launched its election campaign unitedly, under an election symbol bicycle, from Peshawar by holding a considerably well attended meeting at Jinnah Park on November 2. Leaders of IJI declared that they would maintain their unity for the integrity of Pakistan. They also said that Pakistani people were not going to accept the leadership of women. They alleged that US Congressman Solarz was behind Benazir to bring her to power.¹⁷

IJI IN ELECTIONS

During its first stage of elections, IJI presented its manifesto which has incorporated the seven points program which had formed the basis of the IJI and included various promises like President making and making of Prime Minister, Governors and ministers answerable to the courts. The taxation system would be replaced and would tax all incomes. The manifesto of IJI also guaranteed to every citizen for his food, clothing, shelter and educational needs. Handless peasants would be given cultivated lands. Student unions and trade unions would also be restored. Necessary amendments would be made in the constitution to make the Holy Quran and Sunnah the supreme law of Pakistan. The military force would be equipped with the most modern defense arms equipment and system.¹⁸ Regardless of which party would win the November election, that party was likely to come to office with only a minority of votes. Too many political parties and candidates were the reasons of this critical drawback. Zia said that only those parties would contest the elections that get registered. 32 parties came forward to apply for elections symbol and out of those 32 only 27 had put up their candidates for the National Assembly elections.¹⁹ Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's popularity had given PPP a golden opportunity of defeat IJI. The IJI lacked charismatic leaders, but it had money and 11 years of political career.²⁰

The Elections campaign came to a halt on November 14 with the IJI holding a big public meeting and a large procession. Speaking to that large

procession Nawaz Sharif said that the large crowd had proved that the people of Lahore had given their verdict in favor of IJI.²¹ President Ghulam Ishaq Khan asked voters to exercise their right of franchise judiciously and fearlessly in order to elect honest, pious, dedicated responsible and trust worthy candidates to the assemblies.²² The nation of Pakistan went to polls to elect a new assembly for 5 years in which about 50 percent voters took part. More than 33000 polling stations were set up across the country where voters freely and under peaceful conditions were able to cast their votes during the 9 hours of polling.²³ The PPP had won 92 seats in 1988 elections.

The IJI won 55 seats and its electoral performance assumed a disappointing aspect with the defect of its leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. 27 independent candidates were elected as the National Assemblies representatives. MQM, a new political force, registered a stunning victory capturing 13 seats. The IJI failed to get a single seat in Sindh.²⁴ Commenting on 1988's elections, Washington Post said in an editorial "A Different Pakistan", that:

Pakistan is the latest country where military rulers have sponsored fair democratic elections to elect a civilian government. It is one of the most exiting global political developments of the 1980's, as important as the moving of human rights considerations to the center of things was in 1970's... There was in Pakistan, in all reports, a genuine and general exhalation at the opportunity after 11 years to return to popular rule. Democratic elections don't merely legitimize political power and establish a country's international respectivity. They also confirm citizen's dignity. The time in past when military governments could be suffered as the best alternative available in difficult circumstances, let one celebrate for their putative advantages. Everywhere the generals are on the defensive.²⁵

The elections of 1988 paved the way for a shift to democracy. The PP assumed power at the center and Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister of the country on December 2, 1988. Wearing a traditional gown and a scarf covering her black hair, Benazir signed the parliamentary roll book. She accepted an embrace from Nussrat Bhutto who was too an assembly member. Bhutto smiled and assumed her legislative seats.²⁶ The PPP assumed power while IJI was in opposition.

THE AFTERMATHS

Benazir Bhutto assuming responsibility, she came to term with the military and few power contenders. Her appointment as the PM of Pakistan had been delayed for two weeks during which she gave an assurance to Pakistan Army that she was not going to act against military interests. She also said that her party had no candidate for president-ship and that she would favor Ghulam Ishaq Khan as the president of Pakistan.²⁷ The opposition party IJI expressed strong disapprobation at the circumstances of the transfer of power. They castigated PPP as a conservative force. They also

charged that the PPP government had led to a situation where its only aim was to adopt ad hoc measures designed to ensure its survival on a day to day basis.²⁸ Saeed Shafiqat said that people party government had emerged on the national scene was not a “free agent”²⁹ and had to play in other persons cradle. The PPP government was a collection of political cum feudal and it had to reckon on structural component of Pakistan political system identified as bureaucracy, military, and religious elite.

THE PPP MQM ACCORD

Both the PPP and IJI had tried their almost to retain the MQM to patch up with one of the principle party, IJI was failed. Both the PPP and MQM reached to an agreement when Syed Qasim Ali Shah, which was president of Sind PPP survey the residence of Mr. Altaf Hussain beside the top leaders. The chairman of MQM Mr. Azim has said that the aim was to develop the harmony and peace in Sind and rest parts of the country more over he stated that the main issue had been disappeared in charter of demand and 59 point charter had been analysed by negotiating teams of MQM-PPP.³⁰ Altaf Hussain had visited the state guest house in 2nd December, 1998. He meets with Benazir Bhutto. One declaration was signed by two leaders named as “Declaration of Karachi”. Under the joint signatures of Mr. Azim Ahmed Tariq and Qasim Ali Shah this declaration was issued.³¹ The IJI was remained unsuccessful due to minority party at centre nor it had any involvement in Sindh assembly, at other side government had given the seat of deputy speaker of Sindh assembly to MQM.³²

PPP-ANP COALITION GOVERNMENT IN NWFP

The provincial assembly election of NWFP, the IJI had acquired 29 seats, while the ANP have 12 and independent had acquired 15 seats. It was clear that IJI would succeed in making a government. But all of the rules and things were changed.³³ On November 30, 1998 after the hectic lobbying of five hours, NWFP - PPP had measured the support of 13 of 15 independent MP-AS and ANP. During meeting PPP had given fairly well proportion of cabinet seats. More interesting was that IJI, which even stood to offer Chief Ministership along with 12 ministers to the independents failed or unsuccessful to woo their support. Chief minister Arbab Jahangir which was the former he said that the IJI offer to chief ministership and also for ministries. While independents things to go beside PPP. Arbab Mohammad Jahangir was the significant among independent. Syed Munir Shah and Anatullah Khan were also significant.³⁴

PPP-IJI ACCORD IN BALOCHISTAN

One parliamentary group which was formed by the combination of PPP and IJI in Balochistan Assembly was known as likeminded parliamentary group. This group was comprised of 15 MPs elected involving these from PPP, IJI few members of the independents. According to declaration which

was written in the presence of 15 signatories according to which members of like-minded groups were connected to retain unity on problems like composition of government in the province. Declaration more said that struggle would be made to seek consensus upon the significant things involved in election of the leader of opposition or House. Other point was that nobody of the group would take with any party without the consent or approval of the party, while all the doors were opened for new members.³⁵ The Provincial Chief of JUI was Molvi Mohammad Khan Sherani, MNA who was authorized by JUI secretary general, Maulvi Fazal ur Rehman to negotiate the all conditions with like-minded groups of PPP independent and IJI for composition of provincial government which should be politically viable.³⁶

IJI and PPP remain successful in achieving the 3-8 provincial seats correspondingly in Balochistan assembly. However some of the independents and few parties joined hands to elect a Chief Minister. So the last decision was given to or hand over to the MPA of IJI, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. He became chief minister after elections, many analysts were agreed it was a fragile government propped by various ideologically groups. In this province PPP gained importance over IJI, among 100 seats PPP acquired 67 seats, the PPP was successful and have more chances to form a government, Mr. Qasim Ali Shah was elected as chief Minister in 2nd December 1988.³⁷ Mian Nawaz Sharif was elected as Punjab Chief Minister, in spite of PPP, IJI had a clear advantage. It was very problematic for PPP to make a government in pro-IJI province. Among the election of Chief Minister they showed hand procedure and it was adopted.³⁸

The picture emerged as a composition of PPP government at the centre and Sindh, ANP and Balochistan with IJI and PPP coalition government on NWFP and IJI government. In the Punjab province makes a flexible balance of power. In initial year Punjab government and central government were in opposition. The government composed by Benazir Bhutto remains shaky after 11 months. This government was not acquired success in gaining credibility. There was more danger from anti-democratic forces which were spread everywhere material law loving consistency, establishment. The IJI and all kind of Ziaists and Muhalls had a threat from the democratic dispensation. They promised that we remove Mr. Bhutto from government before March 1990.³⁹ When Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto hears about the planning of combined opposition parties was to move a non-confidence motion against her in the national assembly. She also heard some intelligence assemblies were engaged in the plan in cahoots beside opposition politician, she was that generous bribes were also being offered.⁴⁰ A journalist Munir Ahmad by repute commented in his book that "Pakistan mayn intelligence Agencion ka siyasi kirdar" that Shamus-ur-Rehman had informed that prime minister that both senior army officers were intriguing to remove the government from power.

An indignant Bhutto suddenly ordered Masud Sherif, deputy

directorate of intelligence Bureau, to check this out with the help of Brigadier Mohammad Akhter , a joint secretary at the prime minister secretariat, Masud sharif did more than just that. ⁴¹ He laid on elaborate trap, setting up video and audio both records at Malik Mumtaz home to eaves drop the evidence on tape. The conversation was taped in a single operation code named "Mid night Jackals". Using Mumtaz service links with Brigadier Imtiaz and major Amir the officer were lured to his residence to meet a PPP MNA, posing as a leader of dissident party faction. In a letter address to the Prime Minister on 5th Oct 1989, Masud Shrief informed her that 12 audio tapes had been recorded. Bhutto handed over the tapes to the GHQ while her Aid General (Retd) Nasullah Baber conveyed to the army chief, general Beg , to the government outrage over the matter. ⁴² So the army stood sown and opened the door for PPP party to solve the political situation of the country. Initial shock for the government is the announcement by MQM that it had broken its alliance with PPP and would help the opposition at the non-confidence move.

Two major of the tensions among both MQM and PPP were over the problem of Biharis and the reports of large scale migration of non-Sindhis from the interiors. While the problem for example Kala Bagh Dem , the making of cantonment in the province and provincial autonomy were also raised to show the PPP lack of sensitivity to its electoral base in sindh. The ruling party or government had been put on the defense. ⁴³ Quickly this was followed by defection of four FATA members to the opposition camp. With reports of rebellion b/w the PPP sindhi MNA"s, the cop leader appeared confident of ousting the government. According to opposition sourced the Cop had certain support of 131 members when it finally decided to strike. Over the PPP MNA"s from sindh were in touch with the Cop leadership before the movement and attested five of them, Rana Chandar, Qurban Ali Shah, Shabir Shah, Kirshan Chandar and Noor Muhammad laurid were taken certain to vote with the opposition. Qurban Ali Shah the MNA of Tharparkear who was at loggerhead with the PPP central leadership since the publication of his controversial interviews, reportedly played a main role in rallying PPP dissidents not only from sindh as well as from Punjab in accordance with no confidence move. The Cop also assured most of the MNA's that are Makhdoom of Hala, which were led by open Criticism of the government leader lead credence to this assertion.

The MQM also swung to Cop when it got an assurance that a substantial number of PPP MNA's from sindh were prepared to support the move. The MQM was promised the membership and assured with the support of PPP dissident; the Cop could also from provincial government. The other main cause for Cops confidence was at least 10 PPP MNA's from Punjab were in contact with it. Till Oct 26, 1989, when the no confidence motion was firmly tabled in national assembly, the Cop opposition seems impregnable. ⁴⁴

However the scenario got to be changed with the Kallu ballsed. Up and scotched clandestine and ulterior motives of same senior officers of ISI. As against three IJI peoples which were from Punjab, Rais Sabir Ahmad, Ghulam Muhammad Ahmad Maneka and Makhdoom Ahmad Aalam Anwer, who had lately supported the motion in the assembly met Prime Minister and announced their condition of dissident as well as announced their dissociation from the move. This type of defection deal the opposition a body blow from which they never recorded. "The defection of these three members proved to be turning point."⁴⁵ In the ugly battle for Islamabad, democratic norms shows major casualty. No hold was barred in the scramble for MNA's. Every weapon from cocrion to bribery was employed. The elected members of country were highest political institution behaved and were treated liked chattel.⁴⁶ After month of paralyzing political warfare among government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her opposition, the battle entered a deceive phase on floor of National Assembly Hall. Chaudry Abdul Ghafoor, a leading member of IJI asked that "leave be granted for a vote of no confidence" against the Bhutto government. The Prime Minister looked on as 98 legislators rose in help of the movement involving 14 from MQM.

After study the official count the speaker declared, "Permission given" Benazir answered, "This is not a democracy" this is bribery. This is corruption but the motion is going to be defected" of 237 seats in the national assembly, the opposition had needed 119 vote to pass the motion.⁴⁷ In Pakistan when the army barrack, so it offion winds up in power. Among no confidence motion, the troops had been stationed anywhere in Islamabad to maintain order as national assembly held a vote of no confidence against the government, at last there was no struggle made to disrupt the proceedings, both of side had warmed there might be. After a ninety minute debate the speaker asked that the roll to be called, the Cop a grouping of IJI five smaller parties, polled 107 votes, 12 short of majority it needed. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi said "I hope the Prime Minister will take in a sporting spirit."⁴⁸ It was a large order marshaling support for survival. Prime minister proved in convincing terms on the floor of Nation assembly that she had enjoyed the support of 125 members. The Speaker Malik Meraj Khalid labour Minister Malik Akhter Ahmad Awan and Mumtaz Ahmad who were not present PPP's total strength at the movement was 128. By this count she had 21 more than the strength of Cop in the house.⁴⁹ President Ghulam Ishaq Khan had expressed his serve disappointment while commenting on the first year of the democratic system. He said, "As a whole we failed to create an environment of mutual understanding and positive cooperation as directed the democratic spirit. The vigor reflecting the democratic creativity was no more. In many areas of country instead the concerns for personal security had crippled the creative potentials of the nation."⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

At the end of this detailed discussion, we may conclude that with the slogan of change an alliance of Islamic forces titled *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad* was formed in late 1980s. Apparently it stood against the socialist agenda of Pakistan People's Party and tried to strive for an Islamic identity with the provision of Islamic democratic system, however, it was severely criticized by a large number of political analysts for its character as a tool of establishment to crush the PPP sentiments. Yet, it is admitted that this religio-political coalition was mainly enthused by the Islamic ethics in order to attain political purposes. However, political motives of the alliance undermined the Islamic values of consultancy and tolerance and acceptance of other's views in the spectrum of General Will.



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