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Reconciliation of Pakistan People's Party: A Conduit to Sustainable Democracy in Pakistan

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Abstract:

Like most of the underdeveloped countries of the world, Pakistan's political history witnessed several unconstitutional and dictatorial regimes causing hurdles in the evolution of democratic culture and traditions in the country. Time and again different democratic governments have been warped up mainly due to mismanagement, unbalanced institutional development or rising political aspiration of the military elites. However, espousal of reconciliation provides an effective tool to minimize the unconstitutional adventurism. The present study is conducted to evaluate the history of reconciliatory politics in Pakistan on the parameters of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs). Here, the pattern is carried out by the main stake holders to promote the national reconciliation. A panoramic view of the contemporary developed countries clearly reveals that almost everywhere TRCs have turn out to be a decisive element of the responses of states, particularly those going through political conversion, to serious acts of human rights violations and impunity occasioned by a history of lingering conflicts and antagonism. Similarly, the mainstream political parties of Pakistan i.e., Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), commonly known as PML (N), have passed through the instable political situation aiming to reconcile under historic Charter of Democracy (COD) to reinforce parliamentary democracy, ensure provincial autonomy, independent judiciary and establishment of an independent Election Commission to ensure proper socio-economic and political evolution of the state. The paper seeks to examine the attempts made by PPP's led coalition government to restore the parliamentary democracy in Pakistan with the spirit and policy of reconciliation.

Keywords: *Charter of Democracy, Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League (N), Parliamentary Democracy, Politics of Reconciliation*

1. Introduction

It is scholarly admitted that with the fall of colonization process and with the emergence of newly independent states, the character of conflict is gradually changed from interstate to intrastate. This change, on most of the occasions, resulted in civil wars, rise of military dictatorial regimes and in the end high levels of human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Peace workers, on the other hand, have been struggling to bring about durable tranquility in these suffering States. One of the tools which they have been effectively utilizing is the policy of "reconciliation". Although the reconciliation in comparison to mediation, negotiation or arbitration, is perhaps the least understood phenomenon, however, the principal stride to examine the reconciliation procedures is to differentiate it from a usual peace building practice. Unlike Pakistan, democratically matured societies, reconciliation is taken as the process of addressing split relationships, as stated by the Harber & Kelly (2004), with covering a range of activities such as:

- To develop a shared hallucination of an inter-reliant society.
- To accepting and deal with the past grumble.
- To build a positive relationships with utmost level of trust.

- To bring about a significant attitudinal transformation; and
- To have a commitment for a considerable social, economic and political change.

It is generally observed that under developed societies have often experienced agitation, political unrest, military coup d'état or collapse of democratic institutions. However, in the contemporary world, the rise and emergence of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), is providing a significant forum to the retort of countries, especially those going through political changeover and to grim acts of human rights contravention. Since 1973, many TRCs have been established and worked effectively. From 1974 to 1994 a number of under developed states including Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone and many others used this gateway for a successful political transition. In spite of their positive efforts, a number of developing states are suffering by the hand of civil or military authoritarian rule which often lead to political or social instability. However, under such circumstances, reconciliation is considered as an effective and modern tool for social and political awareness of the society. In order to identify reconciliation as a nonviolent process linked with peace and its subsequent forgiveness, Montville (1996), a prominent Political Scientist, points out three interrelated steps for a successful settlement:

- To understand the history of the conflict and trust building.
- To recognize the inequality and consequential historic wound; and
- To accept the moral duty and commitment to coup up the political volatility.

Consequently, the suffering and agony of a politically premature society to show its fortitude to move into a new phase where the rule of law should prevail, democratic norms can be reconstituted and fundamental rights can be guaranteed and promoted.

2. The History of Political Reconciliation in Pakistan

The contemporary political history of South Asia has offered a unique depiction where India emerged a successful democratic republic while Pakistan could not evolve a democratic culture due to one reason or the other. Like its immediate neighbor Pakistan also came into being as a parliamentary democracy, but soon after its emergence the path was opened for civil or military bureaucracy which dominated the State's polity. The country witnessed four major military interventions i.e., in 1958-69 by Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, in 1969-71 by General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, in 1977-88 by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, and lastly by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999-2008 (Shaikh, 2009). In all these cases, the constitutions of the state guarantees, guardian of the basic human rights were either abrogated or held in abeyance.

Like its predecessor, the fourth military coup under General Pervez Musharraf presented an uncertain environment of conflict and crises lead towards the political instability, chaos, violation of human rights, mockery of the Constitution, and rifts in federating units. This unstable situation of Pakistan compelled the leadership of mainstream political parties including PPP and Muslim League (N) agreed to sit together for re-conciliation in the best interest of the State. Consequently, a historic document of Charter of Democracy was signed by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto in 2006 in London (Mirza, 2011). The document full filled the 1st condition on re-conciliation as Montville puts the joint analysis and understanding of the history of the conflict with trust building.

3. Charter of Democracy (COD, 2006)

The political instability, 1973 Constitution's violation and failing of rule of law during the Musharraf regime compelled the leadership of two major political parties PPP and PML (N) to examine and find out a solution of the contemporary situation. Although these two major political parties of Pakistan remained opponent to each other and always striving to destabilize the elected government of each other while remaining in opposition, however, both of the said parties suffered exiles and political victimization by the authoritarian rule of General Pervez Musharraf. Their common sufferings required them to come together to reformulate the parliamentary government back in the country. Consequently, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto met in London in 2006 and finally signed the historic document of Charter of Democracy (COD). No doubt, the document is esteemed as the *Magne Carta* and a milestone in the political struggle for true and viable democracy in Pakistan. The COD declared the consensus of the parties as:

We, the elected leaders of Pakistan...[note] our responsibility to our people to set an alternative direction for the country saving it from its present predicaments on an economically sustainable, socially progressive, politically democratic and pluralist, federally cooperative, ideologically tolerant, internationally respectable and regionally peaceful basis in the larger interests of the peoples of Pakistan to decide once and for all that only the people and no one else has the sovereign right to govern through their elected representatives, as conceived by the democrat par excellence, Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah (Mian, 2006).

The Charter established to review a democratic order and absence of military interference from the politics of Pakistan. The signatures of the document brought about a restoration of the 1973's Parliamentary Constitution in its true spirit. Both parties agreed to restore the independence of judiciary by adopting the transparent method for judicial appointments. They also agreed to show their full commitment on any future constitutional or national issue to manage it according to the fortitude of 1973's Constitution. Similarly, headship of both political parties demanded for a free and fair fresh elections and ultimate transformation of authority to the elected representatives of Pakistan. In consequence, the reconciliation between the two mainstream political parties, in order to bring about a social change, pressurized the dictator to conduct the elections and the transform the power to an elected government.

4. The National Reconciliation Ordinance

The National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) as a part of formal “Deal” between President Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto was notified on October 2007. After the exchange of various drafts between major stakeholders the deal was confirmed. The NRO as misnomer was designed to attain specific political goal of peaceful coexistence through negotiations. Talking about its objectives, Musharraf declared that after discussion with major political leaders and colleagues in power, we decided to put forward a broad comfort to politicians for creating conducive political atmosphere in Pakistan (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2007). Likewise, the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) reported, “The reconciliation part of NRO appears to have been borrowed from TRC, set up in South Africa between President Nelson Mandela in aftermath of white apartheid rule” (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2007). It seems the beginning of the Ordinance by an authoritarian rule is reconciliatory which not only unlocked a hope for democratization in the State but also opened a new window of opportunity:

Whereas it is expedient to encourage National Reconciliation foster mutual trust and confidence amongst holder of public offices and remove the remnants of political vendetta and victimization, to make the election process more transparent and to amend certain laws for that purpose and for the matter connecter therewith (Pakistan Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, 2007).

Like any other successful contract, here too, the guarantors played their role in NRO. Mrs. Condoleezza Rice (2011), the American Foreign Secretary revealed the secret about this deal in her book, “*No Higher Honor*”. She told that

How she worked hard to bring the two “moderates”, General Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto, together to have an official agreement. She made it clear, “Musharraf had asked for facilitation in bridging-up his differences with Bhutto, it seemed difficult, but in case the two opponents could come to a power-sharing understanding, it would budge the weight of politics towards the modesty to weaken the Islamists”.

Thus, NRO as a part of “Deal” between Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto apparently paved the way towards the elections leading to democratization in the country, through reconciliatory progression.

5. Elections 2008 and the “Murree Declaration”

Under the mounting pressure of lawyer's moment, civil society and the demand from political parties, general elections were announced to be held in January 2008. However, the unfortunate assassination of Benazir Bhutto and its aftermath delayed the elections up to 18th February 2008 (Khan, 2011). The elections, as predicted, brought immense transformations in the politics of state. The report of European Union declared that 2008 Elections brought a relatively peaceful transition of power (Khan, 2011). The newly established private media and the lawyer movement with the help of civil society played their constructive role in transition process. After the elections in March 2008, both PPP and PML (N) have signed a joint declaration named “Murree Declaration” for the formation of coalition government in Centre and the Punjab. In the declaration both the parties have agreed upon the reinstatement of the judges and to solve other national issues with the consensus under the spirit of COD. The mainstream parties i.e., PPP and PML (N) also agreed to share the federal cabinet lead by PPP. The declaration was welcomed and endorsed by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) and put its weight to strengthen the national consensus (ICG Asia Report, 2002).

The mature democratic transition occurred in the form of elections for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan. The negotiations progress also bore fruit in the shape of successful elections for the Prime Minister of Pakistan when Mr. Yousaf Raza Gillani became a newly elected leader of the House by securing 264 votes. The firm belief and determination of the political parties successfully installed democratically elected government which completed the transition process to democracy, appreciated by intelligentsia and political observers all over the world. Along with some external factors i.e., change of regime in USA, the peaceful transition to a democracy within Pakistan resulted into Musharraf's isolation. The political parties under the reconciliatory process also planned to bring about impeachment against the President. While facing the threat of impeachment, he ultimately resigned on 18th August, 2008. His resignation proved a landmark, where a powerful military autocrat was ousted by the political actors. Musharraf's resignations further strengthened the democratic norms when Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, the Co-Chairman of PPP, was chosen as a new President of Pakistan (Pakistan. National Assembly, September 6, 2008).

6. Restoration of Chief Justice and Termination of PPP, PML (N) Coalition Government

With the fall of President Pervez Musharraf, PPP and PML (N) decided to share the power on basis of their mutual consensus in case of get rid of dictatorial regime. Most of the political actors, including the head of PML (Q) Choudhary Shujaat Hussain, a close associate of General Musharraf, wished for the success of this coalition government to serve the state interests in future (*Dawn*, March 18, 2008). The coalition government was expected to deal with many issues including:

- To restoration of supremacy of the Parliament according to the Constitution of 1973.
- To reduce gradually increasing inflation.
- To re-instate the sacked Judges of the Supreme and High Courts.
- To play an effective role in war against terrorism; and
- To take effective measures in order to manage the short fall of electricity.

However, contrary to the general expectations, this alliance could not work for long. In March 2009, the leadership of PML (N) decided to part their ways from the ruling coalition led by PPP. Mian Nawaz Shareef in a formal announcement stated, “After thorough deliberations PML (N) has finally decided to separate ways from the ruling coalition government”. He further added, “In a comprehensive letter to Mr. Asif Ali Zardari I requested for a timely implementation of the agreements, however, he pretended as the agreement is not a sacred document like the words of Holy Quran which can't be changed, therefore, PML (N) has decided

to separate the ways from coalition government of PPP” (*Dawn*, March 15, 2009). In the meantime, the lawyer’s movement, in collaboration of many political parties including PML (N), decided to go for a long march from 12 to 16 in order to restore the sacked judges. However, the government not only showed reluctance to restore judges but also declared section 144 thereby forbidding of gathering of long march. The federal authorities made all possible arrangements to block the ways leading to Islamabad. Despite these efforts, the long march continued with great zeal and fervor and was expected to reach Islamabad between 15 and 16 March 2009 (*The News*, March 17, 2009). The government was under enormous pressure of the civil society and it proved a difficult time for the ruling party. There were rumors on the media that the government is soon going to be crashed in result of possible clash of the institutions. The leadership of PPP, after reading the intensity of the situation, showed tolerance and reconciliation for the best survival of democracy, and the Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani announced the restoration of sacked judges. The Prime Minister appeared on the state television on midnight and addressed the nation in the way:

I am addressing on an event when we are standing on the cross roads of the history. The nation knows that we always preferred reconciliation, tolerance and respectful politics. We all know that the democracy and the democratic institutions can’t be strengthened until political parties and other actors don’t respect their mandate. The lawyers and the political parties are presenting their sentiments in the form of Long March; we respect it which is their democratic right. The PPP and its leadership especially late Benazir Bhutto was important part of the lawyer movement. Keeping COD, Murree Declaration and other promise of the leadership in the mind I hereby announce the restoration of Chief Justice and other Judges and it is also notified. He also invited the leadership of other political parties especially PML-N to come and join politics of reconciliation and tolerance for the flourishing of democracy in Pakistan (*Dawn*, March 18, 2009).

There was large scale appreciation from every corner of the word for taking bold and reconciliatory decision. Including others, US authorities also extended their support through embassy in Islamabad, The restoration is a statesman like decision which will diffuse a lot of confrontation and it is the substantial step towards national reconciliation. Thus, a bold step of PPP’s leadership saved the country from derailing of the newly established political system.

7. Restoration of parliamentary system: an implementation of COD (18th Amendment)

Political history of Pakistan clearly reveals that it has had real challenges with constitutional issues when its military and sometimes civilian dictatorships caused a political instability. However, when two main political forces of the country i.e., PPP and PML (N) suffered from dictatorship, they have decided to act in a mature manner. In the light of COD, the landmark 18th Constitutional amendment provided a new gateway for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

After his elections, according to the parliamentary traditions, President Asif Ali Zardari addressed to the parliament. He, during his address on March 28, 2009, asked the Speaker of the National Assembly to constitute a parliamentary committee in order to put forward an amendment in the Constitution in light of COD (Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, 2008). After his speech the committee of 26 members representing fifteen political parties was constituted and the Parliament witnessed a motion to accommodate all political parties in the House. The representation of all political parties on board showed their reconciliatory approach in order to avoid confrontation in the way of democratization. The committee, under the leadership of Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, decided to accept the relevant suggestions from all sectors of society. After the laborious work of about nine months it proposed amendments in 102 articles of the Constitution (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2010). The Chairman of the committee also presented the bill in joint session of the legislature, where he dedicated this remarkable occasion to Banazir Bhutto. He supplements, “the bill guaranteed parliamentary preeminence, rights of the provincial units and recognition of the people’s struggle for the revival of democracy” (*Daily Times*, April 3, 2010).

The President of Pakistan during his address to the Parliament showed his pledge and dedication to the reconciliation process in the country. He added:

Madam Speaker let us promise that we will sustain the constitutional ascendancy. This necessitate that each organ of the country shall function in its constitutional paradigms, and does not walk over on the sphere of others. We believe in settlement, and not altercation. I remind that after the martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto some had advised us confrontation, we were advised to boycott the coming elections of 2008 and to confront the dictatorship in the streets. However, we believed that democracy is the best revenge. At present, I hope they will acknowledge that our position has been justified. I want to take this occasion to say, that the Constitutional Reforms is a national responsibility, our duty to the people of Pakistan. Let there be no reservation about it (Press Information Department of Pakistan, April 5, 2010).

The historic 18th Amendment Act, 2010 was finally passed collectively on April 8, 2011. The fundamental features of the 1973 Constitution, i.e., Islamic republic, federal structure, parliamentary democracy, provincial autonomy and independence of judiciary were restored. Yet the most substantial importance of the bill was the accomplishment of democratic norms. It was also significant as almost all political parties in the House joined hands with the commitment to restore the Constitution of 1973. They demonstrated astonishing unity, extraordinary tolerance and maturity to understand each other’s view point in this regard. The most vital success of the amendment was the awe inspiring affection with the democracy and revulsion with the despotic rule. The PPP lead coalition government enhanced the atmosphere of reconciliation and cooperation in the political scene of the country; otherwise the bill would have not get the required majority in the parliament. However, in spite of reconciliation some notes of reiteration were also there which was coup up in a democratic manner (National Assembly of Pakistan Report, 2010). The amendment paved the way for an elected government in the future and blocked all the ways, responsible to derail the past democratic systems which reflected a new beginning of the democratic epoch in Pakistan.

8. The 19th Constitutional Amendment: a Promising Compromise

The 19th constitutional amendment is an upshot of 18th constitutional amendment because some articles of 18th amendment were challenged in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The Court issued a detailed order regarding a few observations on some provisions included article 175-A (appointment of the judges) in the judiciary. The Supreme Court's comments were to describe the fact that under the premises of 18th constitutional amendment, an effective role of judiciary has been minimized by the PCCR. This situation may fabricate a conflict within state institutions. In order to observe the tri-chotomy of the purposes, the Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC) analyzed the Supreme Court in connection with the verdict of Speaker of the National Assembly (Rabbani, 2011, 168-70).

No doubt, the situation seemed difficult for the ruling party. It was not an easy task to bring all political parties on board once again to develop a consensus as there was the general perception that the institutions are moving towards a collision. Democratic norms in Pakistan were at very embryonic stages and the interface among the state institutions was not moderated by institutional standards. To manage the dilemma, the PCCR met to originate further discussions. For the restoration of parliamentary supremacy it was pledged to assure the judicial independence. The committee behaved once again very mature to build up harmony before laying the bill in the Parliament. With the approval of 19th amendment draft by the cabinet members, the Parliament collectively agreed on the bill. However, drafted of the amendment bill was prepared in the light of Supreme Court's instructions. After tabling the draft of 19th constitutional amendment, the Chairman of the committee stated:

It is the day of disillusionment for those forces that were forecasting conflict among institutions of state. The passing of bill has further strengthened the constitutionalism, which is necessary for a political maturity and the supremacy of law in Pakistan (Rabbani, 2011, 267).

By taking advantage of the prevailing positive political situation, Prime Minister Mr. Yousaf Raza Gillani endorsed that the passing of two amendments in a very short span of time as the result of reconciliation among the political parties. The parties showed unanimous agreement to strengthened democracy in Pakistan. He stated:

The consensus and reconciliation among the political parties is "a present for the people." He further added, "this assembly is more influential than all earlier; if not passing two amendments in a year would have not been promising" (National Assembly of Pakistan Proceedings, December 12, 2010).

No doubt, the tolerance and flexibility demonstrated by the political party in power has protected the country from institutional clash. The mature politics of the government was equally responded by the opposition parties especially ML (N). The opposition on the cost of its own reputation strived utmost to prevent the system from being derailed and ensured parliamentary strength in Pakistan.

9. The Twentieth Amendment

Like most of the under developed states, in Pakistan it always remained an unhealthy tradition that after every elections there were allegations of rigging against the winner by the losers. Although on some occasions, the caretaker set up favored one political party against the other, however, a positive contribution of government and opposition in caretaker set up would ensure transparent elections in the country. In this connection the 20th constitutional amendment proved a new landmark which was achieved by means of reconciliation and consensus in political history of Pakistan. This was a key-step for democratizing the society leading to transparent elections in Pakistan. The 20th amendment was passed with the mutual consensus of the both opposition benches and the government elites like 18th and 19th constitutional amendment. The previous two amendments were brought to undo the undemocratic incorporations from the constitutional set up, whereas 20th amendment was approved with futuristic prospective. It was to play a decisive role in order to conduct transparent elections in future.

To conduct a free and fair election through an independent election commission was the will of two mainstream political parties in COD and endorsed by other political parties in the Parliament (Rizwan et al, 2014). The PPP lead coalition government sustained its guiding principle of reconciliation that resulted into unanimously approval of 20th amendment by scoring 247 with nobody on the other side (*Daily Dawn*, February 17, 2012). It arranged a mode to install a concierge set-up and an independent Election Commission to supervise the future elections. Choudhary Nisar Ali Khan, a seasoned politician from ML (N), praised and congratulated the nation on passing of 20th amendment with inclusive national consensus. During debate on the floor of the assembly he said, "it was not the question of any party but a democratic process...for the survival of democratic system, opposition should work together with the ruling elite to restructure the democratic configurations in Pakistan. In the same circumstance, Prime Minister congratulated and assured the nation, "It has strengthened the democratic norms, and the past mistakes have been rectified by the incumbent parliament" (*The Nation*, February 17, 2012). It is believed that the original constitution that assured a parliamentary system in the country has been resumed with the help of these amendments.

10. The Consensus Based Legislation

The PPP lead coalition government evolved consensus-based legislation in line with politics of reconciliation in the Parliament. The historic legislation witnessed the parliamentary regime i.e., 2008-2013 to cover almost every walk of human life. The Parliament successfully passed a total of 134 bills including three landmark constitutional amendments and laid down the convention to pass private member bills as well (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2013). As Pakistan has experienced an alleged history of elections, keeping it in view both PPP and PML (N), have decided under COD to introduce reforms in elections. An autonomous, impartial and independent Election Commission was approved to be established

where a level playing game be ensured. The stakeholders also agreed on an impartial concierge government to conduct and manage transparent elections (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2011).

Among other legislative and political issue, some social matters were also discussed in the 18th amendment. Although the Constitution of 1973 encourages legislation for women protection and guarantees their full involvement in all walks of life but it could not work effectively due to unremitting interruptions. In order to achieve the desired goals, the Parliament passed a numerous imperative pieces of legislation focusing on acid throwing, sexual harassment at their working places, anti-women practices and to establish a national commission in order to set a parameter about women status. The legislature also legislated for the Child Rights in order to provide them a violence and exploitation free environment with the provision of immediate relief in form of maintenance allowance. In the meantime, general demand to manage energy crisis has increased because of climate change and global warming. To meet the demands, Parliament legislated to manage shortfall in energy sector. Similarly, the bills were recorded for the establishment and empowerment of Educational Institution. The House at its utmost remained committed for the promulgation of human rights and has taken a number of measures to assure the right and liberties of working class. The COD's signatories were agreed for the establishment of National Democracy Commission to promote democratic culture and to provide assistance to the legislators for their capacity building. The organization was believed to offer an expert view on different social and political issues and to help the parliament to make a companionable law for Pakistani society.

In order to have an effective command and control system, the National Command Authority (NCA) Bill empowered the Prime Minister to be the Chairman of NCA, which shall exercise authority over all nuclear and space technologies. It was a good illustration to demonstrate the system of check and balance in which the President intended to shift his authority to the Prime Minister. The COD, accentuated that supremacy will be improved to assist the general public, with the admission to communal services. The stipulation of essential requirements of education, health, job-creation and reduction of price would be ensured (Kundi, 2011). The Parliament remained successful to evolve a consensus on the historic legislation where the part of opposition remained constructive. Under the guidance of President Asif Ali Zardari the government adopted many positive suggestion initiated by the opposition under the true spirit of politics of reconciliation and accommodation. He, during his address to the joint setting of the legislature, vowed to strengthen the democratic course in State. He urged to promote the politics of reconciliation for the best survival of the state and the system. He said:

We will encourage supremacy of the Parliament and will not allow anyone to take over the Parliament. We believe that all state organs should work within their constitutional parameters. The restoration of constitution shows that if political parties rise above politicking, they can deliver. Let us struggle to keep our egos aside and stop challenging each other, merely for point-scoring which weakens democracy in the long run. The job of the leadership is to unite not divide. We believe in reconciliation, not confrontation. He called for arrangement of national consensus and to collectively take "tough decisions". I invite all political forces for a national dialogue sooner rather than later as it is time for new ideas, creativity and bold commitment. There has been enough pain. It is time for reconciliation (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2011).

To achieve the above stated objectives, Pakistan People Party accommodated many political actors in the House. Initially it formed the coalition government with PML (N), JUI (F) and ANP. However, later on the new alliance was formed with PML (Q), after months of turmoil in PPP's relationships with PML (N) and MQM, where Pervez Elahi was made deputy prime minister and PML (Q) members were inducted into the federal cabinet. Their votes helped out the PPP gain a surer footing. On the other hand, as a counter-move, PML (N) built an alliance with religious and nationalist parties. The coalition with PML (Q) was to run smooth administration the passage and implementation of legislation and for the survival of the democratic regime. Similarly, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, was looking submissive to the proposal of a joint venture with the PPP, at-least for his own political endurance (*The Express Tribune*, May 1, 2011). Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan, Information and Broad casting Minister, said that the cabinet increase would be made according to the constitutional needs. She made it clear that PPP, believing in the policy of reconciliation, will take all political forces on board to decide national issues. The coalition, no doubt, helped out PPP from the state of instability and provided strength to the coalition so that it could focus on the national issues rather on the survival of the government.

11. Reconciliation Continued

In spite of its great efforts for reconciliation, the PPP government remained under a series of corruption scandals including cases against the leadership of the party. In this dilemma the chief of *Minhaj-ul-Quran*, Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri called for a long march. The march moved in hundreds of vans, motorcycles, buses and cars towards Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. The objective of the march was to demand electoral reforms, the formation of interim government with the consultation of judiciary and military, and dissolution of the Parliament before the term of its expiry and the disbanding of the sitting Election Commission of Pakistan (*Daily Dawn*, January 14, 2013). However, the government in response showed flexibility after taking some security measures and allowed a sit-in about 500 yards from the Parliament. Other political parties in opposition also demanded the resign of the cabinet and to announce the general election's date with the formation of impartial interim government, which ultimately encouraged the Long March participants. To coup up the situation and to keep the security of state in focus, the government again adopted the reconciliatory stance instead of reaction. Meeting with the deadline of Tahir-ul-Qadri the representative of the government i.e., ten members committee, met with Qadri in the leadership of Choudhary Shujaat Hussain of PML (Q). After evolving successful negotiations "Islamabad Long March Declaration" was signed. Both parties considered the accord as its own success. Qadri extended thanks and congratulations to the demonstrators, party workers, females, media and the government for a successful end where he declared it the day of the victory. In this critical situation the government lead by PPP again followed its set principle of reconciliation and remained successful to manage the crises otherwise the system would have been failed. Another

incident that badly affected the smooth running of the administration when in response to the cases against Prime Minister Gilani, Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified him as the Prime Minister during its verdict in National Assembly Speaker's ruling case: *Yousuf Raza Gilani is disqualified from membership of parliament from April 26, the date of his conviction. He has also ceased to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Election Commission shall issue a notice of disqualification and the president is required to take necessary steps to ensure continuation of democratic process (The News, June 19, 2012).*

The situation was perceived and propagated by the media that the institutions of the state are going towards clash. However, in response to the decision People's Party has summoned its parliamentary party convention where Jehangir Badar, Secretary General of PPP, confirmed that the central cabinet stood dissolved after the ineligibility of Prime Minister on the parliamentary traditions that "wherever in the world where the Prime Minister is gone the cabinet is vanished" (*Daily Dawn*, June 20, 2012). However, the party directed the party workers not to engage themselves in any type of remonstrance while the party will make a decision about its future plan with the consultation but the democratic process would continue without interruption. It was pledged by PPP leadership that the party would continue to perform a positive character in the larger concerns of the State. As per their commitment the most of the party leadership stayed committed with the politics of accommodation and after fulfilling all constitutional requirements the new cabinet was formed in the Premiership of Raja Pervez Ashraf, who remained in power till the expiry of five-year term of PPP-led coalition government.

In this way, the PPP government recorded a momentous exit as country's first chosen regime was to complete its democratic tenure. Raja Pervez Ashraf, at this occasion, was confident that it is the end of a "menacing episode in the country's life of ambushes on democracy". The historic constitutional words were written for the first time that, under article 52 of the Constitution, the House "stands dissolved at the expiration of its tenure of five years on March 16, 2013" was the outcome of politics of reconciliation and accommodation (*Daily Dawn*, March 17, 2013). The Prime Minister then informed the nation that all four chief ministers had "agreed in principle" to hold elections within 60 days of their dissolution. He was convinced to make an agreement on the pattern of caretaker government, as the issue seemed bogged down of sharp disagreements over the nominees between PPP and PML (N). He, by recalling the history, credited himself the end of five-year term this time and the present potency of democratic system to reconciliation. The Prime Minister conceitedly concluded, "democracy in the country is currently so powerful, that hardly anybody will dare to play any unconstitutional role against any elected government of Pakistan as this sinister chapter has now been closed" (*Daily Dawn*, March 17, 2013). PPP's policy of reconciliation ultimately provided a peaceful transition of power to PML (N) after holding successful Elections of 2013. Mian Nawaz Sharif, the sitting Prime Minister of Pakistan, paid tribute to outgoing President Asif Ali Zardari for his politics of reconciliation in this regard. He believes that President Zardari has played a decisive role to strengthen democratic system by giving up his powers to the Parliament (*The News*, September 6, 2013). The outgoing President Asif Ali Zardari described that in spite of difficulties he tried to make persistent attempts for the constitutional supremacy and democratic principles.

No doubt, it was the sole event in the political history of Pakistan when a democratic President left the office with stateliness after finishing his term. Asif Ali Zardari, at this occasion, reiterated his full support of Pakistan People's Party to the new administration of Nawaz Sharif in order to resolve future challenges. He said his party will hold up the government with the politics of reconciliation for the purpose of strengthening democratic system in the State. These statements from two political rivals optimized the nation the establishment of viable democratic system in the country.

12. Conclusion

The reconciliation policy, on the parameters of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, adopted and followed by PPP-led coalition government has brought social and political stability in Pakistan ultimately strengthened the democratic institutions of the country. The reconciliation for political tolerance and soft functioning of democratic system mainly resulted into the completion of constitutional term by the elected assemblies. Political leadership of PPP, being a major victim of military dictators, have learnt and adopted the policy of reconciliation on different national and international sensitive issues. Conceivably it was a unanimous verdict of the PPP leadership that the policy proved to be the best guiding principle enabling the country to face the multiple challenges. With the successful transition of power from military to civilian rule in year 2008, it was imperative to correct the democratic course by restoring the 1973 Parliamentary Constitution. The action was rightly appreciated by majority of political actors with the hope to strengthen the democratic system of the country. Yet, like other state organs, state authorities have assigned the military to maintain law and order in the society. So, with the help of civilian establishment military successfully launched military operations against the religious hardcore militants in Swat and Khyber Agency resulted in the restoration of peace, law and order.

Although some of the non-state actors also tried to molest the peace process by propagating against government in order to bring down the democracy in the country, however, PPP's vigilance and timely action enabled the government to survive. No doubt, the completion of tenure as a democratically elected government is considered a great triumph; however, the performance of PPP does not stir much poise. Growing charges of dishonesty, nepotism and corruption, bad ascendancy and governance from top to bottom level, unrelenting adverse relationship between Judiciary and the Executive and above all the incapability of the state authorities to build a consensus for combating terrorism badly affected the sustainability of democratic process in Pakistan.

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