

**STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN
PARLIAMENTARIANS IN PAKISTAN'S
POLITICS (1988-1999)**




Submitted By

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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & PAKISTAN STUDIES
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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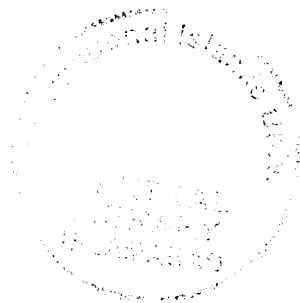
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Degree of Master Studies (MS) in
the Discipline of Pakistan Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic
University, ISLAMABAD

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & PAKISTAN STUDIES
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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ISLAMABAD**

2020



*In the name of Allah,
the Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful*

DEDICATION

This piece of research is dedicated

To

My Exemplary Husband
(FAYYAZ MALIK)

DECLARATION

I, Adeela Ambrin, hereby declare that this Thesis has been put in writing by me in its entirety on the basis of my research work under the guidance of my supervisor- Assistant Professor Dr. Syed Akmal Hussain Shah, Department of History & Pakistan Studies-Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University Islamabad.

No portion of this research has been copied from any source. Thumbs down part of the research, presented in this Thesis, has been submitted before for any degree or qualification in this or any other university or educational institution.



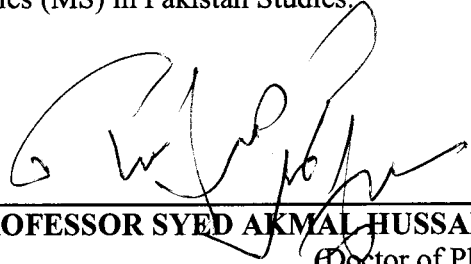
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The thesis titled "STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN PAKISTAN'S POLITICS (1988-1999)" put forward by MS. ADEELA AMBRIN, Registration No. 4-FSS/MSPSDE/S16 in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Master Studies (MS) in Pakistan Studies, has been successfully completed under my supervision.

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ACCEPTANCE BY THE VIVA-VOCE COMMITTEE

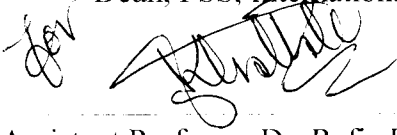
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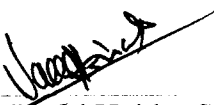
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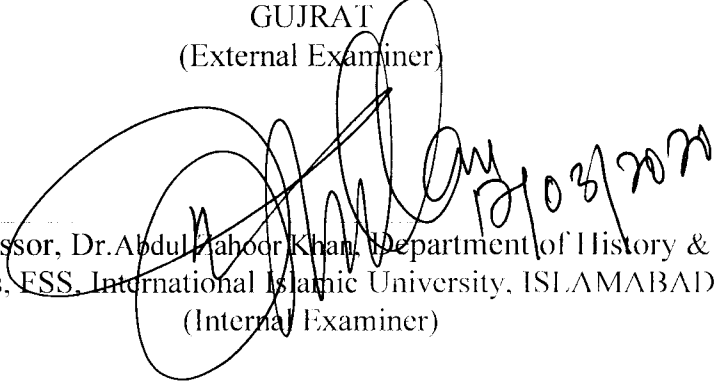
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ADEELA AMBRIN

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Aurat Foundation
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
FLSAW	The Forward Working Strategies For The Advancement of
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
IJI	Islami Jamhoori Itehad
JUI	Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam
MOWD	Ministry of Women Development
MQM	Muhajir Qaumi Movement
NCSW	National Commission on Status of Women
NDU	National Defense University
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDA	Pakistan Democratic Alliance
PM	Prime Minister
PML(N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Group)
PPP	Pakistan Peoples' Party
SMEDA	Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development
USA	United States of America

GLOSSARY

<i>Aurat Foundation</i>	An organization established in 1986 as non-profit, non-governmental organization under The Societies' Registration Act 1960 working for gender equality in Pakistan.
<i>Hudood Ordinance</i>	A set of laws that among other things criminalize adultery and non-martial sex including rape were enacted in 1979 and have led to thousands of women being imprisoned for so-called honor crimes.
<i>Islamization</i>	In a process of a society's shift towards Islam.
<i>Kargil War</i>	It was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil, district of Kashmir along the Line of Control.
<i>Majlis-e-Shura</i>	Majlis-e-Shura means parliament. In modern politics, a parliament is a legislative body of government. In Pakistan the parliament is consisted of two houses. The Upper House is called Senate. It is the house of provinces. The Lower House is called National Assembly and it represents people of Pakistan.
<i>Mujahideen</i>	A plural form of Mujahid. The term for one engage in Jihad. Its widespread use in English began in reference to the guerrilla type military group led by the Islamist Afghan fighters in the Soviet Afghan War.
<i>Parda</i>	The seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing (including the veil).
<i>Qisas and Diyat Ordinance</i>	In September 1990, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan promulgated the Qisas and Diyat Ordinance which redefines certain crimes and punishments under the Pakistan Penal Code. Punishment of Qisas is physical in nature whereas Diyat is in the form of blood money.
<i>Quaid-i-Azam</i>	Great leader, a title assigned by the Muslims

Roti, Kapra aur Makaan

of India to their leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. Manifesto of Pakistan Peoples' Party, to provide every citizen with basic necessities of life i.e. food, clothing and shelter.

Shariah

Islamic Law based on the teaching of Quran and the Hadith i.e traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W).

INTRODUCTION

Women face barriers to their involvement in politics worldwide. Socio-economic conditions and cultural norms are seen as obstacles to their progress. In 2008, women's representation rates worldwide stood at 17.7%.¹ This minimum representation shows that the ideal parity in politics requires women to cover a great distance. Women must participate fully and equally in policy-making to support honest government. Efforts are being produced to improve involvement of women by means of legislative measures such as gender quotas implemented at a notable pace worldwide.

With the passage of time feminist's belief became common which demanded that women should have socio-economic and political equality with man. It was as late as mid-1800s when feminism became widespread in Europe and America. The movement grew in power and won a number of new rights for women. The status of women was changed which proved a turning point in the history. At first, the feminist movement concentrated on gaining legal equality especially the right to vote. Consequently, the British women were enfranchized in 1918 and the American women in 1928.²

During the mid-1900s, the feminist movement again became active with the concern for economic and social equality and the end of education and job discrimination against

¹ Shehzad Ahmad, "Women's Political Participation in Pakistan" *Indian Streams Research Journal* (2013).

² Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*. (London, Psychology Press, 1995). 3.

women. A large number of women entered law, medicine, politics, business and many other traditionally male fields.³

Now the women share 50 percent of the entire population but they have low representation in the houses (parliaments) of the world in general and in the parliament of Pakistan in particular. If the real meaning of parliament is to represent the masses and reflect the population then the women have right to become proportionally represented according to the size of the population. In the general election of 2002 under the supervision of Pervez Musharraf (ex-president of Pakistan) the Pakistan's women in parliament surpassed the general election with the average of around 15%. This women representative quantum leap was historical and put the burden on women to divulge their capabilities as the representative of the citizens of Pakistan. Moreover, it also opens the door of opportunities and challenges for democracy, political parties, and democratic institutions and as a whole for the country.

This research, specifically, deals with the era from 1988 to 1999 in which the role of women parliamentarians was not at initial phase but was at peak under the great supervision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto; however, the number of women representatives was not as higher as in the general election of 2002. The quantum and significant role of women parliamentarian in the history, especially from 1988 to 1999 would not be ignored and always become the part of antiquity for the empowerment of women.

On November 16, 1988 the general elections were held, the exact quota for both houses, i.e. National Assembly and Senate was 336 members and 100 members respectively.⁴

³ Ibid, 98.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) beat the technocratic military government of Zia-ul-Haq.⁵ The consequences of the election were winning position of the PPP by 94 of the National Assembly out of total 207 seats.⁶ By this election, Benazir Bhutto was the Pakistan's and Muslim World's first women executive head of the country. The total turnover ratio of this general election was 43.5%. The general election of 1988 was witness of empowerment of females in Pakistan's parliament.

According to Afiya Shehrbano Zia, the author discussed the social issues of women, health, and discrimination against men and expressed extensive concern in the parliament of Pakistan.⁷ The plan to launch the women police stations, development banks for women and courts especially for females has been under consideration of women parliamentarians. However, amid of two incomplete terms in office (1988-90 & 1993-96), Benazir neither resisted to any Islamization laws of Zia-ul-Haq nor she raised her voice against the eight constitutional amendments.

Women national leaders were historically rare.⁸ The attempts to address the female leadership problem in situations where women are traditionally weak have shown the value of parentage as a way of doing business.⁹ The leadership of women in some areas is largely limited by marriage and blood to the family members, some of them have been assassinated, to former management and opposition leaders. Gender, however, also plays a major role in elections for women in such circumstances.

⁴ Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London, Palgrave Macmilian, 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Afiya Shehrbano Zia, "Faith Based Politics, Enlightened Moderation and the Pakistani Women's Movement" *Journal of International Women's Studies* (2009) 225-245.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Peters and Wolper, *Women's Rights*, 201.

For several reasons a woman appears to be a more fitting political power descendant. For instant, woman is not perceived by men's representatives as a politically ambitious person and therefore, is easily removed.¹⁰ Otherwise, Women are always considered family unity, so that after a period of political turmoil they can be replete with the huge task of getting their country together.¹¹ It was the same with Benazir Bhutto; she only got her father's teachings and memories and the guidance from the goodwill of her father. Through her education and the dream of her father, she learned leadership skills.

Benazir Bhutto was born into Sindhi patriarchal family and has been victim of military establishment in the charges of bribery and defensive threat. Yet, since the people of Pakistan respected and adored her. Moreover, she became an iconic figure in Pakistani politics. She was not just a leader, but she was also a Pakistani human rights activist and an epitome of justice for disadvantaged.

As political and humanitarian leader, she became a symbol of a charitable dimension and a symbol of learned liberal Islam. Her career in politics has been running for 30 years. It wasn't her option, but the circumstances forced her into politics. After 30 years in politics, she herself admitted that her position arose in pursuit of a destined order.¹² She had to face number of issues to tackle: a totalitarian regime, rivalries in politics and conflicts within her own party. On many fronts she had to fight: the brutal dictatorship, the long political rivals, and the detractions of her own political party. It was a gigantic task for a regular average human being, but she was not an average human being.

¹⁰ Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, *Women's Rights*, 102.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

The emergence as prime minister of the world's second largest Muslim state, Benazir Bhutto, a thirty five year-old, Western educated, unveiled, sophisticated Muslim woman, was quite stirring. In general, it was believed that women can never take political influence faithful. Muslim clerics have traditionally opposed female political leaders and discouraged women from political participation.¹³ During the tyrant rule of Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88), this idea was actively embraced and popularized and conservative ideology of Zia was fully supported by an extremely powerful clergy.

Benazir Bhutto went on to fight, in spite of all these adverse circumstances, and her main focus was on empowering the Pakistani people, especially the poor and the elderly. It was a historical event, not only in Pakistan's history, but also in the whole of the Muslim world, that she never gave up her struggle and gained control. As she said herself: 'I have not chosen this life; I have been chosen'.¹⁴

Benazir Bhutto eventually became an internationally renowned leader, not only a national leader. Her diplomatic skills, her capacity to make decisions and particularly her vision have been ahead in Pakistan's time. On stage, she was recognized as a world leader in stature, ability, diplomacy and craftsmanship.¹⁵ She was the recipient of so many global awards since going through the best educational institutions worldwide. In appreciating her theoretical and practical knowledge, she received an honorary degree as a Doctor, and became Pakistani Prime Minister twice.

Benazir Bhutto was a student who was hard worker and intelligent. Her father made complete strides as Pakistan's future leader through his skills and ability. Therefore, he

¹³ Lawrence Ziring, "Pakistan in 1990: The Fall of Benazir Bhutto", *Asian Survey*, 31(2), (1991), 113-124.

¹⁴ Bhutto, *Daughter*. 113.

¹⁵ Ziring "Pakistan in 1990", 113-124.

was worried that his daughter still wanted her to be successful in the best learning institutions which like other parents wish for their children. For this reason, Bhutto wrote to his daughter in one of his jail cell letters that he always prayed for her success in every exam and trials of her life.¹⁶

In 1974, when her father called the Islamic Summit, she had a great historical opportunity to learn; it took place in Lahore. She had the opportunity to meet many Muslim leaders, communicate and interact, helping her father organize this important political activity. The "Islamic Summit," which almost every Muslim Head of the state attended was a very unusual event with a unique nature held in Pakistan. All this in her life gave her an interest in foreign affairs and she cultivated this at the governmental level as a passion for diplomacy.

After difficult tests, trials and sacrifices faced by the Bhutto family, success in politics gradually came in her life. The leaders of the movement to uphold basic rights and democracy have been chosen to take part in delivering justice to the people of Pakistan in the socio-economic spheres. The relationship between leaders and economic forces plays a key role in the transformation of society. Members required it so that local communities are changed. Leaders must also develop and construct an atmosphere that empowers and transforms people.¹⁷

The leadership is thus important to society's motivation and development. In extremely difficult conditions, traditional leaders have been leading and improving their ethics. Charismatic leaders such as Benazir Bhutto have done the same thing. They had been

¹⁶ Saeed Shafqat, "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto", *Asian Survey*, 36(7), (1996), 655-672.

¹⁷ Ibid.

capable of changing society and inspiring the masses. Political leadership and its role in the change in society thus became a major area of investigation. The analysis of leadership and characteristics of leadership were recognized as an important contribution to understanding. The legacy of Benazir Bhutto's revolutionary personality has been analyzed in order to examine her role in the promotion of masses and the restoration of democracy.

Throughout her life and her political career, Benazir Bhutto displayed resilience and resistance to all adversities. She emerged victorious and eventually re-established democracy on Pakistan's territory. It was her brave and imaginative character that helped her to survive all violence and pressure of the military regime of Zia. Her strong leadership abilities have helped her to emerge as the world's first Muslim female leader following her father's murder and the death of her younger brother.

The political career of Benazir Bhutto is marked by many achievements. Almost every aspect of her career has had a profound effect on Pakistan's institution building, such as revival of democracy, the first women police stations, the Women Bank, the appointment of Women Judge, privatization, public and private collaboration, missile technology, etc. An in-depth study and review is needed to explore the political life of her.

1. Statement of the Problem:

The ardent interest is to enclose the entire campaigns that women did to get the reserved seats in the parliament of Pakistan when there was not apropos pursuance of the Constitution 1973. The study focuses at the fundamental role that women played as

parliamentarians to accomplish the task of initiating a phase for the women empowerment in the state and society of Pakistan.

2. Significance of the Research:

The study declares the authentic movements and all factual data for readers to mitigate their problems about the history and role of women in the parliament. The declaration of research serves as helpful material for learners who are interested in the history of Pakistan especially during 1988-1999. The research paper also serves for other researchers take assistance from core idea and do the research in depth.

The current study tries to highlight the women's role in politics at the time when the space for women in politics was minor. In that scenario, the citizens of Pakistan opted for their woman leader, for first time in the history of Muslim nations. This era was quite difficult to find the reserved seats and possess the position in parliament for women.

3. Review of the Literature:

The primary and secondary both sources are available for this research and both have been used. A brief review of the literature is as follows:

The Role of Women Parliamentarian as a Leader describes that during the period 1988-1999 twice the parliament of Pakistan got a chance to have Benazir Bhutto as the head of the house and had secured the Chief executive of the country. She drove the women of her era to jump out from the ancient and classical thought and allowed them to lead a powerful life in the male dominant society of Pakistan.

Serwet Rasul declared not only the parliamentarians looked forward under the immediate supervision of Benazir but majority women of Pakistan anticipated the best future with the female leader and ministers during 1988-1999. However, in the NDU Journal, "Empowerment of Pakistani Women: Perceptions and Reality", Serwet Rasul does not divulge the pivotal role of women parliamentarians for specific period in Pakistan. There are few general conceptions with the period are defined in the journal. The lack of discussion for specific period prevents the researcher to grasp lot of data from this particular journal.

The Role of Women Parliamentarians as a Politician, The women parliamentarians also played the significant role in the politics of the country. Furthermore, the restless efforts of women parliamentarians tend other women to potentially initiate their future in the politics. The efforts of women parliamentarians to address the discrimination and social biases cannot be ignored. The biases entrenched in Pakistan's society stands as the barrier to let the women participate in the politics. The physical and moral support and backing by the women parliamentarians in the year of 1988-1990 and 1993-1996 ensured the uprising of the political life of women and permitted them to fight for their fundamental rights in the society.

Palash Ghosh, in his article *Pakistani Women in Politics*,¹⁸ states that amid the time of 1988 to 1999, the social issues of ladies' health and nutrition were broadly focused in the parliament of Pakistan. The arrangement to launch the ladies police headquarters, advancement banks for ladies and courts particularly for females has been under the thought of women parliamentarians. However, he does not provide the list of

¹⁸ Palash Ghosh, "Pakistani Women in Politics", *Journal of News*, (2013).

parliamentarians for this specific era. Furthermore, this article does not provide the complete information about the pressure those women parliamentarians had to face due to gender gap or male dominance in Pakistan's parliament.

Shaista Ikramullah in her book *From Purdah to Parliament* states that gender-based violence is the global issue that a woman has to face in her entire life.¹⁹ The women's parliamentary caucus played a major role that is significant to provide the direction to overcome the gender-based violence in the general society of Pakistan. Moreover, women parliamentarian at specific era introduced landmark legislation to protect the women against gender-based violence and declared it a crime. However, it needs more efforts for its proper implementation in every class of society.

Mumtaz Khawar and Farida Shahid in *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back* state that as the head of parliamentarians, Benazir Bhutto was instrumental in empowering women participation in politics.²⁰ As a leader, Benazir broke the tradition that women could not lead the nation and let all the fake assumptions down to her feet. Amid of 1988-1999, Benazir Bhutto elected twice and contributed to empower the women with other women parliamentarians especially, Begum Ashraf Abbasi and Begum Nusrat Bhutto. This book does define the empowerment and women's role in politics of Pakistan but does not tell the real war behind the screen which the Benazir Bhutto with her companions fought for the rights of women.

In Farzana Bari's "*Women Parliamentarians Challenging the Frontiers of Politics in Pakistan*," which is study on women's empowerment, important factors that impede

¹⁹ Shaista Ikramullah , *From Purdah to Parliament*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Mumtaz Khawar and Farida Shahid, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, (Oklahoma: Zeb Books, 1987).

women's political participation were developed and identified. Ideological, political, socio-cultural and economic factors in this respect are important.²¹ However, this article only deals with the hindrance factors and does not focus on the contribution of these women politicians.

A study on the condition of women in Pakistan's parliament was undertaken by Saira Bano. The research focuses on the political role of Pakistani women. The study found that the status of women has improved in relative terms, although the vision of women's empowerment remains a long-dream. She observes that the male consider themselves traditional custodians of political heritage and do not welcome women's participation in important political decisions. This study is a general commentary on the role of women parliamentarians; it does not specifically deal with the contribution of female parliamentarians in a particular time period.

Ahmad Ali Mehboob in a newspaper article appreciates the performance of women legislators but he observes that the women elected on reserved seats have to face some sort of discrimination from party leaders who view them as if they are lesser members, as compared to the members elected on general seats. He states that sometimes they are not allocating development funds and deprives them of a normal political process. The author does not provide any suggestion regarding improvement in the system of election to reserved seats of women.

²¹ Farzana Bari "Women Parliamentarians Challenging the Frontiers of Politics in Pakistan." *Gender, Technology and Development*, (2010).

Asma Afzal Shami carried out a study to research the historic definition of women's participation of women in Pakistan. The results of this study indicate that women in Pakistan had to face struggles. The article mainly focuses on the struggle by women, but it is insufficient in explaining the existing social impediments in women's political participation.

Women's Empowerment in Pakistan: a scoping study published by the Aurat Foundation is also used as the secondary source of data. This report demonstrated that women's empowerment is the complex, multi-dimensional and emerging concept of feminism. It was published in the year 2011, with another report of 'Capacity of Pakistani Women's Organizations to Carry out Gender Equality Initiatives.' The report presents that historically women have been playing a pivotal part in the society and politics in Pakistan.

Afiya Shehrhrbano Zia's research article "*Faith-based Politics, Enlightened Modernity and the Pakistani Women's Movement*" will be used to throw light on the issues of women's empowerment in Pakistan. In this article, Afiya Shehrhrbano divulges the women's movement that paved the way for Pakistani women in politics and in parliament.

Benazir Bhutto's autobiography '*Daughter of the East*' discloses the movement of women in parliament and how the women regained their empowerment in politics of Pakistan, especially after the punishment of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto by Former General Zia-ul-Haq. The researcher has taken this book into account for gathering the broad data regarding the role of women and various challenges they have been facing in politics of Pakistan.

Dushka Syed in her article "Women in Politics- Problems of Participation: A Case Study of Pakistan" provides the critical analysis of women participation politics in history.

perspective. Social impediments discussed in the article are significant but not sufficient for the purpose of this research.

Shahzad Ahmad "Women's Political Participation in Pakistan," highlights the active role of women in the political life of Pakistan.²² The findings reveal that a large percentage of women are active participants in the Parliament of Pakistan.

The literature review of numerous sources utilized for the investigation shows that the most of the of documents incorporating books, papers and articles address Pakistan's political life during the time of the governance in Zia or post Zia and deal with the governmental activities of various prime ministers, including Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. The government's administrative and bureaucratic manuscripts, along with discourses, statements of officials, narratives of political party, a press column and criticisms on an editorial column page, are the main source of information, especially in English press printed at present. Several writers, commentators and media members have made great contributions, together with appropriateness and improvement, to preserving historical accuracy and actualities.

The observers describe oral narrative accounts as well as ground study and history as an extra essential foundation for repossessing the underlying facts of research work and for understanding and acknowledging martial control and democratic developments throughout the world.

²² Ahmad, "Women's Political Participation".

Regarding the political history of Pakistan, a notable writer, Lawrence Ziring, has written a number of books. Two of the main books which he wrote on the Pakistan's history are very significant:

- *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (1997)
- *Pakistan At the Cross Current of the History* (2004)

These books give a good cause and insight into Benazir's two terms of office as Premier and leader of the opposition, but he has not given any reflection to her role as female parliamentarian.

Likewise, Ian Talbot addressed the organizational past of the democratic system after-Zia in his famous work *Pakistan: A Modern History* (2003). He also takes Benazir's time as Prime Minister into account in his revision. He also briefly addresses her involvement as an opposition leader during the Nawaz Sharif's two terms and her animosity with the government and the opposition.

A book by Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi, entitled *Military and Politics in Pakistan*, published in 2000: 1947-1997, similarly details the armed martial interventions in Pakistan in his later work on the same issue i.e. *Military State and Society in Pakistan* (2003). He addressed the role of Benazir Bhutto in political affairs of Pakistan and her diffusion in the social system in Pakistan in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

He also addresses our political institutions and traditions which are prevalent in Pakistan. He also speaks about the shortcomings of our political institutions and practices in Pakistan for many years. But the military and its civil employees, the bureaucracy, are his

most important focus. In this respect, it is a high-quality effort. However, Benazir Bhutto's position as a parliamentarian was not particularly focused on.

In a similar series of literature on Benazir Bhutto, Saeed Shafqat does a successful and well-additional research exercise. He calculated and stressed his reservations about the connections between military and civilian bureaucracy during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto period and Benazir Bhutto in his book *The Civil Military Relation in Pakistan* (1997). While the role of the undetermined actors of Pakistani political affairs (military and civil bureaucratic forces) remains underlined and control sharing is overlooked and revisited by the political role played by Bhutto in the context of the functioning of the civil surveillance sector.

A detached section on Pakistan was published by Veena Kukreja, entitled *Civil-Military Relations in South Asia* (1991), but the subject was not detailed and comprehensive as required by this article. Likewise her second book, *Contemporary Pakistan* in 2003 is a study on various periods in Pakistan's history. In 2003, she published her book. Once again, her work also neglected the Benazir's role as woman parliamentarian, even though she mentions Benazir as prime minister.

The work *Crossed Sword* (2008) by Shuja Nawaz is another work focusing on military intervention in politics. It is a very big effort to cover up Pakistan's policies from the beginning of the Musharraf rule by the Pakistan Army. But it clearly shows the perspective of military regarding the civil and military issues. Benazir Bhutto being holding premiership and also Member of Parliament, is again neglected by this book when she was the leader of the opposition.

Iftikhar Haider Malik introduced another work in his book, *State and Society in Pakistan: Authority Ideology and Ethnicity* in 1997. It focuses on the role of Pakistan's leading class and groups in Pakistan's state creation. He explored the 'triangle of power, philosophy, and race' and sought to form a hypothetical and historical framework to research the narratives on the case of politics of Pakistan by combining military, bureaucracy, and feudal.

The book analyzes the problems of state fusion, culture, gender and the position of the intellectual office. This book is a significant framework for the community and coalitions of authority in Pakistan's state and culture. But, because of its law on the course of conduct, legislative primacy, and as a member of its prominent and oppressed faction, a lot needs to be done, in relation to the position of Benazir.

Dr. Safdar Mahmood has devoted a 32 pages chapter on the 'Dilemma of Democracy' in his work *Pakistan: Political Roots and Development* (2000) in relation to events between 1985 and 1999 with a massive gap to get more information about what happened in the time.

In his writings (*Bohranon ka Daur*) "*A Time of Crises*" published in 2000, Munir Ahmed also wrote just a few words of the strong and dominant role that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif played in Benazir Bhutto's upsurge and droppings. This analysis of existing literature shows the need for a detailed and serious study of the subject. Benazir Bhutto's position has been touched by the view that any author had personally concerning her in all the writings, even in books and magazines, for or against her.

The review of existing literature shows that various studies and works cover very well the role of women politicians in Pakistani politics including the problems they face in their empowerment, the obstacles and hindrances in their way and their contribution in the development and progress of the country. However, no study sheds light on the achievement of the women legislators regarding legal, social and political issues in the state and society of Pakistan. Also, the contribution and role of women parliamentarians in the time period 1988-1999 is not the subject of any study. This gap is filled by the present study, which especially focused on the contribution and can serve as a guiding source for women who opted to take part in politics of Pakistan.

4. Objectives of the Research:

- 1) To analyze the role of women parliamentarians in Pakistani politics during the period 1988-1999.
- 2) To examine the role of women parliamentarians in the empowerment of Pakistani women and their efforts for the resolution of their problems in the period 1988-1999.
- 3) To study and compare the contribution of women parliamentarians during the regime of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto during the period under study.

5. Research Questions:

- 1) What is the role of women parliamentarians in the politics of Pakistan during the period of 1988-1999 in Pakistan?

- 2) What important political, legal and social issues related to Pakistani women were raised by the women parliamentarians and their contribution in the empowerment of Pakistani women?
- 3) What are the differences and similarities among the women parliamentarians' role during Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto era, 1988-1999?

6. Research Methodology:

This study follows a qualitative research design, with the exploratory and descriptive methods as sub design. It works in the paradigm of modern history.

Data Collection:

Locating the Sources:

The study is comprised of the primary as well as secondary sources and was completed with the help of different libraries and centers such as, Parliament House Islamabad, National Archives Centre, Central Library of Quaid-i-Azam University and Digital Library of Higher Education Commission.

Identifying the relevant sources:

Primary and secondary both data have been used to gather information, including official record of the Parliament House, various journals, books and autobiographies, magazines, newspapers and different websites. NDU journals, journal of the Politics of Pakistan, Journal of Sociology, along with autobiography by Benazir Bhutto, and books by Shaista Ikramullah, Dushka Syed, S.M Hali and Serwat Rasool were used. As far as the internet

is concerned, various governmental and private websites were available to gather the information, which was utilized for this study.

Collection of Fact:

The report of different organizations including Aurat Foundation, CPA report for the participation of Parliamentary partnership program for women parliamentarians from the parliaments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United Kingdom and reports of NCSW, National Commission of Status of Women have been examined and accounted. Various magazines, articles, and online journals have also been taken as the primary sources to gather the factual data based on the reliability criteria. Newspapers like The Dawn, The Daily Times and The Express Tribune from the time period under study have also been taken as secondary sources for gathering reliable and authentic data for research.

Data Analysis:

Research focuses on the authentic data of archives, political journals, books, and official and newspaper reports to gather the required data. This data was then critically evaluated and analyzed by the researcher, in order to answer the research questions.

The tool for Reliability:

The present study did not just rely on official records and works of different authors and commentators but also cross-checked the information for authenticity through internal criticism and comparison of various sources against each other, as a tool of verification.

7. Organization of the study/ Research Outline:

The research is comprised of three chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. The first chapter presents the contribution of women parliamentarians in the Pakistani politics and legislation from the year 1988 to 1999. The second chapter deals with their contribution in making reforms providing legal and political protection to the female population of Pakistan. The third chapter is based on the comparison of the role of these parliamentarians in the regimes of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto

CHAPTER- 1

WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS' CONTRIBUTION IN POLITICS AND LEGISLATION

The women's contribution in all around the globe in the sphere of politics and decision-making processes is not a new phenomenon. It can be observed since centuries. The global order has witnessed this phrase "women who have changed the world", which is affiliated to a number of influential women. This connotation resonates with the political and social power of these women who have contributed not only in the development of their own countries, but also became the international political figures. Despite of this fact that there is noticeable progress toward the gender equality across the world, however, the number of women politicians always remained the lowest. This current chapter extensively discusses how the women parliamentarians contributed in the realm of politics and legislation process in the year from 1988 to 1999.

In order to analyze the contribution of women parliamentarians in both, political and legislation sphere, the evaluation of the historical background is significant. As the era before 1988 was marked by the then president Zia-ul- Haq, it helped to understand that how the long stretched reign of Zia- ul- Haq impacted on the women political sphere. Moreover, the transition of Martial law administration to democratic government is also significant aspect which helped to analyze how this transition helped the women parliamentarians to exercise their political powers and contributed in the legislation. Furthermore, the major contributions of women parliamentarians will be discussed and analyzed.

1.1. Political Participation of Women in Pakistan:

In the realm of politics, the Muslim women have remained an active part since pre and post-independence era. After the inception of Pakistan, two of the notable women, Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah were the first women representatives in the first Legislative Assembly of Pakistan.²³ They struggled for the incorporation of women rights in the constitution of the Pakistan. Moreover, both the ladies managed to play a vital role in the formulation of information of laws that helped the promotion of the rights of the women and encouraged them to actively participate in the national matters.²⁴ Their persistent struggle for the rights of women can be gauged from this fact when they became successful to pass following legislations:

- The Muslim Personal Law of 1948,
- The demand for the reservation of the special seats for the women in 1956,
- The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961,
- They passed the Muslim Personal Law under the Constitution of 1962.²⁵

The political history of women in Pakistan also produced the eminent political woman, Ms. Fatima Jinnah. This lady managed to crack the foundation of the dictatorial rule of Ayub Khan. Ms. Fatima by contesting the presidential elections marked the first step of democracy in Pakistan. In the Bhutto era, this was the time when women were struggling to attain their status in the society through the perspective of the economic rights.

²³ Ahmad, "Women's Political Participation".

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dushka Saiyid, "Women in Politics-Problems of participation: A Case Study of Pakistan", *ISSI Journal*, XXI No.2. (2001).

During the General Zia-ul-Haq period, general elections and then the formation of Majlis-e-Shura (Parliament), women became more active in the political sphere. This paved way for women to speak about their rights and condemn the dictatorship of the Zia's regime. The new era of democracy was initiated when Benazir Bhutto became the first female Prime Minister. This was the first time after independence of Pakistan that a woman got the chance to lead the nation.

1.2. The Societal and Economic Dynamics of Political Activation:

The dynamics of political and societal structures indicate that, specifically during 1988-1999, the role of female parliamentarians was although activated in the sphere of politics but the patriarchal structure in Pakistan does not even allow for more space for women in political field. Moreover, it is also observed that the women parliamentarians are not tilted towards the basic issues of female because of the existence of party politics.²⁶

Reserved seats for women in parliament is very significant aspect as it is indicating the exclusive space for women parliamentarians to exercise their political role and do efforts on the behalf of the rest of the female population. Quota based on gender have been argued on several grounds but one of the main arguments for this affirmative measures incorporate.

- Half of the world population is comprised of women. That is why it is an issue to provide justice by their representation in the political institutions as based on their numerical strength.

²⁶Saira Bano, "Women in Parliament in Pakistan: Problems and Potential Solutions", *Women's Studies Journal*, Volume 23 Number 1, (2009), 28.

- Women also have their own specific perspectives on politics and political matters, therefore, their presence will add different angles or dimensions in politics.
- Women are ingrained with their specific role of re-production and sub-ordination status in Pakistani society, which is an appropriate rationale for them to be part of political decision making process to represent and protect the rights and interests of women.²⁷

The PPP government since 1988 failed to move a bill revoked discriminating laws against women due to the lack of two-third majority to invalid or amend the law.²⁸ It has been observed that despite the fact that women have reserved quota system in legislature, women parliamentarians have been failed to present the basic interests and rights of female population. Moreover, they even could not be able to unanimously build consensus on the appeal of the Hudood Ordinance since the past twenty- seven years in the legislation and the years from 1988 to 1999 even did not highlight this issue. This phase shows that women parliamentarians are not only responsible for protecting their political parties but also their constituencies with the population of women. Being the members of political parties, these women's views have been subjected to their parties' scrutiny and their party position on the subject should be respected.²⁹

The efforts of women parliamentarians on political front are significant to understand as, number of factors are responsible to allow them to exercise their power freely. The historical background till 1988 shows that national elite was the strata of the society which included influential civil and military bureaucracy and they had leverage to rule

²⁷Farzana Bari, "Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges", United Nations: DAW, Expert meeting group, Bangkok, Thailand, 8-11, (2006). 1.

²⁸Bano, "Women in Parliament".

²⁹ Bari, "*Women Parliamentarian*". 13.

the political structure in Pakistan. The quota for women in political sphere is 33% which is imposed only due to the pressure on the national elite from International Financial Institutions and certain Multinational Corporation of the world.

Moreover, in the economic perspective, after the partitioning of Pakistan, poverty was inherited problem which also burdened the female population. Whereas, the women were the neglected segment of the society which always needed a proper voice at the national level regarding their rights and representation. In all the local bodies, women representation is thirty three percent.³⁰ However, women have seventeen percent seats reserved in the constituent assembly at the national level.³¹

1.3. Democratization of the Women Political Sphere:

It is a mystery that the history of women's political participation suggests that women parliamentarians remain confined to the protection of their political families when the women's right discourse was dominated by religion and the extension of their domestic role.³² This notion can be traced from the centuries' old tradition as women were regarded as inferior to the men and many philosophers had presented this in their theories. For instance, Aristotle, Plato, John Locke and Hobbes argued that politics is purely a domain of men, whereas, physically and mentally women are not appropriate for

³⁰ Ahmed, "Women's Political Participation", 43.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Azra Asghar Ali and M. Javed Akhtar, "Empowerment and Political Mobilization of Women in Pakistan: A descriptive Discourse of perspectives", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, Vol. 32, No.1 , , (2009), pp.221- 228.

the politics with the men.³³ This shows that women had to struggle in the sphere of politics.

In the era of then-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the empowerment of women in politics is illustrated. This marked the democratization for the women politicians as well. This democratization process in Pakistan offered opportunities for women to practice and gain their rights.³⁴ The process of political movements in democracy, moreover, shows that all sectors of society needed to expose themselves to new developments and behaviors, will be organized in accordance with available development patterns.³⁵

The women empowerment regarding their political mobilization (participation) in the Benazir era can be used as testing tool to judge that how the women parliamentarians materialized political mobilization by exercising their political power. It can be assumed that it is due to approaches of the difference in the gender development which might be the result of the political patterns of the eastern democracy.³⁶ Lucian says that social policy and non-political spaces are diffused in non-Western societies and the mobilization of people takes place along with primordial, rather than instrumental, factors and the considerations of collective identity strongly color the whole political.³⁷

In the case of Pakistan, women parliamentarians had to mobilize along the traditional patterns which indicated further deteriorating the positioning of the women in Pakistani society. The presence of the women in the political sphere is not only influenced by the

³³ Bari, "Women Parliamentarians".

³⁴ Adriana Craciun, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Ch-2, (London:Routledge. 2002).

³⁵ Karl W.Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", *The American Political Science Review*, 55(3), (1961), 494.

³⁶ Lucian W. Pye, "The Non-Western Political Process", *The Journal of Politics*, 20(3), (1958), 471.

³⁷ Ibid.

domestic but also global trends. The lack of the economic basis is the cause of the political deterioration of the women which is result of their low literacy rate.

1.4. Women Parliamentarians' Political Activism Under Zia's Islamization:

The regime of Zia-ul- Haq is significant as it helps to understand that how the women exercised their opportunity being women parliamentarian and worked for women empowerment. As the then PM Benazir Bhutto's period marked the transition in the political activation of women parliamentarians. General Zia's *Islamization* policies paved the way for militant Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan. This penetrated deep into the Pakistani society where the women were already striving for their rights. In other words, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism created every kind of discrimination for women which was justified through the use of Islamic tradition.³⁸ Despite of the fact, there was a provision in the constitution of Pakistan regarding the equalitarian status.

During the General Zia's regime different measures like, Law of Evidence and Hudood Ordinance were initiated. The Law of Evidence stated that witness of the women has half of the status as compared to the male witness. Whereas, under the *Hudood Ordinance*, number of women prisoners were charged. The Women's Day is celebrated on February 12, in-order to revive the memory of massive protest in 1983 against the Law of Evidence which ended in brutality of the state.³⁹ Despite of the fact that the result of the women

³⁸Ali and Akhtar, "Empowerment" 218.

³⁹ Ibid.

activism at political front did not strengthened their position in the time period of 1988 to 1999. As their participation as a women parliamentarian remained slow.⁴⁰

It is also a noteworthy fact that all the constitutions like 1956, 1962 and 1973 ensured to provide the reserved seats for women in the provincial and national assemblies. The seats' allotment was ranged from the 5 to 6% and they were elected by the members of the assemblies through indirect election.⁴¹ It was requested to increase the reservation to 30 per cent in 1988 which was expressed by the National Campaign for Restoration of Women's Reserved Seats.⁴²

1.5. Role of Benazir Bhutto in Election

In the 1980s, Zia-ul-Haq's death in August 1988 caused the gradual transfer of power to parliament from the presidential government. The 1985 amendment to Article 91(2) authorized the President to appoint the Prime Minister until March 20,1990. This modification allowed Ghulam Ishaq Khan to hold National and Provincial Assembly elections on November 16 and 19, 1988 and to hold office of President after the death of Zia.⁴³ The Supreme Court ruled on October 3,1988 that elections would take place in a party-based manner because party less elections were human rights violations.⁴⁴

Political activities increased after the announcement of elections and the Supreme Court judgment. One of the IJI's main objectives was to try to create huge problems for the PPP

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Bano, "Women in Parliament",31.

⁴² Ali and Akhtar, "Empowerment", 224.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Rafi Raza, ed., *Pakistan in Perspective 1947-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45.

⁴⁴ Nawa-i-Waqt (Urdu), Rawalpindi, October 3, (1988); Muhammad Ali Shaikh, *Benazir Bhutto: A Political Biography*, (Karachi: Orient Books Publishing House, 2000), 109.

at the polls. General Hamid Gul (Chief, ISI) and IJI architect was assisted by two army officials-Brigadier Imtiaz and Major Aamer. The IJI put together divergent philosophies with growing anti-PPP sentiments.

1.6. Resilience in Exile:

It was during January 1984 to December 1985, Benazir had to face adverse situation in Pakistan. She faced the toughest phase of her life and her struggles were growing every day. The inhumanity of the military regime was building up. The disloyal elements of the party showed their true faces and competed for the PPP leadership. Her friend and caretaker, Nusrat Bhutto, the mother of her, had already been sent by the government into exile and she also fought in these circumstances against her ill health. She challenged all the issues and demonstrated her bravery and conspiracy. She defied all the problems and proved her bravery and ability to handle conspiracies.⁴⁵

This section discusses Benazir Bhutto's resistance in exile between 1984 and 1985 when, owing to her bad health, the government allowed her to go abroad. Substantial events took place both in Pakistan and in England during this time, during which Benazir Bhutto was exiled. It is worth noting here that Benazir Bhutto didn't ask the government to send her outside the country, rather, because of her serious health conditions a panel of doctors recommended that she has to go abroad. But the government said that Benazir Bhutto should depart the country and the military regime allowed her to go abroad as to show courtesy.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Shafqat, "Pakistan "

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The reason behind the permission granted to Benazir Bhutto to travel abroad by the Zia's government was analyzed by the writers in different perspectives. Some members, for example, thought that General Zia would let her move because he wanted to send the Bhutto ladies outside because he wanted to weaken the PPP because he wanted to take over the party from his PPP protégés.

Benazir Bhutto had written a book titled *Pakistan: The Gathering Storm*, on January 7, 1983, when she was being detained. In the book, she stated as follows:

The main consequences are two: the Generals were and still are determined to destroy the PPP as they enjoy people's trust and affection as the biggest and most powerful faction. Secondly, she was the daughter of the man who made PPP. We need some explanation.⁴⁷

The Benazir Bhutto and her sister, Sanam, left for London on January 10, 1984 via Switzerland. Upon fleeing, the government declared that her condition had been serious and claimed to have been asking for permission to travel abroad. The PPP sources disputed the argument of the regime and declared that the Physician Committee had suggested the regime to send Benazir abroad for care. The then government itself did arrangements for her departure.⁴⁸ Benazir Bhutto remained in exile till 1986 and she had to come back Pakistan due to demise of her brother Shah Nawaz Bhutto.

The military regime was relaxed and felt strong after the departure of Benazir Bhutto. By an ordinance on February 9, 1984, all student unions and student associations, which played the role of nurseries for future leaders, were banned. The government banned political activities of all the organizations, locked offices and closed their accounts. All

⁴⁷ Benazir Bhutto, *Pakistan: The Storm of Gathering*, (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1983).

⁴⁸ M.A. Baig, *Bhutto ki Tasweer* (Urdu) (Lahore: Kashif Brothers, Bank Colony, 1986).

organizations were declared illegal by the decree and against the constitution.⁴⁹ The martial law government had been thinking about doing that since they took office in 1977 but could not, because Benazir Bhutto defied the military dictator.

At the 'Educational meeting,' the government in 1977 failed in order to introduce a resolution to regulate the activities of students. The government attempted to ban student unions again in October 1979. They prepared other legislative documents to limit the students, which could not be accomplished because they could not do so due to heavy demonstrations in the political circumstances.⁵⁰ But this time, the regime effectively banned all student unions in the absence of Benazir Bhutto.

She was deeply concerned by the regime's crime to injure and exclude the student community. She decided to hold a party meeting on October 26, 1984 in London to discuss this matter and particularly to express her serious concern at the atrocities perpetrated by the Sind students. The University of Punjab and various colleges of the Punjab and other provinces rusticated hundreds of students. The government was stopped by no person. In some ways, the government relaxed after Benazir Bhutto's exit and in February 1984 began to free political prisoners. On February 7, the CEC member Farooq Laghari was released and on February 12, 1984 General Tikka Khan was also appointed Secretary General PPP. This was followed by one worker after the other.⁵¹ She made the statement regarding this matter in her letter.⁵²

⁴⁹Jahangir Bader, "Political Leadership: A Case Study of Benazir Bhutto", (PhD thesis, History Dept. University of Punjab, Pakistan, 2013).

⁵⁰ Bader, *Political Leadership*, 148.

⁵¹ Baig, *Bhutto*, 201.

⁵² See Appendix I, Jahangir Bader, 130- 131.

Benazir Bhutto reactivated her political activities after her operation and rehabilitation.⁵³ She wanted to visit the USA to meet some Senators and opposition members, to inform her about Pakistan's current political situation. Benazir Bhutto entered the USA on March 6, 1984 and met with Congressmen and Senators in Washington. She also went to New York and came back to London the same month. Benazir said General Zia had been unable to suppress people's determination through dictatorship and repression. It is not possible to win the battle of heart and soul by weapons.⁵⁴

The brutality of the tyrant has made the situation more difficult. She said that she is still alive despite the injury of April 4th and declared that she would devote all her power and energy to despotism and the rule of law, the right to oppose evil and the virtue to victory over the forces of evil. She also said that they all would owe a promise to make sacrifice for this noble cause. And that they will overthrow the dictator '*Yazed*' and liberate our motherland and citizens from enslavement and martial law batons forever.⁵⁵

On November 6, 1984 Benazir Bhutto was disturbed when four PPP members, Nasir Baluch, Essa Balouch, Malik Ayub, and Saifullah, and Ghulam Buksh Lahoni, the fifth perpetrator, were sentenced to 14 years in prison to death in special military tribunal. They were exposed to the false accusation of hijacking of the PIA airplane and sentenced to confessional confessions. In making the following comment in the press, Benazir denounced the military court's decision⁵⁶.

⁵³ B. Riaz, *Blind Justice*, 2007.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See Appendices II Jahangir Bader, 163.

On November 30, 1984 Secretary General PPP, Tikka Khan replied to the proposal for the creation of a committee of action and the suggestions made by Khar after consulting organizational officials and members of the party and sent a letter to Benazir Bhutto (Figure 3). The Tikka Khan told her, as they struggled with this system in the region, to set up these action committees under the working organization, rather than above. Khar's proposal was dismissed by Tikka Khan. Khar and Tikka Khan differed from each other because Khar wanted an independent Action Committee whereas, Tikka Khan desired that PPP's Punjab organization should be under it. The advice of Tikka Khan was approved by Benazir Bhutto on basis of agreement, and the proposal of Khar was adopted as one Party's leader⁵⁷

The writer and several other PPP members had been in jail since Benazir Bhutto's departure and released in May 1984. The Punjab organization, through its compilation of workers' information and its preparation for agitation against the government, began work in the area. Benazir also led them and proposed some political initiatives. If they wanted to speak about anything, she told them to call. General Zia announced on December 1, 1984 that he would hold a referendum to support his policies and that nobody should disrupt the referendum in order to ensure continuity.⁵⁸

General Zia released an order dated December 5, 1984 stipulating that it is a punishable offense under the law to postpone the referendum.⁵⁹ The December 19, 1984 referendum in which General Zia launched the country's public campaign was proclaimed by General Zia. But the public pressure or support of the people could not be built up. *The London*

⁵⁷ See Appendices III, Jahangir Bader, 170.

⁵⁸ Baig, *Bhutto*, 198.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Economist said that referendum was being held by General Zia and that, being the supporter of Islam, he was so obscurely proclaimed appointed as Pakistan's President for five years that even Communist States were ashamed of this act.⁶⁰

Benazir supported her own involvement in the elections in 1985 and said that there should be no space for the enemy. Nevertheless, the MRD and PPP local leadership decided to boycott the elections. Benazir supported the decision of the MRD leaders and called upon the people of the country. Several leaders of PPP and MRD did not accept the decision of MRD and decided to be part of elections. This was a blow to Benazir Bhutto's leadership in the PPP.

Upon her return to Pakistan, a powerful faction of the party showed the concerns regarding the safety of Benazir Bhutto. It was strongly advised that she should not return to Pakistan. The CEC's decision to return to Pakistan generated enthusiasm among the PPP staff. The exiles also began preparing to return to Pakistan. CEC members returned to Pakistan after taking the decision to withdraw. After two years in exile, Benazir Bhutto was very shocked by the disloyal elements in the party and the numerous antagonists. They didn't expect her to go back in the presence of a brutal dictator and be accepted so wholeheartedly in Lahore. Benazir began visiting various towns for rallies and *jalsas* from 12 April 1986.⁶¹

From 1986 onwards, she struggled hard to revive the politics of PPP in the country. Her political struggle against the dictatorship and her strong ability to stand even made headlines in the foreign newspaper. She was strong enough to return Pakistan in sensitive

⁶⁰ A. J. Aqeel, *Pakistan Chronology: 1947-2010*, (Karachi: Fazli PubliShehrs,2010) 34.

⁶¹ Bader, *Political Leadership*, 184.

circumstances when the atmosphere of conspiracies was on its peak. It can be concluded that being a woman, Benazir Bhutto had to face traumatized events in her life: Her father's death, her imprisonment, her exile and risk to return Pakistan.

CHAPTER-2

LEGAL AND POLITICAL PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Many obstacles and opposition have been faced by Benazir Bhutto in her life, she has also been held in several horrific prisons in Pakistan, where even criminals have refused to go. At that time she was young, but she was not sad or losing her heart. It was her combat, skills, endurance and strength of will that made her a great leader. Benazir had a hard time confronting a dictator's cruelty when her father died. She was then able to resist all of the military regime's adversities. She was born with leadership qualities. At the time General Zia wanted to kill ZA Bhutto, these attributes or abilities became more popular.⁶²

It was a turning point or "courage for resistance". Benazir Bhutto's entire personality is well reflected in this definition. After ZA Bhutto died there was a lack of top management, she became a savior of Pakistan in a very worst times. She not only shocked the entire People's Party of Pakistan, but became a threat to other leaders. A leader like Benazir didn't fear death because the lives of these leaders don't differ from life to death. She faced not only Western, military, other socio-political and religious leaders, but she was determinant.⁶³

The major political activism of women parliamentarians regarding the protection of the women strata of Pakistan, a number of contributions has been analyzed. Right after the

⁶² Bader, *Political Leadership*.

⁶³ Ibid, 23.

death of martial administration of Zia-ul- Haq in 1988, Benazir Bhutto became the Prime minister of Pakistan, who has the privilege to become first executive head of Muslim state in whole Muslim world. Her both tenures are interesting to analyze because this helped to understand that how under the reign of woman Prime Minister, women parliamentarians contributed for the empowerment of the population of women in Pakistan?

This chapter defines the major contribution of women parliamentarians in uplifting the women population of Pakistan. It has been divided into four portions: first briefly defines the initial step of women in the elected bodies and how the women struggled to attain the 33 percent representation through the reserved seats. Second defines the main contributions like establishment of First women Bank and First women police station. Moreover, how these progressive steps contributed in the well-being of the women strata of Pakistan.

Third describes that how Benazir Bhutto struggled to de- construct the societal values for the uplifting of women. This also extensively defines that which was the societal forces that made hindrances for the progress of women. Fourth briefly defines what were the legislation steps or measures were taken to highlight and then safe guard the rights of women at national and international levels.

2.1 Benazir in 1988 and 1990 Elections:

Muhammad Khan Junejo was appointed as Prime Minister of Pakistan by President General Zia-ul-Haq. Election was conducted on May 29, 1988 on a non-party corruption basis. Nevertheless, the decision to hold elections on a non-party basis was reversed on

October 2, 1988 after the accidental death of President Zia on August 17. In 1988 elections, Benazir Bhutto's People's Party (PPP) captured 94 seats in national assembly. Thus, the first and the youngest women prime minister of the Muslim world was Benazir Bhutto at the age of 35.⁶⁴

The Bhutto government was ousted on charges of corruption. The elections held on October 24, 1990, headed by Mian Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, led to the elections of 217 members of parliament. It was a significant, but unpredictable and extraordinary victory. In 2012 Asghar Khan Petition, Mirza Aslam Baig, ISI chief Asad Durrani and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan confirmed the financial support provided to Mian Nawaz Sharif, since they felt that the Benazir Bhutto Party's burden on their national shoulder would be cumbersome.⁶⁵

The then President of Pakistan Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif resigned on July 18, 1993 and on October 6, 1993 elections were called. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari had dismissed the Benazir Bhutto government on allegations of corruption and abuse of power charges. On November 5, 1996, Farooq Khan Leghari was appointed as Prime Minister. Once again, Benazir Bhutto was pushed into opposition seats because this time they won just 18 seats.⁶⁶

2.2 Women Parliamentarian Struggle for Reserved Seats:

The implementation of quotas for gender is considered as the one of the significant policy measures which can help to facilitate the increase of women access in the decision-

⁶⁴ Attiya Shaffaq Khan, "Role of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan's Politics as a Parliamentarian: 1988 to 1999", (Master Thesis, University of Punjab, 2014).

⁶⁵ Ibid, 43.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 45.

making bodies, more specifically in parliament. It has been an established notion and reinforced belief by the women rights activists and groups from all around the world that a state cannot achieve democracy when, together with decision-making, there is no fair representation of men and women in the legislative and political process. A number of studies have been conducted which asserted that quotas help to set “the number and gender balance right in political and legislative institutions”.⁶⁷ Moreover, quotas are parameter for change in the democratic structure and help the women in attaining the influence in political and legislative sphere and elected forums.

In case of Pakistan, the indirect modality of elections on reserved seats for women is one of the main disadvantages for instance; women get deprived of having constituencies, as they cannot develop contacts with the electorates, which resulted in the dependence on the male- dominated political hierarchies.⁶⁸ Pakistan adopted its Adult Franchise in 1951 by the Constituent Assembly. At that time, assembly raised the demand around 3 percent reserved seats for women not only in central assembly but provincial assemblies.⁶⁹

When Zia-ul-Haq died, the new government established by PM Benazir Bhutto reserved around 2 seats for women members.⁷⁰ When President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed assembly in 1990, this also affected the reserved seats for women as it was also lapsed. Moreover, the struggle of women parliamentarians was not just limited to become the voice and representatives on the behalf of whole women population of Pakistan, but they had to struggle to sustain and maintain their reserve seats. For instance, during all the

⁶⁷ Aurat Foundation, “Legislative Quotas for Women: A Global & South Asian Overview of Types and Numbers, Legislative Watch Programme for Women Empowerment”, (Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, 2012)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Aurat Foundation, *Women Empowerment*, 12.

three consecutive general elections held in 1990, 1993 and 1997. With the military coup of General Pervez Musharraf in October 1997, the parliamentary election in 1997 was dismissed. It is irony that right after the dismissal of women reserved seats in 1988, the representation of women in assembly started becoming low.

The figures indicate that the proportion of representation of women in the elected National Assembly fell nearly 3.2 per cent in 1997, however, 2.4 per cent in the Senate and overall 0.4 in the four provincial assemblies.⁷¹ This became the serious concern for not only human rights organizations but the women parliamentarians as well. This concern became the main subject for many official reports regarding the issues of women. A report, named as The Commission of Inquiry for Women, headed by Supreme Court judge Mr. Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid and it was appointed by the Government, states:

“Equal participation of men and women in decision-making is a prerequisite for effective and genuine democracy. It is unfortunate that even major decisions that affect their lives in the form of laws and policies are made primarily by male- membership bodies with virtually no participation by women. This is a major reason why so many of the laws are discriminatory. While it is vital for women to have a decisive voice on issues of particular concern to them, it is equally critical to have their perspective and views reflected in other decisions in other spheres and at all levels”.⁷²

It is also interesting aspect that the civil society along with the women members of leading political parties started to raise the problem of reserved seats for women. The

⁷¹ Aurat Foundation, *Women Empowerment*, 132.

⁷² Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women, Reprint, (1998).

Human rights activists and women leaders from political parties launched a campaign after the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing in 1995, in order to increase the women representation to 33 per cent in all the elected bodies of Pakistan. There was board consensus attained before the launching of campaign which stated that the condition of women in Pakistan has reached to depressed level. Moreover, it was being stressed that women need representation not only in assemblies but also in policy- making bodies which should be improved. However, this required forceful and firm affirmative actions.

The women in main political parties and women rights organizations decided to reserve their seats as the limited affirmative action necessary to bring women into the democratic main stream, but that direct contact with the general electorate had to be followed by this. Ultimately, they decided that at the level of women who must be selected by direct election a minimum of 33 percent must be reserved. The Aurat Foundation (AF) has therefore begun from 1995 to mobilize its advocacy network in this respect for a specific campaign on this demand. AF also lobbied legislators and governments in control, together with other right-wing organizations.⁷³

Along with the main political parties of the country like PPP, ANP and PML- N, and women rights organization organized the round table discussion in July 1995 for the purpose of seats which were reserved for women. However, the discussion led to the joint declaration by the representatives of parties in order to restore the women's reserved seats and to expand the provision to the Senate.⁷⁴ The Commission of Inquiry for Women

⁷³ "Citizen's report of the Citizens' campaign for Women's Representation in Local Government in Pakistan 2000-2001", (AF, 2001).

⁷⁴ Aurat Foundation, 129.

also stressed upon the main principles of reservation and also suggested 33 percent reservations of seats for women in all the elective representative bodies and prevalence of direct system, constituency based elections which should be joint electorate for both women and men.

The country wide signature campaign was started to support the principles of reservations of seats for women and 33 percent representation in 1998. Not only the organizations of civil society but many individuals, legislators of different political parties, many women belonging to the political parties became part of it. As a result, all the assemblies of four provinces unanimously passed the resolutions during 1998-99 urged the federal government to restore the reserved seats for women in all the legislative bodies.⁷⁵ The assembly of Balochistan was the first to approve this resolution and increased its reserved seats for women “in the Local Government from 16.4 percent to 25.8 percent” which was considered as the highest achievement in the Pakistan’s history.⁷⁶

This represent the inside glimpse that in order to attain and become the voice and representative of any faction of the society, women parliamentarians had to struggle to strengthen at the basic level. It can be observed that increase of 33 percent reservations of women seats in legislative bodies of the country was a huge success of the women which also indicate the notion of struggle.

⁷⁵ AF Legislative Watch Newsletter No. 15 & 16,(2001).

⁷⁶ Aurat Foundation, *Women Empowerment* 156.

2.3 Substantial Achievements for the Progress of Women:

2.3.1. Establishment of First Women Bank:

One of the main contributions of women parliamentarians in the administration of Benazir Bhutto was the establishment of First Women Bank in Pakistan. This marked the wave of psychological revolution in the patriarchal society of Pakistan.⁷⁷ This indicates that she struggled to empower the Pakistani women which was totally negation to the concept of masculinization of the public space and was considered as the outcome of the military regimes. However, activism of women in political sphere and empowerment of the women was the result of Benazir Bhutto, which was suppressed due to the policies of Zia-ul- Haq previously.

The new wave of empowerment of women was experienced in Pakistan under the leadership of Pakistan's first woman PM Benazir Bhutto. Her era indicates the prominent and substantial political activation of women parliamentarians for the betterment of women population. The first substantial step in the sphere of politics and legislation can be analyzed when in 1989; Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto established the First Women's Bank.⁷⁸

This bank is new concept in Pakistan to give space to women to excel economically. This is a Pakistan's monetary organization and considered as one of Pakistan's most competitive reservoirs and monetary development to reinforce women in the economic and social sphere.⁷⁹ Moreover, her government tried to erase the press censorship which

⁷⁷ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto* , 64.

⁷⁸ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 53.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

changed the depiction of women in the media in new perspective. The total Rs.100 million was announced by the Benazir government for the establishment of the bank in the end of July 1989 which was considered as “the first tangible and meaningful step towards recognizing the Pakistani woman as an independent economic entity”.⁸⁰

This bank has been emerged as the first nationalized financial institution which is still catering particularly the female entrepreneurs’ needs. The concern of the bank in the initial years of its establishment was to ameliorate the socio-economic necessities of women from urban and rural areas of Pakistan. First Women Bank is not just commercial bank but it is evolved into an effective finance institution for Pakistani women. The bank provides financial assistance to kinds of businesses:

- Businesses which women are operating but not restricted to them only.
- Women who have 50% of ownership rights in any partnership companies or private firms or are companies’ managing directors.

2.3.2 National Plan of Action and Ministry of Women Development:

Ministry of women development (MOWD) initiated the National plan of action. The number of priorities was formulated under this Plan of action for women, in order to help to alleviate the condition and empowerment of women.⁸¹ Federal government of Pakistan set up ministry which helped to strengthen the division of women in the cabinet secretariat as the follow up mechanism to the rights of women committee recommendations. Moreover, in 1989, this division was upgraded as a ministry for

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ MOWD, Reports of COIW, (1997).

development of women.⁸² The problem was emphasized because the Ministry had little presence in all the provinces during its initial stages and therefore could not make significant changes. Moreover, social welfare and special education were also included in the Ministry of Women's Development, Special Care and Special Education later in 1996. For all the measures taken, however, there was no institutional change for the security and advancement of women's rights.

2.3.3 De-Construction of the Societal Values:

The transition from the old patriarchal values to the empowerment of women was gradually evident in the reign of Benazir Bhutto. She deconstructed the orthodox concepts of the society which created controversy when she attained the position of premiership. This was completely opposite to the Islamic principles which argued that a woman cannot hold the position of executive of the country. Amid these disputes, she felt it necessary to act within the current Islamic system, and used Islamic history and scriptural examples to maintain her public presence.⁸³

The critical analysts argued that ' It has imprisoned women in the debate that prevailed before her election, when she adopted the Chadar and Islamic language to justify the presence of her in politics.⁸⁴ This specific discourse created the sense of religious manipulation to regulate women and this also served particular political interests. Women parliamentarians along with the women leaders started to take precautions regarding their appearances in the public sphere which indicates that they did not want to offend the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ MOWD, Reports of COIW, (1997).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

cultural and religious values and sentiments of the Muslim population. This practice of head covering was not constant as they did not follow the same custom in their private life.⁸⁵

She used the Islamist terminology, arguing vocally against the myths of the status of women in Islam as a result of adulterating a pure faith, a syncretized trend when Islam became adulterated by tribal practices.⁸⁶ Despite of the fact that her all these efforts to change the situation of the women of Pakistan, she did not bring any substantial revolution. She could not be able to challenge and amend many laws which were discriminating under the disguise of Islam. It is being argued that since her government was formed through the fragile coalition so she had limited choices.⁸⁷

In order to sustain and remain in the power and work parallel with the opposition and the lobby of Islamist, it was difficult to nullify the previous policies of the government, specifically regarding women. Although the issues of women were also part of the PPP's manifesto, but gender specific issues did not become part of her government. The reasons were following like; there was lack of strengthened alliances among the organizations for women rights and absence of political currents which extract power from the most neglected faction of the Pakistani society.⁸⁸

2.3.4 Legalization Process for Women Empowerment:

As the cultural values are embedded in the fabric of Pakistani society deeply, along with the religious influence, it is challenging for any government to make any changes in the

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 72.

⁸⁷ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 101.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

existing law because culture and religion are sensitive matters. Regarding the protection of women, the government led by Benazir Bhutto, during her first term, refrained itself from revoking 9th amendment of Zia-ul-Haq.⁸⁹ This was the law which introduced the changes regarding the betterment of women in a long run. The state policies regarding gender rights were remained under the paradigm of Islamic law.

The policies of Benazir on gender also show evidence of ambivalence. However, it is vague whether they were pushed by the intention to develop more gender based egalitarian society or to placate the Islamist factions. Due to this reason Benazir was severely criticized by the Islamic factions along with the women rights activists. It is also a significant aspect that politics of Benazir, at the same time linking Islam and gender remained not much effective in indicating the link of political class with the real struggles for the rights of women.

2.3.5 The Fourth World Conference on Women-1995:

The fourth World Conference on women was held in Beijing in 1995 which is known as Beijing platform for action and Pakistan also participated in this conference. The agenda of this conference was empowerment of women. As there was significant paradigm shift towards the development issues of gender and women.⁹⁰ It was the clear agenda that this conference would focus only on the equality among both gender and human rights.⁹¹ Moreover, it was concluded by the conference that one of the key hurdle in the

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Mitra and Bacchan, *Encyclopedia of Women in South Asia: Pakistan*, (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications 2004), 87.

⁹¹ Naveeda Noreen and Riaz Musarat, "Protection of women rights through the legal reforms in Pakistan", *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, Vol. 3, No.4, 119- 141, (2013).

development of women is violence so it was also included in the critical concerns, which were twelve in number, in the conference for Actions.⁹²

Pakistan, right after her participation in this conference, developed the National Action Plan with the consultation and help of civil society. The three main areas were highlighted by the conference; advancement of women in economic sphere, equality of rights and violence against women. These aspects were also adopted by Pakistan and “as a key follow up as per Para 297 of the platform for action formed national Plan of Action.”⁹³ Pakistan is signatory of “The Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women” (FLSAW) which was held in Nairobi in 1985.⁹⁴ The Program of Action consented at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 at Cairo, and World Summit on Social Development.⁹⁵

The program of Action mutually consented in 1995, at the International Conference on Population (WSSD) at Copenhagen⁹⁶ CEDAW was one of the significant among them. The core aim of the commission was to gain and then secure educational, political and economic opportunities and rights for the Pakistani women.

2.3.6 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)-1996:

Beijing Declaration was held on the women’s empowerment and Pakistan also participated in it. Under this declaration it was stressed upon that women all around the

⁹² Savitri Gooneskere, *Violence, Law and Women's Rights in South Asia*, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2004), 148.

⁹³ NPA, MOWD, (1998), 1.

⁹⁴ Noreen and Musarat, “Protection”, 131.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ NPA, MOWD, (1998), 2.

globe have not gaining their equal rights. It was further agreed that it is also a weakness in our societies that we are failed to provide the basic and fundamental rights to the women. Moreover under this declaration, it was committed to eradicate the hurdles which were creating obstacles in the progress of the women. Beijing Conference became a reason for Pakistan to join CEDAW.

CEDAW was signed by Pakistan in 1995 and ratified later in March 11, 1996 during the reign of PM Nawaz Sharif. Although the women activists of Pakistan were already demanding to ratify the CEDAW since 1983.⁹⁷ This convention has significant place because it considered the women who constitute the half of the world's population into the main focus of the human rights concerns. This convention tried to develop the notion of gender equality and advised all the participatory countries to ensure the women to have equal rights as the men enjoy.

According to this convention all the countries participated required to take all the essential and proper measures to enhance the development and ensure the advancement of women in order to guarantee them to fully enjoy the human rights and basic freedom parallel to the men. The legal status of women was the major concern of this conference. According to the article 2(F) of the convention that each state should take all the possible measures like; abolish or modify the existing laws, customs and regulations which safeguard the discrimination against women.⁹⁸

Due to political instability from 1988 to 1999, the governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, both, had done fewer efforts according to the CEDAW despite the fact that

⁹⁷Noreen and Musarat, "Protection", 137.

⁹⁸Noreen and Musarat, "Protection", 136.

Pakistan had ratified it. It is irony that failed to submit any single report to the CEDAW. This clearly indicates that Pakistani societal structure is so strong that it cannot be changed at once.

2.3.7 Some Miscellaneous Development Programs:

Benazir expressed concerns about women's social problems, health and discrimination in the society during her 1988 election. She had proposed various plans for the establishment of women police stations, courts and development banks for women. She also vowed to dismantle controversial Hudood laws restricting women's rights. Though, she did not propose any legislation to boost the social status of women during her two incomplete terms (1988-1990 and 1993 to 1996). She could not revoke any of the Zia's Islamization legislation which was covered by a Constitutional 18th amendment and against ordinary legislative reform from judicial review.⁹⁹

The Prime Minister's Women's Health program was initiated during its second tenure (1993-1996). Recently, this program is known as Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Health Program, which has been enabled during PPP government in 2008, will make recruitment of lady physicians and health visitors a top priority of the government and relocate adequate funds, in particular for children and maternal facilities at the level of union council in every district.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, some of the other proposed suggestions in women budgeting included:

- Appointment of women teachers in primary schools.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 72.

- Girl students ' scholarships from 5th to 10th grades.
- Implementation of employment / recruitment programs in all areas of life.
- Low cost accommodation for women who are unmarried, in need and underprivileged.
- Plan to provide equality of opportunity for rural and remote women.
- Adequate dowry funds would be introduced.
- Women police stations and women banks are being reactivated.
- The minimum credit amount without guarantee or protection for Small Businesses, including cottage industry, is Rs. 30, 0000 will be provided to women.
- Farmers and landless women would be provided with agricultural land.¹⁰¹

2.4. Comparative Analysis of Both Tenures of Benazir:

The morning of December 2, 1988 saw the beginning of Benazir Bhutto's political history. She was the first female Prime Minister to assert herself in Pakistan's modern political history and especially in the Muslim world. Her appointment as the first Islamic Republic prime minister was the result of an essentially unbroken and liberal electoral process in which people were forced to change their marginalized and frustrated condition. Benazir Bhutto was also the young Prime Minister in the history of world politics in 1989 elections.¹⁰²

Throughout Benazir Bhutto's first term as Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, there was a very jubilant reason for celebrating the elections and high

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

expectations and the resolution to lead them was seen. The first challenge during her first term of her office was to fulfill and meet the coalition's expectations and demands. It was a tough job. Pakistan did not go through a very "happy" period in 1989, apart from this challenge. State faced economically and internally a very threatening situation. The IMF agreed with Pakistan to impose additional taxes and add additional monetary restrictions on Pakistan in order to provide it with more funds so that it could repay its past debt. As Prime Minister, Benazir had more than wanted to speak at once on her plate.¹⁰³

Politicians speculated that although Benazir is 100% heart and soul perfect, she still will fail to save Pakistan from its destructive path of liquidation and jeopardize. Benazir was faced by constraints from the military that she cannot disrupt their budget whereas, on the other hand country was facing derailed economic situation. She was forced by the military of Pakistan to allocate 40% to 60% as the security situation along Pakistan's borders was not very satisfying and she was also involved personally and interested in Pakistan's nuclear program; this was an obligatory step.¹⁰⁴

It was about the temperament and power of Benazir Bhutto as a person who demonstrated something in her leading capacity and was doing something. She could only fight one thing and never give up. The irony was that, in fact, the government allocated less budget on education, health and accommodation. She assured her supporters of social reforms, development and improvement in elections.¹⁰⁵

There has been much to ruin Pakistan, because the military in the past 11 years had ignored the social reforms, including education and health, which were in need of a full

¹⁰³ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 74.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Bader, *Political Leadership*, 94.

makeover. The cheery on top in making Pakistan in worst condition was made by Afghan refugees and trafficking in drugs from Afghanistan which was consuming Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto has been reforming and she lifted the ban on freedom of speech. Moreover, she allowed freedom to communication media to express opinions and criticize her for her shortcomings and strategic planning.¹⁰⁶

This was a very courageous and vital step that her father who expressed keenly faith in democracy, didn't take. Benazir Bhutto's efforts to allow freedom of the media showed her belief in transparency and democracy. Her first term has also been marked by her efforts to improve ties with India. Her interaction with Rajiv Gandhi marked a new era for the relationship between Pakistan and India at the SAARC Summit.¹⁰⁷

Pakistan and India signed a bilateral agreement stating that no country should target the nation's nuclear power plants and that information would be shared to deal with the international border drugs and smuggling. Benazir Bhutto's first term did not contain any new legislation in any field. In her rule, she was not satisfied with the legislation made on behalf of Shariah and on all sides, whether national or foreign, expressed discomfort with legislation directly on women in the country. But nothing can be seen and clarified when it comes to the practical implications.¹⁰⁸

In 2000, the laws for women were passed by Gen Musharraf and the number of special women's seats in parliament increased. In less than 800 days of rule in the office of the Prime Minister on the part of Benazir Bhutto, it was definitely not humanely feasible. Her hands were mostly bound in her first term due to the government's lack of funds. So, all

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

the changes that we see in her first term are those that do not require new funds. What was more backward about Benazir's approach was to solve certain issues so that she did not find money or plan to create more capital for new or existing projects.¹⁰⁹

Her first term finished because it was opposed to the unseen and external powers in and outside the military that couldn't bow down for her. It includes the rejection of Pervaiz Musharraf's proposal for the opening of the Kargil War, a Directorate General for Military Operations, and her opposition to General Gul which was intended to help the strengthening of Sikh movement in India so as to stop India from taking action against Pakistan. In her first term, she became the fearless leader who could not compromise on the name of the sovereignty of people and the country and an excellent diplomat who was committed to writing new pages on behalf of Pakistan internationally.¹¹⁰

The Benazir Bhutto's second term was marked by another triumph, which in October 1993 brought her back to Parliament. Just half of the voters cast their vote this time on the political scene in Pakistan. This was the result of people's dissatisfaction with politicians. Democratic powers from Pakistan have played an unequal role in not neglecting their own shortcomings of personality by their participation in America and Pakistan's army. This was spoken above the surface in the form of corruption and self-promotion.

Benazir Bhutto, like the first time, was Pakistan's Prime Minister and kept coalition crunches. The people of Pakistan again narrowly handed over Benazir to Pakistan's future. Once more, she had the job of giving "roti, kapra aur makaan" to Pakistani people

¹⁰⁹ Bader, *Political Leadership* 101.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

in the name of saving democracy in the region. Up until now, the nation state has remained behind and has been economically unsound, and Pakistan's common people have emerged as an unstable social culture. This time, Benazir Bhutto was sponsored by the US lobby and had to present a better impression of America and to cope with this portrayal of the Pakistani people.

Benazir Bhutto's second term introduced an actual politician who was undetectable. On the one hand, she negotiated with America in the face of Pakistan's readiness to stop Pakistan's nuclear program in exchange of their support for the Kashmir stance against India, and on the other hand, she had more than ever been able to keep Pakistan nuclear in line with the Indian aggression. She has maintained her previous position that the rising terrorism in the subcontinent was the result of failed US policies in Afghanistan and "Mujahedeen" problem had to be more than ever tackled.

She publicly criticized and always disregarded America's pressure on Pakistan on this issue. Benazir reflected and proved in her second term that she was really the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was a magnificent diplomat. This tenure of Benazir Bhutto was ruined by two key scandals as a result of the conflict of her husband and brother, her family life became lime light. As her brother blamed Asif Ali Zardari for corruption which resulted from the police killing of Murtaza Bhutto in Karachi in 1996, accusing Asif Ali Zardari of being a perpetrator. Furthermore, her political rival Nawaz Sharif announced publicly that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was involved in bank fraud, which forced President Leghari to take action to prevent Benazir Bhutto and her husband

Asif Ali Zardari from being convicted of corruption, by withdrawing their government in 1996.¹¹¹

Not many legislative steps in favor of the common people were taken, as was its former time. In this time, Benazir mainly supported Nawaz Sharif's economic policy in order to prioritize the privatization and to make no changes or improvements.

2.5. Contribution of women parliamentarians:

As a matter of fact, women representation remained very low during the era from 1988-1999. After the general elections of 1988, eighth National Assembly was formed in the political history of Pakistan. It had total 217 members, out of which 24 were women. Twenty of them were elected on reserved seats and four were elected on general seats¹¹². Thus female representation was only 11% from 1988 to 1990. The ninth National Assembly was formed after the 1990 elections and it had only two female members which make 0.9% of the total strength. From 1993-1996 four females became a part of assembly which makes only 1.8%. From 1997-1999, six women were part of legislature and it was only 2.8% representation¹¹³.

Syeda Abida Hussain, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto and Begum Ashraf Abbasi were the women who won 1988 election on general seats. Mrs. Kalsoom Saifullah Khan, Mrs. Malik Mehr-un-Nisa, Begum Rehana Sarwar, Begum Sarwari Sadiq, Mrs. Amna Piracha, Mrs. Razia Sultana, Mrs. Attiya Inayatullah and Mrs. Shahnaz Wazir Ali were

¹¹¹ Bader, *Political Leadership*, 102.

¹¹² National Assembly of Pakistan. <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/index.php> accessed on May 12, 2019.

¹¹³ Fatima, Ambreen. "Pakistan main Auratun ki Siyasi Shamuliyat or Moessar Numaeindagi ki Surat-e-Hal Par Seminar". *Nawa-i-Waqt*(Urdu). December 22, 2019.

some of the names of women elected on reserved seats to the national assembly in 1988. The most notable female parliamentarian during this era was Benazir Bhutto. She had support of other ladies including Begum Ashraf Abbasi and Nusrat Bhutto. A description of the contribution of other parliamentarians is given below.

Dr. Begum Ashraf Abbasi was a close supporter of Pakistan Peoples' Party and its leaders Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto. She was the first female deputy speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan from 1973-1977 and then again from 1988-1990. She had always been a great support to her party leadership¹¹⁴.

Syeda Abida Hussain was a famous Pakistani politician from Jhang. She started her political career in 1971 from the platform of PPP. When the 1985 general elections announced she joined the P.M.L. and stood in constituency NA-87 against clergy member, Rehmatullah Bharwana; she was noted to be the first woman to be elected to the National Assembly on a general seat. In 1988, she joined PML (N) and contested the 1990 general election against Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. She again won and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed her as the Pakistani Ambassador to the United States. She was the first woman diplomat to hold this office. Her appointment came at a troublesome time for the foreign relations with the United States due to Americans placing the military embargo on Pakistan's military. She acted as Pakistan's principle negotiator with the U.S Department of state and described the meetings with the American officials stressful because the Americans kept demanding the roll back of atomic bomb program¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁴ Women Parliamentarian Caucus. <https://wpc.org.pk/> accessed on May 12, 201

¹¹⁵ Ibid

After the 1993 General Elections, Benazir Bhutto recalled her diplomatic assignment. She came back to Pakistan and started working as a supporter of Nawaz Sharif and sat in opposition benches in the parliament. In 1997 elections she successfully defended her constituency and joined the second administration of Nawaz Sharif as a Minister of Food and Agriculture and later became the Minister of Population Control and Census. In 1998, she notably oversaw the successful and peaceful nationwide census in all over the country.

India conducted nuclear test in May 1998, Abida Hussain was one of the leading politicians in the party who supported government to break the policy of deliberate ambiguity and conduct the atomic tests in response to India. Over the Kargil Front in 1999, she sided with Prime Minister and after the military take-over of 1999; she was imprisoned in Adiala Jail along with the party leadership¹¹⁶.

Begum Nusrat Bhutto served as a senior member of the Federal Cabinet between 1988 and 1990. She was married to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1951, and after her husband founded PPP, she worked to lead party's women wing. After Bhutto's execution, Nusrat Bhutto along with her children went into exile to London from where she co-founded the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy a non-violent opposition to Zia's regime. She returned to Pakistan in 1988 as the party's national leader and campaigned for her daughter Benazir's Bhutto's election¹¹⁷.

After the PPP's victory in 1988 she joined Benazir's cabinet as a minister without portfolio while representing Larkana District in the National Assembly. She remained in

¹¹⁶ Ahmed, M. *Benazir: Politics of Power*. Karachi: Royal Book Company. 2015.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

the cabinet until Benazir Bhutto's government was dismissed in 1990. Afterwards, during a family dispute between her son Murtaza and her daughter Benazir Bhutto, she favored Murtaza and after his assassination, she moved to Dubai in 1996¹¹⁸.

Dr. Fehmida Mirza another parliamentarian during this era joined Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) in 1997 and was elected to the National Assembly from constituency NA-173 (Badin II) in 1997 general elections. She had an intrinsic inclination for humanitarian work and arranged relief and rehabilitation for affectees of the devastating cyclone and floods in Sindh Province during the year 1999. She was a senior politician and parliamentarian. She has been elected to the parliament for three consecutive terms in 1997, 2002 and 2008 elections as MNA from Badin. Later she also served as a speaker of N.A in 2008 and had the distinction of being first women speaker in the Muslim world¹¹⁹.

Another parliamentarian during this era was Tehmina Daultana. She was elected to the National Assembly for the first time in 1993 general elections from NA-130 Vehari II as a candidate of PML-N. She was re-elected to the N.A in 1997 general elections and remained as the Minister for Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education¹²⁰.

Women representation remained low in Senate as well. Dr.Noor Jehan Panezai was the only woman member of Senate in 1991. She was also elected as the first woman deputy chairperson of the senate in 1991 and served in this capacity till 1993. In the next term of

¹¹⁸ Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. <https://pildat.org/> accessed on May 10, 2019.

¹¹⁹ Women Parliamentarian Caucus. <https://wpc.org.pk/> accessed on May 12, 2019.

¹²⁰ Ibid

Senate Fizza Junejo and Nasreen Jalil were elected as senators and they remained a part of Senate till 1997¹²¹.

¹²¹ Women Parliamentarian Caucus. <https://wpc.org.pk/> accessed on May 12, 2019.

CHAPTER-3

WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS DURING THE ERAS OF BENAZIR BHUTTO AND NAWAZ SHARIF

As women are almost half of Pakistan's entire population, their place in society, in terms of their social and economic empowerment, has always been a matter of interest to civil society. The current chapter is divided into two portions: the first portion defines the role of Benazir Bhutto as a woman parliamentarian whereas the other portion defines the evaluation of the initiatives taken by the PM Nawaz Sharif during his both tenures. Moreover, comparison has been made to the government since 1988 and 1999 and to what extent the constant switching of government upholds the struggle of women rights.

3.1 Benazir Bhutto and Her Role as Parliamentarian:

Benazir was quite participative and did not use the autocratic style while holding the status as Prime Minister of Pakistan. She was the woman with the most gracing personalities but her vertex is visible as a public leader and as a parliamentarian in Pakistan in her political career. In Pakistani politics, patriarchal society developed with new perspectives which were unusual.

When Benazir Bhutto as a prime minister took over the government, she faced several issues as the country was on the verge of bankruptcy. For instance, at the domestic level the lurking problems were establishment control, long stretched legacy of Zia and weak

economic condition.¹²² Whereas, at international level, her administration faced pressure due to nuclear program and issue of Afghanistan.¹²³ Furthermore, there was pressure from international monetary fund to agree to its certain terms. The whole situation of Pakistan at domestic and foreign level indicated that she had to handle a lot of problems which were lingering upon her.

Being an independent woman with foreign educated, she had to sacrifice her baggage in order to be part of the political sphere in Pakistan. Moreover, as a woman leader she was part of the leading political party and had back of her name of late father. It can be marked as political miracle in the Pakistan's history as she stood firm for her motto and empower women of Pakistan through her mission of democracy, when the political climate was under the influence of Hudood laws, although most of them were not rightly interpreted.¹²⁴

As a parliamentarian being a woman, she struggled to move towards accomplishment of democracy and revival of democracy in Pakistan. Her caliber as an intellect, rhetoric speeches, and leadership qualities influence and encouraged other women parliamentarians to move towards the progress of women. Her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a learned Pakistani diplomat and politician, inspired and educated her. Benazir Bhutto accompanied Zulfikar Ali Bhutto during Simla agreement and during his address at the Security Council during the fall of Dhaka.

¹²² Qurat-ul-Ain Bashir, "Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan: 1988-1999", (PhD Thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 2015), 80.

¹²³ Khan, *Role of Benazir Bhutto*, 81.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

It showed that her training towards the politics was more on practical grounds.¹²⁵ In order to analyze the role of Benazir Bhutto as a woman parliamentarian, her foreign level policies and domestic level policies are significant to understand as it will help to understand that being a woman how she led Pakistan. This section is divided into two portions: First defines the foreign level policies and second defines regarding the domestic policies.

3.2. Foreign Level Policies:

3.2.1. Stance of Benazir on Pak-USA Relations During Cold War:

The far-sightedness of Benazir encouraged her to tilt towards the support of War of Afghanistan and USA against Russia. Being a woman executive head of an Islamic country, her each and every step was keenly observed so she opted for a careful analysis of foreign scenarios and what was beneficial for Pakistan at that time. She advocated American involvement of Mujahedeen support as “American Frankenstein”.¹²⁶ While speaking to parliament, she argued many times regarding the Middle East and South Asia alignment and showed fears about the war implications if war would be lost. Moreover, she mentioned several times regarding an important question that once the American Afghanistan war will be over then what will happen to Mujahideens?¹²⁷ She advocated in favor to break the alliance of Pakistan and America.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Khan, “Role, 45.

¹²⁷ Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan: Crises and Conflicts*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1998).

3.2.2. Benazir's Vision and Policy for America:

Benazir observed and understood that America continuously shifted their policies according to their interests, so she realized that Pakistan was not in the condition to make America her enemy in a situation when there are many forces operating in South Asian region. For instance, American's policy for Russia was anti which played an important factor to support Afghani Mujahideens. She realized that the consequences to add the religious sentiment in war would be fatal for Pakistan so she was anti-American support. Her approach towards this crucial matter shows the repercussions in Pakistan up till now.¹²⁸

3.2.3. India- Pakistan Relations in Her Spectrum and Her Stance on Kashmir Issue:

Benazir expected good relations with India in the beginning of her tenure. She worked and emphasized to rebuild Pakistan and Indian relations. Her stance was reflection of confidence she gained through her father as his contribution to Simla Agreement was positive.¹²⁹ As a result she expected a paradigm shift in the progress and prosperity in the relation with India. Her stance was shown in her parliamentary speeches as she advocated for the strong and prosperous Pakistan with friendly and peaceful relations with neighboring countries.¹³⁰ She took this initiative by visiting India and signed trade agreement along with inviting Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan.

¹²⁸ Bahadur, *Conflicts*, 101.

¹²⁹ Bashir, *Pakistan: 1988-1999*, 102.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

It was her peace gesture which paved way for better relations with India. This is evident from the fact that after Rajiv Gandhi, Bharatiya Janata Party's policies forced the new PM V.P. Singh to dismiss the trade agreements which the former PM Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi executed.¹³¹ Moreover, extremist wave was initiated to launch military operation in Kashmir and increase the troops at India and Pakistan borders.

3.2.4. Benazir and Her Stance on Afghanistan:

Despite all her reservations, she authorized the involvement of Pakistan in Afghan War against Russia because Russia was supporting Bharatiya Janata Party of India against Pakistan.¹³² During her short span of two years, she was not able to distance her foreign policy from the triangle of India, Afghanistan and USA. Any war situation in South Asian region had significant role in internal affairs of Pakistan because of strategic placement of Pakistan in the region.¹³³ Due to the vulnerable condition of Pakistan and due to its strategic location, she needed a decisive approach to handle the border issues which were looming at western and eastern borders.

3.2.5. Hurdles in Atomic Program:

Despite problems from the then President and some Army's segment created for her, she was not only ardent in nuclear program of Pakistan which her late father initiated but also focused to allocate special funds to fulfill this project. While often speaking to parliament she argued that in order to develop, Pakistan needs an advancement and struggle in the

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Bashir, "Parliamentary". 198

sphere of science and technology. Furthermore, ministry of science and technology was moved inside of the PM house and administration had to report her directly.

Although the credit to initiate the nuclear program of Pakistan is given to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, but it was Benazir Bhutto who has the honor of starting, formulating and finalizing the Ghauri and Shaheen Programs under her reign. She is known as the “Mother of Pakistan’s Space program”¹³⁴ in Pakistan. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan was authorized by her in 1990 whereas, in 1995, Dr. Samar Mubarakmand worked in the field of nuclear energy to shape the defense shield around Pakistan that can be built by the integrated space weapons program.¹³⁵

Integrated Space Weapon program development was one of the greatest achievements of Benazir which helped to develop and enhance the atomic bomb program of the country.¹³⁶ It is considered as the toughest decision of Benazir Bhutto on nuclear program when Pakistan was facing pressure from USA. Her diplomatic strategies regarding nuclear program can be observed from this fact that whenever USA put pressure on Pakistan she ensured them to halt the nuclear program but she kept this program alive.¹³⁷

On the basis of this stance, she advocated to increase awareness regarding literacy in computer in the parliament and support the idea for computer use in schools and public in general. Due to support from the parliament she managed to issue a degree for computer hardware import in Pakistan which was tariff or duty free. Furthermore, she worked for the establishment of a structure to improve public and private sectors to establish

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Bashir, “Parliamentary”, 13.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

technology and technology parks all across Pakistan.¹³⁸ During her tenure, the program to give financial assistance and grant loans for computer literacy programs was approved by the parliament.

3.2.6. Badar 1 and 2:

It is a credit for Pakistan that it is the first Muslim country that launched first military satellites with the names of Badar 1 and 2. It was the stature of Benazir who wanted a strong security system for Pakistan which paved way for the successful launch of military satellites. 1990 was proclaimed a science year by the launch of two military space satellites in Pakistan. National awards were given to the scientists and engineers who contributed in the field of science and technology to encourage them.

3.3. Domestic Policies:

3.3.1. Economic Policies:

During her tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir faced numerous issues as this was the time when Pakistan was on the verge of bankruptcy and in this critical issue, international monetary fund was adding fuel to the fire as they were putting pressure on Pakistan to agree on some terms.

The way she struggled for the revival of democracy in the country was appreciated but she was not much appreciated for her economic reforms for Pakistan and social development. Despite the fact that she had studied economics from well reputed international institute, this troublesome economic crisis has over shadowed her

¹³⁸ Ibid.

personality as a parliamentarian. During her both tenures, although she talked a lot in her parliamentary speeches regarding the industrial development and progress in the sector of agriculture, along with the measures to privatization policies, but she did not get the time to materialize them.

Moreover, she mentioned in her speeches that nationalized industries will be privatized but these decisions did not take place in real. However, her steps towards the energy sector, which were criticized at that time, are now proving to be beneficial for the country. She introduced energy policy in 1994. This policy can be labeled as “all-inclusive, articulated and ultramodern visualization of energy requirements of the nation state”¹³⁹ This policy accomplished the future energy needs of Pakistan.

3.3.2. Minority Affairs:

The credit is given to Benazir Bhutto who was the first Prime Minister in Pakistan to promote the inclusion of minority parliamentarians in government. She appointed Julius Salik as a minister of population welfare in Pakistan.¹⁴⁰

3.3.3. Cultivation of Freedom of Speech in Pakistan:

In order to strengthen the civilian rights, freedom of speech is essential. Regarding the freedom of speech to the press, Benazir was in its favour, because it works as a watch dog for democratic system. It is also to her credit, that she gave the freedom of expression under the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan which had never been given by any politician or executive before. She mentioned many a times in her parliamentary speeches that she and

¹³⁹Khan, *Role*, 62.

¹⁴⁰ Bashir, “Parliamentary” 123.

her party, PPP, wants to opt the way of love, progress and freedom of expression because it is the sole element which can help to keep the democracy on track.¹⁴¹

The freedom of speech was not limited to press only but it was first time in the history of Pakistan and its political system that opposition in the parliament was given prime time slot to criticize the policies of government whenever they felt that the government was not working for the prosperity of the country.¹⁴² There was no doubt that her step was risky which could back fire at the seat of Benazir in parliament or it could cause de-stability of her administration. This step of Benazir is labeled as courageous and bold, as it was an effort to set free the people of Pakistan from the fears of martial laws.

3.4. Benazir's Efforts for Women Emancipation:

3.4.1. First Women Police Station:

In the history of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was the first lady who inaugurated first women police station on January 25, 1995.¹⁴³ This is the sheer example of efforts of Benazir to emancipate women of Pakistan which is a male dominated society. Although it was good step but like her several other initiatives, it lacked availability of proper ground work. For instance there wasn't any legislation layout nor was any Standard Operating System developed in order to govern the working and jurisdiction of police station. Furthermore, there were no substantial efforts made for the induction of women in the department of police. However, in 1995 first batch of women constables was recruited.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Bashir, "Parliamentary" 198.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

The purpose of police stations for women was to ensure that the women who are persecuted in our conservative and chauvinistic society would have a safe passage to report to the police regarding their grievances. These kind of exclusive women police stations were much needed because women victims of rape or other domestic violence could not comfortably talk with male police officers. Moreover, it further instigated an opportunity to reduce women discrimination in different fields of life. This step of Benazir proved futile as female police were not fully trained for the tasks related to this profession.¹⁴⁵

3.4.2. Other Developmental Steps for Women Emancipation:

As her father, Benazir has been tenacious in working on women's rights and has done everything possible to achieve gender equality. She initiated a number of social programs for the betterment of women. As defined in the earlier paragraphs, the development of women bank was one of the major contributions of Benazir to uplift women of Pakistan. It was set up to facilitate women by giving credits to women enterprising. About 100,000 women in health care had been fully trained and instructed to provide basic health facilities and to educate women in healthcare, birth control and nutrition.

During the reign of Zia-ul-Haq, participation of women in sports was banned but Benazir Bhutto when she came into power and uplifted this ban.¹⁴⁶ This move from Benazir was appreciated by women because in order to create healthy environment, sports should not be limited to men only. Moreover, this also indicates the irony of Pakistani society where

¹⁴⁵ Bashir, "Parliamentary", 67.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

sports is only limited to men. Whereas her step for the betterment of women indicated that women are essential part of the society and like men they also need sports.

Moreover, another step for emancipation of women was the establishment of Ministry of Women Development in 1989 which was an independent ministry and was concerned only with the women affairs.¹⁴⁷ The aim of the ministry was to give women their rights which are provided in the constitution of Pakistan. Moreover, in order to practically address the issues of women, ministry had some specific wings which ensured to provide gender equality and gave facilities to the women who were involved in the development process. Its concern was to first identify the issues of women, make legislative plans and later present in the parliament to make protective laws for women.

Furthermore, National Commission for Maternal and Child Health was established. Her significant step was the establishment of burn centers for the women who became victims of burns. Moreover, exclusive women hostels and vocational training institutes were established all across Pakistan. Moreover, the new programs regarding gender studies were introduced in different universities of Pakistan.¹⁴⁸ Her both tenures in government show her commitment towards the rights of women which is evident from the fact that due to her efforts Pakistan in 1995 became the signatory of the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action. Furthermore, the Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women was also signed by Pakistan in 1996.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Sarah Javed, Women Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Leadership in the Context of Reproductive Rights and Empowerment an Analysis of Pakistan (2012) Retrieved from www.lead.org.pk.

¹⁴⁹ For details regarding Beijing Declaration Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women check chapter three.

These steps on the whole define that her commitment towards the struggle of women in Pakistan were neither specious nor just symbolic. In her book, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, she noted that gender blindness must refer to the statute. Democracy can't function when women are subjugated; uneducated and not autonomy.¹⁵⁰ Her efforts for rights of the women showed that she wanted to uplift the status of women from the discrimination of the society, the status which Islam has given to the women in Muslim society.

3.4.3. Benazir's Stance on Hudood Ordinance:

There were various reasons which prevented the Benazir government to revoke the Hudood laws and could pass pro- women laws. In 1988, her party manifesto stated the solution of the issue by canceling the discriminatory legislation developed by Zia-ul-Haq, and ensuring women's education and employment opportunities. This was mentioned in chapter 9 of the manifesto of the party under the title of "Rights of Women Elimination of Discrimination". An absence of two third majorities in the Federal legislature was one of the main obstacles for Benazir to make constitutional legislation.¹⁵¹ This was the reason her proponents claimed Benazir could not easily repeal or modify Zia-ul-Haq's laws.

Therefore, this was an excuse given by the government of Benazir Bhutto which brought instability in government to make amendments in these crucial laws. However, this step was not favored by many political experts. For instance, regarding the excuse Shahnaz Rouse states that this is an interpretation that is too plain. Her regime even took no

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 29.

¹⁵¹ Lawrence Ziring, "Benazir Bhutto: A Political Portrait", *Asian Affairs*, (1991), 182.

symbolic public stance against this amendment. Moreover, Ms. Bhutto gave the Islamist irrelevant ways to the ideological battle by taking an arranged marriage by covering her head with a dupatta publicly. These are not insignificant issues in a Muslim country where Islamists are trying to control all aspects of women's bodies and lives.¹⁵²

Her statement indicates that she linked Benazir's attire, which is regarded as holding religious and cultural value, did not address the real issues of women. Shahzadi is of the view that this is bitter reality that there were no serious efforts being made to uplift the status of Pakistani women¹⁵³. Another hurdle for her short span of rule was the unbalanced relation of civil and military. Due to this reason she was more focused on this issue which restrained her from taking steps to amend laws regarding women¹⁵⁴.

It is argued that due to effective role of opposition parties like PML (N) and IJI, engaged her to take defensive approach at the levels of national and provincial assemblies. These factors are also defined that she "was too weak politically to seek the repeal of the fundamentalist-inspired laws considered degrading to women, she could not attack the causes for a slumping economy, and she was unable to address the problem of Pakistan's poor"¹⁵⁵ The cleavages and marked distinctions between these two political parties' ideologies established an ongoing conflict for the federal governance.

The PPP government's inability to develop a sustainable Punjab approach is another challenge. The virtual state of conflict between the central power group and the largest province of the nation has almost embedded the entire regime. The broad government can

¹⁵² Shahnaz Rouse, *Gender, Nation, State in Pakistan- Shifting Body Politics*, (Lahore: Vanguard Book, 2006), 31.

¹⁵³ Shahnaz Rouse, *Gender*, 33.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Lawrence Ziring, "Benazir Bhutto", 182.

have real importance only if the opposition parties and, especially, those responsible in the regions are genuinely attempted to understand.¹⁵⁶ The fact derived from the above references is that, due to her concern with the opposition, which formed the government in Punjab, Prime Minister Benazir could not implement her action plan. Punjab was able to generate barriers to the ordinary functioning of the federal government due to its population and huge resources.

In fact, there was also a lack of sensitivity and a severe engagement to address Pakistani women's distress in political issues. The principal reason is that she and the members of the group came from the privileged class which did not focus on the unfair legislation of the past administration but were enjoying the privileges of their offices. It is essential to say, however unengaged she was towards the problems of females, the disadvantaged Pakistani women saw in her a solution of problem which they were facing. As a lady, Bhutto encouraged the women population to take exceptional measures to make dents into the socio-cultural mentality of this community.¹⁵⁷

By contrast, in the course of Benazir's presidency, Weiss's remark showed its absence of enthusiasm for more females as politicians and administrators, with only one female being given a PPP ticket for a seat in the national assembly, apart from her mom, and a small number of females being awarded provincial assembly tickets. No female ministers were originally provided portfolios but this was overturned by the extension of Benazir's federal cabinet to 43 members, including five females on March 23, 1989. Out of the 24

¹⁵⁶ Arif Nizami, "*A Balance Sheet in the Deficit Benazir Bhutto's first year in Office*", (The Nation, December 02, 1989).

¹⁵⁷ Lawrence Ziring, "Benazir Bhutto" 182.

ministers, only a single member who is a portfolio-free minister was a lady. Four of the 19 State Ministers were female.¹⁵⁸

She had, however, taken some small steps to tackle women's problems who were unable and underequipped to transform the integral situation of women in society in any significant way. The trivial measures for improving females have involved increasing Zia's Women's Division to two significant ministries for women's development, firstly, to recognize discriminatory legislation linked to females under the Zia administration, secondly, the development of a policy that will provide better jobs possibilities in the private and public sectors.¹⁵⁹

Finally, the Ministry had produced a study recommending that gender-based legislation be reversed promptly but its government has not followed up. Similarly, a Women's Development bank was set up which is deemed as a significant opportunity for women to provide economic resources and to provide economic support to them.¹⁶⁰ However, the Bank was restricted to a limited number of urban centers, so a big proportion of rural Punjabi females could not benefit from the services that it supplied.

Secondly, the functions of the bank remained restricted by themselves, without offering entrepreneurial infrastructure for females. It would have been easier to begin a company with simple installments if the bank could provide credit to poor deserving females, following the example of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.¹⁶¹ Moreover, she also reduced

¹⁵⁸ Anita Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan", *Asian March Survey*, 30:05, 437. (1990), 437.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 43.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Baqui Khandker & Zahed, "Grameen Bank: Performance and Sustainability", Washington, D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The World Bank, (1995).

the sentences of the underprivileged women prisoners during her first term as Prime Minister. Furthermore, after the resurgence of females in Punjabi culture, it urged females to become members of trade unions, which would favorably influence women's position.

These efforts were taken as a symbolic gesture of releasing the mostly poor women of the social prisons that the previous administration had built up. The new government permitted the rise of trade unionists, which soon seemed to include a large number of women in their ranks, and increased press censorship.¹⁶² However, given Pakistani women's unchanged circumstances and the absence of change in patriarchal thinking, these measures were not sufficient even to have little effect on low-middle and poor women's circumstances.

When the PPP won elections and Benazir became prime minister for the second term (1993-1996), the style and sensitivity for dealing with women's problems were almost the same. Although even this time, PPP manifesto promised steps for women empowerment by reserving 5% quota for women in all government and semi-government organizations, restoring special seats for women in National and Provincial Assemblies and by constructing a special women police force, along with the appointment of women lawyers in superior judiciary. Thirdly, the party once again dedicated itself to abolish all discrimination against females. Unlike the 1988 elections, the PPP was unable to secure an absolute vote by 37.85 per cent in the national assembly, securing 89 of 217 seats and

¹⁶² Weiss, "Benazir", 435.

forming a coalition government with the splitter faction of the PML (Junejo group) with a small majority.¹⁶³ Only 4 females were directly elected in the national legislature.

As noted, no other women were able to enter legislative elections since the deferred reserved quota had not yet been restored. As for her past term, she also faced numerous challenges, such as domestic policy conflicts, an economic recession which some economists described in 30 years as the worst, international terrorism and global inflammation both in its eastern and western frontiers. Because of the political and sensitive alliance, due attention was not given to women's problems.¹⁶⁴

In this situation, the Government of Benazir was not able to spare time and effort to concentrate on women problems related to their health and education system, except in the context of a small amount for women under the Primary Health Care and Family Planning program. The budget distribution for health rose from Rs. 1. 539 million in 1993-94 to Rs. 2. 430 billion in 1994-95, a total rise of 58%. The significant thing is that the allocation for growth was improved by about 15%.¹⁶⁵ These measures could not, as expected, even bring minimal changes to the benefit of the Pakistani women.

In addition to the fact that the Mohajair Qaumi Movement (MQM) and PPP had no power-sharing agreement and internal civil wars between both sides of the MQM were further fueled by the hidden role of civil and military intelligence agencies, and various sectarian conflicts between extremely Shi'a and Sunni groups, the formerly insignificant

¹⁶³ Tahir Amin, "Pakistan in 1994: The Politics of Confrontation", *Asian Survey*, 35:02, (1995), 143.

¹⁶⁴ La Porte and Jr. Robert, "Pakistan in 1995: The Continuing Crises", *Asian Survey*, 36:02, (1996), 179.

¹⁶⁵ Tehmina Ilyas, "Social Sector under Benazir Government", *The Muslim*, May 23 (1996).

socioeconomic progress made by Benazir had been severely reversed. In Karachi this worked to create a Hobbesian condition which is called war against everyone.¹⁶⁶

During her second term of office, these inner and outer barriers gave another excuse for ignoring the significant task of overcoming the Hudood legislation. This ongoing disregard by the government of Benazir dissuaded females from voting in 1993 as they voted more in favor of the PML (N) in comparison to the PPP in 1993, which also shows that many voted separately of their male member of the family (and) the inability of the government of PPP to undertake concrete action between 1988 and 1990 to enhance the position of females in Pakistan.¹⁶⁷

Bhutto could not contest any legislation that existed under the name of Islam. Kashmali Khan analyzed her shortcomings as follows. "Despite the reality that women's problems have been a concern in the PPP manifesto, gender problems have not been given priority in the lack of a broad alliance between women's organizations and because of the political currents arising from the assistance of marginalized faction of society, the state has argued that its regime is unwavering since it ruled by a weak coalition gender issues."¹⁶⁸

But in her autobiography, the former Prime Minister has the same rationale for her second term performance, saying she has taken some measures to enhance women's status. The first stage was to endorse the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the United Nations. The second effort she listed was the creation of the Ministry of Development for women. She also promoted hospitality at

¹⁶⁶ Amin, "Pakistan"

¹⁶⁷ Porte and Robert, *Survey*, 168.

¹⁶⁸ Rais A. Khan, "Pakistan in 1991: Light and Shadows". *Asian Survey*. 32:02. (1992).

Muslim Women's Olympics in Pakistan for the first time in history. Fourth was to set up unique women police stations in Pakistan. Fifth was to lead women magistrates to create family courts headed by them. She describes further that she had established distinct women police stations. In her own words,

(Her) government created a special police station for females to offer women trust in the reporting of offences against them, and appointed the first female magistrates to the country's high judiciary, we created a family court headed by women magistrates to hear matters relating to child custody and family affairs.¹⁶⁹

In addition, she declared to introduce the Social Action Program on Women's Health and Education by Training 100,000 women working in health and family management (building) in Pakistan's towns and villages 30, 000 new elementary and secondary schools.¹⁷⁰

In reality, the status of women, and particularly the poor and the middle classes, cannot be affected far-reaching. Bhutto also reiterated that unjust laws on women continue in Pakistan by refusing to remove unabated and unequal legislation on women. Benazir's defenders have claimed that their actions have been limited by the conditions and a strong opposition has created obstacles to its fulfilment at the federal and provincial levels.

Although, she expressed awareness of the issues of females in particular in her lectures and statements on multiple occasions, she did not have an agenda to tackle them. For instance, Benazir acknowledged the commonality of women's problems during one of her

¹⁶⁹ Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation-Islam, Democracy and the West*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 206.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 230.

1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, where CEADAW was also signed.¹⁷¹ She was not able to translate theory into practice despite this recognition at the deliberate forum and could not try to tackle a range of such societal problems, although they were linked not solely to females, but could have benefited them in society.

One of the major faults in her strategy was the slow development of a policy of systematic privatization. In the industrial enterprises, especially in the public sector, unemployment, inflation and deflation required urgent attention and policy measures that the Bhutto administration seemed unable to implement.¹⁷² Therefore, when her administration was rejected in 1997, many individuals welcomed the choice as they were disappointed with her performance.

3.5. Women Issues under Nawaz Government:

The Nawaz Muslim League won the chance to rule like the People's Party three times. Nawaz Sharif is the only leader to be offered the opportunity to third time as Prime Minister. In a 1990 election, the Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) coalition led by PML (N) won 105 of 217 National Assembly seats, well in front of PPP and its 45-seat Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDA) associates. Only two females, namely Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat Bhutto, could vote for the national legislature. The PML (N) formed a government with a large majority in the biggest provincial assembly. The assembly consisted of the names Fauzia Bahram and Begum Raj Gill, both two males and one woman on general seats and one on minority quotas. No females had reserved seats to

¹⁷¹ Bashir, "Parliamentary"

¹⁷² Shafiqat, "Pakistan".

national and provincial assemblies, since in these elections; the women's quota was not restored.

The results of the election results gave a wide majority to Nawaz Shareef in the central and most populous provinces to form government. The two key factors in these elections were first demonstrated that, as promised during an election campaign, individuals voted on a performance basis, fulfillment of the agenda. Second, the Islamic party's representation in mainstream politics, which introduced the governance dimension after the 1990 election, meant that the burden of orthodoxy was to be lifted by Nawaz Sharif.¹⁷³

As he was appointed to numerous significant offices in his government, Nawaz Sharif was a Zia protégé. So there was an impression from the start that Zia's associated women's legislation could be changed or abolished, specifically. In other words, the coalition partners of Nawaz Sharif were indifferent to the notion of change and transformation, which continued the status quo and conservative policies.¹⁷⁴

But since the IJI was created in 1988, their manifesto had emphasized the equal rights of females but had its own exclusive interpretation by political parties such as Jamat-i-Islami and Jamiat Ulema e-Islam, which did not match the needs of the vast majority of Pakistani women. In the past, the party was a driving force behind Zia-ul-Haq's military administration's program of Islamisation.¹⁷⁵ The 1988 IJI manifesto contained a section,

¹⁷³ Shafqat, "Pakistan".

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

titled ' Women, ' which comprised of the socioeconomic and political rights of women in Chapter VIII.¹⁷⁶

This manifesto promised women the right to inherit in accordance with Islamic legislation, but has never been implemented. Second, the manifesto provided training and education for females to increase employment opportunities. The declaration disregarded civil society's request to abolish the Hudood rules. The orthodox portion of the coalition conceived the omission as an endorsement. This was further verified in 1992, when Senator Dr. Muhammad Rehan expressed concern about discrimination legislation against females during the Senate proceedings on ' Women's Day,' refuted by representatives of religious groups, who took up frequent argument that current legislation did not discriminate against the female population.¹⁷⁷

Many Senators have not supported this position of religious groups. The discussion in this meeting disclosed, however, that the government of Nawaz Sharif did not have any sensitivity towards women's problems due to the low socio-economic situation of women. The government of Nawaz Sharif presented the "Shariah Bill Enforcement" in 1991 verified this fear.¹⁷⁸ This law, on behalf of Quran and Sunnah, was directed at creating a theocratic government that would have exceeded the rule of law Premier.¹⁷⁹

Some policymakers believe that Nawaz Sharif and the religious parties in this House had been working to make up for his weakening position by promoting the IJI's religious

¹⁷⁶Manifesto of Islami Jamhoori Ittehad, (2012), 17.

¹⁷⁷ Mohammad Yasin, "Women's Rights-a Story of Painful Discrimination", *The Muslim*, March 09 (1992).

¹⁷⁸ Shehzadi Zamurrad Awan, "Placement of Pakistani Women during Democratic Regimes: 1988-2018", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, July- December, (2018), 368.

¹⁷⁹ Rais A. Khan, "Pakistan in 1991: Light and Shadows", *Asian Survey*. 32:02, (1992), 199.

portion. Even Nawaz's effort to fulfill the IJI via Shariah could not generate a noticeable outcome. In addition to coalition partners, the PDA opposition alliance and women's rights activists have strongly criticized the bill. In its resolution PDA states that while this proposal is a 'conflict and division', as the 1973 constitution ensures that no laws repugnant to the Qur'an and Sunnah can be passed, have resolved the issue of Shariah implementation in the nation once and for all. As such, this system undermines our religion's revolutionary spirit.¹⁸⁰

In supporting the same idea, while discussing the various clauses of this bill at the time of committee stage, a professor of law writes that "The Shariat bill cannot be adopted in its current form to better Islamic structures and institutions than it is at the current time, as it does not contain any novel thoughts or suggestions. The Bill was rhetoric, redundant, repetitive and declaratory in nature."¹⁸¹

This proposal has brought suspicion and questions about the suggested legislation to Pakistani women after Zia's Islamization, fearing that it might indirectly further erode the status of females. A commentator believes that the law as such is not incorrect, but that the situation of a specific community must be taken into account when it comes to its implementation.

This specific legislation would not contribute, in letter and spirit, if a number of factors were induced, which were not present during the moment it began.¹⁸² In the end, with a simple majority, the Bill was accepted by both houses of the Parliament. The Nawaz Government's intention to support this law was not to persuade but to prolong its rule.

¹⁸⁰ Dawn, May 04, (1991).

¹⁸¹ Farogh Naseem, "Shariat Bill: Can it Better the System?", *Dawn* May 10, (1991).

¹⁸² Mushtaq Ahmad, "Spirit of the Shariat Law", *Dawn*, May 07 (1991).

However, quickly the President dismissed Nawaz on the charge of corruption and misuse of authority, so it is impossible to evaluate the complete consequences of this specific proposal in its full form.¹⁸³

The extensive assessment of Nawaz Sharif's politics shows that he and his partisans were interested in company, and were not very sensitive to Pakistani women's uplifting. He sometimes pointed out casually the issues facing Pakistani women and commented on the need to grant females their due privileges according to orders from the Quran. He confessed that his government had failed to provide females with much deserved, necessary equipment and possibilities, in recognition of his weakness, he said in the message on Women's Day 1992:

My government remains mindful that it has not fully exploited women's potential for improvement. Many still suffer from illiteracy, hunger, unemployment and inadequate housing.¹⁸⁴

The Nawaz administration, however, was limited to wording and no practical steps were taken to resolve female problems. The female members better represented the elites than deprived Pakistani women in National Assemblies and in Punjab Assemblies. The Second time Nawaz Sharif was elected Prime Minister in 1997, when his party Pakistan Muslim League took control of nearly two-thirds of the assembly and three-thirds of the

¹⁸³ *Pakistan Observer*, 23rd & 26th April, (1993).

¹⁸⁴ *The Muslim*, March 09, (1992).

Punjab assembly.¹⁸⁵ The national assembly has had a total of 6 females on general seats and the quota of females has not yet been restored.

One deceptive factor is that not one single female had won a general seat and that no female also had reserved seats because of the quota lapse. The election findings show a decreasing position of the faithful who had a rather powerful presence in national parliamentary bodies in the past. Jamat-e-Islami, for instance, boycotted elections this time and only two seats at a national assembly were allowed to win the other important orthodox party such as Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI).

The religious parties' reason for obtaining fewer seats, however, was that they did not function seriously in the current scheme of representation and preferred to seek "real Islamic government". These Islamic parties have been decided that they are not willing to accept the verdict of the people. Maulana Hussain Ahmed, leader of the Jamat e-Islami and Maulana Fazl-ur-Rahman, president of the JUI, announced that mass movements are set in motion to overthrow and to replace the present parliamentary system by a true Islamic administration.¹⁸⁶

These, along with other variables, threats and requests brought pressure on Nawaz's government. Moreover, his government's tension with superior judiciary and army management was compounding.¹⁸⁷ In the widespread tensions between all parties involved, social issues, especially of women, were even not on the Nawaz

¹⁸⁵ Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern", *Asian Survey*, 38:02,(1998), 117.

¹⁸⁶ Syed, *Asian Survey*, 118.

¹⁸⁷ Hasan Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan in 1998: The Polity under Pressure", *Asian Survey*, 39:01, (1991), 181.

administration's agenda and it seems that it had blocked every opportunity to promote women's rights.¹⁸⁸

His pending agendas continued again, from the beginning of his term in 1998, with the constitutional fifteenth amendment, which intended to delegate maximum powers to the Prime Minister. A shairah bill was initiated in the Parliament. Although this proposal is silent on women's problems, Nawaz Sharif seemed to be following the Zia Islamization approach. It was believed that females could suffer under the pretext of religion in an age of self-proclaimed, "bigoted" Zia style. However, because of the weak PML(N) party position in the Senate, the proposal could not get enough votes to be adopted by the National Assembly with 2/3rd majority. No severe effort was made to acknowledge and address a range of challenges experienced by Pakistani women during his second term as Prime Minister, despite a large number of women in the National Assembly.

However, Sharif sometimes referred to the protection of the freedom of females, but those obligations were confined to statements only. For instance, in his address to Parliament on 9 October 1998, following the approval of Shariah Bill, he noted that women's rights have also been fully safeguarded and he (Nawaz Sharif) wanted to see a society in which women have free movement without fear.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Sangh Mitra and Bachchan Kumar (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Women in South Asia: Pakistan*, (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2008), 87.

¹⁸⁹ Dawn, October 10, (1998).

3.6. Comparative Analysis of Benazir and Nawaz on Emancipation of Women:

3.6.1. Comparison between Nawaz Sharif and Benazir on Role of Women in Development Sector:

It was 1990s, when neo- liberalism shift in the sphere of economic policies brought economic opportunities in Pakistan which also gave opportunities to women to step- out and work in the public and private sectors in urban centers. However, development policies, which were women oriented, initiated by the then Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir brought major changes in the improvement of women emancipation but it can be seen that these development policies did not eradicate gender discrimination and as a result women still suffer in various areas of life.

As for the development policies, it can be observed that since the creation of Pakistan focus has been laid on heavy growth and large scale development projects for mechanized agriculture, heavy industries and their promotion. Depending on this policy, women were just indirect beneficiaries of development interventions.¹⁹⁰ During the governments of both Prime Ministers, efforts were made to give opportunities to oppressed strata (women) of the society by initiating programs to empower women of Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto laid the foundation of First Women Bank in Pakistan to empower women, through providing loans to small entrepreneurs. This idea was adopted from Grameen

¹⁹⁰ S, N. Ahmed, "Microfinance in Pakistan: Islamabad: Policies and Practice", (Master Thesis School of Management and Governance, University of Twente, 2008).

Bank, Bangladesh, where it proved very successful. This model ensured the safety of women clients because they could be given small loans. The small loans were given on collateral free conditions because women intended to invest their loans in those businesses which could benefit them. Moreover, this model encouraged women to invest and earn from their businesses which resulted in not only their self-reliance but also the uplift of their social status, as they became productive members of labor force.¹⁹¹

The Grameen Bank model was adopted by many countries including Pakistan. This paved way for microcredit financing in Pakistan and became an important way to promote female entrepreneurship. Due to Pakistan being the signatory of the Beijing declaration, Pakistan had to introduce extensive institutional reforms including role of women in economic development. These economic development coexisted along the neo-liberal economic model whereas, private enterprise and free market gained supremacy in the economic policy of the state.¹⁹² This situation resulted in the development of microcredit oriented economic interventions to create hegemony in development interventions also by targeting women. The trends of microcredit loans further spread throughout the country by prevalence of Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which helped in transferring of loans to the beneficiaries including major population of women.¹⁹³

During her governance, microcredit programs specifically for women, were more focused on the empowerment of women and tried to alleviate poverty.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, aim was also to promote small scale entrepreneurship which was dependent on the skills of the

¹⁹¹ Ahmad, *Practices*, 84.

¹⁹² Javed, *Women*.200

¹⁹³ Javed, *Women*, 202.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

entrepreneurs. In late 1990s, during the era of Benazir Bhutto, microcredit loans became a significant tool to alleviate poverty. However, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development (SMEDA) became a pivotal part of the development agendas of the Benazir government.¹⁹⁵ The year 1991 has been marked as an important step towards the uplifting of women participation in business and trade. This was result of beginning of various training and capacity building programs which concerned to involve women in trade activities which were non- traditional.

3.6.2. Comparison on Development for Women:

Major difference between Benazir and Nawaz Sharif governments was their efforts for development of women. The era of Benazir was not just important for the initiatives her government took for the development of women but also paved way for active groups of women which were struggling for their empowerment. This indicated that her government was active and supportive towards their struggle. Due to these policies, a large number of women activist organizations became part of Beijing Conference in 1995 which resultantly enforced government to take steps regarding implementation of international commitment. During her era, a strong coordination among government and NGOs could be observed regarding the women equality and emancipation.

As compared to the initiatives of Benazir Bhutto for emancipation of women, the era of Nawaz Sharif was more conservative and backlash for the development of women. His administration was not much progressive or much concerned regarding the issues of women. In fact, efforts were being made to confine women within the boundary of home.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

The prime examples are following: ratification of Qisas and Diyat Ordinance and women restrictions on media.¹⁹⁶ Most of the women empowerment organizations were restricted and banned.¹⁹⁷ State authorities investigated those women empowerment organizations and declared as anti- state organizations.¹⁹⁸

It can be gauged from these factors that the era of Nawaz Sharif was more conservative and was not progressive as compared to Benazir Bhutto who worked hard to empower the women of Pakistan. It can be considered that the era of Nawaz was a setback to the empowerment of women. However, due to his rigid policies towards the rights of women, feminist groups agitated against the state inflicted discrimination against women. Moreover, his policies indicated that in order “to distract the communal groups of society from infrastructural and economic issues Nawaz Sharif follows some footsteps of Zia under Islamization.”¹⁹⁹

3.6.3. Lack of Legislation for Women:

Due to some reasons, neither Benazir Bhutto nor Nawaz Sharif governments took serious steps to introduce any legislation for protection of women rights. Although, despite the fact that both were convinced for the revisiting of Hudood Ordinance of Zia-ul-Haq which could be achieved through the establishment of review bodies. Finally, their proposals were dismissed and the past shows that no concrete steps have been taken to change or abolish this law.²⁰⁰ There was pressure from the women rights organizations for amendments or repealing of Hudood Ordinance which forced both parties to include

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Awan, *Placement*, 371.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Weiss, *Survey*, 437.

²⁰⁰ Awan, *Placement*, 381.

this issue and ensure to take steps for amendments in this law during their election campaigns.

Regarding this matter, Benazir Bhutto adopted a different approach. While analyzing her stand on this law an expert on South Asian policies states: When Benazir got to power, her interest shifted from the achievement of political advantages Visa-Visa's government's reforms to the management of complexities (i.e. gaining power) in implementing reforms. Consequently, the government of Benazir has done nothing to hinder the operation of Zia's Nizam-i-Mustapha. The Federal Shariat Court or the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court had never been dissolved by their administration. Neither the Hudood Ordinance nor the Ramazan Ordinance has been challenged and work of the Council of Islamic Ideology has been curbed.²⁰¹

In conclusion, after a significant gap, extensive discussions on discriminatory legislation are being evaluated not only played significant role in legislative discourse, but in socio-political columns, publishing houses and press talk events as a discussion point. Previously, a dialogue like this took shorter form, following the enactment of the Hudood laws in 1979, during the rule of General Ziaul-Haq.

Although policies related to women, are facing grave criticism of orthodoxy, at least awareness and debate at all levels have begun, focusing on women's socio-economic and political problems. As can be seen from the above extensive assessment of women's executive and legislative policies at the national level, PML (N)'s attitude to gender problems stayed reactive. It is said by political commentators that the policies adopted

²⁰¹ Charles H. Kennedy, "Islamization and legal Reforms in Pakistan 1979- 1989", *Pacific Affairs*, 63:01, (1990), 76.

during Nawaz government were caused by enormous pressures of civil society, which was built by some incidents involving gross violations of women's rights.

In a nutshell, it can be summarized that however, little was achieved in Benazir Bhutto's and Nawaz Sharif's (1988–99) governments to improve the condition of women. During Bhutto's term as prime minister, she disappointed many who had been waiting for her to pass new laws or repeal Hudood laws on the basis of her campaign commitments. These women's rights promises were subject to other political maneuvers by policy requirements; Bhutto's determination to release females imprisoned under Hudood law was restricted to those already sentencing and didn't affect the vast majority of women waiting for trial.

CONCLUSION

Democracy may be assumed to be a globally accepted political system that organizes society and the people who live there, establishing elected governments to give equal rights to everyone in society. Against that backdrop, the fight for democracy in Pakistan is neither invaluable nor feasible without sacrifice. In Pakistan's political history, four decades of leadership and PPP staff, including the public in general, fighting and sacrificing for democracy is nearly an unusual phenomenon.

There's little in a world where leaders like ZA Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto have been assassinated in what is known as a court case or bare physical assaults. The dictatorial regimes and oppressors used the entire State apparatus and institutions to end the leadership struggle for democracy in Pakistan. Finally, the vision of democracy was met. Faced with major challenges ahead, such as the resourceful war on terrorism, the PPP formed a government and shared its power with all the parliamentary political parties.

The PPP took all the stakeholders on board in pursuit of its conciliatory view and actively introduced critical legislation in order to secure Pakistani people's democratic rights. In spite of disagreements with the other parties in particular the parliamentary opposition, PPP has successfully made Constitutional amendments such as the 18th, 19th and 20th through a unanimous parliamentary vote. This is the legacy of the PPP government, which brought Pakistan the 1973 constitution as well.

The Pakistani people must go a long way in order to achieve the political goals of the future. As the two driving forces in the international community, democracy is the only way for us to communicate with foreign policies and the economy. It is time to continue democratic systems in Pakistan that can assist in the transformation of society and the

state within Pakistan that is an important factor in coping with global changes and practices. Both our internal or external conflicts must be resolved. It may be possible to use IT to train our next generation for the demands of global society based on information technology. The old bureaucratic style and strategies such as outdated weapons are no longer relevant to the problems facing the world to evolve.

In Pakistan, the political system must be completely transformed from a feudal democracy to a more growing democracy. The need for the hour is to create space in social, economic and legal equality. Election work must be a cost-effective proposal for intellectuals, experts and common politicians, including women, to open parliament doors and enhance Pakistan's future democracy. Feudal government hegemony and state machinery can only be avoided by creating democratic values in Pakistan's society and corporate politics.

The people of Pakistan have been represented by Benazir Bhutto to support the cause of democracy. For this purpose, she also gave her life. Youth should take many lessons from the legacy of Bhutto to continue their fight for Pakistan's democratic future. She had faith in integrity by adopting the political philosophy of her brother, concentrating on the well-being of the poor. Dictators invited her to share power, but she did not join hands and chose to obey the democratic rules of power sharing with Pakistani citizens.

Benazir Bhutto, young and the first Prime Minister, had to lose too much in her purse in this scenario. The Pakistani people had to stand up and defend themselves as the right way against political and religious fanatics who considered the elected Benazir Bhutto government to be an error of Pakistan's people. Due to tremendous pressure on several

posts as a consequence of the events mentioned above, the Government of Benazir Bhutto had done very little yet understandably decently in her office.

She had many reasons and ambitions to do, but she had no proper planning and strategies for her government management to deal with them. She has raised a large number of issues in Parliament in particular their strong purpose and determination to repeal so-called Haddood laws that were aimed at the original understanding and rules by many Muslim scholars or Shariah law because only a few of them are misinterpreted and misinterpreted in the legislative system. Nevertheless, she took concrete steps to correct the shortcomings.

She spoke against the plight of prisoners in Pakistan in her parliamentary speeches and in international forums because she also had faced the similar condition while she was imprisoned but no corrective legislation has been implemented except for more than 1000 political prisoners. She had a very clear position on freedom of expression and democracy. That is why TV and news media have not only been given free access, but she also lifted ban on student unions and workers' unions.

In some cases, the economic and financial conditions of Pakistan were also counterproductive to her lack of funding to implement more successful and realistic plans. Here we should bear in mind that the Prime Minister of Pakistan was on the verge of bankruptcy when she assumed office and that the Pakistani government had to make special sacrifices to use more loan to pay for the preceding loan. Benazir Bhutto was the most vibrant active and vigorous parliamentarian in Pakistan for almost a decade.

To some extent the revered political director of Pakistan was controversial until now. She has been at the center of political activity in Pakistan over a decade from 1986 to 1999, almost until 1999, when coping with martial law and taking measures to support a democratic and elected government. Thus it can be concluded that both tenures of Benazir Bhutto were marked with the uplift of women of Pakistan.

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APPENDIX- I

Statement of meeting issued by People's Party on Oct 26, 1984

A meeting presided by the Acting Chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples' Party Miss Benazir Bhutto, was called on October 26, 1984, to discuss the recent situation in Sindh. Present were Mr. Sheikh Rasheed, Ms. Mustafa Khar, Mr. Murtaza Jatoi, Mr. Makhdoom Rafiq, Mr. Hafeez Pirzada and Mr. Riaz Shamim. The following statement was issued:

On 16th October, 1984 a premeditated Army Ambush took place at Khannot (District Dadu) on a busload of students travelling to Larkana, the birth place of the former Prime Minister. The students were going to attend a convention.

Two days before the ambush, Mehran and Sindh universities were closed. During the ambush, seven students were killed (according to official figures) thirty three were injured and ninety five were arrested. According to the mission plan, the helicopters, hovering during the incident, landed and took away the dead bodies and the injured.

The military regime shaken by the growing opposition to its fraudulent selection programme and the mobilization amongst the masses entered into a pre-staged plan to ambush, murder and mop up with imprisonment political activists prior to its March selection scheme.

The Military regime had entered into similar terror tactics in the past. For instance, when P.P.P. was to observe Democracy Day on January 5, 1978, the regime massacred labours at Multan, a few days earlier. When the death sentence was to be announced against the former Prime Minister, by the Lahore High Court in March 1978, there people were publicly hanged. In 1979, when the promised general elections were postponed for the second time, scores of people were flogged at public places at Rawalpindi, Lahore and other cities.

When it became evident that the political parties would not submit before the military rulers selection plan, the regime hanged three innocent workers of P.P.P. in August 1984, after a sham military court trial the camera and began proceedings against two hundred and eighteen others on punishments including death sentence.

Amnesty has recorded the atrocities perpetuated by the regime through torture cells, imprisonments and assassinations.

Wide-scale riots against the Army massacre at Khan not have broken out throughout the province of Sindh and have now spread to other parts of the country. Educational institutions have been closed, police have mutinied at Dadu and hundreds of students have been arrested and are being tried by summary military courts.

The Pakistan People Party condemns the cold-blooded murder of the children of the Federation. The military regime's rule has eroded the foundations of the State. Its use of terror and violence, beginning with the assassinations of the once elected Prime Minister

of the country, has resulted in turmoil and placed Pakistan on the road of chaos and anarchy.

The lessons of 1971, which resulted in war and the breakup of the country, have not been learnt. The drama staged there is being repeated down to the minutest detail of persecuting intellectuals and eliminating students.

The students' role in the achievement of Pakistan cannot be exaggerated. Students are the flower of our land. Their idealism and heroism is a matter of pride for our people and our party. We salute them.

Released by

Mr. Bashir Riaz

Press Spokesperson

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF THE ACTING CHAIRMAN, PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY ON THE DEATH SENTENCE PASSED ON FOUR POLITICAL WORKERS IN PAKISTAN

I have been deeply disturbed by the news that a special military court in Karachi has passed death sentences on four supporters of Pakistan Peoples' Party. Coming only two months after the execution of three young peoples' party workers, this draconian sentence has shown that contrary to impressions in some western countries. General Zia's regime is becoming more and more ruthless as the time of the so-called elections approaches.

The four, Nasser Baloach, Essa Baloach, Malik Ayub and Saifullah Khalid have been sentenced for their alleged involvement in the 1981 hijacking of a PIA plane. The sole evidence produced was "confessional statements" extracted under savage torture. We challenge the military regime to try them in a civil court in the light of which the false accusations would dissolve.

Nasser Baloach, PPP Labour representative in Pakistan Steel Mills was at work according to official records and Essa Baloach, his nephew, was off duty and away when they were alleged to have helped the hijackers. There was no evidence of involvement of Saifullah Khalid or Mali Ayub, whose father had been threatened with dire consequences when he refused to collaborate with military regime in cases against PPP ministers, in the whole affair. That was the reason why they were tried in secret by a military court where the accused had no chance of getting a fair trial. This sentence is intended to "Punish" them for their political sympathies and as an example for others who dare to defy military rule.

This sentence and recent incidents show that the regime is carrying on a scheme to terrify Pakistani people before implementing their plan for a sham election intended to legitimize military rule.

The four lives in balance, in their death cells these brave and innocent young men, await the response of the world conscience. The condemned Karachi four have seven days to appeal. The time is running out—unless quick and effective international pressure is exerted to save their lives by all those who espouse the cause of human rights, freedom and justice.

To my brave brothers in the death cells I would say, "Your Sister is proud of you, your Party is proud of you, if your defiance and your courage. Your struggle is my struggle, it is our peoples struggle, your pain is my pain, it is the pain of a Nation. God forbid action against our party. Therefore, if a semblance of sanity is to return to the body politic of our country, that way is to spare your lives.

Miss Benazir Bhutto
Released by

(Mr. Bashir Riaz)
Press Spokesperson

APPENDIX III

SUGGESTION TO BENAZIR BHUTTO FROM GENERAL TIKKA KHAN

Note by General (Retired) Tikka Khan

Ref photocopy of the note given by Mr. Jahangir Badar:

1. I am in favour of forming committee for making the boycott of elections effective. As a matter of fact these committee have been formed are being formed under the party organization at various levels.
2. Some names suggested in the note do not have the approval of the workers and the party organization in the Punjab. The suggestion will cause disruption in the P.P.P. Punjab.
3. There should be no parallel organization in the party especially in the Punjab and no pressure groups should be formed. All orders directions suggestions should be given through the party organization in the Punjab as done in the case of other provinces. The committee should work as part and parcel of the party organization and should not be a cause of friction.
4. We are a component of the MRD and are bound by its decision to boycott the elections if held under 1983 formula we will provide full cooperation this decision.

30-11-1984

(Tikka Khan)