

## PRESIDENT F.M. AYUB KHAN

### ADVENT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE POLITICS OF PAKISTAN

After independence, Pakistan have experienced nearly 32 years of military rule (1958-69 Ayub Khan, 1969-71 General Yahya Khan, 1977-1988 General Zia-ul-Haq and 1999-General Pervez Musharraf). It is mainly due to the fact that Pakistan could not evolve a stable and true democratic political system. Political developments in the United Pakistan (1947-71) and in the truncated Pakistan (1972-2005) could hardly be considered as having been based on the democratic values.

When the first martial Law was imposed in 1958, Pakistan's political and social conditions were simply intolerable. The politicians freely indulged in conspiracies against each other and violated the 1956 Constitution to get into power. The then President Iskander Mirza was mainly responsible for intrigues and unstable political conditions.

On October 7, 1958 President Iskander Mirza abrogated the 1956 Constitution, dismissed provincial and federal cabinets and imposed Martial Law. General Ayub Khan, the C-in-C was appointed as CMLA.

Political activities were banned. On 24th October 1958, Ayub was nominated as Prime Minister. On 27th October 1958, President Iskander Mirza resigned handing over his office to General Ayub Khan who was now the President.

Ayub Khan received wide support and backing from the masses. The people were extremely fed up of the activities of the corrupt and power seeking politicians and welcomed Ayub Khan's ML.

Ayub Khan was very keen to reconstruct the country. There were a number of things to be done with respect to the nation-building. A proper constitution was the dire need of the time.

A number of steps were taken to introduce reforms in various aspects of the social life which included land reforms, economic development, political reforms, industrial reforms and solution of student and labour problems. Ayub's reforms are given below.

#### 1. BASIC DEMOCRACIES

The BD system was introduced through the Basic Democracies Order which was passed on 26th October, 1959. Ayub Khan introduced this system in order to overhaul the political system of Pakistan which have been tarnished due to the massive malpractices of the politicians. He wanted to introduce a system which "the people could understand and work".

A four tier structure of 'Basic Democracies' was created. These bodies were to form the basis of a new political order.

The four tier structure would consist of a village council at the most basic level, a



sub-district Council, a District Council and Divisional Councils. The local District Magistrates and Divisional Commissioners would act as chairmen of the local bodies.

According to the BD system, the country was divided into 80,000 single member constituencies known as BD wards with a population of 1000-1200 people.

The first elections to BDs were held in January 1960 in which 40,000 BDs were elected in each province. In 1967 this number was raised to 60,000 in each province. The BDs, according to the 1962 Constitution, were to elect the President and members of the Provincial and National assemblies. On February 7, 1960, the BD members elected Ayub Khan as President of Pakistan.

## 2. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

On 17th February, 1960, Ayub Khan appointed a Constitution Commission headed by Justice Shahab-ud-Din to draft the new constitution of Pakistan. The commission submitted its reports to the President on 6th May, 1961. The commission recommended Presidential form of government, adult franchise, revival of political parties system and a powerful legislature. The report of the commission was referred to five-member sub-committee which finalized the draft of the constitution which was announced by Ayub Khan on 1st March, 1962. It was enforced on 8th June, 1962 and ML was lifted.

The Constitution of 1962 reflected Ayub's own interpretation of the political set-up of Pakistan and was based on his experience of Pakistan's political, economic and social institutions.

The 1962 Constitution gave immense powers to President in legislative and executive spheres of the country. The President enjoyed dominant position and could easily influence the National Assembly. The constitution provided for an indirect mode of elections of the President, provincial and NA assemblies by the BDs.

## 3. SOCIAL REFORMS

When Ayub took over he made up his mind to bring a social and economic revolution in Pakistan. He had visualized an extensive programme of introducing reforms in the social, political and economic sectors of the country so that his dreams of making Pakistan a welfare state come true.

Ayub Khan introduced Family Laws to give protection to the women folk. Women in Pakistan were treated as downgraded members of society. Ayub issued Family Laws Ordinance in 1961 to regulate the number of wives and pattern of divorcee. Polygamy was prohibited except under special circumstances.

The Family Laws prescribed a marriageable age for male and female and the maintenance allowance for the divorced woman and her children.

A man wishing to divorce his wife will have to go through the Union Council and its reconciliatory process before the divorce was accepted by Law.

Ayub's regime tried to control the high population growth rate through population control programme. The programme was called the Family Planning Programme.

## 4. REHABILITATION OF REFUGEES

A large number of refugees from India could not be settled even after eleven years of independence. Ayub Khan started the work of the rehabilitation of the refugees with a great speed. He appointed Gen. Muhammad Azam Khan as the rehabilitation minister. Within a year a large number of cases relating to abandoned properties were decided.

## 5. EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Ayub Khan appointed a commission on Education in December 1958. It was entrusted with the job of reviewing the existing educational system which Pakistan had inherited from the British rulers.



The commission recommended the re-orientation of the curricula at all levels, making primary Education free and compulsory up to 8th class. It proposed that Intermediate classes be included in the secondary education and separated from the colleges. It also recommended 3 years degree course, opening of technical colleges and emphasis on religious education.

## 6. INDO-PAKISTAN WAR 1965

Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 is an important event of Ayub's regime. Soon after his re-election as the President of Pakistan, Ayub's regime was pushed into a full scale war with India in Sept. 1965.

The situation in Kashmir had deteriorated. India had acquired massive arms supply from the western countries after its defeat against China in 1962. The arms supply to India on a large scale heavily tilted the balance of power in favour of India. Pakistan protested against this imbalance in the region caused by massive military build up by India. In the meanwhile on December 27, 1963, the sacred Hair of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was stolen from the shrine of Hazrat Bal in Srinagar which fuelled the situation.

The Indian army kept on violating the cease-fire line in Kashmir. A large number of Kashmiris crossed into the Indian held Kashmir. The infiltrators were fully backed by the Kashmiri people. In retaliation the Indian army crossed the cease-fire line in Kashmir and occupied the passage of Kargil.

In order to stop Pakistan's swift advance in Kashmir, the Indian army on 6th Sept. 1965 launched a massive three pronged attack in Punjab. The Indian attack was concentrated against Lahore. There was a severe and full-scale war which lasted for 17 days. The war came to an end on 23rd Sept. 1965 when a UN sponsored cease-fire was accepted by India and Pakistan.

## 7. TASHKENT DECLARATION

In January 1966 President Ayub Khan and the Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri went to Tashkent on the invitation of Russian Prime Minister Kosygin. After a week's negotiations an agreement was signed by Ayub Khan and Lal Bahadur Shastri. Kosygin bluntly pressurized Ayub Khan to sign the notorious Tashkent agreement.

Both Ayub and Shastri affirmed their obligation to refrain from resorting to armed clash. They also agreed to settle their dispute through peaceful mediation and to withdraw their forces to 5 August, 1965 position.

## 8. LAND REFORMS/AGRARIAN REFORMS

Ayub's ML regime took revolutionary steps to improve the agricultural sector of Pakistan. From the very beginning a few notable agricultural families had spread their tentacles in the political set-up of Pakistan. In the former West Pakistan, politics was dominated by a few wealthier landowner families.

Ayub's ML regime, in order to eliminate the monopoly of the big landowners and particularly the absentee landlords, in the politics, appointed a Land Reforms Commission in October 1958. The commission submitted its report within three months. In the light of the suggestions of the commission, Land Reforms were announced. The main features of the reforms were as follows.

1. No person would own or possess more than 500 acres of irrigated or 1000 acres of unirrigated land. Present owners could retain land upto 150 acres as orchard and could also make gifts of a limited area to their heirs and relatives.
2. The land in excess to the prescribed limit would be resumed on payment of 'fair' compensation in the form of



interest-bearing bonds redeemable in 25 years.

3. The resumed land would be offered to the existing tenants for sale. The land not purchased by them would be sold to others.
4. Occupancy tenants would become full owners.

Ayub's land reforms attempted to enhance the status of the tenants. Tenants could not be ejected without payment of appropriate compensation.

## 9. INDUSTRIAL REFORMS

Ayub Khan was determined to introduce industrial reforms in order to give a boost to the economic productivity. He adopted the policy of "gradual liberalisation of economy" to pave way for smooth industrial growth. According to this policy following steps were taken.

- (i) The extreme bureaucratic restraints were removed by more market oriented approach.
- (ii) Prices of the industrial goods were stabilized through price mechanism which relaxed the control over industrial investment and trade.
- (iii) The government removed the constraints on profit margin and prices.
- (iv) New industries were given tax holidays and dividend income upto 3000/- was declared tax free.
- (v) National investment trust was set-up to attract small savings into industrial investment.
- (vi) Domestic markets were unified so that the finished goods could travel from one area to the other.

As a result of the above steps, Pakistan's industrial growth during 1958-63 was highly impressive.

## 10. CHANGE OF CAPITAL

Ayub extremely disliked the Karachi climate, both moral and meteorological. He believed Pakistan should be governed from a place well away from Karachi's backstairs machinations. Moreover he heavily depended on the support of army for continuance in office. He, therefore, strongly desired to move to Rawalpindi where he would be close to the army Headquarters. As such he would be placed in a position to deny to another claimant the use of the ladder up which he himself had used.

Everyone had agreed that a new capital for Pakistan must be built. The federal commission for capital suggested that new capital must be constructed away from Karachi and it should be built on the Potwar Plateau near Rawalpindi. This suited Ayub very much, and instead of waiting for the new capital to be built, he ordered that the secretaries of the government should move immediately to Rawalpindi. In June 1959 the government departments started shifting to Rawalpindi. In February 1960 the new capital was named as Islamabad.

## DOWNFALL OF AYUB KHAN

Like his rise, Ayub's downfall, too, was sudden and confusing. He had to step down in Nov. 1968 in result of a virulent agitation against him. There are a number of reasons responsible for the downfall of Ayub Khan who sincerely and devotedly tried to lift a downtrodden and impoverished people. His downfall can be attributed to the following factors.

### 1. Economic Policies

Ayub's economic reforms are said to be one of the major causes of his downfall. His economic policies on the one side were responsible in promoting the economic growth, while on the other they widened the gap between the two wings of the country. Ayub's economic reforms gave rise to the regional and class inequalities.



## 2. Political Reforms

The political system which Ayub Khan introduced during his ML regime under the 1962 Constitution developed a sense of insecurity amongst the Bengalis. The Bengalis were deprived of all opportunities of any participation in the decision-making process in the socio-economic and political matters. The political set-up which the Constitution of 1962 established demonstrated acute allocative bias towards the former East Pakistan.

## 3. Educational Reforms

Educational reforms of Ayub Khan did not produce desired results. The central role against Ayub Khan was played by the students and Labour Unions.

## 4. Family Laws

Ayub's family laws were severely criticized on being un-Islamic. The Islamic fundamentalists rejected his family planning program.

## 5. Agartala Conspiracy

A conspiracy against Pakistan was hatched by the Awami League leadership at Agartala. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman was the main architect of this conspiracy. He was arrested in June 1966 for making provocative and seditious speeches. He was released but again arrested in December 1967. He was charged for his collusion to overthrow the government of Pakistan with the Indian assistance. He was released on the pressure of the politicians and invited to attend RTC with Ayub Khan.

Ayub's regime tried its best to control the situation. Ayub, in a vain attempt to subdue the demonstration, held a Round Table Conference with the political leaders. He accepted the demand to scrap the indirect method of election and restored the parliamentary system, but the political parties did not agree and demanded that Ayub must resign.

## 6. The Decade of Development

By November 1968 Ayub had become immensely unpopular with the masses. A scathing criticism of Ayub's policies had extremely demoralized the regime who found it difficult to subdue the people's anger. The politicians and officials, close to Ayub Khan, advised him that '**A Decade of Progress and Development**' should be celebrated to deflect the mounting criticism against the regime. The main objective behind celebrating the '**Decade of Development**' was to attract people's attention to the achievements of his time in the office by declaring his tenure, '**A Decade of Development**'.

Ever-since Ayub Khan stepped in as President and CMLA Pakistan experienced a relatively quicker economic boom. During the 1960's the average national growth rate was 7 percent which meant that the gross national wealth had galloped in the ten years (1959-1969). During Ayub's regime the economy was growing faster than that of India's. The state of Pakistan's economy convinced the international economic experts who believed that Pakistan had managed to wriggle out of the vicious circle of poverty finally.

However the economic progress and statistics which looked so impressive at the out set was to appear misleading later on. Ayub's **Decade of Development** did not stand up to its promise. The various reforms which he initiated bounced back and did not work as had been foreseen. There were a number of reasons responsible for the failure of the **Decade of Development**.

The creation of new opportunities and the subsequent wealth had been concentrated in a few hands making the rich class richer. All the reforms were launched and implanted in such a manner that only a particular class reaped the benefits of the reforms.

In 1968 the Chief Economist of the planning commission revealed that only 22



industrial families controlled the 66 percent of countries' Industrial potential and 80 percent of insurance and banking service. Second most of the new wealth was concentrated in the West Pakistan which provided a pretext for the hostility to flare up in the former East Pakistan.

The 'Decade of Development' instead of subduing criticism against Ayub's regime was rather instrumental in accelerating public's indignation against it. The impression of the 22 families monopolizing country's economic sector, gave a severe jolt to Ayub Khan's political image. There was a major political crisis when the students turned against the government in October 1968. The students protests erupted all over the West Pakistan over the food prices and lack of political liberties.

Ayub tried to quell the agitation by the use of force. Bhutto was arrested on 13 November 1968, followed by a number of arrests of the student-leaders and a few politicians. The agitation spread to the former East Pakistan in December 1968 which worsened the situation beyond control. There was a vociferous clamouring all over the country demanding Ayub Khan to step down.

In January 1969, a Democratic Action Committee comprising of eight opposition parties, was set up in Dhaka. This alliance was to work for scrapping the indirect elections, lifting of the emergency regulations which had been imposed since the 1965 war and giving full provincial autonomy to the East Pakistan. On 1 February, Ayub under tremendous pressure, offered to negotiate with the opposition parties. In order to prove his sincerity for the talks, Ayub lifted the emergency on 17 February 1969. Political prisoners were released by the government which helped in extinguishing the smoldering embers and paved the way for the talks to be held.

The talks were held from February 27 to 13 March 1969. Ayub Khan gave in by

accepting most of the demands of the opposition, but it was too late as the movement by now had infiltrated in Rawalpindi and other major cities of the West Pakistan. The Basic Democracies system, the mainstay of Ayub's regime, fell apart with the resignation of so many Basic Democrats.

Ayub's government was in quandary with the resignation of BD members, as it was impossible to replace them. On 25 March 1969 Ayub Khan finally decided to resign. Ayub tried his best to save his regime but the politicians did not agree to his concessions and were bent upon pulling him down from his high pedestal.

Ayub, feeling humiliated and disgraced, made up his mind not to hand over the power to the ambitious, incompetent and disgruntled politicians. He handed over power to General Yahya Khan, the army chief, who by his unwise tactics and imprudent behaviour, pushed the country to the brink of a collapse.