

### **Reforms Introduced by Ayub Khan 1958-69**

On October 7, 1958, President Iskander Mirza abrogated the Constitution and declared Martial Law in the country. This was the first of many military regimes in Pakistan's history. The Constitution of 1956 was abrogated, ministers were dismissed, Central and Provincial Assemblies were dissolved and all political activities were banned. General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the then Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, became the Chief Martial Law Administrator. The parliamentary system in Pakistan came to end. Iskander Mirza was ousted by General Ayub Khan, who then declared himself President. This was actually welcomed in Pakistan as the nation had experienced a very unstable political climate since independence.

Despite economic growth, continuing economic and social inequalities, the disadvantaged position of East Pakistan, and limitation of civil liberties provoked increasing discontent with his regime. Ayub Khan used two main approaches to governing in his first few years. He concentrated on consolidating power and undermining the opposition. He also aimed to establish the groundwork for future stability through altering the economic, legal, and constitutional institutions. The imposition of martial law targeted "antisocial" practices such as abducting women and children, black marketeering, smuggling, and hoarding. Many in the Civil Service of Pakistan and Police Service of Pakistan were investigated and punished for corruption, misconduct, inefficiency, or subversive activities. Corruption had become so widespread within the national and civic systems of administration that Ayub Khan was welcomed as a national hero by the people. The new military government promised that they would carry out reforms in the entire government structure and would cleanse the administration of the rampant corruption. A thorough screening process of all government servants was conducted and service records were closely scrutinized. Public servants were tried for misconduct by tribunals consisting of retired judges of the Supreme Court or High Court. Disciplinary actions such as dismissal or compulsory retirement of the public servant could take place against corrupt officials. A public servant could also be disqualified from holding any public office for 15 years. About 3,000 officials were dismissed and many others were reduced in rank as a result of these measures. A law called the Elective Bodies Disqualification Order, popularly known as E. B. D. O, was promulgated for the disqualification of politicians. Under this law, a person could be disqualified from being a member of any elective body. Under this harsh law, several politicians like Suhrawardy and Qayyum Khan were disqualified. The E. B. D. O, particularly its application, was severely criticized in the legal and political circles throughout Pakistan.

Moreover, Ayub Khan focused on the long-standing question of land reforms in West Pakistan. It was meant to reduce the power of groups opposing him like landed aristocracy. The Land Reform Commission was set up in 1958. In 1959, the government imposed a ceiling of 500 hectares of irrigated and 1000 hectares of unirrigated land in the West Wing for a single person. In the East Wing, the landholding ceiling was raised from thirty-three hectares to forty-eight hectares. Landholders retained their dominant positions in the social hierarchy and their

political influence. Four million hectares of land in West Pakistan was released for public acquisition between 1959 and 1969. It was sold mainly to civil and military officers. It created a new class of farmers having medium-sized holdings. These farms became immensely important for future agricultural development, but the peasants benefited scarcely at all. In addition, a legal commission was set up to suggest reforms of the family and marriage laws. Ayub Khan examined its report and issued the Family Laws Ordinance in 1961. It restricted polygamy and “regulated” marriage and divorce, giving women more equal treatment under the law. It was a humane measure supported by women’s organizations in Pakistan. The ordinance could not have been promulgated owing to opposition from the ulema and the fundamentalist Muslim groups. This law like family planning was relatively mild and did not seriously transform the patriarchal pattern of society.

Furthermore, Ayub Khan adopted an energetic approach toward economic development. It soon bore fruit in a rising rate of economic growth. Ayub Khan period is credited with Green Revolution and economic and industrial growth. Land reform, consolidation of holdings, and strict measures against hoarding were combined with rural credit programs and work programs, higher procurement prices, augmented allocations for agriculture, and, especially, improved seeds put the country on the road to self-sufficiency in food grains. This is popularly known as the Green Revolution. Moreover, Ayub Khan introduced certain reforms in the field of education. It was meant to raise the literacy level and trained manpower in Pakistan. He made technical education mandatory. Two-year degree program was extended to three years. Civil Defense training was made mandatory in the schools and colleges. Last but not the least, Ayub Khan introduced labor reforms. Ayub showed interest to work for the betterment of the labor class. It was made mandatory for the factory owners to recognize the elected union council and to consider its opinion in all the issues. The government provided the security to the leader and members of the union council from any revengeful activity of the factory owner. In September 1961, a law was passed about the basic daily wages of the laborers. Social security scheme was promulgated by which the labor was to be facilitated in case of any emergency. Ayub’s policies of concentrating political power in his own hands, his control over the press and media, imposing state of emergency in the country, and his interference in religion were also responsible for his downfall. By the end of 1968, the public resentment against the Ayub’s regime touched a boiling point and an anti-Ayub movement was launched by the urban-middle class; including students, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and engineers. Law and order broke down and Ayub was left with no other option but to step down.

### **Yahya Khan Regime 1969-1971**

After the abrogation of the Constitution of 1962, Yahya Khan needed a legal framework to hold elections. In April and July 1969, he held discussions with prominent political party leaders to learn their point of view. Most of them asked for the revival of the Constitution of 1956 on the ground that its abrogation had been unlawful, and the country should return to the constitutional position prevailing on the eve of the 1958 coup. Yahya Khan initially agreed with this opinion, but had to change his stance due to opposition from the Awami League.

Not being well versed in constitutional affairs, he appointed a team to draft a new constitutional formula. He voiced his ideas about the constitutional issues in his broadcast address to the nation on November 28, 1969. The formula was officially issued on March 30, 1970, and is known as the Legal Framework Order of 1970.

According to this order, One Unit was dissolved in West Pakistan and direct ballot replaced the principle of parity.

The National Assembly was to consist of 313 seats, including 13 seats reserved for women. Women were also allowed to contest the elections from general seats. The distribution of seats was to be as follows:

East Pakistan: 162 general and 7 reserved seats

Punjab: 82 general and 3 reserved seats

Sindh: 27 general and 1 reserved seat

N. W. F. P.: 18 general and 1 reserved seat

Baluchistan: 4 general and 1 reserved seat

Centrally Administered Tribal Areas: 7 general seats

The L. F. O. also defined the qualifications of people who would be allowed to contest in the elections. The Constituent Assembly was to stand dissolved if it was unable to frame the Constitution within 120 days. Actually, the Legal Framework Order was to act as an interim Constitution.

The primary function of the L. F. O. was to provide a setup on which elections could be conducted. It was then the duty of the elected Constituent Assembly to draft the Constitution of Pakistan. However, the L. F. O. defined the directive principles of State policy and made it clear that the future Constitution should not violate these basic principles. The directive

principles demanded an Islamic way of life, observation of Islamic moral standards, and teaching of the Quran and Sunnah to the Muslims.

The Legal Framework Order also urged the Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution in which Pakistan was to be a Federal Republic and should be named Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It also called for the preservation of Islamic Ideology and democratic values. The Constituent Assembly was also supposed to frame a Constitution in which all citizens of Pakistan were to enjoy fundamental human rights. Judiciary should remain independent from the Executive and provincial autonomy is protected.

The President was given the power to reject any Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly if the document did not fulfill the above-mentioned requirements. The President also had the power to interpret and amend the Constitution, and his decision could not be challenged in a court of law.

The political history of Pakistan from 1947 to 1970 witnessed no general elections. Thus, when Yahya's Regime decided to hold the first general elections on the basis of adult franchise at national level, they were not only required to make a new mechanism but were also required to set up a permanent election machinery. A three-member Election Commission was set up and Justice Abdus Sattar was appointed as the first Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan.

The first task before the Election Commission was to enroll as voters all citizens of Pakistan who were at least 21-years old on October 1, 1969. The electoral rolls were put before the masses for corrections on January 16, 1970, and after necessary amendments, the final list was published on March 17. The total registered voters in the country were 56,941,500 out of which 31,211,220 were from the Eastern Wing, while 25,730,280 from the Western Wing. The Election Commission also marked the constituencies, in accordance with the seats allocated for the National and Provincial Assemblies under Legal Framework Order, 1970. One hundred and ninety-nine Returning Officers were appointed for the National Assembly and 285 Returning Officers were appointed for the Provincial Assemblies.

Twenty-four political parties participated in the elections. They were allowed to begin their election campaigns from January 1, 1970. The public meetings of Awami League in Bengal and Pakistan People's Party in the Punjab and Sindh attracted huge crowds. Awami League mobilized support on the basis of its Six-Points Program, which was the main attraction in the party's manifesto. While Z. A. Bhutto's personality, his socialistic ideas and his slogan of "Rotti, Kapra aur Makan", meaning food, clothing and shelter, were the factors that contributed to the popularity of Pakistan People's Party. The rightist parties raised the religious slogans, while the leftists raised slogans based on regional and communistic ideas.

The separation of East Pakistan was a great setback to Pakistan. By 1970, sentiments for national unity had weakened in East Pakistan to the extent that constant conflict between the two Wings dramatically erupted into mass civil disorder. This tragically resulted in the brutal and violent amputation of Pakistan's Eastern Wing.

The physical separation of a thousand miles between the two wings without a common border, and being surrounded by Indian territory and influences, led to constant political, economic and social conflicts between the two wings; embittering relations bringing the country on the verge of collapse.

As a result of the separation of its Eastern Wing, Pakistan's international credit was depleted and the military, being its most powerful institution, suffered a lot. To some, the very concept of Pakistan as the homeland for the Muslims in Southeast Asia no longer appeared valid.

Trouble started right at the inception of Pakistan in 1947. Almost immediately, East Pakistan claimed that as their population (55 percent as compared to 45 percent in the West) was greater, they were in a majority. Democratically, the Federal Capital, therefore, should have been in Dhaka and not in Karachi.

Since Karachi was the seat of the National Government; ministers, government officials and industrialists exerted immense influence on national and regional affairs, which brought them many benefits. But the East Pakistanis were unable to extract the same kind of advantages, as they were a thousand miles away from the Capital. Moreover, the Capital initially attracted wealthy industrialists, businessmen, administrators, doctors and other professionals who had fled from India.

The location of the Capital, it was said, created great economic imbalance, uneven distribution of national wealth and privileges, and better jobs for the people of West Pakistan, because they were able to sway decisions in their own favor.

Secondly, Bengalis resented the vast sums of foreign exchange earned from the sale of jute from East, which were being spent on defense. They questioned how the expenditure for the Kashmir cause would be justified, when it could otherwise have been productively used to build dams and barriers to control floods, eradicate poverty and illiteracy, and supply food and shelter for the ever-growing population in East Pakistan.

Thirdly, the people of the East believed that it was sheer regional prejudice that all white-collar jobs were taken by West Pakistanis.

Many mistakes were made early in the short history of Pakistan. There lived in East Pakistan about 15 million Hindus who, with the help of their fellow West Bengali Indians from across the border, were able to exploit East-West differences that emerged as a result of these mistakes. Grievances were exaggerated to foster anti-West Pakistani feelings that eventually created

Bengali Nationalism and separatist tendencies. Bengali political leaders went around depicting the Central Government and West Pakistan as hostile exploiters. However, no effective efforts were made by the Government to check these anti-national trends.

Awami League, formed in 1951, was headed by Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman. He had always been an ardent Bengali nationalist. He began to attract popular support from Bengalis in East Pakistan. He put forward his Six Points that demanded more autonomy for the Provinces in general, and East Pakistan in particular. He was arrested in April 1966, and soon released, only to be rearrested and imprisoned in June the same year. He languished in prison until February 1969.

Being deeply aware of the explosive political situation in the country, the then Chief Martial Law Administrator, Yahya Khan, set in motion moves to transfer power to the elected representatives of the people, and announced that the general elections would be held on October 5, 1970.

In all his election speeches, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman reiterated his demand for implementation of his Six Points and provincial autonomy plans.

The 1970 elections were postponed from October to December due to heavy floods that caused immense destruction and havoc in East Pakistan. The sheer enormity of the disaster attracted worldwide attention. This gave Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman a golden opportunity to have an international audience for his anti-West Pakistan feelings, which he accused of brutal callousness. The Awami League gained much sympathy and benefit out of this suffering, and Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman and his people were portrayed on the international scene as victims of West Pakistan's indifference.

In the general elections held in December 1970, the Awami League achieved an overwhelming victory. They captured 167 seats, the highest number in East Pakistan and overall. In the West, the Pakistan People's Party had won 85 seats. The way was now open to draw up a new Constitution.

The Awami League, now overwhelmingly victors, stood firm on its Six Points plan and refused to compromise on that issue. The Peoples Party in the West maintained that the Six Points Program did not really permit a genuine federation. It was in fact a unique constitutional proposal that proposed a federation that had power only over defense and foreign policy.

Efforts were made to start a constitutional dialogue and narrow the differences between the two Wings, but all in vain. Mujib-ur-Rahman's adamant stand in support of his Six Points, and his proposal that East Pakistan should have a sovereign status independent of Pakistan, further aggravated the situation.

Mujib-ur-Rahman launched a non-cooperation movement. The civil administration was totally paralyzed. All government and educational institutions were closed.

People were asked not to pay any taxes. The transport system came to a standstill. Factories and shops were shut. All government activities between both the Wings ceased. The Awami League setup a parallel government. Gangs of local Awami League freedom fighters, known as Mukti Bahini, led violent demonstrations and howled racial and anti-West Pakistan slogans, inciting the people to more violence.

Amidst these disturbances, General Yahya decided to convene the National Assembly in March 1971. But Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman unexpectedly put forward other demands such as the immediate lifting of Martial Law and power transfer to the elected representatives of the people, prior to the National Assembly session.

Unfortunately, on March 23, the Republic Day of Pakistan, the Awami League declared "Resistance Day" and Bangladesh flags flew all over the Province. There was a great massacre. East Pakistan had reached a point of no return. To quash the armed rebellion of Awami League militants, the Pakistan Army struck its first blow on March 27, 1971. Yahya Khan chose to use force to bring law and order in the country.

In the meantime, India exploited Pakistan's dilemma to the full. It sought to wring full propaganda and strategic value for itself out of the Bengali suffering and misery. India launched an attack on East Pakistan on November 22, 1971. The use of modern Soviet missiles, geographical separation by a thousand miles lying across the hostile Indian territory, and the collusion of Mukti Bahini and the Indian Army, made Pakistan's military defeat in the East almost certain.

On December 10, 1971, the first feeler for surrender in East Pakistan was conveyed to the United Nations. On December 17, 1971, a formal surrender was submitted and accepted. Forty five thousand troops and an almost equal number of civilians of West Pakistan were taken as prisoners of war.

The text of the Instrument of Surrender document was as follows:

#### "INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER"

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command agree to surrender all PAKISTAN Armed Forces in BANGLA DESH to Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA, General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Indian and BANGLA DESH forces in the Eastern Theatre. This surrender includes all PAKISTAN land, air and naval forces as also all para-military forces and civil armed forces. These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the places where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops under the command of Lieutenant- General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war. The decision of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA will be final, should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

Lieutenant- General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA gives a solemn assurance that personnel who surrender will be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the GENEVA Convention and guarantees the safety and well-being of all PAKISTAN military and para-military forces who surrender. Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of WEST PAKISTAN origin by the forces under the command of Lieutenant- General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

The surrender led to the disintegration of East and West Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh. After 25 years, the East Pakistanis declared themselves independent and renamed their Province as Bangladesh. Pakistan finally recognized Bangladesh at the Islamic Conference in Lahore on February 22, 1974.

After the disastrous war with India that ingloriously concluded in December 1971, Pakistan had to face its greatest crisis since Independence. The dismembered Pakistan was left only with the four Provinces of West Pakistan; Punjab, Sindh, N. W. F. P. and Baluchistan. East Pakistan was now independent. Pakistan had lost a whole province of 70 million, 56 percent of the total population, and over 54,501 sq. miles of territory. There were 93,000 prisoners of war in India and Bangladesh. Pakistan's international credit was depleted.

President Yahya tried to act in a militaristic manner to impose law and order but the people's patience had been exhausted by this time. Military leadership had been discredited. Disillusionment, uncertainty and pessimism prevailed. People were no longer prepared to tolerate misgovernment. The public severely criticized and accused President Yahya and his Government for ineptness and inability that culminated with the 1971 national debacle.

Faced with these difficulties, President Yahya ceded power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party that had won the majority votes in the 1970 elections in West Pakistan. On the request of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on December 6, 1971, Yahya Khan installed a civilian setup at the Centre and Nurul Amin, a prominent Bengali politician who was against Mujib-ur-Rahman, was made the Prime Minister. Z. A. Bhutto was made Deputy Prime Minister on the same day. Nurul Amin remained Prime Minister till December 20, 1971, the day when Bhutto took over as the civilian Chief Marshal Law Administrator.

A Pakistan International Airline flight was sent to fetch Bhutto from New York, who at that time was pleading Pakistan's case before the United Nations Security Council on the East Pakistan Crises. Bhutto returned home on December 18, 1971. On December 20, he was taken to the President House in Rawalpindi where he took over two positions from Yahya Khan, one as President and the other as Chief Martial Law Administrator. Thus he was the first civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator of the dismembered Pakistan.

The new President inherited a disturbed and desperate nation sobbing and suffering from an intangible loss of confidence. In this dismal hour, he addressed the nation and promised to fight back. He vowed to build a new Pakistan.



Bhutto's intentions to restore national confidence were in several shapes. He spoke about democracy, a new Constitution, and a modified federal and parliamentary system. He took steps to stabilize the situation by successfully negotiating the return of the 93,000 prisoners of war and a peaceful settlement with India. He took steps to ameliorate poverty and to revitalize the economy, industry and agriculture. He gave the third Constitution to the country and established civilian authority over the armed forces in the political setup.

In early 1972, Bhutto nationalized ten categories of major industries and withdrew Pakistan from the Commonwealth of Nations and S. E. A. T. O. On March 1, he introduced extensive land reforms. On July 2, 1972, he signed the Simla Agreement with India for exchange of the occupied territories and release of Prisoners of War.

After the 1973 Constitution was promulgated, Bhutto was elected by the House as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He was sworn-in on August 14, 1973.

After the 1971 war, India held prisoner around 93,000 Pakistani troops and civilians. In Pakistan there was a growing demand to get these prisoners released with the result that a Summit Conference between Pakistani President, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Indian leader,

Mrs. Gandhi, was held at Simla from June 28 to July 2, 1972. The two countries reached an agreement on July 2. The agreement contained the elements of an earlier Indian draft, but the wording was considerably modified. In particular the clause referring to the ceasefire line in Kashmir was rephrased as to make it acceptable to Pakistan.

The broad features of this pact included that the principle and purpose of the charter of United Nations would govern the relations between the two countries. The two countries resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations. The foremost conditions for understanding, good neighborly relations, and stable and lasting peace were laid that no country would interfere with the other country's internal matters on the basis of mutual respect for peace, security, territorial sovereignty, mutual friendship and equality.

It was reiterated again in the agreement that efforts would be made to put an end, as far as possible, to all such disputes and differences that have been the cause of dissension between the two countries for the last 25 years. Both governments also agreed to take all steps within their power to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other.

In order to progressively restore and normalize relations between the two countries, it was agreed that steps would be taken to resume communications,

postal service, and promote and facilitate travel by sea, land and air. Trade and cooperation in economic and other agreed fields would also be resumed.

In order to initiate the process of durable peace, both the governments agreed that Indian and Pakistani forces would be withdrawn to their sides of the international border. The control line between Jammu and Kashmir would be the same as was on December 17, 1971. Both the

countries would respect the international border and the withdrawal of the armies would be completed within 30 days of the implementation of the agreement.

Leaders of both the countries agreed at Simla to meet again at a mutually agreed time so that representatives of both the countries could discuss more arrangements for durable peace, including matters relating to prisoners of war, local prisoners, final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute and diplomatic relations. As a consequence of the clauses pertaining to the withdrawal of forces, Indian troops withdrew from the 5,139 sq. miles of Pakistani territory in Punjab and Sindh it had occupied during the war. Similarly, Pakistani troops withdrew from 69 sq. miles of territory in Punjab and Rajasthan. In Kashmir, India retained 480 sq. miles and Pakistan 52 sq. miles.

Pakistan ratified the Simla Agreement on July 15 and India on August 3, after which the agreement came into effect on August 4, 1972.

According to the original schedule, the second general elections in the history of Pakistan, and the first after the dismemberment of the country, were to be held in the second half of 1977. However, on January 7, 1977, Bhutto announced that the elections would be held earlier. On January 10, Justice Sajjad Ahmad Jan, Chief Election Commissioner, announced the election schedule and declared January 19 and 22 as the last date for receipt of nominations for National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, respectively. To many, the idea was not to give sufficient time to the opposition in order to make decisions and arrangements for the forthcoming elections. Election symbols were allocated to all the political parties. The total registered voters in the country were 30,899,052. Two hundred and fifty five Returning Officers were appointed for the National Assembly elections by the Election Commission.

Immediately after the announcement, Bhutto started his election campaign. The first step he took was the allocation of tickets to his party men. Unlike the 1970 elections, when Pakistan Peoples Party mainly banked on socialistic slogans, this time Bhutto also relied on political heavyweights. A number of feudal lords and other influential persons were allocated party tickets. Bhutto himself held public meetings all over the country, and to get further support from the common man, he announced labor reforms on January 4, and a second set of land reforms on January 5. The attendance in the public meetings was amazing in all parts of the country, especially in interior Sindh and Punjab. The opposition blamed Bhutto for using Government machinery in running his election campaign.

The biggest problem for Bhutto and his Pakistan Peoples Party was that nine important parties of the opposition had joined hands and formed an alliance, named as Pakistan National Alliance. P. N. A. decided to contest the elections under one election symbol "plough" and a green flag with nine stars as its ensign. Throughout their election campaign, instead of giving their own agenda, P. N. A. leadership mainly concentrated on echoing the alleged misdeeds of Bhutto's Government, corruption, mismanagement of national wealth, heavy expenditures on administration and disastrous economic policies evidenced by inflation. The P. N. A. leaders also

exploited the deteriorating law and order situation and misuse of law enforcing agencies against the political opponents. They claimed that the fundamental rights had been curtailed during Bhutto's era.

P. N. A. managed to exploit anti-Bhutto sentiments among a huge section of masses and thus their election campaign received an unexpectedly positive response. Their claim, that their manifesto was Quran, also helped them in winning over a sizable number of voters from all over Pakistan. The attendance in P. N. A. public meetings and rallies was at times unexpected, even for the Alliance leadership itself.

Finally, the elections were held on March 7 in which Pakistan People's Party managed to win 155 out of 200 seats in the National Assembly. The results of the elections astonished political pundits both inside and outside Pakistan. Pakistan National Alliance was only able to win 36 National Assembly seats. To add insult to injury, the Alliance could only win 8 out of 116 seats of the National Assembly from Punjab, and failed to win even a single seat from Lahore and Rawalpindi, cities in which they had organized big public gatherings and processions.

Pakistan National Alliance leaders protested that there had been a systematic rigging of election results to defeat them. At many places, particularly where the P. N. A. candidates were strong, the polling was alleged to have been blocked for hours. There were also reports that P. P. P. armed personnel in police uniform removed ballot boxes. Marked ballot papers were also found on the streets in Karachi and Lahore. Rumors quickly circulated that the results in key constituencies were issued directly from the Prime Minister's office. P. N. A. boycotted the provincial elections. P. P. P. resorted to bogus voting merely to prove that voters had come to cast their ballot. Overall P. P. P. gained 99 percent seats. The voting figures showing the success of the P. P. P. candidates often surpassed the actual number that turned up for voting.

At last Martial Law was imposed by Zia-ul-Haq who appointed a committee to inquire into the alleged rigging of the National Assembly polls. This committee was reported to have found a blueprint of the plan of rigging from the Prime Minister House. The inquiry committee alleged that Bhutto had prepared this plan as early as April 1976, under the title of "A Model Election Plan", later known as the "Larkana Plan". In an interview to Associated Press of Pakistan, Sajjad Ahmad Jan, the Chief Election Commissioner admitted that the failure of the electoral process was by and large due to the candidates of the ruling party, who exploited their position and party machinery and thus destroyed the sanctity of the ballot box.