

When General Zia-ul-Haq took over as the Chief Martial Law Administrator on July 5, 1977, Islamization was given a new boost. General Zia-ul-Haq was a practicing Muslim who raised the slogan of Islam. The Islamic sentiment has always been fully alive in Pakistan. Various governments have used this to their benefit. There are people who doubt Zia's reasons for raising the Islamic slogan; whether it was for political purposes to counter balance Bhutto's appeal or was it to enforce Islam in its true sense.

In his first address to the nation, he declared that Islamic laws would be enforced and that earnest attention would be devoted towards establishing the Islamic society for which Pakistan had been created. General Zia wanted to bring the legal, social, economic and political institutions of the country in conformity with the Islamic principles, values and traditions in the light of Quran and Sunnah, to enable the people of Pakistan to lead their lives in accordance to Islam.

The Government of Zia-ul-Haq took a number of steps to eradicate non-Islamic practices from the country. He introduced the Zakat, Ushr, Islamic Haddood and Penal Code in the country. The Government invited eminent scholars to compile laws about Islamic financing. The Zakat and Ushr Ordinance to Islamize the economic system was promulgated on June 20, 1980. It covered only Islamic organizations, associations and institutions. Zakat was to be deducted from bank accounts of Muslims at the rate of 2.5 percent annually above the balance of Rupees 3,000. Ushr was levied on the yield of agricultural land in cash or kind at the rate of 10 percent of the agricultural yield, annually.

The Government appointed Central, Provincial, District and Tehsil Zakat Committees to distribute Zakat funds to the needy, poor, orphans and widows. Shias were exempted from Zakat deduction from their accounts due to their own religious beliefs. The Zakat was to be deducted by banks on the first day of Ramazan.

A Federal Shariah Court was established to decide cases according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Appeals against the Lower and High Courts were to be presented before the Shariah Court for hearing. Blasphemy of the Holy Prophet (S. A. W.) would now be punishable by death instead of life imprisonment.

Zia-ul-Haq selected his Majlis-i-Shoora in 1980. It was to be the Islamic Parliament and act as the Parliament of Pakistan in place of the National Assembly. Most of the members of the Shoora were intellectuals, scholars, ulema, journalists, economists and professionals belonging to different fields of life. The Shoora was to act as a board of advisors for the President.

A number of other Islamization programs were carried out including the teaching of Islamic Studies and Arabic, which were made compulsory. Pakistan Studies and Islamic Studies were made compulsorily for B. A., B. Sc., Engineering, M. B. B. S., Commerce, Law and Nursing students. For professional studies, extra marks were given to people who were Hafiz-e-Quran. The first Ombudsman was appointed to rectify the misadministration of the Federal Government, officials and agencies.

A Shariah Council consisting of ulema was established to look into the constitutional and legal matters of the State in order to bring them in line with Islamic thought. Since Islam does not allow interest, On January 1, 1980, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq introduced a "Profit and Loss Sharing System" according to which an account holder was to share the loss and profit of the bank. The media was also targeted. Television especially was brought under the Islamization campaign, news in Arabic were to be read on both television and radio, female anchor persons were required to cover their heads, the Azan was relayed regularly on radio and television to announce time for prayers.

In the armed forces, the status of the religious teachers was raised to that of a Commissioned Officer. This was done to attract highly qualified individuals from the universities and religious institution to serve on such assignments.

As the government grew further in its Islamic leanings, the numbers of mosques were increased. Ordinance for the sanctity of Ramazan was introduced to pay reverence to the holy month of Ramazan. The Ordinance forbade public drinking and eating during the holy month of Ramazan. A three months imprisonment and a fine of Rupees 500 were imposed for violating the Ordinance. A program to ensure the regularity of prayers called the Nizam-i-Salaat was launched by General Zia himself.

Zia's Government introduced the Haddood Ordinance for the first time in Pakistan, which meant the punishments ordained by the Holy Quran or Sunnah on the use of liquor, theft, adultery and qazf. Under this Ordinance, a culprit could be sentenced to lashing, life imprisonment and in some cases, death by stoning.

The Islamic laws of Zia also included laws for women. Zia put forward the theory of "Chadar Aur Chaar Devari" and this was to be applied to women. Thus, for the first time, a woman could be flogged for adultery. If a rape was reported, four witnesses were to be provided otherwise, legally, the rape could be termed adultery. Another law, The Law of Evidence, under the Shariah laws

proposed that the testimony of a woman was not equal to that of a man. In legal matters, two women would have to stand witness against the testimony of one man. The status of women was thus arbitrarily cut in half by Zia. There was little consensus amongst Muslim authorities over this law. The lack of consensus among the religious authorities combined with countrywide protests forced Zia to hold back on making the Shariah law the law of the country.

General Zia-ul-Haq wanted to make Pakistan the citadel of Islam so that it could play an honorable and prominent role for the Islamic world. The steps taken by General Zia were in this direction and had a long-term impact; the Zakat tax introduced by General Zia still holds and so does many of his other laws.