BENAZIR BHUTTO: LEADERSHIP AND PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the efforts, sacrifices and challenges faced by Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister and as a dynamic leader of Pakistan People's Party. The measures taken by the illustrious leader to put democracy on the right track and bring socio economic prosperity and stability in the country will also be analysed. As a leader of a party having its roots in the masses, bringing the family legacy forward as well as offering a respite for the suffering millions was indeed a difficult task. She stood up as a stalwart against such odds and was able to fulfill all her commitments.

The progress of any country whether economic, political or social always depends on the political process which consists of representatives and leaders of political parties, who are closely connected with the government in a democratic process and are expected to play a vital role. Wherein the majority of country's population participates in the affairs of state, to Kaustsley "Democratic process means to get maximum support of the people in the state and to make them dynamic for full participation in political activities, to bring new developments in the system and a solve the problems unitedly. He further states that in a state social classes, aristocrats, peasant, capitalists, old and new middle classes, labourers want to participate in this process to get power because the participation of the representative of the above classes influence the economic development in the society[1]. In a democratic set up the representative system is well connected with the political parties who are the organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit with distinctive aims and opinions seeking to obtain the control of government.[2]

According to the experts of political science, leader and his individual relationship is attached with that group which is established to achieve some particular goals. A political leader means a person who occupies such a position in a party, can exercise more influence upon activities, purposes or programme and has the ability to gain power from the people and this generated power is used for the betterment and development of the society. This distinguished character of the leader differentiates him as a person from other members of the state. 20th century was the period during which main focus remained on leaders and leadership. Leadership is of many kinds i.e., political, religious, military, social, economic, organizational, charismatic etc[3]. Some time leadership arises due to charisma, which means that special fantasy, attraction or god gifted talent exists due to which people are attracted towards the leader's personality. According to

1 John Kaustskey, *The Political Consequence of Modernization,* John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1972, p.89.
2 Appadorai, *The Substance of Politics*, Oxford University Press, London, P.481.
3 William A. Welsh, *Leader and Elites,* MacMillian, New York, 1972, p.p. 17-18.

sociologist and political scientist "A person of political society who gets success by getting full concentration of the people towards their extraordinary genius is supposed to be a charismatic personality and a leader[4].

In politics leadership is influenced by several factors such as, psychological, social, political and historical. Psychological factors refer to the person, the intellectual qualities, the moral spirit and courage, imagination, clear vision, ability to possess power and the gift of discipline. Social factors includes habits and customs, beliefs and attitude of the people their social relations and organization. The political factors are the nature and structure of the state, the laws and the rights of the people. The historical factors are the conditions of war and peace, victory or defeat, social system or progress in culture and civilization all the above factors will determine the kind of political leadership that will arise in a country at a particular period[5].

In the light of the above characteristics of leadership, when we analyze the democratic process in Pakistan we know that restoration of democracy took twenty years which was only due to the political leadership of the country. The political history of Pakistan reveals that there have been many political parties and their political leaders had political foresightedness with political sense and sensibility. The advent of the Peoples Party in Pakistan under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, new political leadership emerged on the horizon of Pakistan. Z.A. Bhutto enhanced and gave impetus and made Pakistan People's Party (PPP) a sure success in the political arena but later on circumstances specifically of Martial law had debased the party of its sublime leadership and Pakistan faced military dictatorship which spread over period of 11 years. (1977 to 1988)[6]

After 1988 the PPP was led by Benazir Bhutto who had inherited the charisma of her father. She was educated from Harvard and Oxford Universities in different disciplines like Politics, Philosophy, Economic, International Law and Diplomacy[7]. Her education in different subjects paved the way for her to prove herself as an internationally reputed politician and leader. If we analyse the personality of Benazir as to her qualities of successful leadership we can conclude that she enhanced the mission of her illustrious father by using all of her abilities and God-gifted talents of leadership. She used her unmatched and intellectual influence on people by motivating them to get united to achieve the goal of restoration of democracy. Her qualities gave her the honor of a good and successful diplomat. When Benazir took the reign of leadership in her hands, she had to face many internal and external problems, but due to her ability of foresightedness and clear vision she organized her party in such a way that it emerged as a powerful and successful party on the political horizon. Benazir entered politics with great pomp and show and she achieved sublime triumph right from the beginning. She took active part in the elections of 1988 for the first time and she not only became successful but also

4 Sidney, *The Hero in History*, Bacen Press, 1962, p.151.
5 William A. Welsh, Op.Cit, p.28.
6 Kaleem Bahadure, *Democracy in Pakistan, Crises and Conflict*, p.47.
7 Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, Oxford University, p.42.

proved that her party was a major party and made it evident that even though Mr. Bhutto was martyred but he was still alive in the hearts of the people.[8]
She contested elections of 1988 with the following objectives:

1. I wish to take my country in the 21st century as a modern state so let there be no poverty, suppression, ignorance and exploitation. Nobody should be jeopardized, let there be rule and domination of law. Law should be made equal for all.
2. We do not believe in the politics of violence and terrorism.
3. After elections, we will approach other political parties for collaboration.
4. By providing political stability economic miracles will take place.
5. Our government will be government of the people for the people and by the people. We care more about principles and less about power.
6. We will create a politics of understanding and lessen the tension between the federation and the provinces. We will empower the people in their participation in the government.

Benazir categorically stated that the PPP firmly believes in its predominant principle: Islam is our religion, democracy is our politics, socialism is our economy, martyrdom is our ambition and to empower the people absolutely in the government is an integral part of our sublime mandate.[9]

In the elections of 1988, no party could obtain absolute majority, but President Ghulam Ishaque Khan invited Benazir Bhutto, as a leader of majority party, to form the government. Benazir was nominated as the Prime Minister on 1st December and took oath on 3rd December 1988 as Prime Minister of a coalition government at the age of 35. She was youngest person and the first women Prime minister to head the government of a Muslim majority state in modern times.[10]

The nomination of Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minster was considered to be the foundation of democratic traditions in the history of Pakistan and the efforts towards restoration of Democracy Benazir Bhutto's achievement during her regime (1988 to 1990) were initiation of reforms and modernization which some conservatives characterized as westernization. These achievements were the reflection of her social and dynamic leadership. Though she had many achievements to her credit even them she had to face a lot of opposition during her tenure due to several reasons, ethnic violence, corruption, mismanagement and mal-administration resulted in the dismissal of her government in 1990.[11]
In the election of 1990 Nawaz Sharif came in to power and Benazir Bhutto served as a leader of opposition. Her role in the opposition was also reflective of here strong moral and ethical qualities which is a sign of good leadership. In 1993 the government of

8 Abdul Ali Shoukat Sajjad Bukhari, *Mushraiq ki Batti Auto Biography of Benazir*, p.11.
9 Daily Jang, 14th October 1948, *Party Manifesto*, Issued by PPP Govt.
10 Mohd. Nawaz Kharal, *Murder of Democracy (A life History of Benazir Bhutto, 1953-2007)*, J.S. Printers Lahore, p.20.
11 Ibid. p.329

Nawaz Sharif was dismissed on corruption charges and Benazir Bhutto came to power after the Oct 1993 polls having acquired a broad mandate. Again she reiterated her commitment with the people lent her complete support to Pakistan's nuclear program and promised to urge the international community to resolve the Kashmir issue, reduce un-employment and cut inflation.[12] During her regime her achievements proved her to be a successful leader both at the national and international level. As a good diplomat she tried her best efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue and to keep cordial relations with the countries in the region as well as elsewhere. As a policy when Taliban gained power in Afghanistan she fully supported them with the view that they as a group could stabilize Afghanistan and enable trade access to the central Asian republics.[13]

During this era PPP government maintained its principle stand on the 8th amendment and her government focused on the issues of legislation, health, education and population control under its social action programme. Other significant measures taking by the PPP government includes transparent privatization. Being the first Muslim women Prime Minister she emphasized on the participation of women in politics, bring better development and stability.

Though she proved herself as a successful leader during this era but in 1996, amidst various corruption scandals, economic crisis and the murder of Mir Murtaza Bhutto her government was dismissed by President Farooq Ahmed Legari by using his discretionary powers through the 8th amendment. The second dismissal of her government once more highlighted the fragility of the democratic process in Pakistan. Caretaker government was appointed to hold elections on 7th February 1997. Benazir Bhutto again attempted to regain power but lost to Nawaz Sharif's Party. During this period Benazir and her husband Asif Ali Zardari were convicted of corruption and mal practices. She left Pakistan to live abroad in a self imposed exile[14]. During her exile Benazir Bhutto continued her efforts for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

In 1999 the government of Nawaz Sharif was also dismissed on various corruption charges and the Military General Pervaiz Musharraf took over the control of the government in a Military coup on October 12, 1999. In 2002 General Musharraf made the constitutional amendment according to which Prime Minister were not allowed to serve for more than two terms. This amendment disqualified the leader of both the parties PPP and PML to contest the elections of 2002. However the PPP got the highest number of votes (62 seats in the National Assembly) in Oct 2002 general elections.[15]

Benazir Bhutto's sincerity towards the restoration of democracy in Pakistan was the only reason for which she wanted to return to her country. It could only happen if she made a deal with President Musharraf. Although she knew that it might bring her own political credibility in question in Pakistan, she returned to Pakistan on October 18, 2007 from UAE. There was always a threat and danger to her life which was practically proven

12 Ibid. p, 20.
13 Website: www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/BenazirBhutto.
14 Website: www.Pakistanvoice.com/articleBenazirBhutto
15 Website: www.Pakistanvoice.com/articleBenazirBhutto

when her bullet proof truck reached mid way between the airport and the Quaid's Mazar, a bomb was blasted a few yards away from the PPP leader. In this tragic accident 100 people were killed and 40 people injured. This was first attack on a rally of a political leader who returned to her country to speed up the democratic process.[16] Benazir was leading her PPP in January 2008 elections and filed her nomination papers to contest the elections to the National Assembly on two seats and a reserved seat for women. During her elections campaign, she was shot dead when she left Liaqat Bagh after addressing a rally on Dec 27, 2007, and with her death the era of Benazir Bhutto, the most dynamic political leader came to an end.

When we analyse the personality of Benazir Bhutto as a Political Leader and Prime Minster of Pakistan it may be concluded that her efforts and sacrifices for the restoration of democracy were the result of her dynamism and enthusiasms. She always tried to put democracy on a right track so that it may not be derailed. She proved herself as a catalyst accelerating the democratic path way to achieve economic and political prosperity and stability in the country. Her sacrifices included long term imprisonment, eight years of exile, twice dismissal of her government and the murder of her family members (Father Z.A. Bhutto, brothers Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Mir Murtaza Bhutto and she herself). She did all this for the sake of restoration of democracy. At the helm of affairs she did not get much time to complete her target of democracy in the country. It is believed that if she would have completed her two terms as Prime Minister she could have achieved the goal of democracy in Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto's efforts and sacrifices towards the restoration of democracy will always be remembered in the political history of Pakistan.

16 The News, Thursday 25th October 2007 (Burhanuddin Hassan, Benazir Saga, 1986-2007)