

**RESEARCH PAPER****Legislative Performance of the Non-Partisan Legislature in Pakistan (1985-1988)****<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Waseem Akram\* and <sup>2</sup>Amjad Abbas Khan**

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**\*Corresponding Author:** Waseem.akram89@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This research examines the performance of the party-less legislature in Pakistan from 1985 to 1988. It focuses on the speeches made by the members of the National Assembly during this period. It also highlights their role in challenging the President Zia-ul-Haq's martial law and advocating for the restoration of the 1973 Constitution. The study highlights the parliamentarian's authority and their impact on the government's performance. Both the primary and secondary sources are utilized in this research study, as the main techniques of the research are developed in a qualitative mode. This approach help in the development of the literature based study on the legislative performance on non-partisan legislature in Pakistan. The finding of this research is relevant for the students, studying Pakistan Studies and experts in parliamentary studies who are interested in evaluating the effectiveness of the legislative bodies.

**KEYWORDS:** Eighth Amendment, Geneva Accord, Ojhari Camp, Party-less Polls, RCO**Introduction**

The success of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) put pressure on General Zia and he planned to revive quasi-civilian rule. As the MRD activities got momentum, the Congress delegation of the United States visited Pakistan to urge the Martial Law authorities to restore complete civilian rule. Gen. Zia used the elections of 1985 for restoration of the controlled-civilian regime to continue his rule (Aziz, 2009). Through Martial Law order 102 of January 12, 1985, Gen. Zia announced to hold general elections on a non-party basis, a separate electorate based, and increased the seats of non-Muslims from six to ten (Mehdi, 2010). To take part in the elections, the candidates would have to dissuade themselves from the political parties (Hussain, 2015). He fixed the date of 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 1985 for National Assembly and Provincial Assembly polls respectively. "The House of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies (Election) Order" was amended on January 12, 19895 through Presidential order and set the rules and regulations for the general elections. The MRD parties decided not to contest the polls because of the ban on political rallies, and gatherings and termed the polls "deaf and dumb elections" (Muhammad, 2012). The number of seats was raised from 200 to 237 for the National Assembly, 227 for Muslim seats, and 10 for non-Muslims. A total of 1095 candidates took part in the polls. Fifteen women contested for general seats, and only Syeda Abida Hussain won the seat from Jhang. The turnout remained at 53.7 % (Mehdi, 2010). By and large the elections of 1985 were fair and five out of nine federal ministers lost their constituencies.

**Formation of the Assembly**

Beforehand the oath-taking ceremony of the MNAs, the newly-elected members from Punjab were invited to the Governor's house in Lahore to see the governor, Gen. Gillani and President Zia would address them later. In this meeting, a member from

Faisalabad, Chaudhary Shafique Ahmad criticized Gen. Zia for his insulting remarks (Zia termed the members of his hand-picked *Majlis-e-Shoora*\*(constituted by Gen. Zia in 1981 to serve a political arm of military regime. It has no powers of legislation. All the members were hand-picked of Gen. Zia) better than the newly elected members of the National Assembly 1985) and demanded an apology from him. His demand of apology not only astonished the members but also Gen. Zia as well. Resultantly, he had to apologize for his remarks. The critical stance of the parliamentarians against him and his colleagues created some “thoughts of regret” in him (Mehdi, 2010). Gen. Zia took oath as the President on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1985. He encouraged the parliamentarians to implement a true sense of democracy and Islam in the country (The debates of National Assembly, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1985). Furthermore, he talked about the revival of political parties and democracy.

### **First Dint in the Martial Law’s Coffin**

The members of the newly-elected House took oath on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1985. After the oath-taking ceremony, all the legislatures were informed to reach at the Presidency to attend the inaugural ceremony of President Zia-ul-Haq. The Air Marshal (retd). Nur Khan stood up there and stated “The time has come for you to uplift the Martial Law” (Hussain, 2015). The President assured him to restore complete civilian rule but after the settling down of the Parliament. The members like Khaqan Abbasi, Air Marshal (retd). Nur Khan, Abdul Hameed Jatoi, and Haji Saifullah proposed Syed Fakhar Imam as their candidate against Khawaja Safdar, a nominee of Zia for speaker’s election. Syeda Abid Hussain proclaimed that through Salman Farooqui and Brigadier Imtiaz, Gen. Zia tried to pressurize Fakhar Imam to change his mind and offered him finance ministry in exchange for his withdrawal (Hussain, 2015). He sent Salman Farooqi along with Brig. Imtiaz, additional secretary to PM, later on, Nawabzada Abdul Ghafoor Hoti to convince him. On the failure of these emissaries, he directly approached Fakhar Imam in the chamber of Chief Election Commissioner, Justice S.A. Nusrat, but he stood firm and did not change his mind (Hussain, 2015).

The election of the speaker was much anticipated for Gen. Zia because he wanted to have control of the Parliament like his hand-picked *Majlis-i-Shoora*. Secondly, he wanted to control the outspoken legislatures, because the critical demands of Air Marshal (retd) Nur Khan and Chaudhary Shafique had annoyed him. A total of 230 members cast their votes in the speaker’s elections. Fakhar Imam got 119 while Khawaja Safdar could get 111 votes. The victory of Fakhar Imam disturbed Gen. Zia’s plan, and he in his maiden meeting with Fakhar Imam, suggested working through parliamentary standing committees instead of debates in the house. The defeat of his nominees proved first stock in the Martial Law’s coffin. This act realized Gen. Zia that the Parliament would not be a rubber stamp and will retaliate in case of any pressure from the non-democratic forces (Mahmood, 2000).

### **Debate on Martial Law and the Eighth Amendment**

A total of 11 privileged and adjournment motions were moved in the lower house to criticize the continuity of Martial Law and urged the PM to uplift it. The first privilege motion in the house was presented by Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar about the Revival of the Constitution of 1973 Order, issued by Gen. Zia. On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1985, through a resolution he condemned the continuity of Martial Law as there existed an institutional conflict because two parallel law-making bodies. The Constitution of 1973 and regulations of Martial Law could not work together. Therefore, Martial Law must be lifted to restore the democratic sense of the Constitution (The debates of National Assembly, Volume II contains Nos. 1 to 20, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1985). Haji Saifullah made a comparison between civilian rule and the Martial Law regime. He alleged Martial Law for its failure to control the evil deeds and the problems created because of military rule. At the end of the first

session, the speaker declared Martial Law “illegal and without lawful authority” which surprised everyone including President Zia (Hussain, 2015). On 7<sup>th</sup> August 1985, Chaudhary Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar alleged that Gen. Zia had no intentions to uplift Martial Law and cautioned the House of dire political and constitutional consequences if the Martial Law was not lifted soon (The debates of National Assembly, Volume III contains Nos. 1 to 10, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1985) The Prime Minister while addressing a huge gathering on the eve of Independence Day 1985 at *Minar-i-Pakistan*\* (Minar-i-Pakistan was built in the memory of Lahore resolution, presented in the annual session of All India Muslim League on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940. It is located in Minto Park (now greater Iqbal Park), Lahore proclaimed to uplift Martial Law before 1<sup>st</sup> January 1986. This house appreciated the efforts of Muhammad Khan Junejo and showed his full confidence in his leadership. The Parliamentarians appreciated his timely announcement and sought to grant a “standing ovation to the resolution” (Volume III contains Nos. 1 to 10) presented by Haji Saifullah. Javed Hashmi termed 14<sup>th</sup> August 1985 a historical day and appreciated the efforts of the Parliament and PM for this milestone announcement. He stated that there were two ways to end Martial Law, confrontation, and parliamentary politics. After the failure of MRD parties the Parliament gave a new direction to this struggle (The debates of National Assembly, Volume III contains Nos. 1 to 10, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1985). Before the installation of complete civilian rule, Gen. Zia sought to uplift Martial Law conditionally. Law Minister Muhammad Iqbal presented the bill of the Eighth Constitutional Amendment on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1985 in the National Assembly. The bill was surprising for the legislatures and 32 members opposed it. The Independent Parliamentary Group termed the bill a “calculated attempt to perpetuate Martial Law in the country in civilian guise” (Muhammad, 2012). On 12<sup>th</sup> September Haji Saifullah argued that through the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment, Gen. Zia was trying to change the Parliamentary constitution into the Presidential one. He urged the Parliamentarians to vote against this bill because the authorities wanted to use this amendment as a tool to continue Martial Law. He proposed to publish this bill in the newspapers and let the public decide it by their will (Manager Publications, 1985). The huge criticism and resistance in the Parliament forced Gen. Zia to change his strategy and also, he sought to amend it more. Zia called on dissident group consisted of some notables like Haji Saifullah, Syeda Abida Hussain, Javed Hashmi, Chaudhary Shafique, Dr. Sher Afghan Niazi, Air Marshal (retd) Nur Khan, Rahim Bux Soomro, Balkh Sher Mazari, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad, Liaquat Baloch, Hafiz Salman Butt and listened their concerns and amendments. He instructed Dr. Mehboob-ul-Haq and Haji Saifullah to form a comprehensive draft by removing the reservations. He made it clear that he would go to any extent to get passed this bill. Although the Official Parliamentary Group had the required 2/3 majority in the house to get pass this amended bill yet Gen. Zia wanted to get pass it unanimously like the Constitution of 1973. The minister for law withdrew the earlier bill on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1985 and tabled a new amended bill after the consensus of the dissidents. On 7<sup>th</sup> October 1985, Air Marshal (retd) Nur Khan termed it a most disrupted bill that would divide the Parliament. Furthermore, he stated that the Constitution was being amended just for the ego or selfishness of one individual (The debates of National Assembly, Volume IV contains No. I to 43, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1985). On 15<sup>th</sup> October, Muhammad Khan Junejo also criticized the excessive powers of the President in this bill and intended to replace the discretionary powers of the President to dissolve the assembly. He stressed that if a vote of no-confidence had been passed against the PM and no other members have the majority of the house, then the President could use his powers to dissolve the assembly (The debates of National Assembly, Volume IV contains No.1 to 43, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1985). The assembly was able to get some concessions that President could nominate a PM till 1990 and the governor would nominate Chief Minister till 1988, after that the assemblies would elect the leader of the house themselves. The legislatures continued to debate on the bill for forty-four days and no other amendment bill was debated as long as the passage of the 14<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment (Hussain, 2015). The bill was passed

by the Assembly on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1985. Despite the approval of some proposed amendments, eight members remained absent and did not sign the bill (Hussain, 2015).

President Zia in his address to the joint sitting of the Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1985 announced to uplift Martial Law. He appreciated the effective legislative performance of the party-less house and the members who introduced amendments in the draft to the 8<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment. He urged the parliamentarians to work for the progress and prosperity of the nation with the same determination. He called Chairman Senate Ghulam Ishaq Khan, PM Junejo, and Speaker of National Assembly Syed Fakhar Imam to sign the orders to uplift Martial Law (Muzaffar, et al. 2017).

### **Revitalization of Political Parties and Removal of the Speaker**

Although Gen. Zia restored the fragile democracy, yet he did not resuscitate the political parties. PM Junejo and the other seasoned politicians knew that their survival lay in the revival of political parties. The Parliamentarians initiated the strategy and presented 6 privileges, adjournment motions, and one resolution to re-establish political parties. The free expression of the legislature's interpretations in the Parliament worried the President Zia and he thought to revive the political parties to break the unity of the house. At the end of the first sitting along with the PM, he urged the parliamentarians to continue the culture of political parties to nourish the healthy political culture. He also encouraged the parliamentarians to support Junejo and join the Muslim League (Hussain, 2015). He asked the Parliamentarians to raise their hands in support of Junejo, except forty all the others supported him. On the instructions of Zia, finance minister Dr. Mahboob-ul-Haq presented the draft and described the policy to grant developmental funds to the parliamentarians. Zia wanted to get several benefits from this scheme. Firstly, he wanted to divide the house to raise the strength of the Muslim League, secondly, to divert the attention of the legislatures from legislation, and thirdly to control the independent and newly-elected members of the house. On the advice of PM Junejo, the minister for law Muhammad Iqbal Khan presented a resolution in the National Assembly to form a special committee consisting of twenty-nine limbs to revive future political structure. He named Muhammad Aslam Khatak (chairman) and included some notables like Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Abdul Ghafoor Khan Hoti, Gohar Ayub Khan, Malik Naseem Ahmad Ahear, Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain, and Javed Hashmi. He stated that the committee would report to the assembly within 15 days. On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1985, Haji Muhamad Saifullah presented an adjournment motion and opposed the pressure of the government members on the independent members to join the Muslim League. He further explained that CM and Governor NWFP visited Frontier House, Islamabad, and pressured the members to join the ruling group (The debates of National Assembly, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1985). On 18 August 1985, Liaquat Baloch argued that without the resuscitation of the political parties' Act, the government had started the member's registration, using the state resources and the Governor Houses had become the hub to strengthen it. The minister for Law and parliamentary affairs Muhammad Iqbal Khan presented "The Political Parties (Amended) Bill, 1985" in the assembly on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1985. The legislatures urged to attain public opinion on this and criticized the excessive powers of the chief election commissioner to de-notify any political party. The Bill of Political Parties (Amended) was passed from the Parliament. The political parties were to register themselves from the election commission, in case of failure they would not be able to take part in the elections. As per the revival of political parties, the registration of PML could be done in February 1986. However, the premier started to organize PML on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1986. On 4 February 1986, Haji Saifullah on a point of order raised a question about the disqualification of the premier and his cabinet colleagues on the joining of the Muslim League before its registration. He gave the reference to "The House of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies (election) orders 1977, Political Parties Act section 3(b) and argued that they had joined the unregistered party after becoming members of the

National Assembly. He requested the speaker to move the reference to the chief election commissioner for their disqualification.

When the speaker sent the reference against PM Junejo to the chief election commissioner, the law minister tabled a motion of no-confidence against him. Mian Muhammad Zaman lamented that Fakhar Imam misused the point of order and his chamber has become the hub of politics of Independent Parliamentary Group. Dr. Sher Afghan Niazi negated the allegations of Mian Zaman and urged the parliamentarians to support Fakhar Imam. Zafar Ullah Jamali counseled the house to resolve their deviating issues amicably. This house was elected as party-less and the no-confidence motion against the speaker would turn this into a party-based house. Syed Assad Gillani appreciated the performance of the speaker as he has taken the morale of the house to the highest level and removed the impression of a “rubber-stamp” Parliament. Javed Hashmi also appreciated the performance of the house and stated that the motion was a punishment for Fakhar on his position against Martial Law, contesting elections despite Gen. Zia’s message and attempt to make the legislature an independent house (The debates of National Assembly, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1986). Lt. Gen (retd) Abdul Majeed Malik alleged that Haji Saifullah was ready to withdraw his motion against the PM and other cabinet members however, the speaker sent it to the election commission instantly. Haji Saifullah cautioned that its accomplishment would not only affect the performance but also bring a divided house, with no benefit to the democracy. Syed Fakhar Imam in his speech revealed that six Meetings were held in his chamber to cover the matter of reference and he gave enough time to the PM to save himself. On the providence of the evidence from the mover’s side, he had to send a reference against Junejo on the violation of the Political Parties Act 1962 (The debates of National Assembly, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1986). Before the voting, a parliamentarian Malik Sarfraz told Syeda Abida Hussain that Gen. Zia wearing a uniform came to the Parliament and called on fifty parliamentarians. He threatened to dissolve the assembly and go for fresh polls in case of Fakhar’s survival. Furthermore, he revealed that Gen. Zia termed the no-confidence motion against the speaker as the savior of the Parliament and PM as well (Hussain, 2015). His threat worked and they voted against Fakhar Imam. On 30<sup>th</sup> May 1986 voting was held, a total of 229 votes were cast, 152 in favor and 72 against the motion while 3 canceled votes. By removing Fakhar Imam, Gen. Zia hit a major blow to the independence of the Parliament to strengthen his rule by wrecking the strength of the parliamentary institution. Safdar Mahmood argued that the immediate cause of Fakhar Imam’s removal was his critics’ stance against the continuity of Martial Law and approval of a privileged motion against Gen. Zia on his assailing remarks about the legislative body. Fakhar Imam’s move to send the reference against PM Junejo to the chief election commissioner added fuel to the fire. Although Gen. Zia saved Junejo from disqualification by issuing “The House of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies (election) (amendment) ordinance No 1 of 1986” yet Fakhar Imam had become unbearable for both of them. Junejo with the covert support of Gen. Zia retaliated by tabling a motion of no-confidence against him. Although it was a democratic step to remove the “disobedient speaker”, yet they showed their lack of democratic norms. They not only brought the members under their control but also clipped the wings of the non-partisan Parliament (Mahmood, 2000).

### **Strength of the Parliament**

The parliamentarians knew that their real backbone was the existence and strength of the Parliament. Some key politicians like Syed Fakhar Imam, Javed Hashmi, Syeda Abida Hussain, Haji Saifullah, Chaudhary Mumtaz Tarar, Sheikh Rasheed, Dr. Sher Afghan Niazi, Liaqat Baloch, and other notables worked hard for supremacy of the Parliament. They not only made the Parliament a supreme institution but also defended it from the criticism of the adversaries. The members presented eight privilege and adjournment motions related to the supremacy of the Parliament. On 12<sup>th</sup> June 1985,

Liaqat Baloch tabled a privilege motion about the article of the *Jang*, written about the credibility of the party-less assembly. He termed it a pre-emptive campaign to disrespect the autonomous status of the National Assembly. He refuted the allegations of the paper about its dependence on Martial Law to stay in power. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1985, three privilege motions were moved against the Senator Pir of Pagara's statement about the integrity of the National Assembly. Pir of Pagara termed the newly elected National Assembly as a "body of Basic Democracy members" who were busy in taking privileges, plots, and issuing permits. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1985, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad presented a privilege motion on the statement of Pir of Pagara on his advice to the President to dissolve the National Assembly. The members not only disliked his statement but also encouraged the parliamentary privilege committee to take notice of his statement. Two resolutions were moved against the criticism of the President on the performance of the Parliament in April 1988. Haji Saifullah, Nawabzada Salah-ad-Din, and Syed Fakhar Imam defended the performance of the house and argued that the Parliament had done a lot to curb corruption, implement Islamization, and for the well-being of the state.

### **Foreign Affairs**

The Parliament played a key role in the formulation of comprehensive foreign policies during this critical phase of Pakistan's history. This house focused on the Indian threats of attack on Pakistan's nuclear facility, their propaganda about Pakistan's nuclear program, and the tense situation on borders. Eleven adjournment motions were tabled in the house about the Indian threat to attack Pakistan's nuclear installation in Kahuta, two were about the Indian claim on Siachen glacier, two on the clash and deployment of forces on the border, two were about Indian Premier's propaganda about Pakistan's nuclear processing plant.

There were four resolutions moved in the house about concerns of the US President, Richard Nixon on Pakistan's nuclear capability, no-supply of Hawke eye aircraft by America, the United States ambassador's statement to urge Pakistan to open its nuclear plant for international inspections, and not assistance in case of clash with India. The house not only criticized the dual standard of the USA about nuclear policy in South Asia. The legislatures reiterated the sacrifices and efforts made by Pakistan for the United States and urged the foreign minister to react sharply in case of US objections.

The house also retaliated sharply in case of Russian threats. The legislatures tabled twelve motions in the house about the smuggling of Russian weapons into Pakistan, the deployment of Russian forces on the Pak-Afghan border, the firing of Russian forces on Pakistani soldiers, and the Russian Ambassador's statement not to interfere in Afghan affairs. The house condemned the threatening tune of Russia to pressurize Pakistan to sign the Geneva Accord as soon as possible.

### **Debate on Afghan Policy**

The Afghanistan crisis remained a major core of Pakistan's foreign policy during this era. The Parliament debated a total of twenty-five privilege and adjournment motions on Afghanistan's involvement in Pakistan, firing and shelling from the Afghanistan side, the bombardment of Afghan jets in Pakistani territory, and the distribution of Afghan ammunition and money in the tribal areas of Pakistan. On 20<sup>th</sup> August 1985, Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar tabled an adjournment motion on the threatening statement of Afghanistan's President Babrak Karmal in which he threatened Pakistani authorities with dire consequences in case of interference in Afghanistan's internal matters. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1985, four adjournment motions were presented by legislatures about the violation of airspace and bombardment of Afghan planes in North Waziristan and the martyrdom of two soldiers.

The house also discussed negotiation to resolve the Afghan crisis. PM Muhammad Khan Junejo and Foreign Minister Zain Ahmad Noorani also assured the house to discuss the possible accord in the Parliament before signing it. Chaudhary Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar tabled an adjournment motion in the house on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1988 and argued that the PM did not take the house into confidence despite of assurance several times. The other Parliamentarians also endorsed the resolution's point and demanded an explanation from the foreign minister and premier about this misadventure. A joint sitting of the Parliament was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1988 to debate the Geneva Accord and Ojhri Camp 1988 incident. On the first day of the sitting, Syed Fakhar Imam criticized foreign minister Zain Ahmad Noorani for the absence of a clause for the formation of an interim government in Afghanistan. Professor Khursheed Ahmad pointed out three major consequences of this accord. Firstly, he pointed out that there was no clause related to the end of hostilities. Secondly, it was not between the aggressors and depressors (Afghanistan and USSR), but between the indirect countries like Pakistan. Thirdly, it gave the impression that Pakistan intervene in Afghanistan and there was no point of Russian intervention or setup of an interim government in Afghanistan (The debates of National Assembly, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1988). Javed Hashmi elaborated on the Geneva Accord by delineating its five aspects. USSR successfully withdrew its forces, the USA showed its military supremacy over Russian technology, Najeeb Ullah was able to continue his regime, and the Afghan immigrants would be able to return to their homeland while Pakistan stood looser (The debates of National Assembly, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1988). Syeda Abida Hussain stated that despite the accord, Russia reiterated its support to Najeeb's regime while Pakistan urged to continue Afghan policy. She criticized what sort of accord this was that could not resolve the Durand-line dispute, the Afghan crisis, and the formation of an interim government in Afghanistan. (The debates of National Assembly, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1988)

### **Ojhri Camp Incident 1988**

The Ojhri Camp (Rawalpindi) incident in April 1988 proved one of the deadliest tragedies in Pakistan which resulted in the loss of nearly a hundred lives including a federal minister, Khaqan Abbasi. The minister for justice and parliamentary affairs, Waseem Sajjad presented an adjournment motion to defer the routine matters and discuss the Ojhri Camp incident. Syed Fakhar Imam raised his concerns about the location of the arsenal depot in the residential area. PM Muhammad Khan Junejo formed two investigative committees to probe the matter, one was under Lt-Gen. Inamullah Khan while another was under Muhammad Aslam Khatak. In the joint sitting of the Parliament, the parliamentarians discussed the catastrophe in detail and demanded firm action against the liable. PM Junejo assured the house to present the report of the committees in the Parliament and front of the nation as well. He also assured the house to punish the real culprits of the misfortune (The debates of National Assembly, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1988). Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar has raised a question about the location of Ojhri Camp in a residential area and extracted his concerns that ammunition was used to supply from there to Mujahedeen. He also raised his suspicions about the arrival of an American expert team. He articulated that there were rumors that the American team came here to investigate the displacement of ammunition worth 50 crore, provided by the US to Mujahedeen (The debates of National Assembly, 21<sup>st</sup> April 1988). He proposed to form a judicial commission, headed by a Supreme Court judge. He advised the PM to call a round table conference and urged Gen. Zia to step down as COAS (The debates of National Assembly, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1988). Nawabzada Salah-ud-Din termed the concerned commanding officer incompetent and demanded his retirement from the service. Syeda Abida Hussain identified the security loopholes and insufficient security measures by the federal government and army. He demanded resignation from the interior minister as well as from Gen. Zia (The debates of National Assembly, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1988)



### **Legislative Performance**

The assembly performed its duties efficiently, discussed the significant matters and the problems of the masses like the law & orders situation, violation of basic human rights, water dispute between provinces, demand to introduce Urdu as the national language, misreporting of statements of the parliamentarians on media, mismanagement, and losses in PIA & Pakistan Railway and detention of political leaders like Rasul Baksh Palijo, Benazir Bhutto. This house successfully passed three annual budgets and allotted funds to the parliamentarians for developmental budgets. This house also passed several bills related to the welfare of the masses and strengthening democracy. It also passed key bills like, The Representative of People (eighth amendment) Ordinance, 1985, The House of Parliament and provincial assemblies (elections) (Amendment) Bill, 1985, The Horabara Bustard (Banning of Hunting and Capturing) Bill, 1986, The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1986, Report of the Council Islamic Ideology for the year 1977-78, The Agricultural Development Bank (Amendment) bill 1985, The establishment of the Federal Bank for Co-operatives and' Regulation of Co-operative Banking (Amendment) Bill 1985, 8<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, the revival of Political Parties (amended) bill 1986, The Senate election (amended) bill 1986, The Constitution (tenth amended) bill 1987 and Capital Territory local government bill 1988. The legislative performance of the assembly was splendid which provided a strong reply to its critics. This house put pressure on Zia to vacate the post of COAS and also echoed for the public accountability of the alleged senior officials.

### **Dissolution of the Assembly**

The conflict for power between the premier and the President irritated the latter. When Zia realized that Junejo and the Parliament were openly challenging him, he dissolved the assembly on May 29, 1988. Safdar Mahmood compared the dissolution of this assembly with the dissolution of Pakistan's first constituent assembly in 1954 by Malik Ghulam Muhammad (Mahmood, 2000). Mohammad Waseem contented that the parliamentarian's echo of accountability of civil-military bureaucrats and urge to relive Zia form military's command were the key factors behind its dissolution (Waseem, 1994). Benazir Bhutto termed this "victory of the people" and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi called it a "historical decision" (Hussain, 1990).

### **Conclusion**

In a nutshell, As the result of party-less polls, an inexperienced and non-partisan-based legislature came into existence. Gen. Zia expected complete obedience and loyalty from it however it water-shed his expectations by voting against Zia's nominee. The victory of Fakhar Iman encouraged the parliamentarians and opposed the continuity of Martial Law, criticized the government policies, and showed their credibility. Although they removed the speaker through a vote of no-confidence, yet could not restrain the parliamentarians from criticism and effective legislation. This parliament performed excellently and passed several bills related to the restoration of democracy, revival of political parties, and constitutional bills and showed his credibility by discussing them at large. The National Assembly criticized the government for signing the Geneva Accord on loose terms while criticizing the army and Gen. Zia on the tragic incident of Ojhri Camp. The demand for the removal of Gen. Zia and the responsible intelligence officer and the presentation of the inquiry report in the house made it unbearable. The President sought to wrap up the parliament before any action to silence the critical voices.



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