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Causes of the Muslim League's Downfall from the Perspective of Pakistani Politics (1947-1954)

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ABSTRACT

This paper will attempt to unravel the historical elements by analyzing the main structural, organizational, and leadership gaps that led to the weakening of the Muslim League between 1947 and 1954. Using a historical-institutional analytical framework, the research aims to isolate and define the most important parameters that will determine the politics of fragmentation, leadership, and constitutional and center-province conflict. These two key results were arrived at in the analysis: (1) the failure of the League to distinguish itself among ethnic-nationalist movements, to become a more disciplined and centralized party, lost its legitimacy; (2) a mix of party leadership and executive power established an internal structure that led to bureaucratic stagnation. All this is worsened by the lack of a coherent constitution, the resulting political stalemate, and the birth of a political vacuum all of which are the major factors that led to the deterioration of the league. The political vacuum would then be filled by the political parties, the most notable ones being the Awami League and the Republican Party. This work can be discussed as an addition to the general historiography of post-colonial states because it explains the fall of the first political party in the history of Pakistan and fills a significant gap in the literature on this topic.

Keywords: Muslim League; Political Decline; Institutionalization Of The Party; Leadership Crisis; Party Fragmentation; Constitutional Delay; Center Province Relationship; Democratic Instability; Politics In Post-Colonial States.

Introduction

The introduction section explains why the Muslim League (led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah) can be called the first political party in Pakistan. It explores the underlying factor of the league political discourse, outlines the incentives of the Muslim people of the subcontinent, assesses the substantive matters that the party aimed at addressing, and questions the organizational and leadership resources that Pakistan allegedly needed but could not mobilize. Although, many studies have been conducted on the political disintegration of the Muslim league, there still exists huge gaps as far as the partition phenomenon, the establishment of Pakistan, and the consolidation of the league after that. Moreover, the discussion of the Muslim League as a political and faith-based entity in Pakistan and its fragmentation process in general have been mostly overlooked in scholarship. The academic discourse is more inclined to shrug off inner conflicts, lack of leadership and anarchy in the organization, but emphasize the external problems like refugee crisis, and subordination of administrative functions. The research paper is aimed at explaining the factors that led to the downfall of the Muslim League by 1954, and thus provides an idea of why other political outfits have been unable to attain the element of consolidation in post independent Pakistan. The analysis describes the transformation of the league into a governing body as a specific variant of institutional change, which assumes that

ideological realignment, an unstable neo-parliamentary system, and elite-dominated politics were all the moves that pushed the polity towards the failed democracy.

In the past, the Muslim League was the main, indeed the only, political representation of the Muslim community in British India. Started in 1906, the league developed in phases of elite mobilization (1906-1913) and constitutional politics (1913-1930), and finally made a transition into mass political support (1930-1947) to become the leading movement in the struggle of Pakistan.

Study Background

Trying to maintain the socio-economic and political rights of the Muslims in colonial British India, the All-India Muslim League was established in 1906 and turned out to be the catalyst to the Pakistan Movement up to the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. The league was able to unify various communities of Muslims thus forming a part and parcel of the South Asian historical study.

However, the issues that the young state of Pakistan was facing were quite different than the ones they had dealt with before. Although the Muslim league formally became a political party, challenges that accompany nation-building i.e. independence, new systems of power, and internal governance of the league become the main concerns that include economic and refugee crises.

The period between 1947 and 1954 was one of the unhappiest political periods in Pakistan. Despite the parliamentary control that the Muslim league still had in it, the league was not able to attain democratic consolidation. Jinnah died in 1948, and Khan died in 1951, which further fueled factionalism and left the party without a leader, and weakened its internal strength. Divisions between East and West Pakistan also helped to weaken the national character of the league through provincial divisions. The inability of the league to meet regional electoral requirements, in order to meet constituent requirement, hold elections, or create a constitutional structure weakened the legitimacy of the league. The 1954 elections in East Pakistan confirmed the loss of the supremacy of the league marking the withdrawal of its legitimate national power.

These aspects are relevant to the present study which aims at explaining the causal factors, mechanisms, and the consequences of the weakening of the Muslim League.

Statement of the Problem

The current work focuses on the post-commonwealth analysis of the political demise of the Muslim league; the observation is explained by the fact that the party was an influential political power in the early years of the statehood of Pakistan. However, the paradoxical situation that is inherent to the given case is also considered, with the study trying to outline the circumstances in which the party became a political body and at the same time lost control of itself. The Muslim League had a lot of political legitimacy in 1947 compared to the other political participants, however, this proved ironical because it lacked legitimacy as a governing institution, was politically unstable, had internal democracy shortfalls and thus lost the popular and mainstream constituency, which created a greater political fragmentation.

The League was also joined to the incumbent government and later on to the ruling party, thus increasing and centralizing its powers, which reduced fragmentation but in the process enhancing the lack of accountability by the League. The parliamentary authority of the League was weakened significantly as a result of avoiding responsibility to its members and its parliamentary prerogatives, non-elected officials and bureaucratic machinery, which, in turn, contributed to the level of political stagnation and led to the flourishing of demands towards an authoritarian regime.

The lack of a logical political ideology that will inform the leadership of post-independent Pakistan also makes the problem worse. On its part, the Muslim League was unable to refocus its politics and to change its agenda to its pre-partition goals as well as to establish a governing ideology that was attentive to the requirements of an autonomous polity. These gaps led to a socio-political response to Muslim league and thus giving rise to a strong opposition.

The proposed study poses questions to both the internal and external factors that triggered the collapse of the League, and hence, fills a gap in the historical writing of Pakistan politics. This paper focuses its efforts on the weakening of the Islamic League in the ten years of existence in Pakistan (1947-1954), which falls within the context of political theory and historical study. Instead of a simple description of events, the study aims at a more critical exegesis.

Objectives

1. To examine the organizational framework of the Muslim League during the immediate post-independence period on the one hand and determine the possibility of institutionalization of the same.
2. To look into how leadership vacuities and succession processes affect the internal integrity of the party.
3. To determine how the elite factionalism would affect the effectiveness and general integration of the political party.
4. To assess the consequences of the meltdown of the constitutional structure and consequent constitutional elections on civic democratic living.
5. To determine the effects of the estrangement of the East Pakistani regional actors to center-province relationships.
6. To examine how executive prerogatives and administrative bureaucracy affect parliamentary democracy.

The objectives of the research must bring a clue to the failure of political parties in post-colonial countries and also to the democratic stagnation in Pakistan, and this will be informative on both theory and practice.

Research Questions

1. Why did the Muslim league fail to institutionalize as a ruling party even after attaining independence?
2. What were the implications of lack of leadership, lack of succession and party weakening?
3. What were the impacts of elite capture and internal fragmentation on functionality of the Muslim League?
4. How did the impact of constitutional adoption and elections delay impact democracy?
5. What was the contribution of inter-governmental tensions to the party becoming weaker as a national party?
6. What was the effect of executive power and administration control on the self-governance of the party and their compliance to the parliamentary democracy?

These political, structural and organizational factors are used to analyses the decline and disintegration of the Muslim league.

Value of the Research

The study is aimed at the Pakistani political memory and the development of the party system, which provides the novel input to the research of the early democratic failure. The research contribution to the field of post-colonial governance, political theory, and party institutionalization is that by examining the fall of the Muslim League, one broadens their understanding of this concept. It also offers some fresh insights on internal democracy,

leadership responsibility and organizational resilience, which will be of good use to the policymakers, historians and political analysts interested in the problem of instability and authoritarianism in Pakistan.

Delimitation of the Study

The limits are limited to the time immediately after independence (1947-1954) and focused on the Muslim League as the political powerhouse. Both East and West Pakistan are encompassed and center-province politics, leadership framework, constitution-making, and the political systems in general are considered.

Weaknesses of the Study

The study is quite rigorous but at the same time, it is highly dependent on secondary sources in historiography that may contain interpretative bias and cannot have access to internal party files. Also, the research is not confined to a year after 1954; this limits the comparative aspects of the research with the years ahead; however, there are no reasons to why the results would not be of analytical interest.

Rationale of the Study

The study is important in that the early political failures largely influence the modern governance in Pakistan. After identifying the weaknesses of the Muslim League, it is crucial in understanding weaknesses in the weak and unstable democracies, thus shedding light on the structural factors that lead to party politics fragmentation, leadership gaps, and poor institutionalization in Pakistan.

Literature Review

One more recent research interest has focused on the issues of gracious leadership and colonial negotiations and the Pakistan Movement. K. K. Aziz and Lawrence Ziring have written the League and the constitution negotiations but have not discussed anything on the party collapse after independence. The reasons given in the literature stock as to why the party has fallen are the absence of institutionalization, and personalized party leadership. Nevertheless, it appears that there is no consensus as to what extent the (political) bureaucracy or the leadership of the party should be held liable towards this. Other scholars blame the decay to meddling of the Governor-General, but others blame the fragmenting of provinces (political). This study will address this gap by combining organizational theory with history by providing very few studies that have concentrated on the internal contradictions of the League as a governing party. Literature reveals that the League was sick of various diseases all of which were rooted in the absence of democracy in the party and complete monopoly of the leadership. More current studies on this era have realized that the Muslim League was left with redefining ideology after 1947. Unlike Indian National Congress \ socio-economic reform bloc, the League and its leaders retained the pre-independence objectives and hence were not suitable in purposes that matched governance of a state.

Theoretical Frameworks

The study is involved in the three theories, i.e., political party institutionalization, post-colonial state, and elite centered leadership. Theoretical reconsiderations of these theories explain the deterioration of the Muslim League in Pakistan during state-building years, 1947-1954, as the center of party failure in particular structures, institutional gaps and the leadership traits.

The conceptual frame works of this study can demonstrate the weakening of the Muslim League to be the result of these factors.

- a. Weak institutionalization of the party.
- b. Inability to institutionalize the charismatic power of the party.
- c. Party politics and elite monopoly.

- d. Lack of structural balance of the political subsystem and administrative subsystem.
- e. The lack of adequate federalism.

This is a complicated explanation of the non-elitist systemic political relations, and the isolation of non-elitist League decline to its politics.

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptualization of the framework is that the fall of the Muslim League was the consequence of the chain of mutually reinforcing failures. The loss of leadership and the ability to organize the situation determined the resolution in the capture of the elites, which, in turn, contributed to factionalism and aggravated the state of its the constitution being paralyzed. All these reasons, alienation of the region and interference of bureaucracy, eventually resulted in defeat at the elections.

This framework gives a logical pattern of analysis that identifies the association of various dimensions of the problem.

Research Gap

One area of the analysis of single leadership cases and bureaucratic dominance still seems to be neglected, that is, the politics within the party. This problem is examined in this paper through the application of both historical and organizational theories to come up with an analytical description on the downfall of the party.

Methodology

This paper aims at explaining how the politics of the Muslim league changed between 1947 and 1954 with the assumption of qualitative historical research design. The initial publication used primary documents, archival resources, and newspapers available at the time.

The study has chosen this approach to reach the analysis level of depth, source triangulation, and contextual precision. In the context of this methodology, particular interest is paid to the process tracing to define the causal variables, especially the ones exercised via the leadership on the institutions.

This research aims at examining reorganization of parties and its role in such a case, in particular, the predictive quality of the leadership on the results of the elections and the development of a sufficiently justified hypothesis based on the usefulness of the structure dynamics of withdrawal. To limit it is one of the factors. The paper aims to do this by making comparative references so as to make sure that the interpretive validity is achieved whilst focusing on the environment in Pakistan.

Analysis

The study used in this paper infuses these theoretical concepts in an explanatory paradigm with the view of explaining the demise of the Muslim league of the interwoven components of the structure of the organization, its leadership and other units of the paradigm.

The dependent variable is the major concern of the framework:

The weakening of the Muslim League, between 1947 and 1954, as seen through the existence of a decrease in its political strength, failure to get the majority of votes in the elections, disintegration of the party, and diminishing the political support of the party itself.

- a. Independent Variables
- b. Leadership Crisis
- c. This variable captures
- d. Lack of Jinnah successor of a charismatic leader
- e. The centralization of leadership of parties and states to a single person.
- f. Weak power and political legitimacy of party presidents.

- g. Tactics in combination with unstable leadership that disintegrated party unity and deteriorated decision-making capacity.
- h. Organizational Weakness
- i. Indicators involve,
- j. Weaknesses in inner-party democracy.
- k. Lack of party elections.
- l. Lack of engagement and mobilization of the grassroots.
- m. Phantom party memberships.
- n. These led to the fact that the party could not react to the dynamics of the political environment following the change of decolonization.
- o. The Elite Capture and Factionalism.
- p. This variable exemplifies
- q. Landed gentry hegemony and regional elites.
- r. Personal internal conflicts between party rulers.
- s. Development of domestic pressure.

The political elite factions provided an ideological vacuum and procedurally replaced the estranged party members with political zeal to the party.

Party Institutionalization Theory.

There is no other theory, which even remotely compares to the research objectives as party institutionalization theory, particularly the principal works of Samuel P. Huntington, and later in his life streamlined works of Angelo Panebianco. Huntington argues that political order and legitimacy is maintained by adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherent interdependence of the political institutions. In this way, the political parties that fail to institutionalize, disintegrate, become caught by elites, and deteriorate.

In the given circumstances, the view of the Muslim league is of a highly mobilized and extremely weakly institutionalized party. The League went beyond the borders of a nation-state and worked on development of a nationalistic movement which would unite. The party could not realign and focus on governance after it was formed instead of just mobilizing the people following the establishment of Pakistan. Lack of regular elections, autocratic leadership of the party, poor grassroots movement, and absence of accountability mechanism are all symptoms of serious institutionalization deficit.

Typologization of the party by Panebianco, on the other hand, is quite appropriate. Movement parties are mobile and reliant on one, very powerful and active leader with a coherent single ideology, unlike institutionalized parties who perform on predictable, coherent, and systematic procedures, and based rules of governance that provide neutrality. A post-independent Muslim league was still primitive in a movement-political phase, which topped up with stagnation, internal strife, and capture of organizational elite.

Limitations of the Charismatic Authority.

Weber is the most accurate in capturing the Constraints of Charismatic Authority. The fuse of the allure of the founding leader whose role was that of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam, before 1947 played a key role in the balancing, integration and performance of the League. Nevertheless, Weber was aware that this charm was not here to stay but instead should be pooled in an order of rational control in case it stayed.

In the instance of Pakistan, the restructuring of charisma did not exist. In 1948 the leader of Muslim league, Jinnah, passed on and there was no means to guarantee the unity and legitimacy of the party in order to succeed in the preservation of the partition. Neither of the subsequent leaders of the party nor Liaquat Ali Khan and Chaudhry Khaliq-us-Zaman had the

same level of legitimacy or internal unity of the party required to exercise the same level of dominance and internal stability. The leadership vacuum that had been caused by over-reliance on personal leadership in party organization instead of party constitution left the organization as such.

Elites and Factionalism

Pareto and Mosca have their own view of elite theory but both sides of the discussion hold that political authority belongs to the small elite group which is entirely politicized. In loosely institutionalized settings, rivalry between elites is observed in the form of factionalism and not programmatic political rivalry.

Once the Muslim league received independence, they slowly became an elite dominated political party that was controlled by the members of the landed gentry and other allied bureaucrats and provincial power brokers who took over the organizational set up of the party. The League was not a political party of parliament, but it was a medium by which the members of the elite in the League furthered their political and economic ambitions. This was the reason why the political party was captured by the elite and the league was so factionalized to the extent that, personal animosities and enmities of the League became preeminent over politics in Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, and East Pakistan.

In addition to this, it is explained by the elite theory that led to dissent within the party which did not lead to reformation but instead to the formation of splinter parties as was the case of the dissenting leaders of the Awami League and the Republican Party.

The Imbalance of Institutions and the Post-Colonial State

The post-colonial state theory provides a description on the outcome of colonialism and colonial rule as well as on the problem of bureaucratic profligacy, poor political institutions and non-democratic institutions. As post-colonial systems state theory, Alavi states that the post-colonial systems are endowed with the characteristics of a strong bureaucracy and military, whereas the political parties are much weaker.

The disintegration of the Muslim league has been touched on in several theoretical perspectives. The League failed to stake a monopoly within the bureaucratic latticework of the Governor-General who was a political entity that had great influence within the polity such as, the ability to dismiss and appoint prime ministers. The surrender of the League proves the lack of the institutional power and legislative praxis.

Federal Theory and Centre-Province Relations.

The Federal theory of the state is based on the inclusion and equal distribution of power in a multi-ethnic structure. The negligence towards the regional needs and especially in East Pakistan is also another aspect, which led to the loss of legitimacy of the Muslim League.

The East-West Pakistan imbalance, an unjust representation of the party council, along with ignoring the complaints of the political, linguistic and economic grievances were some of the factors that failed to unite the country. According to the Federalist theory view, the structure of the Muslim league was highly centralized and elitist and as a result of that, the league was unprepared to deal with the dynamics of Unity and Leadership of plurality in Pakistan.

Constitutional and Electoral Failure

This captures long term slow development of a constitution.

- a. Unreasonable period to conduct elections.
- b. It is weak in parliament.
- c. This cut across the democratic credibility of the League and the lack of trust among the people.
- d. The Imbalance between the Centre and the Provinces.

- e. Here we have a case of:
- f. The Marginalization of East Pakistan.
- g. Overrepresentation in the party councils.
- h. Queuing of the complaints of the region.
- i. The other parties appeared in the regions due to the political alienation.
- j. Intervening Variables

Intervening Variables of bureaucratic Dominance, and Interference by the Governor General enhances the effects of party weaknesses through diminishing power of parliament and democracy.

Conclusion

The study was dedicated to decline of the Muslim league, which also provided helpful details to the understanding of the very first stage of political instability in Pakistan. It is evident that the League was not able to change into a nationalism movement and a democratically developing governing body.

The degree to which the liberation movements lose the means to self-advocate and become institutionalized is determined by several factors. The case of the Muslim league shows that one might be politically fragile and unsustainable after achieving independence. It must have organizational coherence, system commitment, and, probably, most importantly, open inclusive leadership.

Policy Suggestions

1. According to the research, the policy improvement recommendations are as follows to democracy in the possible areas.
2. Empower democracy within one of the political parties.
3. Separate executive powers and party leadership.
4. Standardize the election processes and reform party documents.
5. Support political action in the bureaucracy.
6. The main goal of these suggestions is to improve the efficiency of the political parties and democracy in general.

Further Recommendations

Third appreciated these recommendations, and in order to carry on the success we suggest the following to the future:

1. Comparisons of other post-colonial parties.
2. The further analysis will primarily cover the post-1954 period.
3. Increased use of archival and oral histories.
4. Having informed other studies on the political history of Pakistan, the premature disintegration of political parties and subsequent military rule has been seriously compromised.

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