Fatima Jinnah & Benazir Bhutto: Initial Saga of Painful Birth of Pakistan's Feminine Politics

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Abstract

Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for the assurance of Gender Equality and Genuine goodwill of Democracy. No nation can rise to the height of glory without the participation of their women into legal, political, socio-economic and decision making process of household to public life. Gender-sensitive Governance has been achieved all over the Globe to some extent but struggle is still on its way and it needs much encroachment. Previously, women who partook in electoral campaigns or political uplifting of other women were docketed as deteriorated women by misogynist portions. This article is based on the struggle of two most Empowered Ladies of Pakistan, Miss Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto for the refurbishment of democracy, women emancipation and equitable and inclusive governance of women. Though, they both faced a lot of backlash, but still they marked a difference among those people for the sake of their women.

Keywords: women emancipation, empowerment, political deterioration, religious misinterpretation, male dominance, misogynist, restoration of democracy movement, dictatorship, religious extremism, male chauvinism

Introduction

This article is based on the political history and efforts of two most influential Pakistani women fought for the political and civil betterment of their nation. To understand the life and position of these ladies, we must have to know the regional situation of the country where they both ruled. Pakistan, a country located on the Arabian Sea, share its border with different other nations like Iran, Afghanistan, Soviet Union, India and China and enjoyed much beautiful and somehow bitter political trading history with these and other States. (Omer Farooq Zain, Bushra Ali, 2009)

In the early 7th century, teachings of Islam were forwarded by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the Muslims and then Muslims followed upon the religion brought up by the messenger of

Allah. Before an independent nation, Pakistan was ruled by British colonization where in 1847, British colonized Hindustan for about a century (1847-1947). It was a time when economic, social, legal expansions were made in that state but later both states tried its level best to get rid of this economic and political suppression by White People. And finally in 1947, Hindustan separated into two nations; Pakistan and India. (Gilmartin, 1998)

After independence, sister of First Governor General of Pakistan-Miss Fatima Jinnah also played her civic and political responsibilities for the stirring and regeneration of Pakistani women to better direction. This lineage was put forward by Miss Fatima and reached at Benazir Bhutto in later times when she ruled over Pakistan as 1st elected Prime Minister of Pakistan for two times. Bhutto and Fatima both got political background thus excelled in political heartening of nation. Benazir Bhutto's father was the creator of 3rd Constitution of Pakistan (14th august 1973), when for the first time, Parliamentary System was introduced in Pakistan. It was a time when Zulfikar Bhutto tried to diminish the economic ruling of so called 22 Families who were holding all the economic resources of Pakistan. He broke this stereotype that only wealthy people can hold or possess properties. Wealth shifting began at this time then powers were also shifted from higher to lower management. (Talha, 2009)

Despite the ratification of ***Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women***, discriminatory practices still exist. Women constitute almost 45% population of Pakistan, but still she has been marginalized and sadly, this subjugation is dramatized on the name of Islam. In fact, Islam never disrespected women at any cost and provides huge reverence to women in all walks of life. She has been cherished as a wife, a mother, a sister, a daughter and so on. But, the Guerrilla Tactics and dirty politics of Pakistan always marginalized women from their level of comfort and made them feel like they are unequal member of State and Nation. Unfortunately, political discrimination and gender inequality is considered to be the normative measure taken in Pakistan since its inception. Situation becomes better than previous days but if we look in to past, then we will be amazed that those women suffered a lot to gain independent status for these women of today who are enjoying liberty at some extent. (Asar, 2003)

Article 25 asserts Equality before law and equality of citizens without the discrimination of race, color, sex and creed but still women are facing political discrimination and unequal practices. The Constitution of Pakistan also ensures the equality of citizens and equal participation of women in political mainstream but role has been played by someone else symbolically and there's another actor playing the main role behind the scene. Well, history of women being suffered from political violence and discriminatory practices seems to be as old

as Pakistan is. Starting from Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah to Benazir Bhutto to Malala Yousafzai, women suffered from political violence, political marginalization, and dirty politics and wishy washy statements given by male politicians. Societal attitudes towards women political participation has been changing to a limit but there's an immense lack of implementation of all those international policies and constitutional measures taken for women because still Pakistani women is bounded by societal norms and values more than her own personal wishes. Women is still expected to be bounded within four walls of home and going nowhere for the emancipation of her rights and personality building.

Situation was worse even before the advent of Pakistan as no women was allowed by male dominant societal rules to get herself involved in political decisions and all that. But this stigma was broken by the participation and involvement of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah (sister of Founder of Pakistan – Quaid-E-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah) who took a bold initiative of political participation and professional mainstream by involving herself into public affairs. She made it easier for women of that and later times to participate into political history of Pakistan.

Here, in this article, author is going to discuss two most important, blazing political beauties of Pakistani politics. Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto for the sake of their country's women and sake of their political stability.

1. Miss Fatima Jinnah
2. Benazir Bhutto

1. Patriotic Heroine: MOHTARMA FATIMA JINNAH

Fatima Ali Jinnah, commonly known as Mader-e-Millat (Mother of the Nation) was the younger sibling of Quaid-E-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. She was the youngest of seven brothers and sisters born to *Poonja Jinnah*, who was known as a comfortable merchant of that time in Karachi. After the death of her parents, she was sent to *Bnadara Convent* for her education where she used to live in hostels. In 1919, she went to *Dr. Ahmed's Dental College* at Calcutta for her degree of Dentistry and graduated from that University in 1923. She had a strong resemblance with her elder brother *Mohammad Ai Jinnah* thus seems to be more attach with him than other siblings. In 1923, she opened her own Dental hospital in Bombay where she practiced her patent field. This thing was the evident that *Quaid-E-Azam* was in huge favor of girl's education because he always talked about women empowerment and emancipation. She participated a lot in political rallies and seems everywhere with her elder brother. All political affiliations of Jinnah known her very well because she was the most progressive member of Jinnah's personal and professional life. She participated in all kinds of political

speeches where she persuaded a lot of women to get them enrolled into country's politics. Once Jinnah said, that it was a time when almost everyone considered me a mad person but only Fatima was there to support me in my good and bad condition. She was famously known as ***Khatoon-I-Pakistan***. (Sana Zaheer, Muhammad Iqbal Chawla, 2019)

Previously, she was not known as a political women, rather she was known to be social activist. But with the passage of time when she participated a lot in to politics and specifically in the political campaign of her brother, people considered her a political activist too. Looking back into past, there seems a fewer data on the professional life of Fatima. In her book, she seems to be in praise of her brother and also discussed the lucrativeness of her father's trade. She wrote very little about herself. Politically, she was not very much into the politics and policy making but she stressed a lot over women uplifting and girl's education. She was a special activist in so many forms as helping out refugees of flood from East and West Pakistan, health issues of all poor people, TB Patients and so on. When she ran her campaign against Ayub Khan, in which she failed, she didn't play blame politics here rather she said that opposite party had strong political and religious influence. As at that time, it was just impossible for Pakistani men to see a woman elected over the highest position of this nation. But this record was broken up by Benazir Bhutto.

1.1. All Pakistan's Women Association (APWA)

APWA (World Muslim Women ARE AWAKE) was founded by *Begum Ra'ana Liaqat Ali Khan* in 1949, based on a non-profitable, non-political organization initially established for the moral, economic and social uplifting of women and inferior people who migrated to Pakistan after great migration process. Fatima Jinnah was among the founding members of *APWA*, where they took initiative measures apart from Government to settle down the refugees and to provide them with food, shelter and basic necessities of life. She wanted to see the women on the higher positions as men but unfortunately, women were and still somehow considered as the subjugated member of society where she is not allowed to participate equally into political affairs or policy making. Well, this situation has been changed a bit but still there needs some improvements regarding women participation on the equal basis.

1.2. Later Life- At Mohammad Ali Jinnah's House

In 1923, when she set up her professional business in Bombay as a dentist, it was a time when almost every Muslim women was circumscribed into *pardah* and they were not indorsed to come out of four confines of home. She erudite how to stand on own feet and how to ripen the

feelings of sympathy for others as well. She was practicing her dentistry in Bombay where she came to know that her sister-in-law, *Ratti Jinnah* died in 1929. She wound up her bag and closed her profession and came back to the house of her brother to take care of all domestic and social chores. Initially, she had no interest in politics, but with the passage of time, by living with her brother, she developed a political interest and realized why it is so much important to women to participate in political uplifting of society for better and equal development. She was much inspired by British women and wanted to incorporate women into all walks of life like male members. In 1930, when her brother went into phase of disappointment that political struggle for Sub-Continent seems to be deviated. Thus she went out London with her brother and they both lived there for almost four years (1930-1934). Here, she keenly observed British women that how they participate in each socio-political decision of their male counterparts and decided to indulge women of Pakistan was well into all these things. After coming back, her political struggle went into a new phase where she started to initiate different campaigns for women empowerment.

1.3. Political Deterioration by ‘Liaquat’ Administration’ and ‘Ayub Khan’

After the death of her brother, she was banned by the dominant figures of Pakistani politics to participate in any kind of political or socio-political activity. She was banned till 1951, and when she came out to speak on radio, censored by Liaquat Administration and many others who let her down by their Guerrilla Tactics. After coming out of her self-imposed restrictions on her political career, she decided to participate in Presidential elections of 1965 against Ayub Khan. But despite of huge political support towards Ayub allies, she lost that election but media reported that she won two major cities at that time. These were *Dhaka* and *Karachi*. Media witnessed that she faced a lot of brutality on her self-esteem and political career after this violation of some masculine regions. She was considered to be a legacy for the movement of *Civil Rights* and helping others out to resolve their social and economic problems.

In the elections of 1956, there were two main political rivals appeared against each other. The one was the ruling party of Muslim League while the other was the bloc and gathering of Opposition parties. Pakistan witnessed the support of dictatorship as all elections movements and campaigns were against Miss Fatima and supported Ayub Khan. She got very few time for the campaigning of her elections, poor financial resources, and more specifically no support from public being a woman. Thus she lost elections by gaining only 36% of the total votes. Only religious party at that time, *Jamat-i-Islami* supported Fatima and cleared their stance that women too can contest elections and can participate in electoral campaigns. This electoral

campaign was not merely a campaign rather it was the character assassination of opponents of Ayub Khan by the immense usage of media, radio, newspapers and other political rallies.

The topic of her death is still controversial as some people said that she died of an unnatural death while others claim that she died naturally. Well, it's a long debate which is still mysterious. She died in Karachi on 9 July 1967 where nearly more than half million people attending her funeral.

Apart from her political affiliation with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, she was a lady of scrupulousness, prestige and self-esteem who tried certain measures for Pakistani women to get themselves known into public and political arena. (Sultana, 2003)

1.4. FATIMA as a Social Activist: After Death of her Brother

After the death of Jinnah's wife, it was the dire need of Mr. Jinnah to take a supportive a courageous lady along him. She supported her brother a lot in all political and social decisions taken up for the betterment of Pakistani nation and its people. She collected a lot of data on the life of her brother and wanted to get it written by a Pakistani author as she didn't want to get it written by any foreigner writer because she was of the fear that they might misinterpret the data. Well, G. Allana assisted Fatima to write a book on her father. Unfortunately, this book was not published in her life³ as she died in 1967, 19 years after the death of her brother. But G. Allana then completed the boom and published it as "*Quaid-E-Azam Jinnah: The Story of a Nation*".

Not just in Pakistan, she asked and requested people living out of Pakistan to help refugees and also she offered her intense help to Azad Kashmir Government. She sent two stretcher ambulances to Azad Kashmir, donated money to National Tuberculosis Association of Pakistan, sent 10,000 scholarship to middle class boys and 10,000 to middle class girls enrolled in schools. Apart from her political activities, she participated in the social welfare, women health and education, and women empowerment on a broader level but her death had stopped everything which she initiated. Still in 2021, we don't know the real story behind her death either it was a natural death or a murder by someone. But author can assure one thing which is the urge of Fatima behind the liberation of women in public walks of life. (Yousaf, 2015)

2. Benazir Bhutto: A Political Portrait

2.1. Former Years & Childhood

Benazir Bhutto was born as a first child to Nusrat Ispahani (daughter of an Iranian Businessman) and Zulfikar Bhutto (a landlord of Sindh and an Oxford educated Lawyer of that

time) on 21 June, 1953 at Pinto Hospital Karachi. At the time of her birth, she had not a dark complexion like many Pakistani child born at that time, rather she got a rosy pick color which later nicknamed her Pinkie. Her name “Benazir” means “without comparison” was named after her aunt who died earlier in her teenage. 3 more children born to Nusrat and Zulfikar Bhutto after Benazir named, Mir Murtaza, Sanam and Shah Nawaz. Being born in a politically acknowledged family, she had keen interest in political studies and knowing more about political history of nation where she born. Her family belonged to a well-educated and political background so they had a lot of comfort zones than many others of that area. English language was taught by a governess, though she knew somehow to speak in Persian (native language of her mother), she also knew the basics of Sindhi (paternal language of her father and the land where she lived-Sindh) and found her interest in Urdu as well (national and official language of Pakistan). Being born in a progressive and multi-ethnic family, she was Sunni from the side of her father, while got Shiite sect from the side of her mother. But known as Sunni Muslim in Pakistani history. (Ziring, 1991)

Though she seems not to be much dedicated and profound at studies because during her free times, she used to go at Sindh Club for swimming and like these activities with her friends. Since childhood, she knew a lot of official dignitaries due to her father’s political background. (Ashfaq U Rehman, Arif Khan, Bakhtiar Khan, 2017)

2.2. First Political Venture-Anti Vietnam War Movement at Harvard

When she moved abroad for her higher studies, she participated in Anti-Vietnam war movement despite of knowing the fact that she will be deported from this country on such political movements. But she was keenly interested in the attainment of rights for all those suppressed and deteriorated nations as she and her family too faced something like that in Pakistan during their early settlements when Pakistan fought its Civil War in East Pakistan. During her class, once a professor Michael Walzer criticized policies and military tactics of Pakistan which it played during civil war, Benazir fearlessly stood up in her class and spoke in the defense of her nation. It seems to be the first indication towards her patriotic behavior for the support of her country. (Ziring, Political Connections: Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto, 1994)

In 1967, her father formed his own political party named “Pakistan People’s Party”. In 1977 when she returned back to Pakistan after completing her degree from Oxford University, she decided to make her appearance officially in the political face of Pakistan. Though she participated a lot in international meetings and convoys with her father especially at China and

some other nations. (Muhammad Azeem, Muhammad Kashif Ali, Ahmad Hassan, and Saeed Ahmad, 2018)

2.3. “Judicial Murder of Zulfikar”: Benazir’s Appeals

On the name of Islamic Fundamentalism, General Zia-Ul-Haq declared military takeover and arrested thousands of people who were in favor of PPP. Zulfikar Bhutto was also arrested, thus coming the responsibilities of movements and party control over the shoulders of Benazir Bhutto and her mother. She made her first speech at Faisalabad which made Zia-ul-Haq frightened that he arrested Benazir after her 3rd speech and converted her home as detention for her. She was released from this house confinement after 15 days. As she belonged to a healthy and wealthy family, it was easy for her to move abroad as other siblings were living in different countries for the sake of their education. But she along her preferred to stay in Pakistan for the defense mechanism of her father and to make PPP active in the absence of her father. Many more people started to attach with their political party as Zulfikar Bhutto attracted more people from the bottom of Pakistan and resolved their financial problems. But unfortunately on 24 October 1977, trial of Zulfikar Bhutto started and he along his four cod3fendants were charged to murder Ahmad Raza Kasuri-a political opponent. This trial lasted for five months and it was a shallow trial to delimitate the powers of Zulfikar. Once Benazir was convinced that her father is innocent and will be released from Jail but it wasn’t the fact. Human rights abuses, public floggings and secret tortures were mainly implemented during the reign of Zia-Ul-Haq and he added a lot of other misappropriate usage of funds and corruption charges over Zulfikar Bhutto. Benazir tried a lot to get her father rid of all these fake situations but print media and e verything was in control of Zia-Ul-Haq. (Pirbhai, 2014)

On 18 March 1978, Lahore High court issued the death sentence of Zulfikar Bhutto along his four codefendants. After a lot of appeals made by her mother and herself, all lawyers failed and on 4 April 1979, Zulfikar Bhutto was hanged at Rawalpindi District Jail and no one from family or friends were allowed to attend the hasty funeral. He was buried at ancestral graveyard and this unfortunate death of her father gave a courage to Benazir to fight for her nation. (Shafqat, 1995)

2.4. First Women to Lead a Muslim Nation: Benazir Bhutto

Daughter of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto-a charismatic leader who found most love and more hate in Pakistani civil and political history. A legendary leader who ruled Pakistan from 1971 to 1977 before the Dictator regime of General Zia-Ul-Haq. She

faced a lot of antagonist attitude from the male dominant and religious elements but her appeal was very much clear in stance of her father that “Bhutto did good things for the poor”, a huge population has supported her on the behalf of her father’s political party. (Sekine, 1992)

Practical initiation of Benazir’s political tenure has been started after the execution of her father. She along her mother went into exile, detention, house arrests but she tried all efforts to make her father’s PPP alive. Though it was a difficult task to maintain the responsibilities of party being in London but some honest party workers played their pivotal role on this regard. In 1984, MRD formed (Movement for the Restoration of Democracy) by 9 political parties. It was an alliance against Dictatorship General Zia-Ul-Haq. Benazir Bhutto was in dominance in this alliance as PP was the strongest and powerful opposition party at that time. During the elections of 1985, MRD opposed elections because they held on non-party basis. She then returned to Pakistan in 1986, after two years of self-exile in London and welcomed warmly by the people of Pakistan. This welcome was based in the memory of her late father. It was the 2nd most warm welcome more than expectations given to any political member. (Khuhro, 2014)

2.4.1. Benazir Bhutto: Trait Theory & Charismatic Personality

Since her birth, she got charismatic personality features from her father as both belonged to a political background. To clearly understand Benazir Bhutto’s political contributions and loopholes, trait theory can play a pivotal role to unfold and understand her political and social role as Prime Minister of Pakistan during her two tenures 1988-1990 and 1993-1996. What kind of motivational factors, political strategies, administrative skills and social responsibilities were attached to personification of Benazir Bhutto during her ruling as the first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan as a lady? She played an immense role in the restoration of democracy by the alliance of MRD but later this coalition was broken down because all political parties were in opposition to each other’s ruling and specially working under the directions of lady. (Burhan Rafay, Basit Habib, Ushna Tariq, Prof. Dr. Azra Asghar Ali, 2016)

So many factors put their role in the upbringing of Benazir Bhutto as a political leader. The first was the political legacy she got from her father, secondly she had a charismatic personality in her own style, and thirdly she had been educated in an environment which pursued a lot of women to participate in liberation and federation of women around them. She had witnessed a lot of deteriorated moments in her life like hanging of her father, her house arrests and later she was arrested and confined in Sukkur Jail which challenged her conviction and integrity severely but she stayed firm. Later her loving brother Mir Shah Nawaz found dead in his apartment in France which shed a deep impression of depression on her mind. But she went on

to be elected as **First Woman Prime Minister of Pakistan** on 1st December 1988 for the first time and remarkably achieved some milestones during her political tenure. As being elected during her premiership, she tried;

- i. She brought up by foreign investment to brighten the future of Pakistani trading society,
- ii. Restored the paths towards democracy
- iii. Always in favor of society free from women exploitation and gender discrimination in all walks of life thus initiated campaigns for women to get rid of humiliation, tortured behavior, and male aggression.
- iv. Enhanced social justice and democratic empowerment of women along men by the incorporation of women into political agendas
- v. Despite of civil-military establishment, she really tried hard to change the civil, social, economic and political structure of Pakistan to get freedom for suppressed margins

As being a positivist, she attracted foreign trade companies to invest in the economy of Pakistan but when she dismissed for the 2nd time, it proved to be a disorientation for foreign trading companies thus they took their business back to their homeland. This thing affected the fragile economy of Pakistan and Pakistan once gain went into economic troubles by the hands of religious extremists who were not willing to be ruled by a women. (Bakhtiar Khan, Arif Khan and Irfan Khan, 2019)

During her first premiership, her government was illegally dismissed in 1990. But she again won a higher majority in electoral process and became **Prime Minister of Pakistan in October 1993**. In the second electoral campaign, she along her party workers used door-steps policy and went over the houses of common pole to influence them for voting their party. She has been provided public with a new “Agenda for Change” which looked for the economic betterment of economically suppressed regions and people.

She was awarded with “World’s Most Popular Politician” by New Guinness Book of Record in 1996. She was also included in the list of 100 most powerful women by Times and The Australian Magazine.

In 1993, she was elected for another time as the Prime Minister of an Islamic State. Here she adopted a range of domestic and foreign policies. In her first Premiership, she advocated for gender liberation and equality at all levels but in this 2nd term, she advanced women’s rights more profoundly mere from talks or sayings. (Tariq, 2017)

- i. Bhutto for the first time signed Pakistan to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

- ii. Founded Council of Women World Leaders, a group of women leaders formed in 1996 to rule the world by their insights
- iii. Created a Women's Division in the Government, which was chaired by a female civil servant along with the creation of First Women's Bank.
- iv. A series of Female police stations was opened by her as to make all victims feel secure who come to police stations for the filing of their report and to provide them with best and scrutinized environment
- v. First women judges were appointed to Supreme Court of Sindh and Peshawar in 1995-1996 after her creation of female courts to handle child custody and family matters
- vi. Yet, she failed to remove the jurisdictions of Hudood Ordinance brought up by General Zia-Ul-Haq to restrict women from public participation, thus faced a lot of human backlash in this regard.

After so much efforts done by her, Pakistan tried to restore its democracy to some extent. In the effort of restoring democracy and modernization she got killed on 27th December 2007, when she came out of her car to wave the crowd. There from 3 to 3 meters, she got 3 bursts of a gun and injured deadly then died later in hospital emergency.

Conclusion

Fatima Jinnah and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto were the advocates of peace in and around regions and they fought to gain the peace by challenging the previously set norms and stigmas which hinder women inclusion and participation at narrower or broader level. Pakistan indeed got its democratic lineage after having so many dictator intervening thus here comes the responsibilities of Pakistani's to save this democracy, restore their efforts to safeguard their motherland from internal and external threats. Remember! There is no mountain high enough to scale by Pakistani women or dedicated males. The thing is we need to incorporate feminine division along the implementation gender based equitable performance for the up gradation of their developing economy and nation. These both ladies have sacrificed their lives to protect the norms of their democratic nation, yet a lot has to be done in this regard. Gender sensitive education is required to train both genders of society to respect their martyrs and everything. Orthodox Ulamas, male chauvinism, religious extremism, political violation didn't stop these courageous ladies from their road to freedom for others and themselves as well. Responsibility of media comes here as well for the projection of gender based programs In order to enhance the political motivation and involvement of women into public life. If media continued to

project something based on women violation, humiliations, disrespect then society won't even be able to respect the norms set down by ancestral ladies.

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