# Deterioration in Democratic Capacity and Loss of Credibility

According to Saeed, ‗civil servants who had worked in the districts and provinces had mastered all the methods of manipulating the feudal, ethnic and political factions‘. So, the overt impression of chaos and inefficiency that was created resulted in politicians losing their credibility and prestige in the eyes of public.7 Still politicians like Huseyn

Shaheed Suhrawardy were available, who had the capability to mitigate the ethnic cleavages as well as bridge the gap between the competing classes by developing cross- ethnic and inter-class alliances of politicians, but the authoritarian structure controlled by non-elected institutions had become intolerant of such democratic moves, as Marshall wrote about the removal of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy as PM: ‗it sent out of office the only available man with aptitude as a politician and giving reasonable promise of national leadership.‘8

The dominant role of the bureaucracy made politicians subservient and thus impeded the chances of capacity building to understand the public issues and problems and their solutions. Manipulation in politics increased the already present tendency of factionalism among politicians who were ready to switch loyalties for their petty benefits.9 Lack of commitment with principles due to denial of responsible roles and thus training was reflected in the changing political loyalties. One such example in the West Pakistan Assembly was witnessed when Muslim League parliamentarians switched their loyalties overnight to the Republican Party for the sake of ministerial portfolios.10 Thus, the limited capacity of the political class to negotiate and compromise democratically further deteriorated. However, the governing elite that had assumed a supervisory role could have facilitated the parliamentarians to reach a consensus about the rules of democratic governance. But the authoritarian mindset was unable to look beyond the immediate need of maintaining the order.11

As long as the subservient and factionalized political class was serving the purpose of democratic legitimacy, the authoritarian elite were not interested in the electoral process. Political process and the intelligentsia (which provide ideological rationale and organizational skills) thus, became irrelevant.12 As a result, people with high expectations when found their representatives involved in petty issues instead of national problems they became disillusioned with the political class. However, they had no alternative as the social status of the political elite was helpful in bringing them back to Parliament; moreover, the electoral process had been discarded. Consequently, the whole democratic process lost its credibility.

# Institutional Decline and a Bewildered Society

The individuals serving in public institutions were part of the society where traditional features were still prevalent while civil society was nascent; therefore, a rational and impartial attitude was not fully internalized in their personalities. Thus, their behaviour was influenced by ethnic, tribal, caste, family and personal affiliations without commitment to their rule based jobs. During the colonial period state officials were motivated by feelings of being part of a superior civilization so, they would maintain their commitment and serve according to rule, though behaved with colonial arrogance. People were also socialized to be obedient to the ‗superior masters‘. After the colonial period, the feelings of being part of a superior civilization should have been supplanted by the spirit of fellow-citizen through inclusive ideology with motivational content until the achievement of a rational and empathetic society. Since the ruling elite with authoritarian mindset considered any kind

of political defiance to their policies as acts of treachery, therefore, this attitude favoured strict administration (a euphemism for arrogant behaviour) instead inclusive approach. Consequentially, the commitment level of public servants declined and particularistic behaviour was reflected in their behaviour. Thus not only did institutional performance decline but institutions became discriminatory and corrupt.

Similarly, when society, which used to have a high level of expectations, observed their representatives involved in nonissues and declining institutional performance, they became frustrated. Consistent inclusive ideological programs would have given them feelings of pride and integration, however, the ruling elite‘s indifference and inconsistent ideological stances made it appear to be bewildered. Thus, society was without any clear direction. All these factors diminished the chances of institutionalization and created a sense of instability and loss of direction.13

The overall deteriorating situation provided an opportunity to the most organized hence most powerful institution to intervene. Thus power shifted from the political class to the bureaucracy and from the bureaucracy to the military. In other words, power gravitated from the disorganized to the organized and from the organized to the most organized institution.

## MODERATE PRAETORIANISM

Military‘s intervention was a welcome step for masses at a time when the country was facing pervasive instability and

the civilian political leadership had already lost credibility. The military‘s firm control restored the institutional performance as well as hope among the masses. However, it was a deviation from the rational-democratic system.

Though authoritarianism found the opportunity and rationale for the intervention, however, it was an anomaly for the institutionalized elite which were attuned to rational rules and also had links with western liberal-democracies. That is why at the time of imposition of martial law, it was declared, ‗the country will be governed as close as possible in accordance with the 1956 Constitution‘,14 and the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) General Ayub Khan justified the anomaly as:

‗They [the politicians had] waged a ceaseless and bitter war against each other regardless of the ill effects on the country

… [there had been] no limit to the depth of their baseness, chicanery, deceit and degradation.‘15 He further reiterated the commitment to a democratic form of governance, ‗Our aim is to restore democracy, but of a type that people can understand and that will work.‘

# Economic Development, Uniformity of Mind and Action, and Democratic Legitimacy

The military regime, being authoritarian in nature, assumed that economic development of the country would automatically lead to a stable, democratic system. Hence the regime was more concerned with economic than democratic development. The modernization perspective, put forward and popularized by western scholarship, was the guideline for Ayub regime for economic development of the country. As Talbot observed, ‗Pakistan was a

laboratory for modernization theory‘s prescription for

―take-off‖ into sustained economic growth through massive infusions of capital directed to industry by the government and the establishment of a cultural, political, and economic environment conducive to the releasing of entrepreneurial abilities.‘16

The focal point of modernization is a sociocultural transformation; from an agrarian society to an industrial society, for this reason the regime intended to involve the traditional, particularly rural population in the modernization project (economic progress through cultural transformation) in a way that would allow economic development to be channelled properly.17 However, traditional politicians could disrupt the project by challenging the legitimacy of the regime through mobilization of the people. Hence in order to accomplish its project the regime had to address the problems of potential social mobilization and a legitimacy crisis.

Ayub‘s diagnosis was that the problem faced by Pakistan was divisive political forces that arose because of the parliamentary form of government. In his point of view the political class exploited the ‗naivety‘ of the common man, otherwise people were ‗by nature patriotic and good.‘18 Therefore, the recommended system should be compatible with the ‗genius of the people‘, and that it must also ensure uniformity of mind and action. Thus Basic Democracy (BD) was designed to serve this purpose, i.e. channelization of economic development, democratic legitimacy and uniform governance.19 BD was also a step towards fulfilling

the promise to make the country a ‗real democracy‘ within the broader perspective of the modernization paradigm.20

However, the real advantage of BD was to maintain democratic legitimacy without being dependent on the traditional political elite. As politicians were to show their political intentions prior to contesting elections that their political activities would be restricted to the assigned roles (council activities) so that the old political class could be sieved out and a new inexperienced class could become part of the system. Furthermore, not only were political parties banned but in order to keep politicians and political activities under control, Elective Bodies Disqualification Ordinance (EBDO) was issued.21 Thus a controlled system was established in which an immature, hence pliant new political class was available for the authoritarian regime to maintain its legitimacy. Consequently, in 1962 the military regime got the basic democrats to ratify a constitution that had already been framed. The new constitution introduced a centralized presidential form of governance.