**Parliament and constitution of Pakistan 1956**

**Background:**

After assuming charge as Prime Minister, Chaudhary Muhammad Ali and his team worked hard to formulate a constitution. The committee, which was assigned the task to frame the Constitution, presented the draft Bill in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on January 9, 1956. The bill was opposed by the Bengali autonomists. Bhashai, the leader of Awami League in East Pakistan, even used the threat of secession to press for autonomy and his party staged a walkout from the Assembly on February 29, when the Assembly adopted the Constitution. Later on, Awami League boycotted the official ceremonies celebrating the inauguration of the Constitution. However, in spite of their opposition, the Constitution was adopted and was enforced on March 23, 1956. With this Pakistan’s status as a dominion ended and the country was declared an Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Constituent Assembly became interim National Assembly and Governor-General Iskander Mirza sworn in as the first President of Pakistan.

***Parliament and constitution of Pakistan 1956***

On 5th March 1956, Major General Sikandar Mirza became the first elected President of Pakistan. The 1956 constitution provides for Parliamentary form of government with all the executive powers in the hands of Prime Minister. President was Head of the State and was to be elected by all Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies. He was to hold office for 5 years. The President was to act on the advice of Prime Minister, except where he was empowered to act in his discretion.

**Composition of parliament:**

Under 1956 Constitution, Parliament was unicameral. Legislative powers vested in the Parliament, which consisted of the President and the National Assembly comprising 300 Members divided equally between East and West Pakistan. In addition to these 300 seats, five seats were reserved for women for each of the two wings, for a period of ten years: thus bringing the total membership of the House to 310.

However, in the absence of any law to control the Political Parties and the problem of floor crossing, political instability perpetually ensued. Although the first general election were scheduled for early 1959, President Sikandar Mirza abrogated the Constitution, dissolved the National and Provincial Assemblies, and declared Martial Law, on 7th October 1958. He appointed General Muhammad Ayub Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, as the Chief Martial Law Administrator.

On 27th October 1958 General Muhammad Ayub Khan took-over as a second President of Pakistan. One of the first major steps taken by General Ayub Khan was the appointment of a Constitution Commission on 17th February 1960. The objective of this commission was to submit proposals, as to how best democracy can be strengthened and molded according to the country’s socio-political environment and Islamic principles of justice. The Commission submitted its report to the government on 29th April 1961. On the basis of this report a new Constitution was framed and given to the nation on 1st March 1962.