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**Parties and rifts**

Controlling political parties, subjugating them and encouraging them to disintegrate in the name of the national interest as well as external pressure, political engineering, greed and use of various manoeuvres are the bitter realities of our political history that can neither be denied nor any sign seen for reformation of this tainted political culture.

It can be said without any doubt that democracy, democratic attitudes and especially political parties have a fundamental role to play in the formation of an organized and balanced society in modern times. It is on record that the real motivation behind the tireless struggle of the All India Muslim League and the successful politics of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in this regard was driven by peaceful political and democratic thinking which led to the creation of Pakistan in the middle of the 20th century. In any case, the real impetus behind the overall progress that modern societies have made over the last two centuries is the development of a well-organized and stable culture of political parties in addition to the democratic establishment of these societies.

Needless to say, Pakistan came into being as a result of a purely political-democratic struggle in which the key role is played by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All India Muslim League, but unfortunately we do not witness continuity of this culture after the establishment of Pakistan. Though we should have strengthened this culture after independence, we see that till the tragedy of the fall of East Pakistan, our political and democratic culture continued to decline. Some people may attribute this situation to the rule of General Ayub Khan, but we must not forget that between the martial law imposed by Ayub Khan in 1958 and the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 the eleven years of political leadership had shown no seriousness on the part of political parties to foster a culture of stable political democracy.

We have to tie this explanation in the context of the recent uprising in the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) and the consequent expulsion of top four leaders – Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani, Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, Maulana Gul Naseeb Khan and Maulana Shuja ul Mulk – from the party and later the announcement of the formation of a separate faction of JUI by these leaders. Although other factions have been formed from within the JUI, such as Jamiat (Darkhwasti), Jamiat (Qadri), Jamiat (Sami ul Haq) and Jamiat (Nazriyati), today these groups are no more in the political arena of Pakistan.

The purpose of this discussion is to draw attention towards the fact that we have a history of revolts in major and notable parties. This practice has done more harm to the insurgents than the parties under discussion.

It may be recalled that the first target in this regard was the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) when it faced an individual uprising in which leaders like Maulana Kausar Niazi and Ghulam Mustafa Khar, who were considered very close to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, separated from the PPP. Later the National People's Party was born within the PPP under the leadership of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, a prominent figure in Sindh politics. Today, we do not see the National People's Party in Pakistan's politics, nor do we see any trace of the political heavyweights who tried to damage the image of the PPP in this era. After this period, another uprising in the PPP was led by former president Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari against Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto; Leghari later tried to keep his politics active from the platform of the Pakistan Millat Party but today the Millat Party has also become a thing of the past and we do not see any party of this name active in the politics of the country.

Between the PPP and the PML-N scuffle in the 1990s, we see Pakistan's political arena as hostile, but this period can at least be described as a period of considerable calm in terms of internal disintegration and insurgency within party ranks. However, when General Pervez Musharraf came to power, he felt the need for a political crutch; and as a military dictator, as expected, he focused his eyes on the party from which he had grabbed power – the PML-N. First the like-minded League was formed under the leadership of Mian Azhar and later the Chaudhry brothers tried to bury the PML-N by creating a new faction called the Quaid-e-Azam Muslim League (PML-Q).

Although the dictator of the time succeeded to some extent in his goal through this temporary arrangement, today neither the dictator nor his party (APML) is visible. Similarly, today the PML-Q under the leadership of the Chaudhry brothers is playing its role in Pakistan's politics but it is not the same as it was during the first decade of this century.

It is worth mentioning that the PML-N has in the past seen groups break away from it: Muslim League (Qasim), Muslim League (Junejo), Muslim League (Chatta) and Muslim League (Zia). Apart from that, top leaders like Javed Hashmi, Chaudhry Nisar, Lt Gen (r) Abdul Qadir Baloch and Sanaullah Zehri quit the PML-N but today in national politics, the PML-N seems to stand as a much stronger and stable party, whereas the groups and leaders that break away from it seem to be practical examples of rolling stones.

In the past, Balochistan's nationalist parties, including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa based Awami National Party (ANP), have not been spared from internal rifts either. Apart from the ANP's well-known nationalist leader Sher Baz Khan Mazari, the separation of Ajmal Khattak, Afrasiab Khattak, Afzal Khan Lala and Latif Afridi Advocate and later formation of their separate parties, first the Pakhtunkhwa Qaumi Party and later the National Awami Party (NAP) were known practical examples of the parting of ways of these stalwarts from the ANP. In this context the role of Begum Naseem Wali Khan cannot be also ignored when she along with a few like-minded leaders formed a separate faction called ANP (Wali) and tried to give tough time to the ANP. But we see that all these personalities who left the original ANP later regretted what they had done and were either forced to rejoin the ANP or their names and parties have become a mystery of the past.

In a nutshell, one can say that the honour and reputation as well as political survival of any leader is in loyalty to his/her party and not in plotting conspiracies or backing internal revolts.

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