

Struggle for Democracy in Sindh: A Case Study of Movement for Restoration of Democracy (1983)

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Abstract: Formation of a Democratic society and stable democratic government is a big problem of third world countries. Good governance without the concept of the participation of the people is nothing and meaningless. Unfortunately stable democratic government is still a big problem of Pakistan. Sindh a southern province of Pakistan played a big role for the democracy. First general elections were held in 1970, on the basis of adult-franchise. Awami League of Sheikh Mujeeb Rehman won the majority seats of National Assembly. But power was not transferred to the winning party. Awami League demanded for the transfer of power and formation of the government. Army ruler Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan did not agree, resultantly Awami League launched the agitation. Army government started the operation against the League. Finally Indian military intervene and East Pakistan was separated. After that incident power transferred to PPP the majority party of rest Pakistan. But within Six years military ousted Bhutto and Martial law was imposed on 5th Ju8ly 1977. The people of country in general and specially Sindh did not accept the military rule and fully participated in the movement for restoration of democracy (MRD). The objective of this paper is to examine the struggle of the people of Sindh for democracy.

KEYWORDS: Sindh, Martial Law, Democracy, Movement, Restoration,

Introduction:

Pakistan came into being in 1947. However, the leaders of Pakistan could not succeed to make the constitution before 1956. After two years of the implementation of constitution military occupied the power of the government remained in power till the dismemberment of the country in 1970.

First general elections in Pakistan were held in 1970, on the basis of adult-franchise. Awami League of Sheikh Mujeeb Rehman won the majority seats of National Assembly. But power was not transferred to the winning party. Awami League demanded for the transfer of power and formation of the government. Army ruler Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan did not agree, resultantly

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Awami League launched the agitation. Army government started the operation against the League. Finally Indian military intervened and East Pakistan was separated.

After the separation of East Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over the power from Yahya Khan on 20th December 1971. He became Chief Martial Law Administrator, President and later the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Second general elections of Pakistan were held in February in 1977 under the rule of Bhutto. PPP of Z.A Bhutto won 155 seats, which was more than two third majority. Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) did not accept the election results and accused the ruling party for rigging. They boycotted the elections of the provincial assemblies. (Dawn 8th March 1977) A country wide agitation was launched by PNA against Bhutto government. Bhutto contacted the leaders of the PNA for the solutions of the crises. Both parties agreed to negotiations and many meetings were held between the leaders of both parties. Finally the dialogue between Bhutto and the PNA leaders nearly reached to conclusion. Bhutto also declared it in the press conference that the agreement would be signed next day. But the military never wanted to slip the opportunity of taking over the government, hence declared Martial Law before the next sunrise i.e. 5th July 1977. Bhutto was ousted from the power and General Zia became Chief Martial Law Administrator. He is promising the people in his first address to hold general elections within the stipulated time of 90 days. However he postponed the elections on the ground to make the accountability of PPP government. Z. A Bhutto Chairman of PPP and former Prime Minister of Pakistan executed in 1979 and once again the elections were postponed for indefinite period by General Zia. After this the political scenario was entirely changed. Such prevailing political situation compelled PPP and some parties belonging to PNA to make an alliance for the restoration democracy in Pakistan.

It was really very difficult for the leadership of the PPP to make alliance with such parties which remained active against Bhutto and supported General Zia. But in the interest of the country and restoration of democracy, the leadership of PPP agreed for this alliance. The first official meeting of the leaders for the formation of Alliance was held at 70 Clifton Karachi on 6th February 1981.

The leaders were agreed and the alliance was formed and named as "Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD)". The following political party formed it

1. Pakistan Peoples Party
2. Pakistan Muslim League (Khawaja Khair Uddin Group)
3. Pakistan Democratic Party
4. Pakistan Mazdoor Kisan Party
5. Pakistan National Party
6. National Awami Party
7. Quomi Mahaz-e-Azadi
8. Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI)

9. Tahrik-I-Istiqal (TI)

10. National Democratic Party (Zardari, 2001, p. 355).

Alliance sponsored a four point program: End of Martial Law; Restoration of the 1973 Constitution; Parliamentary elections; and Transfer of power to the public representatives” (Waseem, 1994, p. 393).

Democracy is the form of government in which right is given to people for the participation and accountability through the election on the basis of adult franchise. It is a big tragedy that military occupied the power by imposing of Martial law and emergency. In the Martial law and emergency the fundamental rights of the people were suspended. The question of the unity and integrity is related with democracy. The future of Pakistan is connected with stable democratic government. The study of this research is related with democracy. This is the significance of the paper.

In this study, I have employed a combination of two methods: the research or investigation and the interpretative; and the natural scientific method. In the research, both primary and secondary sources have been used. The primary research sources depend on the field research comprising interviews, surveys and personal observation. The research on this topic is descriptive and qualitative because of its main source for data collection is the field research. It is a social research method that involves into the direct observation of social and political phenomenon in their natural settings. Various types of questions were prepared to apply for conducting interviews and surveys for required material and knowledge from quarters concerned. Mainly questions were prepared on the policy of the Zia regime towards Sindh and the politics of federalism and nationalism. For secondary sources various libraries and institutions were visited to collect the published and unpublished material on this topic. Analysis of statements, books, journals, magazines, gazetteers, newspapers government records, video films etc were used for this purpose.

Struggle of Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD)

After the announcement of the movement against the Martial Law by MRD, Martial Law authority issued Provisional Constitutional Orders (PCO) and reduced the power of the Judiciary on 23rd March 1981, according to which the judiciary could no longer quash (cancel) detention orders of the military courts, and stay flogging and execution on the basis of lack adequate evidence. (Waseem, 1994, p. 375).

After the formation of MRD, the first setback for it was the hijacking of PIA's domestic flight in March 1981. It was high jacked by the armed persons enroute Karachi to Peshawar and landed on Kabul airport, where received a warm well come by Afghan government. After staying a 48 hours in Kabul, They flew to Damascus the capital of Syria, where the hijacking drama was ended when demands of the hijacker were accepted. Sixty prisoners mainly workers and leaders of PPP were released by Pakistani government in exchange of the hijacked passengers on board. Al-

Zulfiqar Organization (AZO) accepted the responsibility of the hijacking. Mir Murtaza Bhutto, the elder son of Z. A. Bhutto was the leader of the organization. He himself issued the press statement and took all the responsibilities.

After this incident many questions were raised about the leadership of the MRD. "Government propagated that it was the conspiracy of the PPP leadership against the army and Pakistan. The hijacking of the plane and specially, the murder of army Captain Tariq by the hijackers left the negative impression in Punjab" (Author's Interview with Aitazaz Ahsan). It lowered the tempo of the movement especially in Punjab.

After the organizational process, MRD decided to launch a country wide Civil Disobedience on 14th August 1983 under the leadership of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the acting Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party. It was also decided by the leadership of MRD to start of giving voluntarily arrests by the workers as a strategy. The MRD launched agitation from 14th August 1983, in pursuit of its demands and movement soon gained momentum in the larger context of public activities.

Professional organizations, trade unions, bar councils, and the students' organizations were supportive to the programme of the MRD. About a hundred labour leaders endorsed the MRD's call in their meeting in Karachi on 27th July (Waseem, 1994). Trade unions demanded for their rights as well as democracy in the country. When the rallies and gatherings of the trade unions increased in the country, the government issued the ordinance No 53 in September 1982. Accordingly to which death sentence was fixed for those involved in the damage of social property (Ageef, 1989). Even then the struggle of the unions could not stop.

However, the *Waderas* of the Sindh also participated in the movement, though they did not had such practice before. The supporter of the Zia junta said that *Waderas* of Sindh participated in the movement due to the implementation of the Usher. But it was not a strong argument because the usher was also implemented in the other provinces of the country. The feudal class of those provinces did not support the movement. Mushahid Hussain Sayed described it as "*Waderas* has been pushed into the movement due to pressure from below i.e. the rural masses and the feeling of deprivation extends also to the affluent section of Sindhi society, particularly access to political power" (Hussain, M., 1991). They had lost the share in power structure given to them by Bhutto. So they were trying to get back the same status through this movement.

The movement became popular in Sindh and succeeded to gain the mass support. It turned into a violent movement because of the crushing policy of the military junta. Army used Tear gas, *Lathi charge*, and gun firing against the demonstrators. Tahir Amin (1993, p. 197) describes "The

most important reason for the rise of the movement has been near total exclusion of Sindhis from the state elite”.

The movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) started disobedience movement on 14th August, the Independence Day of the country. The voluntarily arrests were started to be given through out the country. It was first time in the history of the country that the leadership was on front line. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the President of PPP, voluntarily surrendered.

“On the first day of the movement, the alliance arranged a big gathering at Locus Park in Sukkur, where the leaders were called for the speeches. At that time police and other law enforcing agencies used tear gas and then did firing on the people, even then Allama Mohammad Shah Amroti, the leader of JUI did not leave the stage.” (Qadri Zulfiqar, 2004)

It shows the commitment of people towards the democracy. The first day of the movement was very successful through out the country. The military government felt threat to rule and used all means to prevent it. Such action of the Martial Law authority changed the peaceful movement into violent one.

“The movement in Sindh had a spontaneous character as distinct from the rest of the country: It was more rural than urban. It involved more unplanned, leaderless and mob action than was the case in other provinces. There followed cases of shooting, arson and armed attacks on trains, police stations, railway treasury, banks and various other government institutions.” (Waseem, 1994, p. 393)

In the beginning MRD movement was peaceful in Sindh like other province of the country. It assumed violence when the army used state force to suppress it. The attitude of the military authority towards the people of Sindh was very harsh as compare to the other provinces. It was deliberately done by the authority to achieve their goal i.e. “divided and rule”, and regime was successful in it’s planning (Waseem, 1994).

“A large number of leaders and workers of PPP and MRD were arrested. But policy towards the public was different in Sindh and Punjab. This was the reason that the roads and streets of Punjab were not closed during the MRD

movement. But in Sindh people were fighting with the army. They even did not allow Zia to land in Dadu.” (Author’s Interview with Aitazaz Ahsan)

No doubt PPP Punjab participated in the MRD movement and their leaders and workers were also arrested, but they could not succeed to mobilize the common man against the government. It was a well laid plot and vigorous campaign of Zia junta to create a division between the Sindhis and the Punjabis and to crush Punjab and Sindh based PPP”(Interview with Professor Aziz Uddin Ahmed). By such division between the people of the country military junta wanted to prolong its rule. They gave more privileges to the people of the Punjab as compared to Sindh. And behaviour of the officers as well as the army *Jawans* towards the Sindhis was humiliating and insulting. It was due to the reason that the majority in the army belonged to Punjab and Zia was afraid of the rebellion from this province. The Punjab was silent at the time when movement was at its peak in Sindh. It was propagated by the Martial Law authority that people of Sindh were fighting for the freedom, not for democracy. To strengthen this impression Zia regime penetrated his men in the movement. They chanted a slogan against Pakistan in the rallies and the procession of MRD (Interview with Hussain Bakhsh Narejo).

The movement was very strong in Sindh. If it had been sustained for a few weeks, the army ruler would have to leave the country. “If the Punjab had participated in the movement Zia would not been able to stay” (Authors Interview with Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi). The conditions in Sindh were such that the President could not move in the interior Sindh. During the movement when General Zia visited Dadu, he could not complete his visit. The people of the city and surrounding areas came out of their homes and rushed to the convoy of the President and stoned his motor car. “Nobody had predicted violence in Sindh at such massive scale.” (Waseem, 1994).

At that time people of Punjab Province and Karachi city supported and participated in the movement as they played the part in PNA movement. In Karachi tens of thousands of anti government protestors fought in the streets. Mostly participants belonged to Sindhi and Baluch community while there was marginal participation of Urdu speaking. (Burki, 1991). The movement proved to be an important landmark in the politics of Sindh but its failure lay in its inability to provoke a response in Punjab (Noman 1988).

On 15th August 1983, anti government demonstrations were continued all over the Sindh province. About more than four hundred demonstrators were arrested including opposition leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi (Burki, 1991). The struggle increased day by day. On 17th August 1983, a clash took place between the police and demonstrators; one person was killed in Dadu. On 18th August other four people were reportedly killed in Sindh (Burki, 1991). Movement became

stronger as the Martial Law junta took the strict measures. People did not afraid from the strict measures and stiff punishments. They demanded for the restoration of democracy. The protestors were chanting the slogans to get the revenge of Z. A. Bhutto. The provincial autonomy was the main point of the speakers in their speeches. It became violent, as A.T. Choudhry wrote in the daily Dawn, "Angry mobs attacked all the symbols of the federal government, banks, government offices, courts, colleges, post offices, railway stations, jails, and arsenals. (Dawn, 27th August 1983) General K . M. Arif (1996, p. 219) wrote about it:

"The MRD leadership fell into the hands of inexperienced low level workers, (the main leadership was arrested by the Martial Law authority) who lacked the capacity to lead. From the noble slogan of restoring democracy, the movement took anti social turn. Public buildings were burnt; railway lines were uprooted; banks were looted; canals were breached. Road became unsafe for travel; dacoits and miscreants took advantage of the disturbed conditions. As the law and order situation took a turn for the worse, public hostility turned against the anti social elements."

In Sindh the leftist organization were more active and organized in all the processions and demonstrations. Sindhi *Awami Tahreek* led by the Rasool Bux Palejo and Fazal Rahoo played an active role in the movement, especially in the organization of the movement. It was the duty of the *Awami Tahreek* to organize the movement in Sindh province. The stability in the movement was the result of the organization of the MRD, which was done by *Awami Tahreek* under the guidance of the commuted leadership of the party" (Interview with Rasool Bakhsh Palejo). Professor Aziz Uddin Ahmed also supported to it and said that "it was the struggle of *Awami Tahreek* that who organized MRD in Sindh" (Interview with Prof. Aziz Uddin Ahmad). Watan Dost Mazdoor Federation and some factions of the *Jeay Sindh Tahreek* also participated in the movement. However, the leader of the *Jeay Sindh Tahreek* G. M. Sayed was opposing the movement. He said, "We are staying out of this agitation. It is not a popular movement. It is only led by PPP's feudals for their lust of power. Like a dog, the PPP is only seeking crumbs and bones" (Hussain, M., 1991, p. 43). Omar Noman (1988, p. 183) also accepted the role of the other regional parties. In 'The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-85' he wrote:

"There were four principle political forces responsible for mobilizing support in the '83 Movement. A major part was played by the PPP, which is led by landlords in Sindh but commands support across a wide spectrum of Sindhi society. However, the party to have emerged as a serious force in Sindhi politics was the Sindhi *Awami Tahreek* (SAT). R. B. Palejo led the Party, a

one time 'Maoist' who now combines Sindhi nationalism with a socialist platform. SAT draws its support from students, workers and peasants. It also has close links with Baloch student and labour unions. A cluster of small parties and groups provided the third organizational force; the most prominent amongst them was the Sindh *Hari* Committee and the Jeay Sindh Group. Jeay Sindh represents the hard-core Sindhi nationalists in the intelligentsia and is led by the veteran advocate of the rights of Sindhis, G. M. Sayed. Finally, a significant role was played by religious leaders who exercise considerable influence in rural Sindh."

In the movement of MRD, Jamait-Ulma-i-Islam played a vital role in the movement, as acknowledged by the convener of Sindh MRD Hussain Bakhsh Narejo. He further said that the workers of the Jamait brought Quran Sharif with them, when they came for voluntarily arrests and demonstrations (Author's Interview with Hussain Bakhsh Narejo).

It was the reaction of the people of Sindh against the oppressive policies of the Zia regime. In the reaction people also used same way and attacked on the government properties. It was the reaction of the suppressive policy that the land less farmers sold their cattle and bought guns to fight the army (Kardar, 1987; Hussain, M., 1991; Sheikh Mohammad Ali, 2000). G. M. Sayed, (1995, p. 199) who was even against MRD also accepted

"State terrorism was seen at its worst when the shortsighted leadership of the MRD brought villagers to the streets. People reading the Holy Quran was treaded under trucks, air raids were carried out. Whole villages were put to the torch even women processing fired upon."

The movement became more violent in the month of September 1983; the clash took place between the demonstrators and the law enforcing agencies. The military troops were deployed all over Sindh. Para military force, Rangers, and *Hur* force also were used to crush the movement. Military opened the fires on unarmed demonstrators. "Seven people were killed by the military in K. N. Shah a taluka headquarter of District Dadu, on 4th September. (Burki, 1991) The demonstrators were peacefully demanding for the release of the two persons who were arrested and reportedly tortured by the army in the military camp. When protestors reached near the military camp, an army *Jawan* sitting in the *morcha* opened the fire on protestors and as a result seven person were killed on the spot and many were injured. Army did not allow taking the injured persons to hospitals. (Author's Interviews with the injured people)

During the movement there was a strict and hard censorship on the newspapers and other news agencies. So, many incidents were not reported. It was claimed by the leaders of the MRD that the number of the killed people was more than the reported in the news.

“The army killed at least 16 persons on 29th September 1983, when the people of the Chandio village protested against the killing of the innocent people, and recitation Holy Quran in the honor of the martyrs of the MRD. When people were busy in reciting, a motorcade of the military reached and opened the fire.” (Zardari, 2001, p. 396)

The movement of the restoration of democracy was crushed by the military by guns and bullets. Zia regime used gunship helicopters and military planes against the protestors. In village Lakhat, district Nawab Shah after killing of army *Jawan*, army used the Air force and bombarded on the village and used Petrol bombs. In the result of those bombs village was burnt (Zardari, 2001 & Author's Interview with Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi).

Police and other Law enforcing agencies killed the innocent people. There was no confirmed number of people killed during this movement due to the strict censorship on press and publication. There was much difference between the claims of MRD leaders and official figures. Benazir compared the massacre of Sindh with the massacre in East Pakistan in 1971 by the Pakistan army.

“The nationwide rebellion was not crushed by the guns and tanks of the army until the second week in October, leaving particular bitterness in the hearts of the Sindhis. 800 people were reportedly killed. Whole villages were erased and crops burned. Women reportedly were molested by the army, bringing back dark memories of the army's rampage in Bangladesh twelve years before. In the ashes of fury, Sindhi nationalism was born. The move towards secession escalated in the other minority province as well. The fragile federation of Pakistan was strained to breaking point under the ruthlessness of Zia and six years of Martial Law.” (Bhutto, B., 1994, p. 244)

Lt. General Jahan Dad Khan (1999, p. 173) Governor of Sindh, during Zia government wrote, “A summary of the casualty list, as available in official documents, was fifty killed and a hundred and fifty wounded. The actual figures may have been much higher.” The Daily Muslim reported the official statement that number of the killed people was 61, while 200 hundred were injured. The arrested people were more than 4691” (The Muslim, 11th November 1983). Sindhi nationalists

estimate that 800 were killed, 2000 injured and thousands of people arrested. (The Muslim, Islamabad, 20th June 1984). Tahir Amin (1993, p. 197) reported that "Most impartial observers estimated the casualty figure at 600 to 800, and 1000 were injured.

Harrison (1992, p. 242) wrote that "The 1983 clashes in which at least 300 hundred Sindhis were killed, have led to a consolidation of Sindhi nationalist sentiment". After bombardment and killing of the people all over the Sindh, the movement was ended. It left many impacts on the country and specially on the politics of Sindh. The people of Sindh considered Pakistan as *Punjabistan*. Many slogans were taunted by the Sindhis during and after the movement. Such as, '*Pakistan Jo Matlab Chha Fasyoon Fatka ain Martial Law*', a poem of *Khaki Jyoy* meaning 'Pakistan means hanging, lashes, and Martial Law'. Jahan Dad Khan (1999, p. 172) accepted this very fact in these words, "The Pakistan army and Martial Law were considered to be synonymous with the Punjab. The majority of Sindhis felt that their interests were no longer safe in the hands of Martial Law and the army dominated Punjab."

It was the commitment of the people of Sindh who fought against an organized army without the support of the Punjab and people of the urban areas of the province. Therefore, the observers commented that it was the nationalist movement of Sindh. As Akbar Zaidi, said, "The 1983 and 1986 movements of the MRD due to lack of support in other provinces was labeled a "Sindhi Rebellion" (Zaidi, 1992, p. 131).

It was the result of the mass support to the movement that the "American Defence Secretary, Casper Weinberger visited Pakistan in September 1983. He said that "In this situation, we have to look at alternative" (Hussain, M., 1991, p. 122). During the movement the appeal of the Nusrat Bhutto boosted up the moral of participants which was secretly published in English, Urdu and Sindhi languages and distributed. Benazir Bhutto quoted that appeal in his autobiography as under:

"My patriotic and heroic countrymen, my honorable brothers and sisters, my brave sons and daughters! The aim of our movement, a civil disobedience, for six long years we have been facing persecution and oppression. Our cause for resumption of democracy have been ignored, our workers have been imprisoned and sentenced to death. Enough is enough. We appeal to all the bus owners to take their buses off the roads, to all the railway men to stop plying the trains. The policemen we say: follow the example of your brothers in Dadu and do not shoot innocent people who are your brothers. Do not be

frightened of this movement. It is for our people, for our poor, for our children so that they do not live in poverty, hunger and diseases. Struggle for your Parliament, for your Government, for your Constitution so that the decisions are taken for the poor people and not for junta and its stooges.” (Bhutto, B., 1988a, p. 243)

Some observer said that MRD was failure. Actually MRD was totally not failed. The first success of the MRD was the announcement by the Zia on 12th August 1983 for holding the general elections, while MRD already declared the agitation to be started on the 14th August (Waseem, 1987).

MRD was a powerful movement of the people of Sindh. Before that Sindhis never had been as active as they were in the MRD movement. It was the struggle of the people of Sindh under the banner of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy that first time the ruler of the country saw the militancy of the Sindhis. It was the movement of MRD, which proved that Sindhis can fight any organized army and rejected the remarks that ‘Sindhi would not fight.’ It was quoted by Mushahid Hussain Sayed in these words “The militancy of the movement demolished some myths about Sindh and its people” (Hussain, M., 1991, p. 114).

Mushahid Hussain (1991, p. 125) said, “MRD attempt to mobilize street power failed to develop into a nationwide mass agitation, barring Sindh where causes of upsurge are some what indigenous to the province marked by a sense of deprivation following Bhutto’s hanging.” The same views were of a Sindhi scholar Mohammad Ali Sheikh (2000, p. 90) he wrote:

“For the first time in the history of the country, the rural areas came out with agitation. Amongst all the provinces, the people of Sindh were in the lead. As a matter of fact they were taking revenge of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s assassination from the regime, though four year later.”

The feudal and *Waderas* of Sindh participated in the movement due to no space for them in the power corridor. The landed elite, consistently out of power since 1977, strongly reacted against the regime and played the most important role in the agitation (Amin, 19937).

The situation of the Sindh province was bitterly affected due to MRD movement, the law and order situation was very worst, as is clear from the writing of ex-Governor of Sindh, Jahan Dad Khan (1999, p. 240). “Bashir Siddiqui, I G Police, Sindh had been delayed a day earlier near Dadu while on his way to Larkana. He had to return to Karachi, as his police escort could not

guarantee his protection.” He further wrote in his same book on page 245 about law and order situation in Sindh as under:

“As a result of the ethnic divide, widespread corruption and the MRD agitation, the provincial administration had been rendered ineffective; in fact it was paralyzed. In the interior, many policemen and other government employees were part of criminal gangs. In addition, if they had any loyalty, it was only towards their own clan and creed. Police station locked to gangs to provide them protection against gangs.”

During the movement Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi issued the statement on the killing of the innocent Sindhis by the army. K. M. Arif (1996, p. 221) has quoted Mrs. Gandhi's as, “India could not remain indifferent to the cause of the people of Sindh.” Sindhi nationalist leader G. M. Sayed who wrote to the Indian Prime Minister to use her influence to stop the massacre of the Sindhis by the military junta as under:

“Although I did not join the MRD nor did I consider it of any use for Sindh's interest, I could not bear this bloodshed. Therefore, I wrote to the world organizations such as the United Nations and Amnesty International, appealing them not to ignore Sindh. I also wrote to the Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India to use her influence to end the massacre in Sindh. At this Indira Gandhi expressed her concern over the Sindh situation in the Indian Parliament.” (Sayed, G. M., 1995, p. 199)

He also appealed to the people of Sindh that they would not participate in the MRD Movement. (Interviews with Amanullah Sheikh; Dr Arbab Khuhawar and Jam Saqi) After the statement of the Indian Prime Minister on the Sindh situation, Zia used it against the democratic movement. Sayed Mushahid Hussain (1991, p. 118) also took that point:

“During the autumn of 1983, when the agitation in Sindh seemed to have the potential to over flow into the Punjab, Mrs. Indira Gandhi came out with a public statement of sympathy with those against the regime. This maneuvers of late Indian Prime Minister back-fired and the regime able to exploit quite skillfully the situation in a way that, many observers posed a certain linkage between the agitation in that province and India.”

Aitazaz Ahsan, a PPP's central leader, expressed the same views about the statement of Indian Prime Minister (Interview with Aitazaz Ahsan). The struggle of the people of Sindh for the restoration of democracy left many impacts on the politics of country in general and specially on the politics of Sindh.

Conclusion:

The movement for the restoration of democracy was launched by the people of whole country but unfortunately the participation of the people of other provinces was marginal. Army rulers used iron hand to crush the movement. Police Para military force and other law enforces agencies open the fire on processions; even they used air force against the common people of the country. It was first movement of the people of Sindh after the Hur movement in which people of Sindh fought and face a well organized army.

Movement for the restoration of democracy was the strong challenge for the Zia regime. It challenged the authoritarian rule of the military after the coup-data of 1977. It was chance that if the people of Punjab participated in the movement as Sindh, Zia might have held the elections and left the power. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi said, "If the Punjab had supported the movement of MRD, Zia would have left the power and army gone back to the barracks" (Interview with Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi).

Though MRD initially was not successful for the holding of general election and restoring the democracy, but it was pressure of the movement that Zia announced the referendum, to show the world that the people of the country were supporting him. The so-called referendum was held on 19th December 1984. There was a nominal participation of the people of country. Specially in Sindh, the polling booths remained open for all the day but people did not come to the polling stations. Only some government servants and *Waderas* cost their votes. But government announced that more than 97% people supported to General Zia in the referendum. It was also the result of MRD movement that Zia agreed for the election and general elections were held in 1985v on non-party basis . This was first step towards the stable democratic system.

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