
Minority Representation in Pakistan's Federal Cabinets: An Analysis of Democratic and Military Governments (1947–1999)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i4.1268>

Abstract

Pakistan was founded not just by Muslims, but also by other Indian religious minorities. Pakistan provided minorities' representation in a variety of social and political areas. This research study aims to emphasize the realm of politics and draw parallels between parliamentary and military administrations with regard to both minority representation and duties to the country as they supervise ministries in Pakistan's national cabinet. Minority ministries gained cabinet representation while also engaging in policy development and contributing to the progress of both the nation and their respective communities. They worked as ministers in critical fields like legislation, health, schooling, and labor, while they made significant contributions in each. A comparison of minority involvement in legislative as well as military regimes (1947-1999) shows that legislative structures were more welcoming to minorities, particularly in terms of giving them opportunities in cabinet seats and other political bodies. Still, minority groups were granted less space in military-led regimes than in ones that are democratic. The key sources for this study were legislative conversations, reputable search results, and supplementary cabinet files.

Keywords: Minority, The Legislature, Armed Forces, Cabinet, Comparative, Government

Introduction

Pakistan is mostly the outcome to a religious minority fleeing colonial India. The Muslim minority that inhabited India confronted two basic powers: the British government, which acted as a governing body, versus the Hindu majority. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah highlighted low-caste Hindus' and the Parsi community's worries regarding people who belong to an ethnically Muslim minority, particularly in the course of Round-Table Conference and following events. Farahnaz Isphahani crafts a portrayal commemorating Muhammad Ali Jinnah's time as Governor General. "Mr. Jinnah commenced in an era where there was no prejudice, no distinction between a single group and a different one, no race, creed, or religion." He started with the core idea that everyone is an equal member of one state."¹

Minorities have been treated as represented at the highest levels of Pakistan's governmental structure since its formation. They occupied the most distinguished political and administrative posts in Pakistan. This study examines and contrasts legislative and military regimes that gave Minorities both representation and chances to serve the country through their various ministries. However, minority MPs received less space in military governments. This study was divided into five categories to explore minority participation in legislative as well as military regimes.

Between 1947 and 1958, there were legislative governments with a total of seven premierships including eight cabinets. From 1958 to 1971, the country's second era was the first military phase. This

stage is further divided into three phases. The first two eras were controlled by the Ayub Khan's cabinets, and the rest by Yehya Khan's. The following period is the subsequent phase during the legislative era, which ran from 1971 to 1977. During this period, four cabinets were constituted. The second martial period extends from 1977 till 1988. Zia ul Haq's presidency has been divided into four cabinets. Following Zia's passing away, the final era was parliamentary, which lasted from 1988 till 1999. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif ruled during this time period, and they represented minorities.

Theoretical Framework

To go deeper into the topic of contrasting democratic and military regimes in terms of minority, there are two representations inside a democratic body, within a cabinet. Two ideas have been proposed: 'Theory on Military Tyranny by Barbara Geddes & Philosophy to Control Sharing and Democratic Survival by Benjamin A.T. Graham. Barbara Geddes expands her theory that dictatorships are classed into three categories: personal, armed forces, and single party. Geddes explains the concept of Military Dictatorship in her book *Military Rule*. Barbara Geddes contended that a nation that has remained under colonial power draws military officers who wish to manage the country in a colonial manner.

That is why military dictators portray themselves as guardians of the public interest, saving the country against the devastation created by shortsighted and unscrupulous civilian leaders. Dictators seldom gain power on their own accord, and they also rarely have enough resources to govern alone. Dictators rely on an allied alliance. Members of this alliance could consist of the military, prominent monarchy supporters, and the economic and ecclesiastical elites. To obtain power, all dictators form a power-sharing agreement with coalition elites. The tyrant always has a reason to benefit from the power-sharing agreement. In reality, tyrants crave ultimate rules. Dictators maintain total power by dominating only a few governmental organizations while ignoring all elements of society, especially religious and ethnic minorities. Similarly, Pakistan's three martial leaders, Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan," and Zia ul Haq, claimed to be liberators and protectors of national interests. The fact is that they never collaborated on power, and all of society's penalties benefited just a few organizations and religious groups. On the other hand, there is a system of democracy that distributes power and promotes state political institutions over privileged families, military dictators, and religious elites. According to Benjamin A.T. Graham's *Authority Share & Democratic Survival* hypothesis, certain positions or processes of decision-making necessitate the participation of several parties or organizations. Inclusive control-sharing divides power broadly and fairly across several acknowledged parties. This includes magnificent (cabinetry) coalitions which represent all major parties; constitutional or legal provisions that reserve specific elected offices for particular political or societal classes; regulations that require openness in the military, public sector, or other levels of government; and rules that grant minority groups the power to veto sensitive modifications to policies such as language and religious policy. The power share concept of democracy seeks to guarantee that every constituency has an equal degree of political weight and an acceptable standard of democratic expectations, reducing the danger that they could leave or rebel due to fear that they will be eliminated from the electoral process. In Pakistan, all legislatures provided representation for all socioeconomic groups and ethnicities.

Hypothesis

A comparative analysis of minority participation in both legislative and military regimes reveals that democratic governments were more hospitable to minorities, providing them positions in cabinet and other political institutions. Their significant contributions for Pakistan's initial economic development courses, democratic formation procedure, including law implementation deserve to be commended. Cabinets during military regimes were frequently composed of committed administrators and professionals. According to the dictator's worldview, they concentrate control into their own hands. The vast majority of political institutions and groups lacked representation. In certain circumstances, minorities were forbidden from serving in Cabinet or on another Constitution-drafting body. They remained mute during the Ayub Khan period, along with Yahya Khan along with Zia ul Haq seemed hardly anxious to include minorities in their Cabinets, with the possible exception of Justice Cornelius,

who remained Law Minister. He, too, failed to function well in sociopolitical affairs because the military institution wielded significant decision-making authority.

The First Parliament Duration, 1947–1958

During this time, three types of cabinets were available. From 1947 until 1954, the first one used single group cabinets. The second set became Cabinets for Many Talents 1954-1955, while the last set was Ally Cabinets 1955-1958. During this legislative term, all three minority leaders, Joginder Nath Mandal, Akshay Kumar Das, and Kumar Dutta worked in the cabinet. On August 15, 1947, Pakistan's governor, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, appointed the first administration.² Jinnah, in particular, took the lead not only in cabinet formation but also in the framing of cabinet policy to be implemented. The cabinet typically represented the provinces, refugees, and minorities.³ Joginder Nath Mandal had been law minister between 15 August 1947 to 16 September 1950, labour minister to 15 August 1947 to 16 September 1950, and works ministry from 31 May 1949 to 10 September 1949.⁴ He also served as Minister of Commonwealth and Kashmir Issues between October 10, 1949, till October 8, 1950. Mandal supported the Objective Resolution, passed issued in March 1949, which remains to cause political discussion in Pakistan, with progressives believing it was used to transform Jinnah's 'Secular Pakistan' to a 'Religious State'.⁵

Following the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, who delivered a deadly blow to the fledgling state, Khawaja Nazimuddin became Prime Minister under extraordinary circumstances. The former Cabinet should be dismissed in accordance with the norms and processes of parliamentary governance. Khawaja made no cabinet adjustments other than naming Chaudhary Mohammad Ali the Finance Minister to fill the vacancy resulting from Malik Ghulam Muhammad's departure and appointing Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar as Minister of Industries. In April 1953, the Governor-General abolished the Nazimuddin cabinet, and Muhammad Ali Bogra formed the third administration, which had no minority ministers.

Muhammad Ali Bogra nicknamed the fourth administration as 'government of All Talented individuals' since it was fully composed of specialists and skilled persons.⁶ Nevertheless, it portrayed a civil-military combination that lacked minority participation. In the 1955 indirect balloting, the Awami League, United Front, the Congress, and Scheduled Caste Federation both won positions, but the Muslim League lost its majority.

Chaudhri Mohammad Ali, who was in charge to the Muslim League legal party, was charged with creating a government after successfully forming a partnership alongside The United Front, which Mr. Suharwardy had effectively fell short to do as he had to not only meet the groups that make up the Muslim League when setting up Cabinets but also depart the appointment of United Front Ministers completely towards Mr. Fazlul Huq's privacy.⁷ The relationship was predicated on a common desire to share power with the government.

This Cabinet included four ministers of the United Party as well as five from the Muslim League. The United Front nominated two Minority Ministers, Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta and Mr. Akshay Kumar Das.⁸ Mr. Kamini Kumar Das served as Health Minister between 11-08-1955 till 12-09-1956 and Law Minister between 11-08-1955 till 31-08-1955 under Chowdhury Muhammad Ali's ministry.⁹ Mr. Akshay Kumar Das served as Minister of the State for Economic Affairs.¹⁰ The inclusion of two Minority MPs in this coalition administration created a non-sectarian atmosphere.¹¹

In December the year 1957, the Republican Party of Pakistan formed its third and ultimate Partnership Cabinet alongside the National Awami Party, the Scheduled Communities Federation, with the Pakistani National the House of Representatives led by Malik Firoz Khan Noon. It comprised a Republican Cabinet headed by a Republicans Prime Minister, alongside the possible exception of a few officials that were completely unaffected by party politics, such as Health Minister Kamini Kumar Das.¹² Mr. Basanta Kumar Das was Education Minister. He worked as Labour Minister from July 2, 1958, till July 10, 1958.¹³ Some of the most frequent ministers in the collision Cabinets were Ahmed, Abdul Aleem, Amjad Ali, Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta, and Jaffar Shah. Ziring believes that all of the Cabinet members were buccaneers and opportunists.¹⁴

Their effectiveness and participation in processes of decision-making were seen in various cabinets

during the initial legislative regimes on a wide range of topics. Minority members exerted a significant impact on legally legitimate and legislative improvements. They remain representatives from the Constitution-drafting Committee, among others, the One Unit committee, and the Islamic Law Commission. They were quite involved with both their rights and community-building efforts. They openly critiqued and expressed concerns about various sections of the Constitution, in addition to other issues like Pakistan's Islamic character, the concept of minorities, and a separate voting issue for minority groups. They devised policies and legislation to address population well-being, advancement of humanity, and humanitarian issues.

Their active participation in Pakistan's early Human Growth and Development Programmes, the Constitution-drafting process, and legislative passage are all to their credit. Their community development work must not be forgotten; Joginder Nath Mandal continues to investigate many areas of the Objectives Resolution, while Kamini Kumar Dutta was essential in formulating the One Unit plan and drafting the 1956 Constitution. Mr. Kamini Kumar worked as both a legislative minister and the chairman of the Constitution-drafting Committee. Although the unified Unit issue was under consideration and strongly attacked in the legislative body, Mr. Kamini Kumar advocated for it and persuaded the Assembly.

As a result, it was enacted without a referendum. Under its 1956 constitution, it evolved into essential to form a committee to propose Islamic laws. Basanta Kumar Das, the then-Minister of Law, recommended the formation of an Islamic Law Commission, that issued its initial report in 1962. Aside from constitutional accomplishments, they prioritised social progress and human rights. In the year 1949, the Labour Ministry, directed by Joginder Nath Mandal, established the Unemployed Exchange Organisation, which helped 10 million people.

Joginder Nath Mandal is additionally associated with creating Pakistan's first housing project for workers. Minister Kamini Kumar Dutta gave all organisations permission to build religious educational institutions. All of these organisations contributed to an individual of the town.

First Military Era, 1958–1971

On October 8, 1958, Ayub Khan, who was then the officer in charge in chief, imposed Martial Law, thereby ending the first Legislative Period. The democratic procedures in Pakistan were unable to generate democratic principles, and the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan failed to carry out its constitutional mission. The introduction of martial law prepared the framework for the 1956 constitution's approval. The Cabinet's authority and reputation remained ambiguous, interrupting democratic norms and reflecting all elements of society, particularly the minority, who lacked enough representation in Ayub's team.

Aside from elites in politics, technocrats, including army generals, he appointed nobody from minority members to serve in his government. The Ayub Khan era was separated into two parts: military rule (1958-1962) and Cabinet within the Federal Constitution of 1962 (1962-1969). Both Ayub Khan as well as Yahya Khan referred to Hindus dubbed 'The Other People'¹⁵ since their promotion of Islam in Pakistani politics favoured orthodox views of the faith. During the military regime, none minority members were allowed to be appointed to ministries, with the notable exception of Justice Cornelius in Yahya Khan's republican cabinet. As a result, they validated the belief that minorities existed in the country solely to the harm of Muslims.

Ayub expressed concern that 'our local society is plagued by a multitude of schisms'.¹⁶ The initial phase of the aforementioned Martial Law rule lasted from 1958 to 1962, during which the following ministries were established but no minority ministers were nominated. The same thing applies for the second phase, which ran between 1962 till 1968. Ayub Khan retired on the 25th of March 1969, in response to demonstrations against him. On that day, Yehya Khan established martial law over the country. His government remained military-oriented, with uncertain roles and authority. Yahya's second Ministry was largely ceremonial.¹⁷ The ongoing Committee of Administration was the name given to the initial military administration, which had no civil or minority representation.¹⁸ On the fourth of August 1969, Yehya Khan constituted the second Cabinet, which included of both civil as well as military administrations. Civilian participation included attorneys, doctors, academics,

former ambassadors, and business owners. In contrast to Ayub Khan's choice, Yahya Khan selected former Chief Justice Cornelius to take on the minority position.¹⁹ From September 17, 1969 until February 22, 1971, he served as Law Minister during Yahya Khan's civil government.²⁰ The civilian Ghosts Cabinet disbanded on February 22, 1971, robbing Yahya Khan of symbolic authority.²¹ He attempted to retain several previous cabinet members and advisers was successful in gaining Ghiasuddin Ahmed's aide, M.M. Ahmed, and also Justice Cornelius, who served as Minority Minister for Law.

Second Parliamentary Period, 1971–1977

The capitulation of Dacca on December 16, 1971, marked the collapse of military authority. Yahya Khan resigned to help the civil establishment. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto leads Pakistan's leading political party, known as the Pakistan People's Party, which was established in 1967. He was Pakistan's first civilian military administrator during a period when the country lacked a constitution. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure might be classified into four Cabinets, all consisting of two separate stages: presidential Cabinets from 1971 till 1973 and legislative Cabinets between 1973 till 1977. Minority representation in cabinets became increasingly important over the subsequent legislative era. Raja Tri Dev Roy, a minister of Tourism, remained active in Bhutto's cabinet deliberations.

He promoted tourism and managed new projects and enhancements in Pakistan's rural districts. Minority representation was present in every one of the initially formed two Cabinets, including Raja Tri Dev Roy acting as Minister of Minority Affairs and Tourism.²³ He was the lone middle-class minister in the socialist-oriented Ministry.²⁴ Raja Tridev Roy arose in 1933 from Rajbari Rangamati, a mountainous area near Chittagong. He was described as a Buddhist from belief. He was the representative for Pakistan's 4318 Buddhists.²⁵ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's final two governments prohibited minority involvement. At that point, the Ahmadis additionally were classed as a minority. The Ahmadis supported Bhutto during the 1970 elections, however Bhutto struck equilibrium by asking that parliament debate and vote on declaring Ahmadis a minority.²⁶

The second Military Duration: 1977–1988

The 2nd legislative phase ended on July 5, the year 1977, as Zia-ul-Haq, Chief of Army Staff, assumed charge. He legitimized his reign by embracing the title of Islamizer. In his inaugural speech, Zia declared himself the 'Military personnel of Islam'.²⁷ After assuming power, he stated that "all of these political groups should work together to create an Islamic state because the country was established in the moniker of Islam as well as might additionally survive solely through staying loyal to Islam"²⁸. He essentially ended Bhutto's idea of a cosmopolitan Pakistan. In terms of minority involvement, Zia's cabinets were comparable to those of previous military rulers.

Unlike the Bhutto administration, Zia Ul Haq's policies caused anxiety among minorities. The most problematic policies were the Islamization Plan and the Hadood Ordinance. Minorities refer to this era as a 'unhappy schedule'²⁹. Minority groups were dissatisfied by Zia's refusal to incorporate them in Cabinets. They had little influence on national politics or the nation's progress. Despite his assertion that he formed four Cabinets throughout his rule, he took no effort to ensure minority representation. Even within Muhammad Khan Junejo's Cabinet, all of the eighteen members was appointed by the premier, but Zia planned to lead the administration directly.

As a result, it seemed improbable that Junejo's Cabinet would contain any minorities.³⁰ Ziaul Haq was slain in an Aeroplan crash on August 17, 1988. His death cleared the path for nationwide elections. For the following 11 years, power was shared amongst Benazir Bhutto along with Nawaz Sharif.

Third Parliament era, 1988–1999

The third parliamentary period may be divided into two phases: Benazir Bhutto's government along with Nawaz Sharif's government. Benazir Bhutto assumed office immediately following the national elections in November 1988. This legislative age had to deal with a strong establishment, and it also had Islamists on edge. Minorities encountered difficulties in this context. Zia's creation of distinct electorates deprived the political parties and minorities both support and votes in elections. Minorities

reappeared to active administration after Zia ul Haq by taking on the task for themselves, so they were represented throughout both Benazir Bhutto as well as Nawaz Sharif's cabinets. However, the types of portfolios allocated to minorities altered. Minorities were allotted ministries for Minority Affairs, Narcotics Control, and Social Welfare, respectively. They worked carefully and determinedly to complete their assigned chores. During this third legislative session, four minority ministers served as federal ministers. Father Rufin Julius along with J. Salik had both worked in Benazir Bhutto's government. Rana Chandar Singh as well as John Peter Sahorta served for Nawaz Sharif's administration.³¹ John Peter Sahorta, the minister of Minority Affairs, launched the Tameer-i-Watan programme. This effort involved the construction of minority community buildings and educational institutions, as well as the implementation of social programmes. Their democratic battle was mostly successful. Similarly, they have been fighting for election rights since 1947.

Their desire for a unified election system was turned down by right-wing MPs who preferred a separate voting system. Minority ministers, notably, Akashy Rana Chandar Singh Mr. Kamini J. Salik, Kumar Dutta, and Basanta Kumar Das, were supportive of the Joint Electoral System.

Conclusion

An investigation of different regimes revealed that, compared to the very first cabinet of the legally permitted period to Nawaz Sharif's following the cabinet in the year 1999, minority government workers not only acquired cabinet participation, but also played a role in policymaking and the advancement of Pakistan as well as their communities. They worked as ministers in critical ministries including law, schooling, healthcare, and labor. Hindus, Christians, Jews, as well as Buddhists indicated pleasure with their participation in the democratic federal government. Their nomination procedure involves credentials and presence from minorities. During military service, minority appearances were not prioritized. They completely ignored minority participation in institutions of democracy such as the federal government. All military governments were self-nominated as well as lacked membership from all parties. They picked people who would surely carry out their policies. Just Justice Cornelius was named Law Minister during Yahya's civil-military administration. This cabinet failed to impress in terms of effort, expertise, and skill. Patriotism and personal interest were among the criteria of army cabinet members. During the conflict, cabinets were assigned less significant social, political, defense, and diplomatic problems. Their cabinets were governed by civilians.

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