

## Introduction

Few men in history have dared walking down the path of dissent with the might of The United States of America (USA). But, it is this very daring nature which cloaks the man in greatness; gazing deep into the adversary's eyes whilst standing firm with their own principles, never bending, creates everlasting legends from ordinary men. One such everlasting legend, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was born in 1928 to a feudal landlord and a once poorly lady. The disparity amongst his parents was truly inculcated in him as he made it his aim and toil to elevate society: the common man, the hopeless peasant. As we observe the annals of history, we see a common trend: the 'unconventional' leaders who strives to make the common man better-off, having a firm stance on issues which disturb the 'big players', are either barricaded in obscurity or even extinguished. His vision of progression disturbed those having unfathomable inertia. Bhutto was this 'unconventional' leader who blatantly refuted the USA and challenged the hierarchy of the Pakistani society by his socialist manifesto, making boundless enemies in the process of partaking righteousness: from being the father of the nuclear program, to dismembering the upper echelons of Pakistani society which consisted of the 22 families.

## BHUTTO'S ISLAMIC SOCIALISM

After the separation of Bangladesh, Pakistan's economy was crippled. Furthermore, the loss of 54% of its population and 93000 Pakistani prisoners of war held captive were embarrassing and detrimental aspects to say the least. Bhutto inherited these ailments when he first assumed leadership of the country. After crafting a new constitution, Bhutto did not halt his efforts. Instead, through his political party (Pakistan People's Party) which was established on the grounds of socialism and populism in 1967, he championed the cause of elevating the common man through means of Islamic Socialism no matter what or when. Defining his stance and his motives at the Sindh convention Hyderabad, he said "*no power on Earth can stop socialism, the symbol of justice, equality and supremacy of man...it is the demand of time and history...I am a socialist...some ridicule me of being socialist, I don't care*" (Bhutto, speeches 1966-69: 177). Initially the idea was presented in 1967 at Lahore where he deemed Islamic socialism as a solution to the ongoing socio-economic problems which were being faced by Pakistan. Capitalism was out rightly disregarded by Bhutto as Capitalism and Socialism did not go hand in hand. Emphasis was established on making a classless society, free of disparities, with Islam as the ruling and binding principle. Islami Masawat (Islamic Socialism), as coined by Bhutto during his election campaign while addressing to the general public, became his motto.

Bhutto's popular slogan: "*Islam is our religion/ democracy is our polity/ Socialism is our economy*" encompassed and defined the crux of his political vision for Pakistan and the common man of Pakistan. Bhutto's ideology of Islamic Socialism, the aforementioned slogan of his, rallied the common man together as they felt empowered. Bhutto's speeches filled

them up with an adrenaline rush which is evidently seen as hundreds of thousands of people attended his speeches. The hope given by Bhutto to the common man was something never witnessed before, thus his ideology of Islamic Socialism was a monumental success.

Source: see Dawn, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1970. Online available at:

<http://chagataikhan.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/pakistan-votes-1970-by-craig-baxter.html>

## **BHUTTO'S ISLAMIC SOCIALISM: THE OTHER DIMENSION OF THE 22 FAMILIES**

Mahbub-ul-Haq, a prominent Pakistani Economist, drafted a paper which discussed the influential 22 families of Pakistan in great detail. The 22 families controlled and owned 66% of Pakistan's assets which was a staggering number even for that time as Pakistan was a newly established state. Having such an alarming amount of disparity meant that the whole country was practically owned by a handful of families as they controlled over 87% of the country's banking and financial assets. The most important factor to be highlighted by the author was how the system had bred this disparity. It was a product of the system. As stated by Mahbub-ul-Haq: *"This is sad because the 22 families are a symptom, not a cause"* (Haq 4). This system had to be eradicated at all costs because it was not in-line with the Economic principles, and showed how weak the whole system was due to the money being tied up with only a few. *"What is required is fairly drastic surgery if a move towards a more enlightened and socially responsible Capitalism is to be made"* (Haq 3).

This fairly drastic surgery was not a peaceful and easy process. Dismantling the assets and the standing of the most influential people in the country made resistance inevitable. However, it was something which was extremely necessary. Especially for Bhutto as his Socialistic ideologies were polar opposites to the very existence of these families. Hence, Bhutto carried out his nationalization reforms in a full-fledged manner. Major industries such as petrochemicals and heavy machinery were nationalized. Bhutto was a man of action, not afraid to execute major plans which had the possibility of being deemed as controversial. His nationalization was a major progression towards his vision. Diluting the assets from the very rich, and spreading them out evenly for everyone to bear fruit from, was a decision which would benefit the masses. Most importantly, it was designed to benefit the country on a whole as the Economic indicators would stabilize and the disparity decrease. These drastic changes held critical value and enabled freedom to the flow of money and finance as the cartel of the 22 families was broken now. Nationalization also gave rise to numerous employment opportunities as the now state managed industries required more man power which led to unemployment rates falling. Moreover, the blockade for newer firms to enter and grow which was the by-product of existing monopolies owned by the 22 families was abolished and growth was encouraged in the form of credit. With the operation of the banking sector under the government's custody, the availability of credit became accessible to the small farmers and cultivators (Rehman and Rauf 2006). Due to his industrial reforms, exports

grew by a mammoth 100% because of the availability of credit and lower interest rates. However, there were discrepancies seen in Bhutto's nationalization policy too as the government fell out with the private sector, which was inevitable, losing their confidence. Vast sums of money and capital stock went out of Pakistan as many families looked to reshuffle their existence elsewhere. It is a fact that the policy of nationalization which took form by discouraging the private sector, as investment remained as low as 15% in the private sector and as high as 75% in the public sector, withered the growth rate of Pakistan's economy. Perhaps, Bhutto's ideologies were too good to be true as Socialism did not stand a chance against Capitalism in Pakistan as is evident by today, as well as, in Bhutto's times. Yet again, he did not shy away from making drastic changes for the betterment of Pakistan, his flamboyant can most certainly be described by his nationalization policy.

## CONCLUSION

Flamboyant is a word that describes Bhutto best. Throughout his political career, his audacity was sky high and he never failed to implement his pursuit. His love for the common man and his country made him take on heavy opponents in the form of his country's elite and the whole world's elite, respectively. He matched them head on with Islamic Socialism and nationalization, and Pakistan's nuclear program, respectively. Although his nationalization did not go as planned and economic performance was weak during his tenure, Bhutto was a man who never bowed down to pressure. His creation, the PPP, had a mandate of elevating the poor. He tried his best to stay true to this mandate which was evident from his reforms. At least he tried with great vigor, something which is barely present in modern politics.

## Bibliography:

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