

## MAWLANA SHAH AHMAD NOORANI: HIS ROLE IN THE RESTORATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN, 1977-200

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**Abstract:** Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani entered into Pakistani parliament, through general elections held in 1970. He always struggled for the democratization and Islamization of Pakistani society through constitutional means. On the demand of Mawlana Noorani, leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF), Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-I-Pakistan (JUP) and Tahrik-I-Istiqlal (TI) on January 10, 1977 formed the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) against the illegal and undemocratic practices of the government. He stood against the martial law regime of General Ziaul Haq. During the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), Mawlana Noorani only voiced for the rehabilitation of the political parties, restoration of the judicial powers and finishing the military courts, elimination of the Martial law; and announcement of the election schedule. Through Mawlana's efforts a new political alliance known as "Pakistan Awami Ittihad" (PAI) came into existence on October 5, 1988 consisting of JUP, PML and TI. In May 1999, another electoral alliance was made with the name of Islami Jamhuri Mahaz, where too, Mawlana played a constructive role. For the purpose of sectarian harmony Milli Yakjehti Council was formed in 1995, which was headed by Mawlana Noorani. At the advice of Mawlana Noorani, a new alliance of six religious, political parties, named as the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), came into being in 2001. Mawlana Noorani was unanimously chosen as its President. He remained the President of the MMA till his death. The MMA struggled collectively for the establishment of a true Islamic democratic system in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Democratic, anti-martial law, anti-sectarianism, unifying figure, seasoned legislator.

**1. Introduction.** Pakistan got independence from British Rule in 1947. Soon after its independence efforts from different sections of Pakistani society started to make Pakistan a truly democratic and Islamic state. In this struggle for democratization of Pakistan a number of religious scholars, politicians and political parties have contributed and scores of them are still striving to achieve this goal. These forces of democratization are struggling in a variety of ways. Some of them are directly participating in the political system. While a number of these forces are indirectly involved in influencing the efforts for democratization. In this regard the role of religious scholars turned politicians is of considerable importance. From the very beginning of the creation of Pakistan they either directly or indirectly strived for it. A respectable number of religious scholars and politicians not only contributed in their individual capacities but also even organized political parties to achieve this goal of democratization.<sup>1</sup>

One such group of religious scholars organized themselves in the shape of Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan in 1948. Leaders and workers of this religious party started contributing to the process of democratization in a number of ways. It had the services of some such leaders who remained active on the political scene of Pakistan for a number of years like Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani and Mawlana Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi (1915-2002). Both these personalities as leaders of their own factions remained active political figures for a number of years, where the politics were mainly dominated by the agenda of democratization and Islamization of Pakistani society.

**2. Early Life of Mawlana Noorani:** Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani was born on April 1, 1926 in Meerut (India). He was the son of a famous religious scholar Mawlana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqi (1892-1955). He memorized the Holy Quran by heart at the age of eight. He passed his Matriculation Examination from Meerut and he graduated from the National Arabic College, Meerut. He got his *Dars-I-Nizami (Fazil)* from the Darul-'Ulum-I-Arabiyyah, Meerut. He also got his *Fazil* Degree in Arabic from the Allahabad University.<sup>ii</sup>

Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani started his parliamentary career with the Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-I-Pakistan (JUP) which won 7 seats in the National Assembly of Pakistan during the 1970 elections. He was one of the seven successful candidates from Sindh. He has also been in the Senate of Pakistan twice. He played a vital role in framing the 1973 constitution of Pakistan. Mawlana Noorani proposed round about 200 amendments to the 1973 Constitution during his parliamentary career.<sup>iii</sup>

Before the elections of 1970 JUP of Mawlana Noorani tried to unite the opposition parties against the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).<sup>iv</sup> The PPP was at its peak due to the towering personality of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. While on the other hand, the ideological base of the country was endangered due to the socialist economic order. The United Democratic Front (UDF) already existed but nominally. The UDF had been inactive due to its internal conflicts.<sup>v</sup> However, Mawlana Noorani ruled out any possibility of rejoining the UDF or joining any alliance with Jama'at-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP). However, he was optimistic about a grand alliance of the opposition parties believing in the Ideology of Pakistan. He observed that fair and impartial elections could be held only under the supervision of an interim National Government. He also announced his party's decision to take part in the forth-coming elections in collaboration with the Tahrir-i-Istiqlal (TI). At the end of 1976, when the general elections were in the offing, the JUP boycotted the by-election from Jhang for the vacant seat of Mawlana Muhammad Zakir, who died in November 1976, because of the sectarian tension in the constituency. On January 7, 1977, Prime Minister Bhutto announced that fresh general elections for the National and Provincial Assemblies would be held on March 7 and 10, 1977 respectively.<sup>vi</sup>

**3. The 1977 Elections and Mawlana Noorani:** Soon after the announcement of the Election date, Mawlana Noorani, in his press statement, welcomed declaration of the assemblies and holding of general election in March 1977. In order to ensure fair, independent and impartial elections, he demanded the release of all political prisoners, withdrawal of section 144 and suspension of the decisions taken under Defense of Pakistan Rules (DPRs). Mawlana stated that the opposition was ready for the elections, and during the election campaign, they would raise the issues of staggering price hike, increase in the administrative expenditures and the failure of foreign policy, and in case of victory, he promised to bring the price of commodities down to the level of 1970. Under the banner of *Nizam-i-Mustafa*, he declared, they would establish a true democratic and Islamic social welfare order in Pakistan.

The PPP government started its election campaign in such a direction as to counter the efforts of different political parties, including JUP, by initiating a move to encourage rival groups of these parties. The Sahibzada group of JUP was asked to support the PPP. On January 17, 1977, at a combined session of the central working committee and general council of this group, which was held at Lahore, it was decided that "on the occasion of the forth-coming general elections the JUP, while fully preserving its distinct identity, resolve to support the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the PPP." The meeting also formulated a program for holding an all Pakistan Sunni Convention, in support of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to establish liaison with shrines of saints, *Daral Uloom* and the *Mashaikh*, and to support the election campaign of the PPP, in all constituencies. The leaders of the group demanded funds to carry out their programs and to counter the JUP led by Mawlana Noorani. In March 1977, another group of the JUP came into being, under, the name of Jam'iyyat-i-Ualma-i-Pakistan (Haqqiqi) headed by Mawlana Abu'l Fateh Ghulam Rasul Chishti of Karachi.<sup>vii</sup>

**4. Formation of Pakistan National Alliance and Mawlana Noorani:** Although the 1973 Constitution laid down a five-year term for the National Assembly, commencing from the day its members took oath. The second general election was due sometime in spring of 1978. However, towards the end of 1976, there were indications of an election before the spring of 1978. So, the activities of the political parties were mainly diverted to formulate an election strategy.<sup>viii</sup>

The UDF, the main opposition alliance, had lost its image and attraction, as Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan (JUP), Tahrir-i-Istiqlal (TI) and National Democratic Party (NDP) (formed in 1975, after the NAP was banned) were standing outside the UDF. However, public opinion and politicians were all in favor of forging a grand alliance against the PPP. Mawlana Noorani, in his press statement, said that his party had decided to take part in the forthcoming elections in collaboration with Tahrir-i-Istiqlal, in order to give the country a viable leadership.<sup>ix</sup>

Another attempt to forge unity among the Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan, Tahrir-i-Istiqlal and Pakistan Muslim League was made in August 1976, and the leaders of these parties completed their talks. The leader of the National Democratic Party, Sardar Sher Baz Mazari, invited a meeting of the opposition parties at Lahore on October 30, 1976. Mawlana Noorani, Mawlana Mufti Mehmood, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan (1916-2003), Pir Pagara, Mian Tufail Muhammad (1914-2009) and Professor Ghafoor Ahmad attended this meeting.<sup>x</sup>

The first meeting was not so effective due to the absence of Air Marshal (Retired) Muhammad Asghar Khan (b. 1921), the leader of the Tahrir-i-Istiqlal. To ensure the participation of Asghar Khan in the second conference, a delegation was organized. This delegation consisted of Mawlana Noorani, Sardar Sher Baz Mazari and Professor Ghafoor Ahmad. Asghar Khan was of the view that there was no need of ineffective alliance. However Mawlana Noorani persuaded him to put their joint candidates.<sup>xi</sup>

In order to pressurize the opposition, the Senate approved an amendment bill on December 31, 1976. This was to disqualify the members of the Parliament and provincial assemblies. The Law Minister, Malik Muhammad Akhtar said that the corrupt people would be disqualified. The law would be applicable to disqualify the Federal and Provincial ministers, MNAs and MPAs, Attorney General and Advocate General. The law would not be misused.<sup>xii</sup>

Mawlana Noorani strongly opposed the bill in the Senate. He said that the bill was not different from the previous Elected Bodies Disqualification Ordinance (EBDO) and Public and Representative Office Disqualification Act (PRODA). He pointed out many flaws in the bill. He criticized the empowerment of the Prime Minister to initiate the investigations. In such a way the Prime Minister would become dictator. He will misuse the bill against his opponents in the Parliament and the provincial assemblies.<sup>xiii</sup>

Another move was initiated by Rafique Bajwa, the Vice President of the JUP in Lahore, where opposition leaders of the UDF, JUP and TI met at his residence on January 10, 1977. They decided to form a National Alliance and on the demand of Mawlana Noorani, the new alliance was named as Pakistan National Alliance (PNA).<sup>xiv</sup>

The nine component parties of the Pakistan National Alliance were: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC), Jama'at-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP), Jam'iyat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan (JUP), Khaksar Tahrir (KT), National Democratic Party (NDP), Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP), Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Tahrir-i-Istiqlal (TI).<sup>xv</sup> After the formation of the PNA, Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan and Tahrir-i-Istiqlal raised the question of fair distribution of tickets. These two parties demanded 50 per cent seats for the National Assembly as well as provincial Assemblies. However, the other constituent parties of the PNA were not willing to give them more than 30 percent. The deadlock was solved due to the efforts of Mawlana Abdus Sattar Niazi, who, after his meetings with Mufti Mehmood and Pir Pagara detained 36 percent quota of seats for the Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan and Tahrir-i-Istiqlal, which was to be divided equally between the two parties. But, as the Chief of the Tahrir-i-Istiqlal was not willing to reduce his demand of 40 percent, Mawlana Niazi reduced the quota of the JUP, and finally it was decided to give 19 percent seats to the Tahrir-i-Istiqlal and 17 percent to the JUP. Thus due to the efforts of Mawlana Niazi and sacrifice of the JUP, the infant PNA alliance survived.

The PNA started its election campaign by holding a public meeting at Nishtar Park, Karachi, on January 23, 1977. The leaders of the PNA addressed public meetings in Punjab, NWFP and Sindh (urban). While addressing a public meeting in Korangi, on January 30, 1977, Mawlana Noorani announced that PNA would enforce "*Shari'at-i-Muhammadi*" in Pakistan and solve problems of hunger, unemployment, inflation and black-marketing. While addressing a public meeting in Karachi on February 7, 1977, Mawlana Noorani alleged that the country had become bankrupt due to the policies of the PPP government. While addressing a press conference in Hyderabad, Mawlana Noorani stated that the PNA would scrap Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and replace it by a Muslim Criminal Law as enunciated in the Quran.

The leaders of the PNA promised to enforce a true democratic set up in the country. The religious parties of the PNA, i.e., the JUP, JUI and JIP, had sensed the development of democratic and Islamic sentiments in the county. But Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan claiming to represent the *Swad-i-Azam*, mobilized these sentiments under the name of *Nizam-i-Mustafa*, a term coined by Jam'iyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan. Mawlana Noorani and Rafique Ahmad Bajwa, who represented the JUP in the public meetings of the central PNA, used this term in their speeches. The PNA leadership was optimistic about its victory in the elections. But the elections had been rigged blatantly. The PNA won only 36 out of the 192 seats in the National Assembly.<sup>xvi</sup>

Mawlana Noorani decided not to take part in the elections of the Provincial Assemblies, as the National Assembly election was rigged.<sup>xvii</sup> The PNA did not accept the election results and demanded resignation of Bhutto and fresh elections under the supervision of the army. Mawlana said that the regime was unconstitutional and started a movement against the government.<sup>xviii</sup> Mawlana Noorani and Mawlana Niazi were put behind the bars due to their movement against rigging in the election. During the movement, the government allegedly planned to kill a few top leaders. Mawlana Noorani was among them. For his services for the true democratic order in Pakistan, Mawlana Noorani

was given the title of *Salar-i-Qafilah-i-Tahrik-i-Nizam-i-Mustafa* in September 1977.<sup>xxix</sup> Mawlana Noorani warned the government that if it were not ready to cooperate, the people would not spare the government and would carry on the movement more vigorously.<sup>xxx</sup>

However Bhutto accepted demand of holding fresh elections in October 1977. He also proposed to form a special team to supervise the elections.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Bhutto agreed to hold elections in October and form an Implementation Committee with equal PNA and PPP government representation. Mawlana Noorani said that the government must accept the final draft of the PNA and the Implementation Committee or the Supervisory Council must have Constitutional position. These drafts of the PNA, for the creation of the Council, created a political deadlock. The military take over was the result of the deadlock and Chief of the Army Staff, General Muhammad Ziaul Haq (1924-88) declared Martial law in the country. The Prime Minister and a number of political leaders were taken into protective custody'. General Ziaul Haq declared that election would be held in October 1977.<sup>xxxii</sup>

**5. Martial Law Regimes and Mawlana Noorani :** Mawlana Noorani said that the paralyzed democratic institutions, the oppressed opposition, destroyed economy and the distorted law and order situation were the causes of the downfall of Bhutto. In the last months of his regime the country was on the verge of civil war, but he delayed the negotiations and decision.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Mawlana Noorani said that the Bhutto era was the darkest period of our political history.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

At first, the military takeover was welcomed by the JUP and the PNA. Mawlana Noorani said, "in the light of General Zia's recent steps, we believe that he is a true Muslim and he is sincere to hold elections in October." On August 1, 1977, it was announced that the elections would be held on October 18, 1977. The Parliamentary Board of the PNA met at Lahore to distribute tickets. The JUP was allocated twenty-one seats for National Assembly and fifty-two for the assemblies of Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. Mawlana Noorani said that he was fully satisfied with the decision of the PNA high command about the allocation of seats.<sup>xxxv</sup>

The PNA started its campaign in the last week of September and successfully organized historic public meetings at Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Hyderabad and Quetta. While addressing the public meeting at Lahore, Mawlana Noorani said that if the PNA come to power, it would replace the entire economic infrastructure, by a system based on the *Nizam-i-Mustafa*, with in a period of six to twelve months. He was confident that with the dawn of October 18, 1977, the *Nizam-i-Mustafa* would be the rule of the day. While addressing the public meeting at Karachi, Mawlana Noorani said that the *Nizam-i-Mustafa* was universal program. He appreciated the services and sacrifices of the citizens of Karachi during the *Tahrik-i-Nizam-i-Mustafa*.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In his press conference, Mawlana Noorani asked Martial law authorities to determine whether the causes of the East Pakistan debacle were military or political. He said that the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report was not comprehensive and asked for a judicial commission.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

On October 1, 1977 General Zia declared that the bad law and order situation did not allow elections to be hold so postponed it indefinitely.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Mawlana Noorani said that the NDP, PML and JIP had begged General Zia to do so.<sup>xxxix</sup> The JUP central working committee, meeting under the chairmanship of Mawlana Noorani, opposed the postponement decision and called for early elections. The committee observed that the solution of all national problems lay only in free and fair election.<sup>xxx</sup> Mawlana Noorani offered his support to General Zia provided he enforced the *Nizam-i-Mustafa*.<sup>xxxi</sup>

In the meeting of the JUP at Lahore, a resolution was adopted in which it was demanded that the government should allow political activity. Mawlana Noorani said that the PNA should be strengthened in order to enforce *Nizam-i-Mustafa*. He said that clashes in the PNA would not benefit any party. He made it clear that the JUP would remain in the PNA. When TI left the PNA on November 11, 1977, Mawlana Noorani declared this step of the TI as a severe setback to the PNA. Mawlana Noorani demanded that the election must be held before March 17, 1978.<sup>xxxii</sup>

**6. Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) and Noorani :** During 1981, the Martial law regime relaxed the situation and the political parties desired for the restoration of democracy. PPP was on the top of those parties. Other parties were TI, PDP, JUI and the JUP. The newly formed political alliance was named as the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Mawlana Noorani was of the opinion that only those parties could be favored, which were free of socialist tendency.<sup>xxxiv</sup> On March 29, 1981, the JUP and PML (Pagara Group) issued a joint communiqué, through which the alliance was named as "*Tahrik-i-Tahaffuz-i-Pakistan*". These two parties were out of the MRD. But their aim was to struggle for the enforcement of the *Nizam-i-Mustafa* in its true sense. The *Tahrik-i-Tahaffuz-i-Pakistan* also aimed at the restoration of the democracy in the country. Mawlana Noorani struggled to bring the country on the democratic tracks. Although, his efforts could not get the required results, but towered against the Martial law regime.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Basically, Mawlana Noorani kept himself aloof from the MRD. He was of the opinion that the anti-democratic behavior of the PPP had paved the way for the recent Martial law. But on August 14, 1983, the MRD declared that an

organized movement would be launched for the restoration of democracy. For this purpose, the NDP President, Sardar Sher Baz Mazari and Secretary General, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour met Mawlana Noorani and persuaded him to join the MRD. In the meantime, General Zia announced the new political setup in the country. Mawlana Noorani called for a high level meeting of the JUP to discuss the situation in the country. During this meeting Mawlana Noorani supported the MRD. He declared that his party had always been in the forefront for the restoration of democracy and also favored the parties, which were struggling for the rule of law and democracy.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The Government invited Mawlana Noorani for talks. He accepted the offer on the condition to have talks on the following agenda:

- (i) Rehabilitation of the political parties;
- (ii) Restoration of the judicial powers and finishing the military courts;
- (iii) Elimination of the Martial law; and
- (iv) Announcement of the election schedule.

The government accepted these conditions of Mawlana Noorani. He also demanded to release all the political prisoners and hold the elections on party-basis. He warned the government vehemently to avoid the amendments to the Constitution.

General Zia blamed Mawlana Noorani for disclosing secrets of the talks held on October 10, 1983. However Mawlana refuted those blames and said that General Zia had not fulfilled his words by not restoring the original Constitution of 1973. He said that if the rulers were serious and sincere about the political crisis in the country, they should hold the elections in the country on party basis. He further said that the imposition of the *Nizam-i-Mustafa* was stopped by the imposition of the Martial Law. Mawlana Noorani was banned in Punjab by the government due to strong stand against the Martial Law regime. He was sent to Karachi.

General Zia-ul-Haq declared that the general elections would be held in 1984. Mawlana Noorani warned that if the elections were not held on the party basis, JUP would launch a movement, along with other parties. In the meantime, General Zia announced to hold referendum over the question of imposing the 'Islamic System' in the country. The 71-97 percent Muslims of the country favored the questions in yes, for the imposition of the 'Islamic System' in Pakistan. In this way General Zia legalized his President-ship for further five years. Thus he secured his position for the next election.

President Zia ul Haqq declared that the elections would take place on February 25, 1985, on non-party basis. In response to the government declaration, the MRD announced it would not participate in the elections. The MRD leadership further said that the government should hold the elections according to the 1973 Constitution and should create an atmosphere of fair and impartial elections. The prominent leader of the MRD, Malik Muhammad Qasim, warned those who contested the elections on non-party basis would be expelled automatically from their parties (parties including in MRD).

The election to the National Assembly was held on the non-party basis on February 25, 1985. The Provincial Assemblies' elections were held on February 28, 1985. Mawlana Noorani was imprisoned prior to the elections. Mawlana Noorani criticized the government by saying that the Constitution was so amended, that the Prime Minister was made helpless. He said that it would be observed, how the Members of the Parliament and the Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo work? He said that the whole Parliament was at the mercy of 'one man'.

Mawlana Noorani said that the original Constitution was deteriorated through regular amendments. He considered the Interim Constitution of 1985 as a new one, and said that it was amendment in the Constitution of 1973.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

When General Zia's various steps were termed as the "Democratization", Mawlana Noorani said Whichever steps were taken by Zia for the Islamic system were based on bad intentions. If he had done all in a fair sense, he would be appreciated in every field of life. The people, at the initial stages appreciated him as he used and exploited the name of Islam and presented himself as a true Muslim (Momin). The people were discouraged and dishearten by the General.... General Zia could do anything he wanted but he did nothing for Islam. Allah had granted him a grand opportunity... General Zia harmed Islam instead of serving it. No socialist, communist or non Muslim had ever harmed Islam as Zia had done.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

The National Assembly of Pakistan passed the Eighth Amendment Bill. According to this bill, Martial Law was protected. The President could dissolve the National Assembly whenever he desired so. The Martial Law was lifted from the country on December 30, 1985, but the country was still far from democracy. We saw the exhibition of this power on May 29, 1988 when Junejo government was dissolved.<sup>xxxix</sup> Until Zia's death in plane crash he was all in all.

**7. Pakistan Awami Ittihad (PAI) and Mawlana Noorani:** The restoration of democracy got a chance after the death of

General Zia-ul- Haqq. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Chairman of the Senate, sworn in as the Acting President of Pakistan the same day. He declared that the elections would be held according to the scheduled program on November 16, 1988.

Pakistan Peoples Party was at its peak during 1988 at the political front. A new political party came on October 5, 1988 by the name of Islami Jamhori Ittihad (IJI). Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi was made its head. As this alliance was the product of the ruling elites, therefore, Mawlana Noorani kept himself away from it. But he remained in close contact with the Muslim League and Tahrik-i-Istiqlal. As a result of his efforts a new political alliance came into existence on October 5, 1988 consisting of JUP, PML and TI. This alliance was known as “Pakistan Awami Ittihad” (PAI).<sup>xi</sup> The general elections were scheduled on November 16, 1988 for the National Assembly and November 19, 1988 for the Provincial Assemblies.

On August 26, 1988, Nawaz Sharif was elected as the Secretary General of the Muslim League while Khan Fida Muhammad Khan as its President. Muhammad Khan Junejo joined the Pakistan Public Alliance. Junejo had some compulsions to join the Pakistan Awami Ittihad: Firstly, he was disheartened by the decision of the Supreme Court to declare the dissolution of the Assemblies on September 30, 1988 as unconstitutional but decided that the Assemblies could not be restored. Secondly, the Muslim League had completed its party elections on August 26, 1988. So there was no other way for Junejo except joining the Pakistan Awami Ittihad.

The Muslim League (Official Group) and the PML (Junejo Group) were still trying for alliance. At last the Muslim League was united on October 14, 1988. Therefore, PML (Junejo Group) left the PPA on October 18, 1988. Hence the PPA fell in crisis. The PPA had no opportunity to expand as the elections were coming in hand. Due to the strong influence of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Karachi, Mawlana Noorani lost the election. However, the JUP got three other seats in the National Assembly.

The parties of the PPA i.e., JUP and TI were not so influential to get majority votes. Mawlana Noorani expressed his views over these failures and said, we had no resources. We did not compete the conspiracies... As far as the votes were concerned, PPP had the highest votes. But after that the JUP was more important. As Nawaz Sharif had confessed that we lost about 25 seats due to JUP. If we had got the same seats then the PPP would not be the ruling party. Apart from Karachi and Hyderabad, we also faced failure in some places at Punjab. This was also due to our minor resources. Whenever I went on a campaign, I used taxi or raksha. The people would laugh at me. On the other hand the offices of the other parties were full of vehicles.

The PPP was the single party, which got success in the 1988 elections. The MQM was successful in Sindh. The traditional politician, Wali Khan lost and his Awami National Party was defeated in the NWFP. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao made PPP successful in the NWFP. PPP got 57 seats out of 115 in the Punjab. Baluchistan, where the party politics was different from its tribal politics, the PPP was a little bit successful. The PPP got 92 seats in the National Assembly while the IJI got 68 seats. Later on the independent Members from the FATA also joined hands with the PPP. MQM became ally of the PPP in Sindh. The PPP formed the government in Sindh and NWFP, while Nawaz Sharif made the government in Punjab. Nawab Akbar Bugti was elected the Chief Minister of Baluchistan.

After having governed for twenty months, the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan issued a charge sheet against the government and dissolved National Assembly and Provincial assemblies on August 6, 1990. He appointed Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as the interim Prime Minister. It was mainly on the plea that PPP government was corrupt.

Although the democratic period (1988 -1990) saw many ups and downs politically, but the regular conflicts among the politicians increased the Public anxiety. Mawlana Noorani had predicted that the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haqq would manage to provide a bureaucrat to the country as a President. His prediction proved true. As a result of the democratic setup, two political parties came to the national stream. Those were the PML and PPP.<sup>xli</sup>

**8. Islami Jamhuri Mahaz (IJM) and Mawlana Noorani:** When Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the President of Pakistan, dismissed the PPP government on August 6, 1990, the opposition leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi was appointed as the caretaker Prime Minister of the country.<sup>xlii</sup> The caretaker Prime Minister announced that the elections would take place on October 24, 1990.<sup>xliii</sup>

The elections for the National Assembly took place on October 24, 1990, while for the Provincial Assemblies on October 27, 1990.<sup>xliiv</sup> As a result the Islami Jamhori Ittihad (IJI) got majority seats in the National Assembly. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The religious parties could not get the required results. They were lacking harmony and unity amongst themselves.

Mawlana Noorani blamed the winning team of the elections for rigging. He said that elections were rigged at high level in various places of the country. An election cell was responsible for the rigging. He gave an example of the

constituency of Professor Shah Faridul Haq in Karachi, where the result of his constituency came at 11 p.m. although the counting of the votes was not yet complete. As a result the Professor lost the elections.

On another occasion Mawlana Noorani said that the aggressive politics of the MQM at Sindh destroyed the position of JUP and TI. When the JUP workers would visit the booths during the counting process, the hooligans of the MQM would make them run away. If there were no use of weapons, the JUP would achieve the same success as during the 1970 and 1977 elections.

Realizing the lack of unity, Mawlana Noorani of JUP and Mawlana Fazl-ur-Rehman of JUI formed a new political alliance with the name of "Islami Jamhuri Mahaz" (IJM) in May 1992. Mawlana Noorani was made its President, while Mawlana Fazl-ur-Rehman was nominated as its General Secretary. The IJM convened a meeting of all the opposition parties in October 1992 at the office of the JUP. This meeting was attended by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Mawlana Fazl-Ur-Rehman, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Sheikh Rafique, Malik Qasim, S.M. Zafar, Shah Farid-ul-Haq, Abdul Qadeer Khamosh, General K.M Azhar etc. but the meeting was not successful in its objectives. So the JUP altered its program to unite all the opposition parties at the same platform, and desired for a more grand alliance, which also failed.<sup>xlv</sup>

Benazir Bhutto started a movement against Nawaz Government on October 24, 1992. She declared to have a long march against his government on November 10, 1992. Nawaz Government faced a tough opposition from the opposition side. The government started arrests of the workers of the opposition parties' all over the country.<sup>xlvi</sup> Benazir Bhutto started train march and road march respectively against the government.<sup>xlvii</sup>

In the meantime, the Babri Mosque incident took place, which turned the eyes of the public from the internal affairs of the country towards the Pak-India relations for sometime. The opposition parties had to postpone the protest against the government. The IJM took serious notice of the Babri-Mosque incident. As a result Secretary General of IJM, Mawlana Fazl-Ur-Rehman called for all parties' conference in order to analyze the situation after the Babri Mosque martyrdom. Mawlana Noorani, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Ahmad Ali Qasuri, Hamid Sarfaraz, Ghulam Rabbani Khar, S.M Zafar and others attended this conference.<sup>xlviii</sup>

There arose some differences between the Prime Minister and the President over the Eighth Amendment Act. Therefore the President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dissolved the National Assembly on April 18, 1993 and made Mir Balkh Sher Mazari as the caretaker Prime Minister on April 20, 1993. The elections were to be held in July 1993 according to the Constitution. Nawaz Sharif challenged the dissolution of the National Assembly on April 25, 1993 in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The Supreme Court declared the dissolution of the National Assembly as unconstitutional. So as a result, Mian Nawaz Sharif got the vote of confidence from the National Assembly. On June 15, 1993, Mian Nawaz Sharif decided to have negotiations with the opposition. Benazir Bhutto forwarded some conditions for the rapprochement with Nawaz Sharif. The conditions were to form a National Government, prepare a package for the constitutional reforms and declare a date for the new elections.

The situation became more complex and Nawaz Sharif along with the Ghulam Ishaq Khan presented their resignations to the Chief of Army Staff on July 17, 1993. On July 18, 1993 Moeen Qureshi was nominated as the caretaker Prime Minister. The political parties started their campaigns for the coming general elections. On July 21, 1993, Mawlana Noorani declared that IJM would make an alliance with other religious parties. On August 15, 1993, addressing the "Jeeway Pakistan convention", Mawlana Noorani said that the public had rejected Nawaz Sharif and Benazir. Both of them were the agents of America. Nawaz Sharif created dissensions and hatred in Karachi and Hyderabad.<sup>xlix</sup>

The President of IJM, Mawlana Noorani said to a gathering in Hyderabad that the fate of Pakistan was related to the *Nizam-i-Mustafa*. The election to the National Assembly took place on October 6, 1993. According to the results PPP got 89 seats in the National Assembly while PML (Nawaz group) got 73. IJM was defeated vehemently. Total 52 candidates contested the election from IJM side, only four were successful. Mawlana Noorani accepted the results wholeheartedly and said that his party would participate in the next election too.<sup>1</sup> Mawlana Noorani had contested the election from the constituency NA-125. He was defeated. He, as result of his defeat, said that success and defeat were the part of elections. He expressed his happiness over the peaceful transfer of power under the democratic traditions. This should be a model for future.<sup>li</sup>

No party could get the clear majority. The MNAs were involved in Horse-trading.<sup>lii</sup> On October 19, 1993, Benazir Bhutto was elected as the Prime Minister.<sup>liii</sup>

The IJM got success at the time when the secretary General IJM, Mawlana Fazl-ur-Rehman, was elected as the Chairman of standing committee on Foreign Affairs in the National Assembly.<sup>liv</sup>

When all the elections completed in all respects there was no need for any electoral alliance. Therefore Mawlana Noorani announced to abolish the IJM. On April 19, 1994, at the residence of Sardar Muhammad Khan Laghari in Dera Ghazi Khan, Mawlana Noorani officially declared the end of the IJM. He said that the IJM was needed only up to the 1993 elections. Then the destinations of JUI (F) and JUP were different.

Nawaz Sharif started agitation against the Benazir's Government. So Nawaz Sharif declared the "*Karwan-i-Najat*" against Benazir's government on August 18, 1994. The PML, JUP, ANP and Jamiyyat Ahli-Hadith (JAH) joined hands with Nawaz Sharif in that *karwan*.<sup>lv</sup>

**9. Milli Yakjihti Council (MYC) and Mawlana Noorani:** On March 24, 1995, the *Ulama* of different schools of thought met in Islamabad. They decided in that meeting to form a council in order to develop the sense of sectarian harmony. The council was named as "*Milli Yakjihti Council*". The council consisted of eleven members. Its head was Mawlana Noorani.<sup>lvi</sup> Mawlana Noorani while mentioning the main objectives of the Council said that it would try to eradicate the sectarian clashes and terrorism. "Foreign hands were involved in terrorist activities, because some foreign elements wanted to weaken the country on the basis of sectarianism, provincialism and linguistic issues".

Mawlana Noorani blamed the opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif and Altaf Hussain for racism. He said that PML (N), MQM and ANP wanted to make '*Panjabistan*', '*Muhajiristan*' and '*Pakhtunistan*' respectively. Due to diverse political conditions of the country, the *Milli Yakjihti Council* (MYC) also started to participate in the political activities.

During that period, the Benazir's government moved 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill in the National Assembly, which increased rivalries between the President and the Prime Minister. Due to all these reasons, President Farooq Laghari, invoked Article 58 (2)-B and dissolved the National Assembly on November 5, 1996. In this way the Benazir government was dismissed. Malik Mairaj Khalid was made caretaker Prime Minister. He along with the new cabinet took the oath from the President on November 6, 1996.

The new set up had to hold elections within 90 days. JUP and the MYC under the leadership of Mawlana Noorani, decided to boycott the 1997 elections. The JI also decided to boycott the same elections. The elections were held and Mian Nawaz Sharif got a heavy mandate. The PML (N) got 134 seats out of 202 in the National Assembly. The PPP got 18 seats. Nawaz Sharif was elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The government of Nawaz soon involved in clashes with the Judiciary and military. The three pillars of the government i.e., legislature, executive and Judiciary got frustrated and finally the military got the upper hand. As a result, General Pervez Musharaf took over government on October 12, 1999 in a military coup d'etat.

The MYC had lost its importance during Nawaz Sharif's government (1997-1999) and afterwards in the first three years of the military regime.<sup>lvii</sup>

**10. The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) and Mawlana Noorani:** Both the political parties of PPP and PML (N) had disappointed the people. There was a need for change. Only the religious parties could be the other option. The people had developed expectation from religious political parties.<sup>lviii</sup> Therefore, at the advice of Mawlana Noorani, Qazi Hussain Ahmad called a meeting of six religious parties at his house on June 26, 2001. Qazi Hussain Ahmad (JI), Mawlana Noorani (JUP), Mawlana Fazl-Ur-Rehman (JUI-F), Allama Sajid Ali Naqvi (TJ), Allama Sajid Mir (JAH) and Mawlana Sami-ul-Haq (JUI-S) attended this meeting. The heads of these religious parties signed a joint communiqué. These parties approved the establishment of a new alliance named as *Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal* (MMA). Mawlana Noorani was unanimously chosen as its President. He remained the President of the MMA till his death.<sup>lix</sup>

Mawlana Noorani said, "The meeting hereby resolved to struggle collectively for the Islamic identity, true democracy, freedom, integrity and solidarity of Pakistan. The six religious parties have decided to have joint efforts from the platform of the MMA. Our target is the establishment of a true Islamic democratic system. Today's meeting declares that the base of Pakistan is Islam and the 1973 Constitution has given protection to the Parliamentary democracy and rule of law."

The MMA decided to adopt a common policy for the elections of 2002. The three main religious parties of the country i.e., JI, JUI and JUP decided to contest the elections from the platform of MMA.<sup>lx</sup> Mawlana Noorani was of the opinion that the 9/11 incident had brought the people nearer to the religious parties and they would not elect any other party.<sup>lxi</sup>

The MMA was converted into a full-fledged alliance on March 19, 2002.<sup>lxii</sup> The MMA leadership criticized the Presidential referendum of General Pervez Musharaf and declared that a countrywide movement would be launched against it. Mawlana Noorani said that there was no room for the referendum in the 1973 Constitution.<sup>lxiii</sup> The MMA leadership declared that it would impose the *Nizam-i-Mustafa* in the country if it came into power.

On the other hand other parties were also trying to unite themselves under one platform. Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) was on the top, headed by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. On May 19, 2002, an All Parties Conference (APC) was held under the auspices of (ARD). Thirty-five political parties including the MMA participated in the APC. The APC was presided over by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. The agenda of the conference was conflict at the borders; price hike, unemployment and terrorism. The APC decided to warn General Pervez Musharaf to protect the borders of the country and get back to the barracks. The political process should be left to the politicians.<sup>lxiv</sup>

The government was busy in fulfilling the American agenda of registering the religious institutions. Mawlana Noorani warned the government against the registration of the religious institutions. Mawlana Noorani said that the MMA was a permanent alliance.<sup>lxv</sup> He also criticized the government on the constitutional amendments. The leadership of the MMA met the President for the purpose but the meeting was not successful.<sup>lxvi</sup>

The international scenario had suddenly changed after the 9/11 incidents. The ‘Taliban’ in Afghanistan were held responsible for the incidents. USA demanded Usama Bin Laden from the ‘Taliban’ who was held responsible for the attacks. But they refused to hand him over to the US. When America along with its allied forces attacked Afghanistan, Pakistan had no option but to side with the international forces. Their wrath fell upon the religious institutions, which in their opinion were the sanctuaries of the ‘Taliban’ and ‘Al-Qaeda’. Therefore, Pakistani government decided to action against the religious institutions.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Mawlana Noorani stood on both the MMA and JUP fronts. He was sure that the general elections would be fateful for the secular forces.<sup>lxviii</sup> The elections were held both for the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies on October 10, 2002. The MMA emerged as the second largest party after PML (Q), which had secured the majority seats.<sup>lxix</sup>

MMA announced to take oath under the Constitution instead of the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) of General Pervez Musharaf.<sup>lxx</sup> However in order to protect the Parliamentary system of the country, the MMA nominated Mawlana Fazl-ur-Rehman for the Premiership, while Liaqat Baloch for the seat of Speaker.<sup>lxxi</sup> Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali was elected as the Prime Minister on November 21, 2002. He got 172 votes, while his opponent, Mawlana Fazl-Ur-Rehman of MMA got 86 votes, getting the second position.<sup>lxxii</sup>

Mawlana Noorani concentrated over the Provincial affairs and restoration of the original Constitution. He also declared that military president was not acceptable. If General Musharaf left military command, MMA would help to make him constitutional head of the state. Meeting of the Supreme Council of the MMA was called on December 17, 2002 at Peshawar in which the following issues were discussed:

1. Presidency of General Pervez Musharaf in military uniform;
2. Presidency through constitutional means;
3. Legal Framework Order (LFO).
4. National Security Council; and
5. Article 58(2)-B

The MMA and PML (Q) had decided to continue talks but were not successful. Due to failure of the talks Mawlana Noorani declared that the MMA would not join the government and had to sit in the opposition. The MMA rejected president in uniform, 58(2)-B and the National Security Council. They also demanded restoration of the Constitution and also vowed not to permit the American operations in the NWFP and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).<sup>lxxiii</sup>

MMA nominated Mawlana Noorani for Senate seat. He was not willing but Qazi Hussain Ahmad convinced him that he was needed in the Senate.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Mawlana Noorani was elected as a Senator on February 24, 2003. The MMA got 18 seats in the Senate. Total seats in the Senate, under the Legal Framework Order were 100.<sup>lxxv</sup>

Mawlana argued on the issue of LFO on the floor of Senate: “The 1973 Constitution was framed after great efforts. Unfortunately, some people fashioned it according to their own interests. Constitution is the base of the people’s economic, social, moral and spiritual prosperities. It is used to be sign of unity. To attack this sign of unity is a great injustice to the nation. A proper way is there to amend the Constitution. But the President did not follow this method and LFO was inserted in the constitution. He argued that it was not legal framework but was an “Illegal Framework” and also an “illegal order” and has no moral, legal and constitutional status.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

The American forces attacked Iraq on March 20, 2003. Demonstrations were held in the nook and corner of the country as a protest. The people came out of their houses with the slogans of “*Jihad*”.<sup>lxxvii</sup> When a resolution regarding the American war on Iraq was moved in the Senate on March 28, 2003, Mawlana Noorani spoke boldly on it. He said, “There is no Muslim who had no spiritual, moral and religious attachments with Iraq. We are attached with them in the

bond of Islam. Not only the Muslims but the secular people of Europe also condemned the war against Iraq. He said that Bush had started crusade.

He further said that Bush was fighting for the 'Greater Israel'. The Israeli kids were being taught at primary and secondary level to make Greater Israel. Madinah, Hijaz and Farat were to be parts of Greater Israel, according to them. Those maps of the Greater Israel were present at bazaars. The Israelis considered that Hazrat Ibrahim was born on the land of Babul and therefore that land was also a part of the Greater Israel. Mawlana said that they were fighting for that purpose.

Mawlana said that former American President, Bill Clinton, invited some prominent Muslims to White House. Hilary Clinton also spoke at this occasion. She admitted that Islam was the fastest growing religion in that region. Now they wanted to stop our religion from spreading by various tactics. They were trying to relate our Islam with the terrorism. Many Muslims could go there easily to preach Islam but they wanted to stop their preaching. As they could not stop the Muslims legally from preaching so they were being labeled as terrorists. This way they would stop spreading of Islam in Europe and America.

Mawlana Noorani explained the logic of Islam very beautifully. He said, "Islam is a religion of peace and tranquility. Islam is the greatest guardian of the humanity. Islam is totally against terrorism. The Quran says that if anybody killed an innocent person, he killed the whole humanity." He demanded of the USA to stop war in Iraq as they were killing the Muslims without any claim and reason. <sup>lxxviii</sup>

The meeting of the MMA was held on April 9, 2003 during this sensitive situation. The stand of the government over LFO and foreign policy was rejected. Mawlana Noorani said on the occasion, "No change has occurred in our stand over the LFO. If the President Musharaf did not remove the uniform, accidents like the East Pakistan could appear. America is the war criminal and the UNO did not play its role to stop the war. Kofi Annan should resign. The Pakistanis should boycott the American and British products. America has killed three lac Afghanis. So there is need of new policy for the recent world crisis". As far as the LFO was concerned, the stand of General Musharaf was unconstitutional, undemocratic and immoral. The MMA has never accepted the LFO. This is a dictatorial law; amendments to the Constitution could be done only through constitutional means."

The whole year the dialogues between the MMA and the government over the LFO and uniform issue continued but President Musharaf and the government did not show sincerity. Mawlana Noorani always stood for the supremacy of the Constitution and Parliament while the government was not ready to show any flexibility. The MMA had been asking General Musharaf to quit the charge of Army and become a civilian president; abolish LFO and restore constitution to its original status. Mawlana very well articulated these demands. He was determined to restore the lost prestige of Parliament and thus provide stable footing to the democratic norms. December 17, 2003 was that date for which Mawlana had been preparing a fiery speech against the regime of General Musharaf. Unfortunately, fate did not allow him. He passed away on December 11, 2003. After his demise the MMA weakened. <sup>lxxix</sup>

**11. Conclusion:** Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani entry into parliamentary politics after the 1970 election brought in a change in the parliamentary as well as religious politics of the country. He rejected the traditional politics and boldly fought against the undemocratic and unparliamentary spirit of the military regimes unlike some of his party leaders who were a little bit accommodative towards the dictators. He never joined hands with dictators. He epitomized the spirit of dissent in and outside the Parliament; always advocating democracy and all that was normally decent in politics and bitterly opposing all kinds of dictatorships. Mawlana Noorani had never permitted his party to encourage sectarianism or to patronize violence. He remained committed to a democratic Pakistan and wanted it to be a welfare state. He was seen as a unifying figure amongst various Islamic religious parties of Pakistan into a single alternative political force. Uniting the six different religious parties into a single force of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal was a glaring example of it. Recognizing his services for the elimination of sectarianism in the country, he was appointed as the Chairman of the MMA.

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