



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Role of Opposition in the Development of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

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**ABSTRACT**

Opposition plays a pivotal and moderate role in a democratic system while complying with the constitutional procedures. Either it is an interim form of government or a constitutionally elected government, a legitimate opposition harmonizes the conflicts arising in the democratic system. The current research study investigates and evaluates the role of the Opposition in the successful implementation of the 18th Amendment and how the Opposition sensibly harmonized its relations with the government all through this process and which challenges and problems it had to face in order to put the democratic process back on the right track in Pakistan. The current study also reveals the difficulties in enforcing the Constitution with the mutual consensus of all the political parties i.e. the Opposition and the Ruling Party. It also focuses on how the Opposition contributes to the pro-democratic efforts and constitutional sustainability. Qualitative approach has been utilized in order to build its research design. The current study ends with this conclusion that the enforcement of 18th amendment had been an overwhelming hallmark that affirmed a long-lasting democratic process in Pakistan as it brought about robust reforms in the Constitution of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Opposition; Political Development; Parliament; Constitutional Amendment.

**Introduction**

*“A democratic parliament might be lame without a strong opposition as it is important to give tough time to the ruling party without marring the spirit of constitution”.—Walter Lippmann*

Opposition plays a concrete role in any parliamentary system in order to bring peace, harmony and coexistence among political factions and also to ensure socio-economic progress and political sustainability in any state or country. It helps carry on the democratic process and raises voice on the various forums in order to address numerous public issues and concerns. In this scenario, the role of the Opposition is not only inevitable but also undeniable. It has been well-said by a socio-political author, Jennings, “If there is no opposition, there is no democracy.” (Jennings, 1959). The Opposition holds the second most powerful office in the parliamentary sphere so it has got a genuine role to play so that the parliamentary or political system could be placed on the democratic track in the long run undisturbed. All of us know that it enjoys a prestigious status of being the second largest political group that has not only been recognized by the Constitution but also been sanctioned as a strong pillar of parliament. It has become a well-settled institution (Cam Hobhouse, 1826).

The Opposition is an indispensable component of democracy as it galvanizes all the political parties and factions under the umbrella of peace and harmony and strengthens the entire parliamentary system. It is an admitted fact that the opposition ensures a long-term democratically-oriented rule and plays her part to the public welfare and overall national progress that’s why its presence is indubitably undeniable in the parliament (Jennings, 1959). One of the most important functions of the Opposition to register positive criticism

on the government for any anti-public policies and to paves the way for a peaceful and prosperous revolution. It further keeps a vigilant eye on all the important sectors of the economy such as public services and puts forward her opinion strongly backed by and based on the public interests (Gupta, 1978).

So, the current study is an effort to acknowledge and comprehend the true spirit of democratic procedure in Pakistan with respect to the bilateral affairs of the Government and the Opposition, and its importance in a developing democracy while keeping in view the 18th Amendment. The present study also aims to evaluate and inspect the response of the Opposition to the constitutional procedure and its development. The governmental affairs with the opposition reveal a complex picture of our current Federal system. Similarly, it has also been observed that the ties in between these two constitutional institutions i.e. the Government and the Opposition tend to tighten in the federal parliamentary system of Pakistan.

### **The Eighteenth Amendment**

Since its inception, the Constitution of 1973 underwent certain changes in order to place the democratic system on the right track of long-term public welfare and prosperity. It was shockingly observed that even the parliament, the integral part of any sustainable democratic system, responsible for its formulation and implementation, also presented sex amendments in the constitution with the short span of four years from 1973 to 1977. Z. A. Bhutto, democratically elected Prime Minister, took practical measures for bringing into effect the 7th Amendments. But shortly after the death of Z. A. Bhutto in 1979, General Zia-ul-Haq imposed the Martial Law and restored the presidential system and thus depriving the Prime Minister of certain powers. The next nine Amendments (from the 9th to the 17th) were made by the following democratic ruling parties as the time passed.

It was after the deposition of the then Prime Minister, Mian Nawaz Sharif, in 1999 when General Pervaiz Musharraf not only accused him of misusing his powers but also imposed the Martial Law and after three years, in the so-called general elections of 2002, Pervaiz Musharraf introduced the 17th Amendment in close consultation with the political parties and thus he rose to power and became the new President of Pakistan under the Presidential Rule introduced by the 17th Amendment. It is for the main reason that the 18th Amendment holds the paramount importance as it put the Constitution of Pakistan back to its original state of 1973. All the undemocratic appendices and attempts were nullified under this 18th Amendment. After the tiring efforts of the Opposition parties and the Ruling parties in various provinces and the Federal, a mutual consensus was made and thus the Amendment was introduced in April 2010. All the crucial matters related with the Senate, Judiciary and the Election Commission were resolved with mutual understanding and peaceful discussions in compliance with the Constitutional procedure (Hussain, 2011).

It was a historic day when on April 8, 2010, the National Assembly, with mutual consensus and understanding of all the other Provincial Assemblies, passed the Bill for the 18th Amendment and thus Pakistan switched from a semi-Presidential System to a glorious Parliamentary System (democratically accredited). The President of Pakistan could no longer be able to dissolve the Parliament and NWFP province was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This Amendment affected no less than 100 articles of the Constitution of 1973 which amounted to the total of one-third of the document. This Bill was passed with the active support and cooperation of more than two-thirds of the parliamentarians both from the Opposition and the Ruling parties.

Pakistan has experienced numerous periods of socio-political upheaval, religious disharmony, and economic depression during the past seventy years. The major reason for this inconsistent, faulty and bad governance in Pakistan owes greatly to the non-compliance with the constitutional principles and disregard for the rule of law by the ruling elite class

(Shah, 2012). Unfortunately, the Constitution of 1973, which set up lofty Islamic values and the federal parliamentary system and a greater freedom to the provinces, was not complied with in true letter and spirit. It was for the main reason that democracy was destined to be derailed with irregular intervals. The feudal system in Pakistan changed our democratic image from a “state” to an “estate” due to the corrupt and unfeeling ruling political parties in the past (Niaz, 2010). Martial Laws by the army further exacerbated and suppressed the democratic ideology and image and the parliaments were dissolved in the name of a better governing rule of the army.

It gave rise to tumultuous and uncertain circumstances and the assemblies were dissolved in order to pave the way for the change from the parliamentary system to pseudo presidential form through the 8th and 17th Constitutional Amendments introduced both by the imposing and domineering military leaders. These amendments also caused lawlessness, political upheaval, socio-economic uncertainty etc. on one hand, whereas on the other hand, it also curbed the freedom of speech, media, judiciary and an air of distrust and hatred among the provinces as well as the federal constituency. Furthermore, the Charter of Democracy was signed between the PML-N leader Mian Nawaz Sharif and the PPP leader, Benazir Bhutto on May 14, 2006 so that both of them might exert their respective efforts and exercise their influence in order to continue the democratic process and curb the anti-democratic forces so that the provincial integrity and sovereignty might be retained. Certain demands arose from time to time in order to make amendments in the constitution so that the judicial process might be made impartial and unbiased and all the provinces might get their due share with respect to the distribution of assets from the federal in order to enjoy equal opportunities for socio-economic development (Point 4 of Report on the Constitutional 18th Amendment Bill 2010).

Therefore, when Mr. Asif Ali Zardari assumed office as the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in 2008, his stance had always been to restore the Constitution to its former and original state of 1973 so he arranged for numerous higher-command meetings of both Houses of Parliament, whose officials gathered together on 28th March, 2009. There, he asked the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan to form a Joint Commission in the Houses of Parliament with the consensus and unanimous decision of all political parties and self-governing groups in the House so that they might be able to offer their proposals for this Amendment in Constitution in the light of the Charter of Democracy (CoD). The president also officially corresponded with the Prime Minister on 9th April, 2009 emphasizing the Government to take substantial steps in this regard. Resultantly, a meeting was held on 10th April 2009 in the National Assembly and passed a bill for forming an alliance of All Parties Special Committee so that they could suggest constitutional changes in the light of the Charter of Democracy. Similarly, the Senate of Pakistan also gave their consent on April 29, 2009 in the same way.

In compliance with the recommendations and suggestions adopted by both the Houses of the Parliament, a Special Committee of Parliament was set up in collaboration and consultation with the Parliamentary Leaders that comprised the following members (Point 6, 7 of Report on the Constitutional 18th Amendment Bill 2010).

Sr.No.	MEMBER	Party	S.N	MEMBER	Party
1	Mian Raza Rabani	PPP	14	Senator Mr. Afrasaib Khattak	ANP
2	Senator Mr. Waseem Sajjad Leader of the Opposition	PML (Q)	15	Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, MNA	PPP
3	Mulana Fazal-ur- Rehman ,MNA	JUI(F)	16	Syed Naveed Qamar, MNA	PPP
4	Senator Mr. Rehmat ullah Kakar	JUI(F)	17	Senator Dr. Zaheeruddin Babar Awan	PPP
5	Senator Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Dar	PML (N)	18	Senator Mir Israr Ullah Khan Zehri	BNP (A)

6	Senator Nawabzada Mir Haji Lashkari Raisani	PPP	19	Senator Mir Israr Ullah Khan Zehri,	PML(F)
7	Ch. Ahsan Iqbal, MNA	PML(N)	20	Senator Dr. Abdul Malik	NP
8	Sardar Mehtab Ahmad Khan, MNA	PML(N)	21	Senator Prof Khurshid Ahmad	JIP
9	Mr. Munir Khan Orakzai, MNA	IND	22	Mr. Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi, MNA	NPP
10	Mr. Hamayun Saifullah khan, MNA	PML(Q)	23	Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, MNA	PPP (S)
11	Senator Mr. S.M. Zafar	PML(Q)	24	Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi, MNA	MQM
12	Senator Mr. Shahid Hassan Bugti	JWP	25	Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar, MNA	MQM
13	Senator Mr. Abdul Rahim Khan Mandokhel	PKMAP	26	Senator Haji Muhammad Adeel	ANP

Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan from PML-N was the leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly at that time. He was quite uncertain about the developments being made for the enforcement of the 18th Amendment, whereas his party was willing to participate in this longstanding process but he refused to participate in that Committee (GAZDAR, H. 2010).

There had been many leaders in the Opposition like Imran Khan who were apprehensive about the enforcement of the 18th Amendment because they opined that this Amendment might endanger the freedom of Judiciary. It also involved the favoritism in relation to the appointment and promotion of judges to the higher posts and thus adversely affecting the entire judiciary system and placing its normal course of action in doubt. The Parliamentary Committee formed to bring in the 18th Amendment continued their discussions on various important forums. The Amendment was made possible after twenty-six parliamentarians gave their vote against this Amendment without the participation of women parliamentarians and the members from the minority either from the opposition or the ruling party (Mirza, 2010).

A long struggle was on its way before the enforcement of the 18th Amendment as the very first meeting was held on June 25, 2009 in order to discuss the doubts and apprehensions of the parliamentarians in this regard and the a Commission was formed which was led by the Senator Mian Raza Rabbani who was made the chairman of this Commission named as Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms and further decisions were made with respect to its course of action (Rules of Procedure). The Committee also formed its Terms of Reference as under:

“While taking into account the 17th Amendment, Provincial Attorney and Charter of Democracy, the especially formed Committee shall recommend certain amendments to the Constitution so that it may fulfill all the prerequisites of the democratic and Islamic principles that will also be in line with the desires of the people of Pakistan” (Point 12 of Report on the Constitutional 18th Amendment Bill 2010).

The Committee also arranged for a Poll in the Assembly Session on June 29, 2009 so that the parliamentarians could put forward their opinions, suggestions and certain recommendations in order to pave the way for the successful implementation of the 18th Amendment and all those proposals and ideas were covered through various channels and social media so that the far-reaching benefits of this parliamentary system could be explained to the public. The Committee received approximately 983 suggestions with the help of this campaign. In the same way, the Committee also asked its members, representing different political parties to dress down all these proposals and recommendations. So, it was mutually decided to drop 91 suggestions and recommendations out from that big lot (Point 13, 15 of Report on the Constitutional 18th Amendment Bill 2010).

The Committee put forward serious efforts to maintain unanimity of conviction among all the active members of this committee so that they might closely review the previous seventeen amendments made by the parliaments during the course of previous five decades. The Committee quite meticulously picked the key points of the previous amendments and when they were reviewing the Constitution of 1973, they gave their consent in case the 18th Amendment would mutually agree to the following criteria:

- Honesty in System
- Minimalizing individual choice
- Firmly Integrating the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies
- Reinforcement of Basic Rights
- Strengthening of Institutions
- Freedom of Judiciary
- Good Governance

The Committee showed its plan to make announcement of the LFO and its palpable modifications as being of no lawful effect, the 17th amendment was withdrawn, while successfully sanctioning certain tasks and took some revolutionary steps such as the provisions pertaining to the parliamentary process so that there might be a substantial rise in the number of seats of Parliament and Provisional Assemblies. It also reserved seats for minorities and special seats for females so that they could also be brought in the stream of parliamentary system. It also reduced voters' age and helped form the joint electorate. The Committee also planned alterations in numerous Articles of Constitution dealing with the Federal-Provincial Affairs. One of the main objectives of these amendments is to further safeguard and strengthen the notion of federalism as articulated in the fundamental principles of Constitution of 1973 (Point 19, 20 of Report on the Constitutional 18th Amendment Bill 2010).

Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms (PCCR), consisting of around 26 members, was assigned a diligent task of implement the amendment in the Constitution of the country and the Committee was led by one of the most competent and distinguished leaders, Mian Raza Rabbani from Pakistan People's Party. The Committee meticulously reviewed each and every section and sub-section of the Constitution and proposed 95 amendments in total in approximately 70 Articles of the Constitution. After the mutual consensus, the amendments were officially validated and then the PCCR made the following legal proceedings. But unfortunately, unexpected hurdles impeded its way from turning it into reality. Some of the members of the Committee and the parliamentarians were not in favor of renaming the province of NWFP and they were also somewhat against the procedure of the nomination of judges in the High Court and the Supreme Court. That's why this matter kept on lying in the cold storage for quite some time as in the beginning, PML-N and PML-Q showed the negative attitude towards the renaming of NWFP province. But afterwards, PML-N finally agreed to the change the name of the province but PML-Q remained hostile to the idea. PML-Q and PML-N as opposition parties, continued to support the strikers' demands for a remote and isolated Hazara province. The name was demonstrating Pakhtun possession of the province disregarding the other ethnic groups in the region (Cookman, 2010).

Eventually the moment came after 77 meetings were organized in order to seek consensus of all the provincial leaders and in the last five hours of the 77th Convention, the Committee for Constitutional Reforms finally and mutually signed the draft of the Eighteenth

Amendment on March 31, 2010. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf (Federal Minister for Water and Power) was the first Senator to sign the draft followed by Professor Khursheed Ahmed (Jamaat-e-Islami), Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao (PPPS), Syed Naveed Qamar, Dr Babar Awan, Haji Lashkari Raisani, (PPP), Ishaq Dar, Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal, Abdul Razaq Taheem (PML N) Wasim Sajjad, S M Zafar, Humayun Saifullah (PM-Q), Dr Farooq Sattar, Haider Abbass Rizvi(MQM), Afrasyab Khattak, Haji Muhammad Adeel (ANP), RehmatUallah Kakar (JUI), Baluch leaders Mir Israr Ullah Zehri, Hasil Bizenjo Abdul Rahim Mandokhel and Shahid Bugti, and last but not the least Munir Khan Orakzai (FATA) with the Committee Chairman, Raza Rabbani putting his sign at the very end (Islam, 2013).

The final draft of the Bill was passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on April 8, 2010 and then the Senate also approved it five days later on April 13, 2010 whereas the president, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, gave his approval to the amendment on April 19, 2010. Consequently, it became an active part of the Parliament. This amendment paved the way to establish an undisputed and untainted democratic process of parliamentary system. It was also a major step towards a sustained democratic system and also a major shift of parliamentary powers from the President to the Prime Minister (Raja, 2016).

### **Salient Features of the 18th Amendment**

#### **Promotion of Democracy**

One of the most significant milestones (hallmarks) of the Eighteenth Amendment is to formulate a lasting bond with all the democratic powers and authorities. It was also an honest effort to save the democratic system from being derailed. It also aimed to register one's hostility and animosity towards any form of undemocratic rule such as Martial Law. Furthermore, it made substantial efforts to hamper and impede all such action that were applied in the past to derail the process of democracy. Many of the political and social groups labeled this success as to be a marvel and said, "It is the beginning of the democratic period in the country," as quoted by Senator Rabbani who directed it. Legal Framework Order 2002 has been revoked as well as Chief Executive's Orders of 2002 and confirmed that they were made without legal authority. One of the articles named 58-2(b) of the Constitution was put into effect by General Zia-ul-Haque in 1979 through the 17th Amendment which enabled the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to dissolve the Parliament and also conferred unlimited powers upon him to change the mainstream of political fabric at his discretion at any time and might disintegrate the process of democracy. Contrarily, the 18th Amendment restored the Constitution of 1973 to its original state and once again empowered the Prime Minister to unify and integrate the democratically accredited parliamentary system in the country. It also restricted any de facto President to intervene the democratic system and implement the state of emergency under any circumstance. The state of emergency can only be enforced if case two-thirds of the parliamentary mainstream will empower the president to impose the state of emergency. Additionally, all the efforts to derail democracy will be strongly resisted as it would not only defile the system of democracy but also shake the public's confidence on the parliamentary system. It may also lead the country plunge into the state of chaos, anarchy and lawlessness (Hussain, 2011).

#### **Fundamental Rights**

The second major milestone of the 18th Amendment is the equal distribution of resources and rights to all the provinces without any discrimination or bias. All the people from all the provinces were entitled the right to education, fair and unbiased trial and public information. In this regard, certain alterations were made in the Constitution after the mutual understanding and consensus of all the parliamentarians. Chapter three of the Constitution of Pakistan elaborates the fundamental rights of the public in which articles of paramount importance were introduced i.e. 10-A "Right to fair trial", 19-A "Right to information" and 25-A "Right to Education." All these three articles helped the public get

their fundamental rights without any bias. Another important article i.e. 25-A in the Constitution of Pakistan sanctions all the Pakistanis from age 5 to 16 years the "Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act." (Siyal, 2019).

### **Compensation to Deprived Classes and Provinces**

One of the hallmarks of the Eighteen Amendments is that it also claims to recompense the underprivileged and remote as well as far-off hinterlands and backward areas of Pakistan. It assures them to make provision of all the necessities of life to any social class living in any geographical locality in Pakistan. There had been some political adversaries like Ghinwa Bhutto who was against the promulgation of the 18th Amendment. She was the chairperson of PPP-SB and she was of this opinion, "This amendment still does not promises those privileges and rights to all the provinces on the basis of equanimity, yet it needs to take dire steps in this regard to put an end to the distrust of the provinces. She further said that there is still much room for improvement with respect to the equal distribution of resources among all the provinces so that their sense of deprivation might be allayed to a certain extent and their privileges might be made secure (Tharani, 2010).

The 18th Amendment has brought in some remarkable changes in the overall management system of our political scenario. These steps include the strengthening of institutions run by the Federal Command and the above-mentioned measures also aim to resolve the disputes and conflicts among various governmental institutions with the assistance of the Council of Common Interest (CCI). It also garners public trust in the governmental departments and make the National Economic Council (NEC) more effective and pragmatic so that it could preserve (conserve) the rights and benefits of various provinces. It also eradicated simultaneous list and reassigned selective functions to the federation (not the federal government) to be directed by the Council of Common Interests and removed the centrality of others (decentralize) to the provinces. It has also exonerated the federal government of her duties with respect to planning, agriculture, industry and rural development, social services, like health sector, accommodation, security matters and social defense which resulted in end of 17 ministries containing the ministries of food and agriculture, education and health. Provincial control of local administration purposes and organizations was also restated. It has also extended the demanding powers of the provinces including a vigorous and buoyant tax base—sales tax on facilities (Shah, 2012).

In addition, NWFP has been assigned the new name of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Another modification came under way i.e. the inclusion of the fixed spellings of the two provinces, Balochistan and Sindh, in Article 1 of the Constitution of Pakistan. The main purpose of this modification was to please the tribal and local political leaders of these provinces and ensure them of equal rights to education, unconditional justice etc. through the acknowledgement of their ethnicities. Another revolutionary change was introduced i.e. to allow the non-Muslims to represent their creed in the Senate so in order to make it happen, the seats of Senate have been increased by four resulting in the representation of the non-Muslim Senator from each province for the first time in Pakistan (Hussain, 2011).

### **Empowering Parliament, Senate and the Prime Minister**

One of the leading milestones of the 18th Amendment is that the parliamentary form of government is restored with all its powers, rights and responsibilities. This Amendment has undoubtedly strengthened and firmly integrated the democratic institution of parliament in true letter and spirit. The parliamentarians of the ruling party were conferred upon certain authority to name the date for the Elections in consultation with the Prime Minister. Another prominent change was made that was to minimize the time frame of 30 days to 10 days for any Bill or Resolution, sent to the President for consideration and sanctioning, passed by the Parliament (Hussain, 2011).

Particularly, the role of Senate has been improved in various matters. It is when Senates raises its voice and endeavours to meet the desires of all the Federal divisions, and it is most likely they will win over their coveted goals and thus gain sufficient satisfaction. Another change was brought into effect i.e. the number of days that the Senate works annually were increased from 90 to 110. Moreover, the president is certain to pass a bill on the observation and execution of the Principles of Policy that he will present both before the Senate and the National Assembly. This improvement also limited the Power of President to disseminate regulation by including a limit that he can disseminate that newly presented bill only when the National Assembly and the Senate are not engaged in certain session. Previously, he had the authority to bring into effect any ordinance at a specified time when only the National Assembly is absent in the session (Hussain, 2011).

The 18th Amendment brought about prominent changes in the parliamentary and political spheres of Pakistan as it thinned down the President's powers and its main objective was to empower the Prime Minister and to bring the Constitution back to the original state where it was in 1973. The powers, enjoyed by the President, were in fact conferred upon him by the Government in compliance with the Constitutional Article before the 18th Amendment but now, the hurdles, involved in the appointment of the Prime Minister, were drastically removed and the Prime Minister became the Head of the State or the Chief Executive of the Government and he was elected by the simple process of the majority of the parliamentarians in both the Houses of the National Assembly. In addition, the duty of the Prime Minister, to coordinate and communicate to the President with respect to the cabinet selections, was suspended. He was also not bound to disseminate the information about his ministers and his decisions on various policy matters. The President's powers to dissolve or suspend the National Assembly were also reduced to the minimum. In fact, the President reserves the optional authority (powers) to dissolve the National Assembly in case the Vote of Confidence on the Prime Minister by the parliamentarians runs short and he is unable to run the parliamentary and state affairs properly. In such an unexpected and undesirable situation, the President is bound to fix a date of General Elections within ninety days and retains the office of care-taker Prime Minister but all this is done with the honest consultation of the deposed Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition of that dissolved Assembly (Hussain, 2011).

Certain changes have been made in compliance with the sanction of the Eighteenth Amendment in order to bring refinement and ease to the parliamentary process. Firstly, the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner will be made by the mutual consensus of the Committee of Opposition leaders and the Treasury Benches. In addition, the Prime Minister has been entitled the rights to appoint the Joint Chief of Staff Commission and the Chiefs of the three Armed Forces whereas the Governor of any province will also be selected on the instructions of Prime Minister. Another prominent change that occurred, after the sanction of the Eighteenth Amendment, was the one incorporated in Article 175. There were only four High Courts in Pakistan as per the provinces but after the 18th Amendment, Islamabad High Court also came into existence. In the same way, the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts which used to be made on the discretion of the President in close consultation with the Chief Justice, after the thinning of the President's powers, this authority was transferred to a Judicial Commission and a Parliamentary Committee (Hussain, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

It has been manifestly observed that varied changes brought in by the 18th Amendment have restored our current constitution to its original state as that of the Constitution of 1973 which aimed to keep the four provinces unified and well-integrated. Pakistan has resiliently braced the trying period of Objective Resolution as well as three charters before the promulgation of the 18th Amendment and all these phenomena are



thought to be the democratically-accredited milestones in the Constitutional history of Pakistan. The law experts termed it one of the most celebrated and cherished Amendments which paved the way to the restoration of the original 1973 Constitution as our Constitution was restored to its original state (Tharani, 2010). The Eighteenth Amendment was, in fact, the initiation of a transitional process for all the political system as it was going to change the traditional powers of the President forever and for the first time in the history of Pakistan, the President entrusted all his powers and rights to the Prime Minister by his discretion. On top of that, all the parliamentarians both the Leftists and the Rightists mutually agreed to this transfer of powers and acknowledged this change with peaceful co-existence. Media also played a commendable role in this regard as it did not cause any chaos or spread any misinformation or rumours to create disharmony and anarchy among the public or among the Senate Members. It helped to remove all the concerns of the stakeholders in a harmonious and moderate way and thus helped to achieve this difficult milestone in the parliamentary history of Pakistan (Malik, 2010).

It would also be quite unjust to acknowledge the pivotal role of the opposition, without whose close collaboration and congenial cooperation, the ruling party might not have been able to succeed in making this uphill task a reality. All through this process, the Opposition was sure that if this Amendment got the sanction by majority, the newly formed Federal Parliamentary System would more prudently and sensibly address the provincial issues and would help the people of various provinces end their prejudice against and create harmony. In this way, all the provinces would be firmly integrated with the Federal therefore the role of the Opposition as well as its constructive criticism is conducive to the overall socio-political development and harmony in the country in the upcoming years.

Of course, there have been some debates and talks on this important national issue just in order to keep the electoral system on democratic track and it will also leave a healthy and long-lasting effect on the entire political regime in the long run. Once a Chinese scholar said, "All long journeys start with a tiny step." (Shah, 2012). Therefore, we can optimistically view the fair implementation of the 18th Amendment in the time to come which will ascertain sustainable socio-political harmony and socio-economic development in the country in a few years to come. That's why it is fairly hoped that the opposition should work more conscientiously and diligently in order to remove the prevalent discrepancies of our democratic system so that positive changes might be introduced in order to strengthen the democratic values and bring substantial changes in the entire political system.

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