

The Role Of Jama'at-E- Islami During Ayub Khan Era



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Abstract: During the Ayub Khan period in Pakistan, from 1958 to 1969, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) played a significant and complex role in the country's political landscape. Founded on the principles of Islamic ideology by Maulana Abul A'la Maududi in 1941, JI emerged as a vocal critic of Ayub Khan's regime, which was marked by authoritarianism and secular policies. As a staunch advocate for Islamic principles, JI opposed Ayub Khan's modernization agenda, which emphasized secularization and economic development over religious values. The party mobilized its members and supporters to protest against the regime's authoritarian measures, including martial law and media censorship, viewing them as detrimental to democracy and Islamic governance. Furthermore, JI actively engaged in promoting its vision of an Islamic state, advocating for reforms that aligned with its interpretation of Sharia law. Through its extensive network of mosques, educational institutions, and publications, JI disseminated its ideological message and sought to mobilize support for its cause, particularly among segments of the population disillusioned with the perceived moral decay and Westernization of society under Ayub Khan's rule. However, JI faced challenges and limitations during this period. The regime's repression of political dissent and restrictions on political activities constrained JI's ability to operate freely and effectively mobilize support. Additionally, internal divisions within the party regarding strategies for political engagement and ideological priorities hindered its coherence and effectiveness as a unified political force. Despite these challenges, Jamaat-e-Islami's role during the Ayub Khan period was significant in shaping the political discourse and consciousness of Pakistani society. As a vocal advocate for Islamic values and principles, JI contributed to the resistance against authoritarianism and secularization, leaving a lasting impact on the country's political landscape.

Keywords: Syed Maulana Abul A'la Maududi, Ayub Khan, Sufi, Jihad, Jamat-i-Islami

Introduction

Jamaat-e-Islami, established by Abul Ala Maududi in 1941, emerged as a significant political and ideological force in British India and later in Pakistan (Nasr, 1994). Rooted in Islamist principles, the party advocated for the establishment of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law, positioning itself as a vocal critic of

both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League (Nasr, 1996). Despite initially opposing the idea of a separate Muslim state, Jamaat-e-Islami aligned itself with Pakistan post-partition, aiming to influence the country's political trajectory with its vision of Islam as a comprehensive socio-political system (Ahmed, 1994). During Ayub Khan's era (1958-1969), the party faced significant challenges as Ayub's

authoritarian regime suppressed political dissent and centralized power (Haqqani, 2005). Jamaat-e-Islami's calls for Islamic reforms clashed with Ayub's modernization agenda, leading to frequent confrontations and restrictions on the party's activities (Nasr, 1994).

Despite state repression, Jamaat-e-Islami continued its activism, mobilizing against Ayub's policies and perceived erosion of Islamic values (Haqqani, 2005). The party's street protests and ideological campaigns contributed to the broader anti-Ayub sentiment, showcasing its resilience and commitment to its principles (Zaman, 2007). However, Ayub's regime posed formidable challenges to Jamaat-e-Islami's organizational growth and political influence, marking a period of relative decline for the party (Nasr, 1996). Nevertheless, Jamaat-e-Islami's role during Ayub Khan's era highlights its enduring impact on Pakistani politics and society, as it navigated the complexities of state repression and ideological confrontation to assert its vision of an Islamic state (Zaman, 2007).

Political Landscape during Ayub Khan's Rule

Ayub Khan's regime implemented the Basic Democracy system, which aimed to decentralize power but effectively marginalized political opposition. Despite initial promises of democratization, Ayub Khan's rule became increasingly authoritarian, suppressing dissent and centralizing authority within the military establishment. Political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, faced restrictions on their activities and were subjected to state surveillance. During Ayub Khan's rule in Pakistan, the political landscape underwent significant transformation, marked by a blend of authoritarianism and attempts at modernization. Ayub Khan, who seized power through a military coup in 1958, aimed to centralize authority within the military establishment and implement reforms to modernize Pakistan's economy and governance structure. The Basic Democracy system, introduced in 1960, was a cornerstone of Ayub Khan's governance model. It aimed to decentralize power by establishing local bodies called Basic Democracies, which were responsible for electing representatives to

higher tiers of government. According to Jalal (1990), this system was designed to dilute the power of traditional political parties and create a parallel structure of governance loyal to the regime. However, critics argue that it served to consolidate Ayub Khan's authority and marginalize democratic institutions (Khan, 2019).

Furthermore, Ayub Khan's regime pursued economic reforms focused on industrialization and infrastructure development. The introduction of Five-Year Plans aimed to boost economic growth and reduce Pakistan's dependence on agriculture. These reforms led to rapid urbanization and the emergence of a modern industrial sector. However, they also exacerbated social inequalities, as rural communities and traditional industries struggled to adapt (Jalal, 1990).

Politically, Ayub Khan's rule was characterized by authoritarianism and the suppression of political opposition. His regime imposed strict censorship measures, curtailed freedom of speech, and restricted the activities of political parties. The Convention Muslim League, a pro-government party, dominated electoral politics, while opposition parties faced harassment and intimidation (Jalal, 1990).

In inference, the political landscape during Ayub Khan's rule was shaped by authoritarian governance, economic modernization efforts, and controlled political participation. The Basic Democracy system, while purportedly aimed at decentralizing power, effectively centralized authority within the regime. Economic reforms led to rapid urbanization and industrial growth but also widened social disparities. The suppression of political opposition and curtailment of civil liberties laid the groundwork for future political instability in Pakistan.

Jamaat-e-Islami initially reinforced Ayub Khan's regime, perceiving it as a bulwark against secularism and communism, but tensions arose due to conflicting modernization policies that contradicted the party's vision of an Islamic state (Jalal, 1990). Despite this, Jamaat-e-Islami influenced policy formation during Ayub Khan's era, advocating for legislation

aligned with its ideological agenda, though facing opposition from secular segments of society (Khan, 2019). While participating in electoral politics, the party encountered mixed success due to regime-imposed limitations, yet sought to promote Islamic values in governance (Jalal, 1990). As Ayub Khan's authoritarianism intensified, Jamaat-e-Islami emerged as a vocal critic, collaborating with other opposition groups to challenge his regime's human rights abuses and concentration of power (Khan, 2019). Beyond politics, the party's socio-cultural impact was significant, as it established educational institutions and promoted Islamic values, despite generating controversy over its conservative stance on issues like women's rights (Jalal, 1990). While enjoying support among conservative segments, Jamaat-e-Islami's uncompromising ideology alienated secular and liberal-minded individuals, impacting its broader appeal (Khan, 2019). Despite failing to realize its vision under Ayub Khan, Jamaat-e-Islami's legacy endures in shaping Pakistani politics and societal discourse, reflecting the lasting influence of Islamist ideology.

Opposition to Ayub Khan's Regime

Jamaat-e-Islami initially aligned itself with Ayub Khan's regime, perceiving it as a counterbalance against secularism and communism. However, as Ayub Khan's modernization policies began to clash with the party's vision of an Islamic state, tensions surfaced, leading to a divergence in their interests (Jalal, 1990). Despite this discord, Jamaat-e-Islami wielded influence in policy formation during Ayub Khan's tenure, advocating for legislation in line with its ideological convictions. Nonetheless, its unwavering stance on issues such as gender segregation and blasphemy laws often encountered resistance from secular factions within society, hindering the realization of its policy objectives (Khan, 2019). Engaging in electoral politics within the confines set by Ayub Khan's regime, Jamaat-e-Islami experienced a mixed electoral performance, reflecting both its grassroots support and the constraints imposed by the authoritarian regime. Nonetheless, the

party persistently endeavored to inject Islamic values into the governance structures of the time (Jalal, 1990). As Ayub Khan's authoritarian grip tightened, Jamaat-e-Islami emerged as a vocal opponent, condemning the regime's human rights violations, censorship, and the concentration of power in the military's hands. Collaborating with other opposition factions, including left-wing parties and civil society organizations, Jamaat-e-Islami played a significant role in challenging Ayub Khan's dictatorial rule (Khan, 2019). Beyond the realm of politics, Jamaat-e-Islami's impact extended into the socio-cultural domain, where it established educational institutions and propagated Islamic ideals. However, its conservative stance on issues such as women's rights garnered criticism and resistance from progressive quarters, illustrating the complexities of its societal influence (Jalal, 1990). While enjoying support among conservative segments of Pakistani society, Jamaat-e-Islami's rigid ideological stance alienated secular and liberal factions, limiting its broader appeal (Khan, 2019). Despite falling short of its aspirations during Ayub Khan's era, Jamaat-e-Islami's legacy persists, shaping Pakistan's political landscape and societal discourse, underscoring the enduring influence of Islamist ideology.

Socio-Cultural Impact of Jamaat-e-Islami's Activities

Jamaat-e-Islami's influence transcended the political arena, permeating into the social and cultural fabric of Pakistani society. The party's multifaceted engagement included the establishment of educational institutions and the propagation of Islamic principles, significantly impacting the sociocultural landscape. Through its educational endeavors, Jamaat-e-Islami sought to instill Islamic values and principles in the younger generation, thereby contributing to the Islamization of Pakistani culture. These educational institutions served as platforms for the dissemination of religious teachings, fostering a sense of religious identity among students (Ahmad, 2009). However, Jamaat-e-Islami's conservative stance on certain social issues, such as women's rights and religious

freedom, sparked controversy and encountered opposition from progressive segments of society. The party's advocacy for gender segregation and its opposition to certain forms of religious expression clashed with the ideals of gender equality and individual freedom promoted by secular and liberal factions within Pakistan (Ahmed, 2009). Consequently, Jamaat-e-Islami's sociocultural impact was characterized by a duality: while it contributed to the consolidation of Islamic values and norms, its rigid stance on social issues provoked debates and resistance, highlighting the complexities of its societal influence.

Public Perception and Reception

During Ayub Khan's era, Jamaat-e-Islami's public perception and reception were characterized by a complex interplay of support and skepticism. The party enjoyed significant backing from conservative segments of Pakistani society, particularly in rural areas and urban slums, where traditional values and religious principles held sway (Khan, 2019). Jamaat-e-Islami's emphasis on Islamic governance and promotion of conservative social norms resonated with these segments, who perceived the party as a champion of their religious and cultural identity (Jalal, 1990). However, its unwavering adherence to ideological principles alienated secular and liberal-minded individuals, who viewed the party's stance on

The legacy and long-term impact of Jamaat-e-Islami during Ayub Khan's era resonate profoundly in the trajectory of Pakistani politics and society. Although the party did not achieve its envisioned Islamic state under Ayub Khan's regime, its enduring influence shaped public discourse and policy debates, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's political landscape.

One significant aspect of Jamaat-e-Islami's legacy lies in its role as a catalyst for the Islamization of Pakistani society. Despite facing constraints under Ayub Khan's authoritarian rule, the party strategically utilized avenues such as educational institutions and social welfare programs to propagate its Islamist ideology.

This activism laid the groundwork for future Islamist movements and contributed to the gradual Islamization of Pakistan's social and political spheres. As noted by academic scholars, Jamaat-e-Islami's efforts during this period sowed the seeds for the broader Islamization policies pursued by subsequent governments, including those of Zia-ul-Haq and beyond (Ahmed, 2000).

Furthermore, Jamaat-e-Islami's engagement during Ayub Khan's era fostered a legacy of political mobilization and activism that continues to shape Pakistani politics today. Despite facing repression and marginalization, the party persisted in advocating for its vision of Islamic governance, galvanizing support among segments of the population disenchanted with the ruling regime's secular policies. This legacy of political activism laid the groundwork for the emergence of diverse Islamist movements and parties in Pakistan's political landscape, which continue to influence electoral dynamics and policy debates (Nasr, 2001).

In contemporary Pakistani politics, the legacy of Jamaat-e-Islami during Ayub Khan's era serves as a reminder of the enduring influence of Islamist ideology and activism. While the party may not have achieved its immediate objectives, its strategic engagement and ideological resilience left an enduring imprint on the nation's socio-political fabric, shaping the discourse surrounding issues of religion, governance, and identity.

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