

Movement for the Restoration of Democracy: Case Study of Sindh (1981–1988)

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ABSTRACT

In the political history of Pakistan, the period from 1981 to 1988 was remarkable. The MRD Movement, which was directed at the progress of the Restoration of Democracy, is among one of the political movements in Pakistan. The MRD was the most powerful political movement in Pakistan's history and emerged when the army's dictator reached their peak power in the 1980s. This paper is based on a qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data sources. The study addresses that MRD became the favorite political movement in Sindh to restore the democratic spirit in the country. However, there have been few scholarly works on Sindh's participation in the MRD campaign. Thus, this article explores why Sindh formed the epicenter of this MRD campaign with compromises made by its citizens to restore freedom within Pakistan. The role of MRD was well understood to have played a key role by the Pakistan People's Party through extensive studies on its contribution, while through using this report by collation, this research finds parties of the politics as well as individuals who actively participated in Sindh during the MRD campaign and addresses the role of all stakeholders who helped to make the campaign successful nationwide.

Keywords: MRD; Dictatorship; Pakistan; Democracy; Political Movement

INTRODUCTION

The political history of Pakistan is turbulent, and the country has struggled to re-establish freedom after a series of dictatorial rules. The political and democratic movements such as MRD, have a greater place in the process of keeping political institutions democratic. The Campaign of the Restoring of Democracy (MRD) during 1981-1988 was a long-standing democratic resistance movement against the dictatorial regimes in Pakistan. The province of Sindh was at the vanguard of the movement for freedom within Pakistan, however, all affiliated movements also took part. On July 5, 1977, General Zia-Ul-Haq declared a state of emergency throughout Pakistan by overthrowing the democratically appointed government for the former Shaheed Zulfikar Bhutto (ZAB) (Mohammed 2011). Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was suspected of manipulating votes in the 1977 elections from opponents of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) administration encountered resistance through rallies, and marches, including attacks that resulted in instability in politics in Pakistan (Mohammed 2011). However, in return, General Zia used that chance to install a state of emergency throughout Pakistan and imprison Mr. Bhutto regarding fabricated charges of murder. The PNA originally backed President Zia-ul-Haq, however, abandoned faith in him when he repeatedly changed the times of scheduled national elections around ninety days (Rizvi 2000).

The movement of MRD was launched soon after the emergence of dictatorial rule maintained by General Zia-ul-Haq after ousting the democratic rule of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as well as opponents within the PNA formed a coalition party to restore the rule of law, despite initial resistance due to the president's harsh measures. On Friday, February 6, the year 1981, the Campaign for the Revival of Freedom (MRD) emerged to restore democratization throughout the nation (Bukhari 2012). According to Bukhari (2012), the MRD motion encompassed Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan's Democrat Party (PDP) led by Nawabzada Nasrullah, Tehrik-i-Istiqlal (TI) led by Asghar Khan, Pakistan's

Muslim League led by Khawaja Khariuddin Qasim team, Quami Mahaz-i-Azadi (QMA), Mazdoor Kisan the Party, Jamiat-i-Ulemai-Islam of Fazal-ur-Rahman group, and Kashmir Muslim Conference (Bukhari 2012). The MRD movement aimed to transition the country off autocratic militarism towards democracy through unarmed protest against politics. According to Khoso (2013), the Pak National Party (the PNP), Awami Tahreek under Rasul Bux Palijo (previously Sindhi Awami Tahreek), as well as Awami National Party (ANP) of Khan Abdu Wali Khan entered the ranks of the MRD shortly after its creation (Khoso 2013).

This MRD coalition was the movement of diverse ideologies, manifestos, as well as ambitions, creating an odd bedfellows effect. They shared just the intention to depose General Zia and not any views on politics. The PPP for short, NDP, as well as (PNP) represented center-left groups, but Palijo's Awami Tehreek, Quami Mahaz-i-Azadi, as well as Muzdoor the Kissan Movement, represented the far-left. The prominent nationalist parties in MRD included center-right groups Tehreek Istaqlal, (PDP), (PML) of Muhammad Qasim faction, and the additional far-right mainline religion movement Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (the JUI) led by Maulana Fazal-ur-Rahman (Khoso 2013). This MRD coalition, which encompassed movements from the radical left to far-rightist, demonstrated a strong commitment towards democratization over specific political beliefs. Early Pakistani expatriates within America as well as Britain who suffered expulsion for their involvement within MRD, unlike other partisan movements, backed it as well as conducted rallies (Khoso 2013).

The diaspora's support for MRD was not as significant as its participation during the Khalistan movement within Punjab, India, as well as the rebel Liberation of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka (Webb 2015). The MRD movement aimed to restore the rule of law, while the LTTE as well as the Khalistan movement fought against national liberation. The influence of the expatriate across other democratic revival initiatives, such as People Freedom throughout the Philippines, remains limited. Myanmar's story differs from others due to the prolonged length of its democratic reconstruction campaign (Webb 2015). Therefore, the MRD movement remains a remarkable democratic initiative throughout the South Asian region. This research aims to provide a detailed knowledge of Sindh's involvement in the MRD campaign between 1981 and 1988. The study also seeks to address the role of Sindhi political and nationalist parties in launching and leading the MRD movement that aims to restore democratic norms in the country. The study is based on the qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data sources. The study is limited to the role of Sindh in the movement.

Statement of Problem

The MRD in Sindh, 1981-1988, represents the most defining moments in Pakistan's political history when activity, though far-reaching and sustained, had taken place in the face of authoritarianism. The implications of the movement remain relatively unexplored in literature about Sindh from 1981 to 1988. Therefore, this study fills that gap by exploring the socio-political dynamics that fueled the movement, the role of key actors, and their influence on the political landscape of Sindh and Pakistan in general. Precisely, the investigation looks at how regional identities, socio-economic factors, and state repression influenced the movement's path and effectiveness. The movement helped to create an interaction between local and national politics in that period which is critical to understanding the democratic struggles today in the region. To analyze MRD through this lens would, thus, contribute toward providing more profound visions of democratic movements in authoritarian contexts and the longer-term implications of political change.

Review of Literature

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy was a very significant political movement against the military regime across Pakistan, especially in Sindh, from 1981 to 1988. People's participation and sacrifice in Sindh made it an epicenter of MRD. The MRD holds an important place in Pakistan's struggle for democratic governance, especially within the context of Sindh. The academic discourse regarding the movement has evolved with time; however, notable gaps in the literature remain for Sindh's contributory efforts and dynamics.

On the MRD movement, a score of literature has been written about former president Zia-ul-Haq's tenure in Pakistan and abroad, and MRD will likely be explored as well. However, the scholarly literature produced by academicians such as Asma Faiz (2021), A. A. Chandio (2011), M. Aslam and Saeed Ahmed (2021), and M. Qasim Sodhar (2021), Haqqani (2005), Jalal (1995), Waseem (1987), Shafqat (1999), Arif (2001), Hussain (1990), Kukereja (2003), Talbot (1998) along with Shah (2018) are profound as they have explored as well as offered perceptions regarding MRD without explicitly addressing it. However, this study reviews only the selected academic work of some academicians.

According to Ahmed, the political history of Pakistan, since its establishment in 1947, has been a description of fluctuations between periods of democratic rule and military coups. The first significant interlude in this cycle of democratic administration was in 1958 when Muhammad Ayub Khan became the head of the military and staged a coup (Ahmad 2016). After him, one of the most notorious military leaders was General Zia-ul-Haq, who took power in 1977. President Zia's regime was highly repressive, introduced through all forms of repression, such as the banning of all political parties, imprisoning the top political leaders of the country, and the declaration of martial law (Ahmad 2016).

For Akhter, the worsening socio-economic conditions under the Zia regime further fueled public discontent. His regime had policies that were pro-stratum elite, which depressed 96 percent of the masses to poverty and economic disparity (Akhter 2021). Further, he argued that the politicized Islam created a climate of sectarian tension and dissent repression. With political parties and civil society facing continued repression, various factions started coalescing around a common goal: the restoration of democracy (Akhter 2021). In such an environment, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) began, especially during the 1980s, as a powerful response to authoritarian rule and a call for democratic governance. This movement was emerging under a backdrop characterized by repressive political structures, military rule, and a fight for civil rights. The social and political reality of Pakistan at the time necessitated the demand for the construction of such movements (Olukotun 2004).

One of the first scholars to analyze the MRD was Tarique Ali in 1985, who provided acumen into its origins and development through an Indian publication. His very early work made a basis for subsequent analyses as it pointed out the socio-political context of the movement. He then went on to particularly analyze in later writings the role of Benazir Bhutto, a main figure of the MRD, while assessing her leadership and strategic decisions that mobilized diverse constituencies (Ali 1984). This was an essential foundation for understanding some key issues on leadership and, importantly, leading one to understand the deeper implications of the movement. Mushtaq et al. (2016) widen the discourse by including Punjab in the analysis of the MRD movement. Their study shows regional disparities in participation and activism, which contradicts the prevalent narrative that Sindh was leading the movement. Similarly, Ahmad contributed to the thinking of academia by finishing a doctoral dissertation on the MRD in

Punjab (M. H. Ahmad 2015). This was published with findings that foreground the specific socio-political context of Punjab. This literature enriches but fundamentally focuses on Punjab, arguably providing dynamic attention to discuss the wider role of Sindh in the MRD movement. There is almost a consensus among scholars that Sindh played its role in the MRD, but the available literature does not carry out special research on it. The paper tries to fill this gap by looking at Sindh's role during the MRD. The research paper by Chandio et al., 'Understanding the Role of Sindh in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy in Sind Province of Pakistan' (2011), sheds light on the socio-political scenario of Sindh in the 1980s but does not cover all aspects of the multifaceted nature of the MRD of that region (Chandio 2009).

As per (Aslam 2021, A. A. Chandio 2021) mass people participated and sacrificed their all during this movement in Sindh. However, according to Sodhar, the leftist parties supported the movement through Awami Tehrik and the Communist Party of Pakistan which gradually turned the movement into a mass protest against military dictatorship (Sodhar 2021) Asma Faiz is of the view that the MRD had its foundations in the post-execution scenario of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was the first elected Sindhi prime minister in the history of Pakistan (Faiz 2021). As such, though this was arguably one of the most potent political forces in the history of Pakistan, a force that was launched when the military dictator was at the apex of power, the MRD's influence in Sindh remains unstudied (Aslam 2021).

The reviewed literature points to a need for more concentrated research into the MRD, especially in terms of Sindh's specific input and the play of regional identity and politics. This article tries to discuss intellectual chasm by presenting a very detailed case study of the role played by Sindh in the MRD, to contribute toward a more holistic understanding of the movement and its implications for Pakistan's democratic evolution. Therefore, it is essential not only to reconstruct this history but also to feed into contemporary political discourse in Sindh with the help of democratic movements like the MRD.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Method:

This exploratory study aims to address concerns about the function taken by political activists throughout the MRD campaign. Since the nature of this study is descriptive, this research is conducted under the domains of the qualitative approach. The data is analyzed using qualitative analysis and a thematic approach. A set of coding schemes and themes were constructed to address the core concerns of this study.

Data Collection:

This study is conducted with the help of primary and secondary sources of data. The investigation utilized additional information like state academic journals, media archives, as well as vintage publications, while original materials such include police records, jail manuals, as well as government records on MRD are not publicly available. Newspaper records from Urdu daily Aman as well as Musawat, along with Sindhi papers Ibrat, Hilal-i-Pakistan as well as Aftab, proved particularly informative. Additionally, around 15 unscripted qualitative materials were recorded in the form of documents from academia, political activists, as well as reporters to gather vital data. In addition, employees from various groups involved in the MRD campaign throughout Sindh province received questions unofficially to provide their respective experiences and information about the movement.

Sampling Method:

For this research, the purposive sampling method was used as the intended population consisted of MRD personnel as well as those with personal knowledge of the event. The method of sampling was effective as it resulted in a finding of additional MRD workers, resulting in a larger sample size. The visits were held at Khairpur, Sehwan, Village Ber Sharif as well as Hyderabad, Larkana, and other locations throughout Sindh to acquire direct information about the MRD campaign from the most convenient respondents.

Data Analysis:

To analyze the qualitative data for this study, the thematic approach of data analysis is applied. A set of themes and coding schemes of main concepts, ideas, and interviews were produced to generate the main theme and findings of this research. The recorded data from interviews, speeches, writings, articles, quotations, and statements were analyzed through coding and themes.

ROLE OF SINDH IN MRD (1981-1988)

Historical Perspectives:

The MRD formally emerged in 1981 out of a confluence of several factors. The growing frustrations from the politicians to the people concerning the disfranchisement of the majority for democratic representation led to the initiation of this movement. In Sindh, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Benazir Bhutto played a central to this movement. Bhutto's return from self-imposed exile in 1986 energized the opposition and galvanized public sentiment against the Zia regime. Again, the MRD was not just a response to the political atmosphere but also part of a greater narrative, rather, the movement drew from some legacy events of previous democratic struggles in Pakistan, especially against Ayub Khan in the 1960s and later against Yahya Khan's military regime during the Bangladesh Liberation War. This was the backdrop against which the MRD mobilized the various constituencies of students, labor unions, and civil society organizations (A. A. Chandio, Politics of Sindh Under Zia Government 2013).

At first, an opposition coalition underneath PNA backed Zia's rule of law to remove the Bhutto-led administration. Many expected Zia would conduct impartial and free elections before going back into garrison by 90 days. As Zia's policy desire for dominance was clear, several political groups began to distance themselves from the armed forces regime. Zia penalized all politically charged employees, excluding the ones that supported his administration, excluding the PPP along with its members (Hyman 1986).

Asghar Khan Tehrik-i-Istiqlal (TI) became among the first PNA, which stands groups to oust the Zia administration in the fall of 1977, followed by JUP's departure from the military-led administration coalition on Friday, July 6, 1978. The NDP ultimately departed PNA as well as no longer supported the armed forces dictatorship. M. A., Sheikh quoted Ahmad Shah Noorani, religious leader and founder of PNA, as calling it the corpse of a horse. Despite this, the Pakistani Muslim League (Pir Pagara faction) including Maulana Abul Aala Maududi's Jammāt Islami maintained to promote the military's rule due to its political goals (Sheikh 2001). Despite resistance to Zia's Islamization of society, the PNA's choice to join forces alongside the PPP in the freedom struggle proved difficult. The establishment PPP leaders blamed PNA political parties for Bhutto's collapse as well as murder. The collapse to unite under the 'Saving Bhutto Campaign led Benazir along with Nusrat Bhutto realize that removing Zia as president would require unity in politics across the country's major groups (Sheikh 2001). Following Bhutto's mortality, major PNA officials argued that Zia's brutal military administration did not align with

its partisanship. The above MRD coalition emerged on February 6th, 1981, in as well as the agreement of its charter was broadcast on BBC's Urdu media program (Bhutto 1988).

In the words of Zahid, this movement was fueled by the opposition to President Zia's dictatorship and renewed hope for freedom. According to Zahid, General Zia suppressed this movement in its early stages to prevent it from becoming widespread (Zahid 2011). However, in the words of Aziz, Pakistan's press was faced with heavy pressure from the military to silence the MRD demonstrators nationwide. Besides, the armed forces administration outlawed its PPP's supporter publications, Daily Musawat as well as Daily Sadaqat, in 1979. Publications featuring negative content about the Armed Forces administration were removed before publishing, resulting in white space across the articles (Aziz 2015). The media was reluctant to provide material regarding the MRD movement due to constraints. Haider Khan argues that this included the agreements, goals, including goals. The British Broadcasters became the sole provider of news for Pakistanis (Khan 2001).

Key Actors and Mobilization:

Since MRD was a nationwide movement, it involved various political parties and lobbies that joined hands in their opposition to Zia's dictatorial regime. The major stakeholders included the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), supplemented by the smaller group from the Awami National Party (ANP), Awami Tehreek, and other Sindhi nationalist parties in Sindh and Punjab. The coalition of individuals ranged from the very broad reflection of the demand for change in society and the restoration of the democratic spirit in Pakistan (Amjad 2024). The very mobilizing aspect of the MRD was its leadership component. Among those leaders, Benazir Bhutto was to become the greatest personality representing the campaign for democratic rule and women's empowerment. She attracted a tremendous following, especially youth and women, for her charismatic leadership promise to usher in a new era of democratic rule (Khuhro 2009). The movement was largely student and youth-driven. However, demonstrations were mobilized by students, a response to which the state often responded through violence. Similarly, universities became hotbeds for activism. Every political discussion flourished there, and everything that voiced opposition to the regime echoed. Trade unions added to this movement further by linking economic complaints with political demands (Hayat 2020). Therefore, the movement emerged nationwide and so powerful aiming to restore the democratic spirit in the country.

Initiating the MRD: A Journey of Resistance:

Though the movement was launched throughout the country, the dictatorial rule of former president Zia-ul-Haq employed every possible option to make it a failure. For instance, as stated by Haidar, Begum Nusrat Bhutto scheduled a covert meeting for the 27th of February 1981 (M. H. Ahmad 2015), but the armed forces administration, as stated by Bhatti, obtained details regarding the gathering from covert movements (Bhatti 1984). The Zia administration intimidated those in charge, raided their homes, and arrested MRD personnel (A. A. Chandio 2009). The Sindhi nationalists such as Nuzhat Pathan, Fazil Rahoo, Fahtyab Ali, Rasool Bux Palejo along other MRD followers were locked up during a secret conference scheduled for the evening of February 27, 1981, as well as inside Mehmood Kasuri's apartment in Lahore (M. Ahmad 1996). Besides, MRD leadership within Punjab has been expelled. At the time, Madam Nusrat Bhutto as well as Benazir Bhutto, respectively, were forbidden to return home. President Zia aimed to control the agitation in the province of Sindh to avoid any analogous democratic revolt across Punjab (A. A. Chandio 2009).

Since the popularity of MRD within Punjab was lower than in Sindh, thus allowed Zia to control the political activities of the province. Moreover, Punjab's administration, including Mehmood Ali Kasuri as well as Nawabzada Nasurullah Khan, supported the Muslim Brotherhood of Pakistan (Shafqat 1997). Punjabi police in addition to the military launched an investigation campaign throughout the region to apprehend MRD followers. Notwithstanding investigations, seizures, as well as limitations, Madam Nusrat Bhutto arrived successfully in Lahore to attend a covert rendezvous inside Mr. Kasuri's residence a few hours ahead of plan (Khosro 2013). Pakistan Day (March 23, 1981) had been selected to host public events in major Pakistani cities, including Lahore, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Multan, Karachi, and Rawalpindi (Suhail 1991). According to M. H. Ahmad, officials raided the conference's place as well as detained several prominent members associated with the MRD activity, including Mehmood Ali Kasuri, Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, Madam Nusrat Bhutto, among others (M. H. Ahmad 2015). Shafqat stated that the state of Punjab banished Madam Nusrat Bhutto from Karachi, while additional MRD leaders were held behind confinement at home (Shafqat 1997). Additionally, Madam Nusrat Bhutto, Nawabzada Nusrullah Khan, Benazir Bhutto, retired General Tikka Khan and Retired Air Marshal Asghar Khan have been placed behind confinement at home (Shafqat 1997). Therefore, several individuals were condemned to jail and whipped by military tribunals that weakened the movement.

MRD in Sindh: A Struggle for Democracy:

According to Bhatti, once the Sindhis failed to respond to the filtration at hand, they took an aggressive stance toward Sindh. The anger over the judicial murder of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979 caused a huge volume of support for the MRD agitation led by the top tiers of the PPP. The PPP found it difficult to garner sympathy in urban centers like Karachi and Hyderabad, where Urdu was mainly spoken. The MRD movement's rural demonstrations looked peaceful to everybody, including military dictators as well as those in power, which was surprising, and it gained wide-spectrum support across Sindh province. In certain areas, Pirs, or the spiritual teachers, requested their Mureeds, or students, to become a part of the MRD group (Bhatti 1984). The success achieved by the MRD campaign in Sindh cannot be solely credited to the PPP regime. Success on the part of the MRD campaign across Sindh can partly be attributed to the influential leaders of Sindh Awami Tehreek (SAT), Rasool Bakhsh Palijo and Fazil Rahoo who gave a tremendous backup to the protest process (Rakisits 1988). According to Khoso, Palijo experienced almost three years of rough weather in prisons in Pakistan due to the struggle of the MRD (A. A. Chandio 2009). It was after the arrest of Palijo that Fazil Rahoo promoted MRD among the students and made it a movement across Sindh. In the view of Amin, Colonel Zia used nearly two companies of army units (40 thousand staff) and planes and helicopters to crush the MRD movement in the Sindh province (Amin 1988). The attack had been termed as an offensive against the criminals. The militaristic warfare left numbers of dead bodies along with damages to various properties because of shelling (A. A. Chandio, Politics of Sindh Under Zia Government 2013).

Moreover, three thousand followers of MRD in Sindh's countryside have also been arrested because of their non-violent demonstrations (Bukhari 2012). According to Khoso, on the 3rd of March the year 1981 three men Arshad Ali, Jamal Nasir as well as Salam-Ullah Tipo kidnapped PIA Flight 720 between Karachi towards Peshawar. The aircraft contained 128 people. The kidnapers forced the captain to divert the jet to Afghanistan airport, where Mir Murtaza, Bhutto's oldest son to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had been awaiting (Khosro 2013). In

addition, the PPP's legitimacy was further undermined by raising doubt among Pakistanis regarding Al-Zulfikar's relationship with the party's B team. Among others, Benazir Bhutto criticized the hijack attempt and also renounced ties with the hijackers (Bhutto 1988). However, Shakir claims that the Pakistan People's Party was categorized as a political terrorist group due to the allegations of kidnapping, detention, and torturing of some of the members of MRD and others (Kantha 2000). Tahreek Mag (1982), a monthly Sindhi magazine, gathered stories from various reports and also received data from Amnesty International, which said that of 6,000 persons detained on charges of kidnapping, nearly all were from the state of Sindh. This way, the resisting spirit and the charm of the movement were reduced. Later, some influential members tried to revive the movement such as the efforts put by Nawabzada Nasurullah Khan along with other MRD members spoke during a Tanga (horse carriage) rally organized through SAT as well as PPP in Shahdaddkot (Bhatti 1984). Thus, popular support for Day of Freedom parades in Sindh, Pakistan surged notwithstanding monotonous engagement in other Pakistani federating groups, but the movement remained cold in subsequent years.

The Civil Unrest of August 1983 in Sindh:

On 14 August 1983, according to Khoso, following black day, the research group affiliated with the MRD campaign, proposed a civil resistance action. This civil unrest campaign was centered in rural Sindh (Khoso 2013). The region's residents actively protested against Pakistan's armed forces through parades, meetings, walks, and famine strikes, including protests (A. A. Chandio 2009). According to Jalal, the Zia administration's methods of favoritism as well as targeted mobilization were successful in gaining support from Punjab's main sociocultural strata, landowners as well, and businessmen, in addition to emerging business groupings (Jalal 1991). Similarly, Bhatti argues that on 14th August 1983, over 20,000 Sindhi people assembled to visit the Monument of Quaid at Karachi as well as roughly the same amount near Landmark Park within Sukkur (Bhatti 1984). The advocates of Zia-ul-Haq's administration attempted to disrupt MRD protests by assaulting them, however, instead of causing harm, this bolstered sympathy for MRD among Sindh citizens. Additionally, Sindh's creative aristocracy contributed to the success of the MRD revolution by making unique and academic contributions. The crucial segments of Sindhi society including artists and thinkers such as Juman Darbadar, Haleem Baghi, Ibrahim Joyo, Agha Saleem, and Shaikh Ayaz as well as Amar Jaleel used literature to express their opposition to the martial administration. Equally, Manzoor Solangi's verse '*Lorhan ain Ghar Ghar mein Golion, Chhapran, Fouj, and Manhan,*' was often cheered throughout the MRD protests performed by renowned performer Sarmad Sindhi. The verse reads, '*There's ammunition across homes as well as huts, yet police and the military declare their bodies are looking for criminals*' (Khoso 2013). Therefore, the initiation of civil disobedience in August 1983 proved fruitful as people across Sindh came out of their residences and supported the movement.

Implications of the Movement:

Since the movement was dynamic, it also entailed a score of socioeconomic and political implications. It was reported in Kawish Magazine (2014) that MRD sought to attain freedom through non-violent meetings, and walks, including voluntary arrests. However, some recorded cases of assault are noted in the civil dissent campaign. The happening contests the evidence about the non-violent stance of MRD. On 16 August 1983, girls' secondary school students protested across highways in Dadu (Sheikh 2001). In response, the police fired tear gases to break up protestors. On the 18th of August 1983, the Daily Ibrat reported that the riot spread

throughout the Naushehferoz region where government facilities were set ablaze including phone trading, financial institutions, as well as a hotel. During this uprising, around five people were killed and eighteen wounded. A comparable incident occurred in Larkana on the 19th of August 1983, where hand grenades were thrown at the transit station, Jinnah Bagh roadway, Umpire route, as well as Pakistani Chowk (Suhail 1991).

Due to the violence and militant attacks, the inner Sindh region, especially the Dadu region, began to be called Vietnam in 1984. During their news conference, the leaders of the MRD dismissed accusations related to the violent operations. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the main PPP figure of Dadu, released a statement to the press stating that his movement MRD was a non-violent movement that had nothing to do with any violent activity at all (Khosro 2013). The first act of pelting pebbles toward police seemed to be an unusual response to the policeman's brutality mixed with tear gas used against nonviolent female protesters. However, attacks on public property such as banks and courts cannot be tolerated. In some instances, terrorists had attacked the activities of the MRD and its workers resulting in injuries to some members, and many were jailed for a term as they had been responsible for ransacking public property on fabricated charges (Bhatti 1984).

In addition, one of the main implications of the MRD was the influence of the movement throughout the Zia-ul-Haq regime that led to a vote of confidence by 1984 as well as non-party polls for the province together with the national parliament by 1985. The establishment of managed democratization within a fresh regime relieved the strain on Zia's regime. The implementation of this legal framework beneath Mohammad Khan Junejo posed fresh challenges for Colonel Zia. This has continued into the present political system, in that, up to this point, MRD was less important because it was overshadowed by political groups pursuing their agendas rather than the MRD banner (Bukhari 2012). Therefore, the movement could not achieve its major targets and consequently, the key leaders were put behind bars resulting in the flagging of the movement.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research was conducted to address the role of Sindh province in the MRD political and democratic movement. The thorough examination of the study provided some highlights about Sindh, that the province was the focal point of the country's Revolution toward the Recovery of Freedom (MRD). The province had also much higher popular support for MRD demonstrations relative to the other Pakistani provinces. The findings suggest that Sindh is the only region wherein MRD could acquire widespread backing and have a significant effect under Colonel Zia's martial regime. Moreover, based on Indigenous reports, this study suggests how the MRD movement used mass mobilization, including meetings, walks, lectures, strikes, protests, and parades, to exert influence over the armed forces dictatorship. The members of MRD in Sindh demanded the rebirth of freedom throughout Pakistan. After a lengthy battle, Colonel Zia restored the rule of law by holding non-party polls in 1985. Martial control was removed in January the year 1986 when former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo reopened the political process that demonstrated the effectiveness of the MRD campaign. However, Colonel Zia-ul-Haq saw unforeseen outcomes in the 1985 non-party polls. Colonel Zia believed that Junejo was going to be the lame bird with full authority. Mohammad Khan Junejo's initial assertiveness posed a challenge to Colonel Zia that prompted him to dismiss his cabinet and legislature in 1988. Therefore, the movement embarked on a new era of democracy in

Pakistan, particularly with the vigilant voices raised by the Sindhi nationalists, common masses, and political parties to replace the dictatorial regime with a democratic regime.

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