

ISLAMIST POLITICS IN PAKISTAN: MUTTAHIDA MAJLIS-E-AMAL DURING MUSHARRAF ERA

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Abstract:

The politics in Pakistan has been influenced by multiple forces and factors directly or indirectly since independence. Islam has been considered ideological foundation of the state. Therefore, religious and Islamist parties have always played a vital role in Pakistan's politics. However, in contemporary politics the role of Islamist parties revived in the form of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). MMA not only formed Government in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 2002-2007) and in Baluchistan rather influence the social, political and structural changes. This was the first serious opportunity for Islamist parties to implement their manifesto. Due to grassroot organization, Federal Governments continued to seek their support and keep it intact. In this perspective, this paper discusses the role of MMA in the politics of Pakistan during Musharraf Era as well as in the formulation of state policies, their relations with state institutions, role as opposition at the Center and governance in NWFP. The Study shall help understand the dynamics of Pakistani politics and to predict the major political streams evolving through past into future.

Keywords: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamist Politics

Introduction

The politics of Islamist parties revolves around the theme of establishing an Islamic state. This theme took the form of state ideology and has been used as a force to strengthen centrifugal forces and for national integration in Pakistan.¹ The Islamist parties have been effectively employing religiously sentimental resources, to implement Sharia Laws since the early years of the formation of Pakistan.² During first parliamentary era and Ayub Government, one can observe a struggle between Islamists and secular politics, and efforts of Islamists to integrate the teaching of "Quran" and "Sunnah" into public policies did not succeed due the strength of

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secular politics. Political leaders were liberal which explains the feeble influence of Islamist parties on politics despite of their strong articulation in political and constitutional sphere. However, practically, insistence of Islamist parties went beyond mere formal references to Islam and sometimes constituted a real challenge to the cultural lifestyle of masses. Anti Qadyani Movement of 1953 was an example of this phenomenon.³ General Ayub Khan was secular minded ruler,⁴ and introduced various political economic and social reforms. Muslim Family Laws 1961 and economic laws were severely criticized by the Islamist parties. In 1962, the Islamist parties succeeded to get promulgated the Islamic provisions in the constitution of Pakistan.⁵ Although, Jamaa-i-Islami (JI) supported Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the Presidential Elections against Ayub Khan, beyond the religious stances, the Islamist parties declared 1965 war against India as Jihad and equally played an active role against Ayub Khan's autocratic rule in Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).⁶

During the first General Election of 1970, Islamist parties could not inspire the voters in the name of Islam and secured around 10 percent of total vote. The Islamists severely criticized Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's socialist philosophy as anti-Islamic which resulted in the reinterpretation of Socialism as 'Masawat-i-Muhammadi. Under the influence of Islamist parties, Islam was declared as 'state religion' in the constitution of Pakistan 1973 that left a profound impact on the politics of Pakistan. Tehreek-e-Khatmay Nabuwat succeeded to declare Qadyani community as non-Muslim through second Amendment to the constitution in 1974 and later, Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) with the dominance of Islamist parties, launched Tahreek-i-Nizam-i-Mustafa against Bhutto, resulting in the military intervention of 1977.⁷

General Zia- Ul -Haq restructured the socio-economic political system of Pakistan through the slogan of Islamization that further weakened the grip of secular politicians on the state policy of Pakistan. Following the Islamists' vision of politics, Zia used Islamization as an instrument for legitimacy of his autocratic rule at internal and external level. An alliance between military and Islamist parties proved more beneficent for the military Government. On the other hand, Afghan war provided Islamist groups an opportunity to

change the power-center from urban to rural Pashtun areas alongside the Pak-Afghan border and also become ally of the Pakistani military in chanting the slogan of Jihad. The process provided Islamists a new space in the Government structure and national politics during Zia regime.⁸ However, the end of regime associated with Islamization by the death of Zia ul Haq in 1988, opened up that space for the secular elements especially, Pakistan People Party (PPP).

The resistance to the rise of secular politics and for the continuity of military directed foreign policy was managed by the establishment and Islamist parties through the formation of Islami Jamhuri Ittihad (IJI).⁹ However, IJI was defeated by PPP in the National Election of 1988 and could form government only in the Punjab. JI, JUI-F and JUP criticized the policies of both PPP and Pakistan Muslim League during 1988-99. The Islamists also criticized Nawaz Sharif government for replacing weekly holiday of Friday with Sunday. For Islamists, PML leadership was not with the cause of promulgation of Sharia in the country but was interested to establish their authority in the state. They blamed Nawaz Government for following the dictations of US Government on the Kashmir dispute and Afghan problem. In this regard, Islamist parties condemned the 'Lahore Declaration', February, 1999.¹⁰ They also criticized Nawaz Government on Kargil issue. Simultaneously, Benazir Bhutto was also called an American agent by Islamists. In this context, the period from 1988 to 1999 can be marked as a power-struggle among the military, political Governments and Islamist parties. Sectarian violence, deteriorated law and order and economic stagnation became the bench-marks of the period and ultimately, tension between the military and Pakistan Muslim League-N over Kargil issue, became the cause of the military coup of October, 1999.

Musharraf's Coup and Response of Islamist Parties

General Pervez Musharraf's coup, declaration of emergency and assumption of the office of Chief Executive of Pakistan in October 1999 was supported by Islamist parties who expressed their satisfaction on the overthrow of Nawaz Government. They demanded Jihad against India in Kargil, accountability of deposed

Government and new General Election in Pakistan.¹¹The Islamist parties were seeking a place in Pakistani politics through the disqualification of popular leadership as per the process of accountability under military leadership. For them, the vacuum created through the disqualification could be filled through the Islamist parties. However, Musharraf Government proclaimed the introduction of good governance, enlightened moderation and economic development for sustainable democracy in Pakistan. Musharraf envisaged an alliance between the military and modern middle class/liberal Muslims, contrary to Zia's Islamist model of governance. He also tried to clear military of militant Islamists Generals to confirm the military's reorientation. He gave statement bringing about changes in the controversial Hudood ordinance and the law relating to blasphemy which led to the beginning of resistance to Musharraf by the Islamists.¹² However, the incident of 9/11 and resultant policy provided strength to Musharraf regime.

America's 9/11 and MMA

The attack on World Trade Centre in America in 2001 changed the strategic importance of Pakistan. Usama bin Ladin, Al-Qaida and Taliban were declared responsible for the incident of 9/11 and Bush administration pressurized Pakistan's military Government to take military action against the militants who had networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Al Qaida was supposed to have close contacts with ISI and Islamist parties in Pakistan. In the circumstances, Musharraf Government took a policy level U-turn on its Afghan and Taliban issue under US threat: 'You are either with us or against us',¹³ and provided US forces logistic support, airspace and military basis to launch an attack on Afghanistan, Taliban and Al-Qaida. After Musharraf's joining US coalition of war against terror, twenty-six religious-political parties and groups established Pak-Afghan Defense Council (PADC) to resist the government policy. This incident changed the nature of relationship between pro-Talban Islamist parties and Musharraf government. The Islamists were considered the allies of the terrorists. It was a major shift in the policy which created a sort of confusion and Taliban and al-Qaida launched suicide attacks against Pakistan. A number of Islamist parties including JI refused to condemn these attacks.

Formation of MMA

The leadership of six major Islamist parties of PADC formed an alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal(MMA) to contest the election 2002. The alliance was consist of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Fazul ur Rehman) (JUI-F), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam - Sami ul Haq(JUI-S), Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (JUP), Jamiat Ulama-e-Ahle Hadith (JUAH) and Islami Tehrik Pakistan(ITP),¹⁴ Shah Ahmad Noorani of JUP as its President. The alliance represented mainstream voices of political Islam, particularly the Ulama network. Their leaders were religious scholars, trained in madrassas. However, JI had established its base among the educated class from colleges and universities. These six parties represented different sects and sub -sects such as Deobandi, Barelvi, Wahabi and Shia schools of thought. JUI had been dominant in the Pashtun areas of NWFP and Balochistan. JUP had stronghold in the Punjab and also had significant support-base in urban areas of Sindh. JI has great support in the big cities of Pakistan as it attracted mainly urban, educated, professional and business classes.¹⁵ These divergent factors within MMA played a crucial role to make Islamist parties united as the alliance did not challenge the political strengths of any party in its respective areas.

MMA chanted slogans of implementation of Sharia laws in the country. Its manifesto focused on the provision of justice, freedom of judiciary, freedom of press and safety of minorities' rights, resolved to address the issues of women rights, farmers' rights, workers' rights, opportunities for youth and promised free education for all citizen of the state. MMA projected this alliance as truly democratic. Liaquat Baluch stressed that MMA had a tradition of democracy reflected in the regular elections within the Jamat-i-Islami. The MMA also chanted slogans for the separation of institutional powers and rule of law, yet not ready to support the western ideals of democracy. MMA did not support the popular idea of people sovereignty as against the idea of divine sovereignty. For MMA Parliament was not qualified to implement any law contrary to Sharia law.¹⁶

Referendum 2002, Legal Framework Order and MMA

Before holding general elections, Musharraf announced Referendum for his election as President of Pakistan, following the tradition of former military dictators Ayub Khan and Zia ul Haq. All administrative and political resources were employed by the government to win the Referendum on 30 April 2002 and Musharraf was declared President of Pakistan for the next five years. MMA challenged the conduct of Referendum in public meetings and declared it as ridicule to the electoral process.¹⁷

Musharraf employed a significant shift in the constitutional structure of Pakistan through Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002 and introduced many changes in electoral system. National Assembly constituencies and seats of Provincial Assemblies were enhanced. Joint electorate was reintroduced. Time span of election campaign was reduced from 90 days to 40 days. These changes were designed to legitimize the dictatorship and to grant privilege to Musharraf serve both as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and President of Pakistan, at a time. Code of conduct for the disqualification of members was also changed to restrict the participation of opposition parties.¹⁸

Jamaat-e-Islami opposed the LFO considering it destructive to the democratic process, and objected the proposed amendments as it did not follow the constitutional procedures. It was considered as an attempt to make the civil society and institution subordinate and inferior to the will of military dictator.¹⁹ Despite strong reaction on Referendum and LFO, MMA never challenged it in any Court of Law. Islamist parties apparently criticized undemocratic and unconstitutional policies of Musharraf Government to improve their political and democratic impression but practically provided support to Musharraf Government to become part of power structure.

Elections 2002 and Results

Musharraf provided administrative and political support to MMA and PML (Q) to contain the political strength of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and PPP in the electoral process in 2002. He accommodated Islamists into his power scheme, announced a financial-package for Madaris.²⁰ Military Government provided several concessions to MMA to hold rallies and procession for

political gains. The candidates from Madaris were allowed to contest election with certificate of Madaris declaring those certificates equivalent to the bachelor's degree of the universities. MMA got book as an electoral symbol, presented it as the Holy Quran which attracted the religious masses especially from Pashtun areas.²¹ This give and take policy between Islamist parties and Musharraf government for their vested interest succeeded to bring desired results in the elections 2002.

PML-Q emerged, as a result, the largest national party with 118 seats whereas PPP won 80 seats and MMA won 67 constituencies and became third major party in the elections 2002. As Islamist parties had a very weak position in Pakistan's electoral history, therefore, electoral results of MMA in National Assembly and, victory in NWFP and Baluchistan surprised the political observers. MMA became the major party of NWFP Assembly with 46 out of 97 seats. In Balochistan also MMA emerged as the major party with 14 out of 48 seats. However, in Punjab and Sindh it could capture only 7 and 10 seats, respectively.²²

Most newspapers linked the achievement of MMA with feelings against America's interference in Pakistani affairs and its high handed tactics in Afghanistan.²³ MMA had propagated that elections were a contest between the foreign-secular elements and Islamists.²⁴ At the same time, MMA was alleged as American agents by some circles who joined hands with military Government to facilitate the presence of Americans and Jews at Pakistan airfields against war on terror.²⁵

After electoral success, MMA began a struggle to make Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. However, negotiations between MMA and Musharraf government remained unsuccessful. He was not considered suitable choice in that prevailing national and International situation, by the military. Resultantly, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali of PML-Q emerged as new Prime Minister of Pakistan and, Maulana Fazlur Rehman took over as the leader of opposition.

Election 2002 provided MMA a political strength and championship of Pathan nationalism in NWFP. At the Center MMA got strength to stand up against the Musharraf and challenge his policies at several issues. In March 2003, on the issue of US attack on Iraq on

the charges of production of weapons of mass destruction, MMA started a movement against US and organized a Million March Protest, all over the country. MMA successfully called for the observance of a countrywide strike on 21 March 2003²⁶. American attack on Iraq was regarded as a war against Islam.²⁷ In August 2003, MMA gathered more than 200 Ulama and issued a fatwa pronouncing sending military troops to Iraq as religiously illegal. They restricted Ulama not to hold funeral prayers for the soldiers killed in Iraq War.²⁸ It was the pressure of MMA that Musharraf did not send Pakistani army to Iraq, despite of persistent pressure from US. Similarly, MMA strongly reacted when Musharraf accused Dr. Abdul-Qadeer Khan (father of Pakistan's nuclear program) and other scientists to transfer nuclear technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. MMA called for strikes, organized demonstrations in defense of Dr. Abdul-Qadeer Khan and declared him national hero, in the months of January and February 2004.²⁹

Qazi Hussain Ahmad accused the government of working on foreign agendas of humiliating national heroes who spent their lives protecting the country. MMA observed Black Day on January 1, 2005. Military operation in South Waziristan and activities of Federal Board of Investigation, besides seeking solution of Kashmir issue through the resolutions other than UN resolutions, were a major shift in Policy.³⁰

Qazi Hussain Ahmad of JI declared that Musharraf was an American Agent He reiterated that establishment of an Islamic democratic state on the model of pious caliphate in the country was the aim of Islamist parties. He accused Musharraf of by-passing Parliament on all important issues.³¹

17th Amendment, National Security Council and MMA

MMA became ally of the Musharraf to extend powers of the president. An agreement was concluded between MMA, PML Q and Musharraf's supporters on the 17th Amendment in the constitution of Pakistan 1973, to restore Presidential power of dissolving the elected bodies/Assembly and incorporation of Musharraf's Legal Framework Order. The amendment endorsed actions taken by Musharraf government since 12 October 1999. For Maulana Fazlur Rehman, it was a great contribution to political stability by MMA

and MMA had changed the Pakistan's political culture from agitation and provocation to settlement of the issues through reason and arguments.³² Similarly MMA reached at an agreement with the Government on the formation of National Security Council. Seventeenth Constitutional Amendment was the restoration of 8th Amendment which strengthen the position of President in the state structure of Pakistan, restoring article 58-2b, constitutional bond for Local Government System and Musharraf's election as President for five years. The establishment of National Security Council (NSC) in 2004 was another attempt of Musharraf government to ensure political role of military in the state system. However, MMA parties were divided on the issue of participation in NSC. JI and JUI-F, had conflicting standpoints on the issue. Qazi Hussain Ahmad of JI refused to join the NSC and threatened JI's acquittal from the supreme council of MMA in case of accepting NSC. Considering NSC a non-democratic body, JI continued its boycott on political and constitutional ground until June 2005. However, Fazlur Rehman was convinced to participate in the NSC meetings for administrative advantages. These differences on the issue provided ISI an opportunity to exploit the situation for Musharraf's ascendancy in the political structure. The MMA agreed to let Musharraf serve as COAS up to 31st December 2004 in exchange of not to disturb the government of MMA in NWFP and Balochistan. Thus, MMA provided Musharraf Government a legitimacy and political strength, compromising its principles and election rhetoric. MMA leadership was divided because of the sensitivity on the religious credentials issues. JI planned a strong active movement against Musharraf but JUI-F was fearful of the expected loss of NWFP and Baluchistan governments and share of power at the Center in case of movement against Musharraf.³³ These differences minimized the MMA functional capacity and ability.

Women Protection Bill and MMA

Another test case for MMA's politics was Women Protection Bill (WPB) 2006. There was a constant pressure from human rights groups and women's organization to reform the Hudood Ordinance, 1979. In August 2006, PML-Q submitted Women Protection Bill to be placed on the agenda of National Assembly.

MMA declared WPB contrary to the Quran and Sunnah and protested for withdrawal of the Bill from the agenda of National Assembly. The Islamist parties launched a countrywide protest against the Bill but could not attract the large gatherings of people. Senate passed the Women Rights Bill despite severe protest and threat of resignation by Islamist parties.³⁴ It became a law on 1 December 2006. The Bill allowed rape to be prosecuted under the civil law. Islamist parties threatened the launch of a nationwide protest in case of any change in the blasphemy law.³⁵

Lal Masjid Incident and MMA

Lal Masjid issue(2007) further sharpened the differences within MMA and between the MMA and Musharraf Government. As per intelligence reports, two administrators of Lal Masjid, Islamabad, Abdul Rashid Ghazi and Abdul Aziz Ghazi, supporters of Afghan Jihad and implementation of Sharia law in the country, were patronizing anti-state elements, using Lal Masjid as a center for the anti-state elements en-route to tribal areas on Pak-Afghan border to fight against Pakistan Army.³⁶ Musharraf Government launched 'Operation Sunrise' against the administration of Lal Masjid. MMA announced three days mourning and protested against the Lal Masjid operation declaring it an act of state-terrorism supported by US.³⁷ Moreover, MMA demanded judicial inquiry by Supreme Court of Pakistan of Lal Masjid incident. Qazi Hussain Ahmad resigned from the membership of National Assembly of Pakistan and announced the boycott of upcoming General election 2008. It was a parting of ways from JUI-F and beginning of end of MMA.

Before the Parliamentary elections of 2008, Musharraf wanted to secure his re-election. As a precautionary measure to combat any challenge from the judiciary to his reelection, Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Ahmad Chaudhry was declared non-functional in March 2007. MMA declared the action an assault on the entire judiciary of Pakistan and condemned it harshly. Musharraf's perceived pro-American stance on internal and external policies and judicial activism became the main reason of his unpopularity. In the circumstances, Musharraf declared emergency on 3rd November 2007 to restrict the activities of higher judiciary and political parties against his government. JI strongly raised voice

against the proclamation of emergency as an extra-constitutional act on the part of Musharraf.³⁸ Parliamentary term of the National Assembly ended on 15 November 2007. Qazi Hussain Ahmad announced the boycott of upcoming General Election 2008 while JUI- F wanted to participate in the Election. On this difference, JI ceased the alliance with MMA.

Politics and Governance in NWFP

While MMA was in opposition to the government at Center, it was governing NWFP and Balochistan at the same time. MMA had promised enthusiastically in the election campaign for the promulgation of Islamic laws in the country. After forming the cabinet in November 2002, the MMA government under Akram Khan Durrani prohibited the sale of liquor and gambling to express MMA Government's concern towards the implementation of its electoral manifesto. The Provincial Assembly of NWFP expressed its will to revert the federal government's decision of weekly holiday of Sunday, adopted Shalwar-Kameez as school uniform, included Quranic studies in the syllabi at primary and secondary school levels, stressed on the interest-free banking and pleaded for the adoption of Islamic system of Taazerat (punishments) through the resolutions. The provincial government prohibited the playing of audio and video games at public places. The public transport was bound to take prayers break and stop.³⁹

MMA government in NWFP established a 21-member Nifaaz-e-Sharia Council for the guidance of the Government to implement Islamic system of governance in the Province. On the recommendations of the Council, NWFP Assembly unanimously passed 'The Sharia Act 2003',⁴⁰ calling for the promulgation of Sharia in the Province and Islamization of government institutions, especially, judiciary and education. It stressed the discouragement of bribery, vulgarity and social evils, protection of human rights of the citizens, promotion and propagation of Islamic values through media and introduction of interest-free economic system.

After two years of the promulgation of The Sharia Act, Hasba (Accountability) Bill was introduced in 2005,⁴¹ to establish the office of Provincial Ombudsman (Mohtasib) at three administrative level of tehsil, District and Province. Unlike the federal Ombudsmen, the

Provincial Ombudsmen was empowered to take *Suo Moto* action in addition to responding to the complaints of the people. The Bill was criticized for creating a dual system and structure of administration and judiciary. It was seen as a step towards Talibanization in the province, by the moderate section of the society. However, MMA was expecting minimization of the miseries of public through the provision of speedy justice as assured in the Hasba Bill.⁴² However, MMA Government could not succeed to implement the Bill due to strong resistance by Federal Government and Awami National Party (ANP). In spite of all such concerns, ironically, none of the MMA Government's policies addressed the issues of poverty, health and unemployment in the province.

MMA Government focused to increase female enrollment at primary school education level and introduced a variety of reforms in school education. Simultaneously, health sector was observed carefully by MMA government immediately after getting power. MMA believed in the segregation of education by Gender, considering co-education as un-Islamic and against their tradition and culture.⁴³ In education sector a visible change was observed at primary enrolment level. The enrolment in primary schools increased by 34 and 19 percent for girls and boys, respectively, in between 2002 to 2007.⁴⁴ Similarly 23 percent growth in school attendance was also observed during the same period.⁴⁵ Establishment of Khyber Medical Girls College in Peshawar and Crisis Center in different cities of the province were the project of great importance regarding the uplift of females. But at the same time, Provincial Government of MMA remained reluctant to accommodate Women's Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), considering their role harmful to the social status of local women.

In health sector, overall budget allocations were gradually enhanced from Rs. 292 million in 2002 to Rs. 3,638 million in 2007. The MMA Government established many new Basics Health Units, Maternity and Child Health Care Centers and Hospitals in the backward areas of the province.⁴⁶ However, the immunization and vaccine programs remained unsuccessful to great extent.

Pakistan faced severe earthquake shocks of its history in October 2005 which largely affected Pakistan's administered Azad Kashmir and NWFP.⁴⁷ JUI-F was convinced to participate in NSC for the

disaster management and relief work for the affected people and their rehabilitation while JI highly criticized the participation of Chief Minister in this regard. The lack of unanimous stance on matters of great concern affected the role of MMA in decision making and implantation process. After Lal Masjid incident, Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e Shariat-e- Muhammadi (TNSM) had recaptured its position in the Swat Valley and was demanding the implementation of Sharia in its true sense. TNSM was against female education and started attack on female schools. It had strong network in Malakand Division and use illegal FM stations to convey its messages to the common people. It condemned polio vaccination and declared it un-Islamic. It ran training camps and produced militant's literature without any check of the Provincial Government of NWFP⁴⁸. In this context, MMA Government did not take any serious initiatives to restrict the influence and power of TNSM in the area. MMA was unable to develop a concrete policy to control law and order situation and to maintain security of the area. As a result, MMA lost the support of its voters in the Local Bodies Elections 2005, held on non-party basis. However, pro-Musharraf elements of PML-Q aligned themselves with Awami National Party (as ANP was supporting state policy against war on terror) against Islamists in the province. The undeclared alliance played an active role in election campaigns and won local bodies elections against the MMA supported alliances.⁴⁹

Kalabagh Dam remained controversial in Pakistan's politics. NWFP has strong reservation to the construction of Kalabagh Dam. Musharraf announced to initiate the project for future needs of irrigation water and electricity.⁵⁰ The MMA Government in NWFP and ANP vehemently opposed the construction of Kalabagh Dam. The mounting campaigns against the construction of Kalabagh Dam in NWFP and in Sindh and the threat of impeachment compelled Musharraf to give up⁵¹the plan. The MMA began to collapse by the end of its rule in 2007 in the Province of NWFP and in Balochistan.

Conclusion

One can observe an understanding between Islamist Parties and military establishment during Musharraf Era. As per the scheme of the establishment, Islamist parties emerged as a force in the form of MMA in election 2002, in the context of American War on Terror

after 9/11. Musharraf used the public strength of Islamist parties to counter the popular political strength of PPP and PML-N., and to create an equilibrium to settle deals with western powers. As opposition at center, the role of MMA remained complex. It criticized Musharraf Government's policies regarding Kashmir, Afghanistan and Iraq. On the Issues of Afghanistan and the nuclear proliferation MMA was tuned perfectly with the Nationalist sentiment. However, it could not muster public support against the Women Protection Bill, despite organizing many rallies in different cities of Pakistan. At the same time, MMA supported the LFO, NSC and 17th Amendment which institutionalized the position of President Musharraf in political and administrative sphere. The internal conflict and virtual division of MMA can be considered one of the main reasons of its failure to influence the formulation of state policies. It proved to be more hard-liner than JUI-F against the policies of and relations with Musharraf Government. MMA criticized and protested against Musharraf policies against Taliban but compromised its principles and election rhetoric on institutionalization process to stay in power.

The introduced of The Sharia Act 2003 and Hasba Bill 2005 in NWFP create a sort of sentiments against MMA among the moderate section of the society considering a step toward Talibanization. The education and health policies of MMA in NWFP did not bring desired results as it lacked coherence and consistency for long time. At the same time, its response to the core issues of poverty, equality, security and justice could not meet the expectations of the people of NWFP. Politics revolved around personalities and patronage thus MMA could not develop its capacity to improve the governing level. It did not design any concrete policy to counter the growing influence and power of the TNSM in Swat that raise questions on the governance/credibility of MMA. It remained unsuccessful to shake off its fundamentalist image. Islamist parties could not mobilize people in the name of Islam further and a secular Awami National Party replaced them in the Provincial election 2008. Religious manifestation could not inspire the large part of the society in the changed circumstances of 2008. That is why Islamist parties could not maintain its place in the General Elections of 2008, 2013 and 2018.

JI and JUI-F contested General Election 2013 in their individual capacity. Both parties received 20.38 percent vote against the PTI 18.99 percent. JI became part of PTI coalition Government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After a decade, MMA revived itself in 2018 to contest General Elections 2018 but could secure only 5 seats of National Assembly. As a whole, to keep itself in the power structure, MMA violated its aims and objectives as well as ideology, played a dual role of opposition and government party, cooperated to restore strong center and compromised its agenda, that led to the complete withdrawal of public support for MMA.

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