

Summary

This research work deals with the challenges to democracy in Pakistan during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's era (1971-1977). The key concerns of the study are the essentials of democracy, their provision to the people and problems that acted as stumbling blocks for the norms and roots of democracy to flourish. Furthermore, the research work deeply investigates the process and phenomenon of the rule of the first popularly elected government in the political history of Pakistan. The power structure of the state, civil and military bureaucracy with domineering roles and the political elite with a strong hold on the politics of Pakistan are also subject of examination and discussion in this research study.

However, the challenges to democracy are associated with a long and protracted process beginning soon after the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state. When Pakistan came into being the strong institutions of civil and military bureaucracy began to play their role either directly or indirectly because of the weakness of the political system. Pakistan could not have a constitution for about nine years which provides the state with the corpus of rules and principles to run and regulate its machinery. Ethnic, linguistic and regional differences left no room for political maturity and prosperity in terms of mental development for the accomplishment of a healthy political environment. So as for as the era of the first popularly elected government is concerned in specific terms it almost had the same problems of democracy as the people of Pakistan faced before its arrival into power. It was no doubt an elected and representative government but the people were not empowered. Fundamental freedoms like right to freedom of thought and expression or criticism were subjected to strong censorship and restriction. The elite still continued to capture the power structure, whether it was the parliament or the bureaucracy. The government made tall promises for the dispensation of democracy. Long speeches were delivered by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with his charismatic oratory power. Land and economic reforms were made but all could not deliver well due to lack of real democratic spirit in the policy and functioning of the government.