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**PROPORTIONAL  
REPRESENTATION  
AND  
THE REVIVAL OF  
DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN  
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## ***Preface***

Pakistan is once again in search of a political order. A new order is being promised. It is time to pause and reflect on the political malaises and search for a way out of it. A humble effort is being made in the present Study which focuses on the issue of the revival of the political process in the country and deals more exhaustively with the issue of the electoral system. As national debate on these issues is presently in the offing, the *Institute of Policy Studies* takes the opportunity of presenting a viewpoint before the nation. We hope these ideas would be carefully considered in the leaderships' search for a new political order. The *Institute of Policy Studies* does not take any political positions, its studies on political themes, as on others, are attempts to examine the issues with intellectual rigour. We are here to share with the nation and its policy-makers the results of our study and research, which incorporates parts of an earlier Study produced in 1979. It is hoped this Report will be of some assistance to those who want to evolve a stable political arrangement in the country.

Mr. Mukhtar Hassan of Agency Afghan Press and Mr. Mutiur Rahman have helped me in collecting data and analysing the same. I am also indebted to M/S Choudhary Rehmat Elahi, Abdul Malik Mujahid, Khalid Rahman, Dr. Anis Ahmad, Mr. Muttaqeen ur Rahman and K. M. Farooq for their comments and suggestions. The final responsibility for this Study, however, rests on the present writer.

Institute of Policy Studies,                      KHURSHID AHMAD  
Islamabad.

16 June 1983

## ***Introduction: The Political Challenge***

Pakistan is caught in a political stalemate. A country that was established as a result of a popular ideological and democratic movement led by the great constitutionalist, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, has not been allowed to function as an ideological and democratic state by the legion of civil and military rulers who were able to hold reigns of power in the country. The country has all along been engaged in constitution-making, for despite adoption of three constitutions (1956, 1963 and 1973) no serious effort has been made to follow and respect the precepts and traditions of constitutionalism. We have been engaged in making and unmaking constitutions but have not cared to strengthen the habit and tradition of constitutionality in the country.

### **Political Stability**

Political stability does not depend upon individuals, however, good or well-meaning: it depends on institu-

tions, traditions and established processes which everyone is trained to respect. The present situation is fraught with serious dangers and uncertainties. A Martial Law that was enforced in 1977, almost six years ago, to meet an emergency situation has continuously been extended in an *ad hoc* manner. This has confronted the country with an extremely vulnerable situation, whose indefinite continuation is bound to further expose it to increasing internal dissensions and subversions and even external manipulations, if not interventions. There is an increasing realisation amongst the people that the name of Islam is being exploited, with little serious effort to respect the Islamic injunctions and seek to implement them. After all, in Islam, political legitimacy rests on the twin factors of: (a) loyalty to and abidance by the *Shari'ah*, and (b) the trust and confidence of the people. Lukewarm attitude towards the *Shari'ah* and almost total disregard of the need to seek mandate from the people to continue to rule, makes the Islamic credentials of the government extremely doubtful. There is an increasing sense of deprivation and alienation amongst the people in all parts of the country, but more particularly in the provinces of Sind and Baluchistan. Lack of accountability is breeding corruption and laxity in the government, something that is unfortunately extending to the personnel of the armed forces involved in civil administration. The prestige of the country abroad has suffered because of this state of affairs, which deserves to be changed without delay. The only way out is the revival of the political process, on the basis of the Islamic and democratic values and traditions.

Much valuable time has already been lost. Quick and effective revival of the democratic process would depend, among others, on the following three conditions:



1. Constitutional issues which have been settled in the past after long and acrimonious debates, on which a near-consensus of the political forces and parties of the country has been achieved, and which have had almost general acceptance from the people, either because of the popular support or of approval by institutions regarded by them as authentic, should not be reopened. On this principle the constitution of 1973, as approved in 1973, should be restored, as a nationally accepted constitutional framework for the country. This means that the amendments to this constitution arbitrarily introduced by the earlier regime, as well as the Provisional Constitutional Order introduced by the present one, should be disregarded, and whatever new constitutional changes are required, they should be introduced through the new national assembly chosen by the people.

2. To arrive at a workable arrangement a national convention of all ideologically committed political forces of the country should be held to prepare a plan for smooth inauguration of the democratic process. This convention should address itself to the problems of a caretaker government, with the specific objectives of making arrangements for national elections, including the question of the electoral system and if necessary the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the President and the Prime Minister, an issue on which the 1973 constitution did not enjoy national consensus and an issue which can be resolved to allay the apprehensions of the armed forces as well as of other political forces by modifying this arrangement in the light of the 1956 constitution which was framed by an equally, if not more competent body and which has enjoyed national consensus.

3. The question of the introduction of Islamic

political order is important but it must not be allowed to confuse the constitutional issues or delay revival of the political process. There is consensus amongst the Islamic scholars and organizations<sup>1</sup> that Islam gives very clear and inviolable principles and precepts for the political system but does not lay down any specific political structures or procedures and as such a constitution which does not violate those fundamental principles can act as a starting point for the Islamization of the political order. To clinch the issue once for all, let these fundamentals be acknowledged as the basis of an Islamic political order:

- (a) that political and legal sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and as such the Islamic *Shari'ah* must constitute the supreme law of the land. This means that the Quran and *Sunnah* should be accepted as the supreme source of guidance and authority, both for legislation as well as policy-making. It also means that the approach of an Islamic state must be ideological, seeking inspiration from the moral and social teachings of Islam and not purely secular, nationalistic or sectarian. We need to go beyond the traditional stand of declaring void all that is repugnant to the Quran and the *Sunnah* and adopt a positive approach to fulfil all that Islam wants the social order to be;
  
- (b) that the affairs of the state are to be run on the principle of *Shura*, which means that political legitimacy would be acquired by seeking the

<sup>1</sup>See, *Twenty-Two Basic Principles of an Islamic State*, framed in 1951 by 31 *Ulema* belonging to all schools of Islamic thought. Also see, *Constitutions for an Islamic State*, framed by the Higher Research Council of Al-Azhar and the *Universal Islamic Declaration* and the *Declaration of Universal Islamic Human Rights* by the Islamic Council, London.

confidence of the people. *Shura* is a principle which must become operational at all levels, i.e. in relation to the selection of political leadership and consequent formation and replacement of governments, formulation of policies and constant accountability before the people or their representatives;

- (c) that the fundamental rights and obligations, as spelled out by the Quran and *Sunnah*, are inviolable. They must be constitutionally guaranteed and practically ensured. Creation of an autonomous machinery to ensure the enforcement of those rights, say in the form of an independent judiciary, is an integral part of this divine scheme of human rights;
- (d) that the individual, the state and society must commit themselves to the duty of establishing justice in all walks of human life and be accountable within the area of their responsibility. The basic needs of all members of the society, as enunciated by Islam, are to be ensured and the basic development of the economy and society aiming at reducing the dependence of an Islamic country on the non-Muslim world;
- (e) that the Islamic *Ummah* is one universal community of faith and even though there may be many Muslim states, they must strive to move in co-operation with one another as members of the same ideological family and to achieve greater integration and solidarity between the Muslim countries leading to collective self-reliance of the *Ummah*; and
- (f) that the mission of the Islamic *Ummah*, and of

each one of its members, is to call humanity to the path of faith and equity, to be witnesses of truth to the human race and to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. This should be accepted and pursued as the prime objective of the state and as its world mission.

The government and all political parties must commit themselves to these principles and resolve to revive the political process, on the basis of the constitution of 1973, with modifications and practical programmes as referred to above. Islam holds no brief for autocracy or oligarchy in any form and it would be a gross violence to Islam to use its name to indefinitely deny the people the right to bring to the helm a leadership they trust.

The challenge that confronts the people of Pakistan is not to *discover* what is the Islamic political order but to *institutionalise* the principle of *Shura* in their political life, which means, structuring their representative organs to fulfil the letter and spirit of Islamic injunctions about *Shura* and to elect people who are qualified, competent and trust-worthy to run these institutions. In this respect two questions are of crucial importance, and they deserve to be resolved without delay.

### Political Parties and the Democratic Process

First, there must be political parties committed to the ideology of Pakistan to act as links between the people and the government and its organs.

Although there have always been active political groups and political communities, political parties as chief instruments of constitutional democracy are a

contemporary phenomenon. In systems wherein a family, a tribe, or a particular class constituted the power-base, political stability and continuity were ensured by these institutions. With the extension of the power-base and the emergence of the people as the final arbiters of political destiny it became necessary to have an institutional link between the people and the organs of power. During the last two centuries the political party has emerged as the most important agency through which the electorate is involved, both in the exercise as well as the transfer of power. This is the institution which has, on the one hand, reduced dependence on individuals and dynasties for the mobilization of political processes and on the other, has ensured continuity, accountability and universal participation of the people in this process.

*It is the function of the political party to organize people on the basis of socio-moral ideals and programmes, to select leadership acceptable to the people, to ensure accountability for their performance in office by facing the people from time to time in the form of periodic election and to reinforce the stability and legitimacy of the political community. Elections provide a national forum for debate and discussion on public issues and for the articulation of the peoples opinion and aspirations and as such act as a means for the exchange of influences between the governors and the governed.*

The political party also acts as a link between its members, integrates them to the political community and provides them with opportunities to participate in the political process in keeping with their dignity. Finally, it is through political parties that regional and ethnic borders can be crossed and national and ideological identity established and strengthened. It acts as

a symbol of patriotism, and a platform to gravitate the people towards a social programme and an ideology. That is why there is a universal realization that "in the modern world democracy and political parties are two facets of the same reality, the inside and outside of the same fabric."<sup>2</sup>

It may also be emphasized that there is nothing in the *Shari'ah* which goes against the formation of political parties in an Islamic policy. They are in the nature of the permitted (*Mubah*) and can be formed in the best interests of the *Ummah*. The Quran exhorts Muslims to have from amongst themselves an organized group to invite people to truth and to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

The discussions in Saqifa Bani Saida on the issue of the selection of a *khalifa* on the death of the Prophet

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14, p. 684.

Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner write:

"The political party is a creature of modern and modernizing political systems . . . the political party emerges whenever the activities of a political system reach a certain degree of complexity, or whenever the notion of political power comes to include the idea that the mass public must participate. Thus one might argue that; just as bureaucracy emerged when public administration could no longer be adequately handled in the prince's household, the political party materialized when the tasks of recruiting political leadership and making public policy could no longer be handled by a small coterie of men unconcerned with public sentiments. The emergence of a political party clearly implies that the masses must be taken into account by the political elite, either out of a commitment to the ideological notion that the masses have a right to participate in the determination of public policy, and the selection of leadership, or out of the realization that even a rigidly dictatorial elite must find an organizational means of assuring stable conformance and control" (Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner "The Origins and Development of Political Parties", in *Political Parties and Political Development*, ed. by La Palombara and Weiner, Princeton University Press, 1972, p. 3-4.)

E. E. Schattschneider says in *Party Government*, that "the political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Quoted by Jeff Fishell in *Parties and Elections in an Anti-Party Age*, Indiana University Press, 1978, p. xiii).

(peace be upon him) are clear indication that the *Muhajirs* and *Ansars* were discussing different claims as political groups. The Al-Azhar model constitution of an Islamic state accepts the right to form political parties. So does the *Universal Islamic declaration of Human Rights* and a number of other works on Islamic political thought.<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, imperative to have political parties to play their role in activating the political process. In the case of Pakistan, their importance further lies in being the only institution capable of transcending the boundaries of *baradari*, class, tribe and region and bring about national cohesion in the people. To restrict the number of parties to a reasonable limit and to ensure their Pakistani character, it is important that only those parties should have an opportunity to operate at the national level which are: (a) committed to the ideology of Pakistan; (b) are not controlled or manipulated from abroad; and (c) enjoy a reasonable degree of support in the country, including all its provinces, e.g. which secure a minimum of 4 per cent votes cast in each province as well as say 5 per cent of the national count.

The second major issue relates to the system of elections, including the fundamental question of single-constituency majority/plurality election or proportional representation and of the qualifications of those capable of representing the people in an Islamic republic. The rest of the present Study deals with the issue of the electoral system and the qualifications of the public representatives.

<sup>3</sup>See, Dr. Zafar, *Islamic State: Theory and History*, (Arabic); Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Islami Riyasat*; Hamid Ansari, *Islam Ka Nazm-e-Mumlikat*.

## *The Electoral System*

The tragedy of democracy in Pakistan is that it has all along been used as a political cliché and not as an effective programme for the polity. Consequently, this powerful concept which has inspired the people in our country and abroad, to heroic action and has given them hope during the long and chilly nights of despotism, is being disparaged through debates often fuelled more by prejudice, ignorance or vested interest than by dispassionate analysis of facts and evidence. The spirit of democracy is symbolised by honest consultation, informed dialogue, contrived consensus, accommodating tolerance and respect for dissent and the rights of all. Difference of opinion can be a blessing, provided the people are prepared to face facts and resolve disputes on the basis of merit. The issue of the electoral system deserves to be examined in this perspective. It is our considered opinion that the system of proportional representation can open up new possibilities of rectifying some of the gross inequities of the present electoral system.



Democracy, in its more general sense, denotes an attitude of mind and a way of life in society in which each individual is believed to be entitled to participate freely in the values and processes of society, particularly in the making of political decisions. In its more restricted sense, the term means the opportunity enjoyed *as a right* by the citizens of a state to participate freely and effectively in the political decisions which affect their individual and collective lives. The basic idea is that democracy signifies a government not only *for* the people but also *by* the people. As a theory of government it stresses the concept of supremacy of law and submission to the will of the people, articulated through a process ensuring the free participation of all citizens.

In earlier experiments with direct democracy this objective was achieved by providing all citizens with an opportunity to *directly* participate in decision-making. As this was no longer possible in a modern state a new experiment was made in the form of representative democracy, in which people elect representatives to make decisions for them.<sup>1</sup> Germane to this scheme of things is the need to attain a truly representative character for the decision-making body. It should fully and accurately reflect *all* shades of opinion that exist in the society. That is why the method of representation is of critical importance in determining the democratic character of a political arrangement. The parliament is expected to be like a mirror of the society, if it fails to reflect its true colours — i.e. all major groups and trends, it would distort the entire perspective.

The systems of voting and of counting votes represent the mechanisms by means of which a people record and measure their approach and thinking on major issues of the day, enabling the organs of the state to reflect and fulfil their will. These systems should be as

<sup>1</sup>See, Madison, J., *The Federalist Papers*, No. 10 (1787).

accurate, as reliable, and as impartial as possible. The success of democracy in a society depends, in the last analysis, on the effectiveness of the method of representation adopted in it. If it ensures just representation of all shades of opinion and assigns to each a weight in proportion to its total strength in the society, it would generate fair-play and strengthen the roots of democracy. If it fails on this count, it will impair proper working of democracy, in spite of all the trappings and symbols of a democratic order.

### Majority System

A number of methods of representation have been tried over the years in different democratic societies. All of them can be roughly grouped together under two major categories. The first major method is known as majority system, where the country is divided into a number of single member constituencies and whoever gets the largest number of votes in his constituency is treated as representative of that constituency in the national forum. It is based on the concept that "the will of a part of the electorate is taken to express the will of whole".<sup>2</sup> This system is prevalent in the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada and many of the countries which were once under the British rule. There are many variations of this system, viz. (a) Relative Majority (First-Past-The-Post-System) with (i) Single-Member Constituencies;<sup>3</sup> or (ii) Multi-Member Constituencies with block votes;<sup>4</sup> and Absolute Majority System with

<sup>2</sup>*International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, vol. 5, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Examples are: UK, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, etc.

<sup>4</sup>As in UK for House of Commons-Constituencies returning two members (1885-1945); Canada, Provincial Parliament; Greece, Chamber of Deputies; Turkey, National Assembly (1950-57); Switzerland, National Council (before 1919).

(i) Single-Member Constituencies having either right to Second Ballot (or Exhaustive Ballot) or Alternative vote<sup>5</sup> and (ii) Multi-Member Constituencies with Second Ballot or Alternative vote.<sup>6</sup>

### Proportional System

The other major system of representation is proportional representation. It is based on the concept that the whole electorate, both majority and minority, should be reflected in the decision-making body in such a way that the strength of the representatives of a particular viewpoint in the said body should approximately correspond to their relative position in the population. There are many ways in which this method has been implemented. The central idea in all of these cases is that the real emphasis should be on the political weight of every group or party and that each party should carry a weight in the decision-making body in proportion to its electoral support. This leads to a proper representation of all, majority and minority, viewpoints in the parliament.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the major variants of this system are: (i) Party List with no choice between candidates;<sup>8</sup> (ii) Party List with various degrees of choice given to the

<sup>5</sup>As in France, Chamber of Deputies 1928–45 and after 1958; Australia, House of Representatives, etc.

<sup>6</sup>Belgium, Chamber of Representatives (before 1900); Australia, Senate (1919–49).

<sup>7</sup>See, Hallet, G. H., *Proportional Representation – The Key to Democracy*, National Home Library Foundation, Washington 1937; Cord, Robert L., Medeiros, James A. and Jones, Walter S., *Political Science: An Introduction*, 1974, p. 356.

<sup>8</sup>As in Germany, Reichstag (1919–33), Czechoslovakia, Chamber of Deputies and Senate (1919–38) and (1945–48); France, National Assembly (1945 and 1946); "Israel", Knesset, Turkey, since 1961; Guyana, since 1964.

voter to give his preference within the List;<sup>9</sup> (iii) Mixed System (Majority System plus Party List);<sup>10</sup> and (iv) Single Transferable Vote.<sup>11</sup>

Both these systems have their merits and demerits. The fact that in Pakistan we have been more used to the 'majority system' of the Westminster type should not blind us to the fact that this system prevails only in a limited number of countries and that other democracies have experimented with the other system with various degrees of success. The question of method of representation should be decided on the basis of its merits and not simply on the grounds of continuity or familiarity. Both these aspects are important but cannot be the sole criteria for judging a system. *The real issue is electoral justice.* If the present system fails on that count, there is no justification for insisting on its continuance. If there is uncontrovertible evidence establishing the non-suitability of a system as far as making the parliament a true representative of the viewpoints of the nation is concerned, then it would be immoral to support it only because that seems to be the only system with which we are familiar. We are making hundred and one innovations in different walks of life, why should this important area be an exception?

<sup>9</sup>Belgium, Chamber of Representative, since 1899; Denmark, Folketing, since 1920; Netherland, Second Chamber, since 1917; First Chamber, since 1923; Italy, Chamber of Deputies; Sweden, both Houses of Parliament, since 1909; Greece, Chamber of Deputies (1946–52); Finland, Parliament, (1906–35); Switzerland, National Council, since 1919, Cantonal Councils, since 1891; Luxemburg, Chamber of Deputies, since 1919.

<sup>10</sup>As in West Germany since 1946; Denmark, Folketing (1815–20).

<sup>11</sup>As in the Republic of Ireland, both Houses of Parliament, since 1922; North Ireland, Senate, University MPs (1921–65), Lower House, 1921 and 1925; Australia, Commonwealth Senate since 1949; South Africa, Senate since 1909; Malta, Senate and Legislative Assembly, since 1921, Gibraltar, Legislative Council (1950–69).

We think that the issue should be examined with great objectivity and openness as the future of democracy very much depends on the suitability of the method of election. Some political scientists have gone to the extent of suggesting that there are two forms of rigging of elections: first, a crude and grosser form where votes are tampered with arbitrarily, and second a more subtle form, where the method of representation is such that it can never result in fair play and ensure to every group or party a position in the parliament commensurate with its real voting support.<sup>12</sup>

We, therefore, feel that the question of change of the electoral system is not a phoney question. Nor is it an attempt to raise a non-issue. The system of election is a method of selecting a country's rulers and decision-makers. It is too important an issue to ignore, whatever be other aspects of the political situation. The nation must have a system of representation that serves its interests best, that ensures justice and fair play for all sections of the body-politic, and which fosters a country's evolution towards real democracy. In this Study, therefore, we propose to examine the case for and against proportional representation.

<sup>12</sup>See, J. F. S. Ross's Preface to Lakeman, Enid, *How Democracies Vote: A Study of Electoral Systems*, London, 1974, p. 11-12.

## ***The Case for Proportional Representation***

The case for proportional representation is based on three major grounds: first, the weaknesses and inequities of the majority system; second, the potential of the proportional representation system towards producing a more representative parliament and a more harmonious society; and finally, on the capability of this system to be more effectively assimilated in an Islamic framework and help in implementing the Islamic political precepts in contemporary environment.

### **a. Failure of the Majority System**

The majority system has produced viable governments, but at a heavy cost. It is based on the assumption that the will of a part of the electorate expresses the will of the whole. This premise ignores the heterogeneous character of a modern society and assumes a degree of harmony which is not in keeping with the realities revealed by the sociology of politics. It is unjust to minorities whether religious, linguistic,

ethnic or ideological and paves the way for the tyranny of majority. It is unable to capture the whole spectrum of political opinions and preferences prevailing in the society as such under this system a parliament can never honestly and accurately reflect all major shades of opinion obtaining amongst the people. A disproportionate weight is given to the view of the majority or even a pseudo-majority. This often produces feelings of frustration and discontentment amongst the minority groups who are denied the opportunity to fulfil their rightful role in the making of nations' destiny.

The majority system does not mean that under it the dominant party necessarily enjoys the support of a majority of the voters. As such, the very term 'majority system' becomes a misnomer. There is no built-in guarantee that the party that gets 'majority of seats' in the parliament also enjoys the support of 'a majority of the electorate'. This system has produced great inequities in the past. Votes are divided amongst all the contestants in a constituency and there is no guarantee that the person or party finally elected to power really enjoys the confidence of the majority of the constituency. There is incontrovertible evidence to prove that this system has continuously thrown into power governments which did not enjoy the support of the majority of the electorate and yet they were able to rule over the people in the name of representative democracy and majority rule.

United Kingdom is the country which has practiced this system for the longest period of time. An analysis of the results of the British General Elections between 1885 and 1970 shows that in *twenty three* elections held during these 85 years it was only on *five* occasions that the party that formed the government got 50 per

cent or more of the votes cast in that election. For the remaining *eighteen* elections parties which had less than 50 per cent of the electorate on their side were able to get enough seats in the Parliament to rule over the country. In the year 1951 the world witnessed the anomaly that the Labour Party which was ruling the country between 1945–51 and which got 48.5 per cent of the votes cast in the election of 1951 lost to the Conservative Party which got only 48 per cent of the votes because the Conservatives were able to get 50.5 per cent of seats as against the 47 per cent seats of the Labour. A careful look at Tables 1 and 2 reveals the failure of the system to reflect the voters' wishes in the

Table 1

*British General Elections 1885 to 1970*<sup>1</sup>

Year of Election	Conservative		Liberal		Labour		Others	
	Votes %	Seats %	Votes %	Seats %	Votes %	Seats %	Votes %	Seats %
1885	44	37	49	50	—	—	7	13
1886	51.5	59	45	28	—	—	3.5	13
1892	47	47	44	41	—	—	9	12
1895	49	61	46	26.5	—	—	5	12.5
1900	51	60	46.5	27.5	—	—	2.5	12.5
1906	44	23.5	55	64	—	—	1	12.5
1910 (Jan)	47	40.5	43	41	8	6	2	12.5
1910 (Dec)	46	41	44	40	7	6	3	13
1918	35	54	23	23.5	15	10	27	12.5
1922	39	56	29	18.5	29.5	23	2.5	2.5
1923	38	42	29.5	26	30.5	31	2	1
1924	47	67	18	6.5	33	24.5	2	2
1929	38	42	23.5	10	37	47	1.5	1
1931	55	76	11	12	30	8.5	4	3.5
1935	54	70	6.5	3	37.5	25	2	2
1945	40	33	9	2	48	62	3	3
1950	43	47.8	9	1.5	46	50.4	2	0.3
1951	48	50.5	2.5	1	48.5	47	1	0.5
1955	49.8	55	2.7	0.9	46.3	44	1.2	0.2
1959	49.4	58	5.9	0.9	43.8	41	0.9	0.1
1964	43	43	11	1.4	44	50.3	5.3	0.1
1966	42	40	8.5	2	48	58	1.7	0.1
1970	46.4	52.5	7.5	1	43	45.5	3.2	1

<sup>1</sup>Data given in this and the following tables unless otherwise stated is from Enid Lakeman is well researched and authoritative book. *How Democracies Vote: A Study of Electorur Systems*, London, 1974.



Table 2

*Showing Voters Support for Government – British General Elections, 1910–1970*

Election	Government	Votes		Seats	
		Government	All other parties	Government	All other parties
1910 (Jan)	Liberal	2,873,251	3,794,553	275	395
1910 (Dec)	Liberal	2,290,020	2,944,273	270	400
1918	Coalition	5,180,641	5,602,046	485	222
1922	Conservative	5,500,387	8,893,250	344	271
1923	Labour	4,438,508	10,110,013	191	424
1924	Conservative	7,854,523	8,786,256	412	203
1929	Labour	8,389,512	14,258,863	288	327
1931	Coalition	14,532,519	7,123,854	554	61
1935	Coalition	11,810,552	10,215,152	433	182
1945	Labour	11,992,292	12,981,006	393	247
1950	Labour	13,295,736	15,473,741	315	310
1951	Conservative	13,718,069	14,878,626	321	304
1955	Conservative	13,315,891	13,443,838	345	285
1959	Conservative	13,750,965	14,111,773	365	265
1964	Labour	12,205,812	15,421,336	317	313
1966	Labour	13,064,951	14,198,655	363	257
1970	Conservative	13,144,692	15,200,115	330	300

number of seats won by political parties. Excepting two years (1892 and 1923) there is a serious distortion in the representation of the major parties as well as of the minor ones. Very small variations in voters' preferences have produced major variations in party positions. This impairs the representative character of the Parliament which fails to accurately reflect the will of the people.

The above evidence establishes beyond any shadow of doubt that the British system of majoritarian representation gives no assurance of even majority rule. Since 1910 only two governments have been booked by more than half the votes cast in a general election (the 1931 and 1935) and both of them were Coalition Governments. Two did not have a relative majority (1929 and 1951).

The story told by the general elections in Canada is no different. Table 3 gives results of four general elections for the Canadian House of Commons between 1953 and 1972. Excepting the 1957 elections one finds distortions very similar to those one sees in the U.K.

In the elections for 1968, results from the provinces taken individually showed even worse anomalies: for instance, in Ontario the Liberals polled 46 per cent of the votes and secured three quarters of the 88 seats, while in Province Edward Island (4 seats) they had 45 per cent of the votes but no seats; 42 per cent of the votes gave them nearly two-third of the 23 seats in British Columbia but little over one-third of the 13 in Manitoba. "These distortions", writes Enid Lakeman, "exaggerate the differences in political

Table 3  
*Canadian General Elections*  
*(House of Common)*

		Votes	Seats
1953	Liberal	2,744,820 = 48.5 %	170 = 64 %
	Conservative	1,749,009 = 31 %	51 = 19 %
	CCF (Labour)	636,292 = 11 %	23 = 9 %
	Others	510,135 = 9.5 %	21 = 8 %
1957	Liberal	2,704,690 = 40 %	106 = 40 %
	Conservative	2,656,312 = 39 %	111 = 42 %
	CCF	707,833 = 11 %	23 = 9 %
	Others	630,697 = 10 %	25 = 9 %
1968	Liberal	3,583,090 = 45.3 %	154 = 58.4 %
	Conservative	2,483,597 = 31.4 %	71 = 26.8 %
	New Democratic	1,357,443 = 17.2 %	23 = 8.7 %
	Social Credit (Quebec)	347,597 = 4.4 %	15 = 5.7 %
	Others	131,748 = 1.7 %	1 = 0.4 %
1972	Liberal	3,721,486 = 38.4 %	109 = 41.3 %
	Conservative	3,391,711 = 35.1 %	107 = 40.5 %
	New Democratic	1,713,386 = 17.7 %	31 = 11.7 %
	Social Credit	738,038 = 7.6 %	15 = 5.7 %
	Independents	114,120 = 1.2 %	2 = 0.8 %

complexion between the provinces and militate against national unity.”<sup>2</sup>

### *The Pakistan Experience*

The tragic experience of Pakistan also deserves to be kept in view. The elections of 1970 established the hegemony of regionalist political parties and destroyed the balance between different political parties and groups. *But this situation was primarily a result of the electoral system, and not of the political preferences of the voters.* Table 4 gives province-wise summary of the results of 1970 general elections according to majority system and Table 5 translates these very results in terms of proportional representation. Awami League got 39 per cent of the total votes cast in Pakistan but 53.3 per cent of seats in the National Assembly. In East Pakistan it got 75 per cent of votes but 98.7 per cent of seats. If the elections were held on the system of proportional representation the complexion of the National Assembly would have been very different and Pakistan would have been spared the trauma of 1971. Similarly the position in West Pakistan would have been significantly affected. (Details in Tables 4 and 5).

According to the above evidence the system of proportional representation would have rectified the distortions and exaggerations produced by the relative majority system and made the composition of the National Assembly more realistic, more representative of the real preferences of the voters, and would have saved the country from the greatest crisis of its history. The absolute majority of the Awami League (160 out of 300), which was out of proportion to its real political support in the country, or even in the province of the then East Pakistan, would have been brought to its

<sup>2</sup>Lakeman, *How Democracies Vote?* *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Table 4\*

Pakistan: 1970 General Elections - Summary According to Majority System

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Province	Total No. of registered voters	Total No. of valid votes polled	A.L.	PPP	PME(Q)	PMI.(Conv)	PML(C)	PDP	NAP(W)	J.I	IUI(WP)	IUI & NI	MJUP	Other Parties	Independents
			Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats	Number Seats
East Pakistan	31211220	17193351	12914225 160	—	184154 —	481048 —	275709 —	483569 1	354842 —	1044137 —	158053 —	485774 —	—	213999 —	595836 1
The Punjab	16364495	10879416	8089	4532795 62	589150 1	555752 2	1377132 7	245955 —	—	515564 1	564601 —	28246 —	1083196 4	110958 —	1267978 5
Sind	5335523	3118338	7713	1401660 18	333694 1	55759 —	213383 —	2398 —	11427 —	321471 2	151284 —	—	216418 3	56499 —	346632 3
NWFP, including Centrally Administered Tribal Areas	3074217	1419720	3170 —	205599 1	325924 2	8256 —	58435 —	4642 —	266282 3	103958 1	366477 6	7744 —	—	244 —	2499 7
Baluchistan	956045	373240	3965 —	8869 —	40827 —	—	41030 —	1394 —	168804 3	4331 —	74651 1	—	—	3964 —	25405 —
	56941500	33004065	12937162	6148923	1473749	1102815	1965689	737958	801355	1989461	1315071	521764	1299858	387919	2322341
Seats secured according to Majority System			160	81	9	2	7	1	6	4	7	—	7	—	16

\*Report on General Elections Pakistan, 1970-71, Election Commission, 1975 vol. II, pp. 68, 69 &amp; 123.

Table 5\*

*Pakistan: 1970 General Elections, Provincewise and Final Party Position in the National Assembly -  
Summary According to Proportional Representation System*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Province	Total % of valid votes polled	A.L.	PPP	PML(Q)	PML(Conv)	PML(C)	FDP	NAP(W)	J.I.	JUI(WP)	JUI & NI	MJUP	Other Parties	Indep.
		% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats	% Seats
East Pakistan	55.09	75.11 121	—	1.07 2	2.81 5	1.60 3	2.81 4	2.06 3	6.07 10	0.92 1	2.83 5	—	1.25 2	3.47 6
The Punjab	66.48	0.07 —	41.66 34	5.42 5	5.11 4	12.66 10	2.26 2	—	4.74 4	5.19 4	0.26 —	9.96 8	1.02 1	11.65 10
Sind	58.44	0.25 —	44.95 12	10.70 3	1.79 —	6.84 2	0.08 —	0.37 —	10.31 3	4.85 1	—	6.94 2	1.81 —	11.11 3
NWFP including Centrally Administered Tribal Areas	46.83	0.22	14.28 3	22.64 4	.57 —	4.06 1	0.32 —	18.50 3	7.22 1	25.45 5	.54 —	.02 —	.17 —	6.01 1
Baluchistan	39.04	1.06 —	2.38 —	10.94 —	— —	10.99 1	0.37 —	45.23 2	1.16 —	20.00 1	— —	— —	1.06 —	6.81 —
	57.96	39.20	18.63	4.46	3.34	5.94	2.24	2.43	6.03	3.98	1.58	3.94	1.17	7.04
Seats according to Proportional Representation: (one constituency basis)		118	56	13	10	18	7	7	18	12	5	12	3	—

\*Report on General Elections Pakistan 1970-71, Election Commission 1975, Vol. II, page 68, 69.

proper size (118 out of 300) and a new equation would have emerged between the political parties to form the government. Similarly the inflated position of the PPP would also have been adjusted to its real strength (from 81 seats in the National Assembly to 56 seats). The PPP position in the Provincial Assembly of Sind would have changed from majority to minority and thus would have influenced the overall course of events with the result that regional antagonisms between East and West of the Indus would not have arisen.

An analysis of the results of the National Elections of 1977 is also revealing in many respects (Tables 6 and 7). Although there was whole-sale rigging in the 1977 National Elections and the voting data cannot be regarded as reflection of the true preferences of the people, nonetheless, a careful analysis (Tables 6 and 7) shows that even on the basis of votes recorded in the elections the exaggerated position of the PPP in the National Assembly would have been reduced from 155 to 120 and the relative position of the PNA would have improved from 37 to 72. If we work out different models on the basis of rigging to the extent of 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 15 per cent, the results further change. Even if the PNA had emerged as an opposition party with over two-fifth of the seats in the National Assembly the course of events in the country would have been very different.

*The real issue is not that of favouring party X and dis-favouring party Y but of ensuring that the party-position in the Parliament accurately reflects the exact party-votes enjoyed in the election. The political parties must realise that their positions can reverse, as has been happening in the case of the U.K. The question must be considered on its merits and on the criterion as to what extent a certain*

Table 6  
*Pakistan's 1977 Election Results Reviewed Under  
 Majority System*

Total Constituencies	Total vote cast	Total votes polled in favour of		Seats secured by		Seats secured if PPP did not involve in rigging at least					
		PPP	PNA	PPP	PNA	5 per cent		10 per cent		15 per cent	
						PPP	PNA	PPP	PNA	PPP	PNA
200	16889183	10148040	6032062	136*	37	131	41	112	60	99	73

\*There were 19 constituencies where PPP returned unopposed on the basis of total rigging, and 8 seats of tribal areas. So, the review is based on the results of only 173 constituencies.

Table 7  
*Pakistan's 1977 Election Results Reviewed under Proportional  
 Representation System*

Percentage of votes Polled in Favour of	PNA	*Seats secured by		Seats secured if PPP did not involve in rigging at least					
		PPP	PNA	10 per cent		20 per cent		25 per cent	
				PPP	PNA	PPP	PNA	PPP	PNA
60%	35.75%	120	72	100	92	80	112	70	122

\*On the basis of percentage of votes polled in favour of PPP and PNA the 200 seats are distributed.

*method of election ensures electoral justice and not on the basis of current vested interest.*

In view of the above discussion and the evidence available from the United Kingdom and many other countries where the majority system of election prevails it would be difficult not to agree with Lakeman that the so-called majority system is totally "unreliable as a means of attaining any of the objectives held to be desirable" in a democratic order. His conclusion is:

*"It cannot be relied upon, either to give a parliament reflecting all the main trends of opinion, or to place in power a government backed by a majority of the electorate, or even by the largest single body of voters. It frequently excludes from parliament men and women whose contribution to it would be most valuable. It cannot be relied upon, either to give one party power to govern unhindered according to its own ideas, or on the other hand to produce government by consent. Whatever may be our views of the purposes of elections, the existing British system fails to meet them with any certainty."*<sup>3</sup>

## b. Towards Electoral Justice and National Harmony

The fact that the majority system is unable to produce a truly representative parliament and a government reflecting the confidence of the majority is enough to establish its unsuitability to deliver the goods in a democracy. This is only the negative side of the

<sup>3</sup>Lakeman, *How Democracies Vote?*, op. cit. p. 57. See also, Pulzer, Peter G. T., *Political Representation and Elections in Britain*, London, Allen and Unions, 1967. Daniels, S. R., *The case for Electoral Reform*, London, Allen and Unions, 1938; Hallett, G. H., *Proportional Representation - The Key to Democracy*, Washington, National Home Liberation Foundation, 1937.



argument. Now we would like to very briefly argue why the system of proportional representation is a better instrument for attaining electoral justice and national harmony, a primary goal of the society which the majority system is incapable of attaining.

### 1. *Wider Representation*

The Proportional Representation System is a device through which almost all the votes cast in an election become effective in producing some political weight in the decision-making body. *So long as the unit of election remains a single member constituency, it is impossible to reflect in the parliament more than one shade of opinion prevailing in that constituency.* From this limitation spring a number of anomalies and injustices. The votes cast in favour of the defeated candidates fail to carry any influence into the elected body and this results in the virtual disfranchising of a large number of votes. The multi-member constituency, on the basis of proportional representation, enables all votes to play some role in producing their voice in the parliament.

Through this system it would be possible for all significant trends of opinion in the constituency to be represented in the parliament. This, in particular, gives to the minority groups — linguistic, religious, ethnic, ideological or otherwise — a sense of participation in the decision-making process. Excepting the very insignificant minorities, all would have some say in proportion to their physical strength. Even at the plans of political parties, each party would be able to have as many seats as are justified on the basis of the number of votes it gets. *There would always be a positive and well-defined relation between a party's strength in the country and its strength in parliament.* This is bound to

build a tradition of justice in political relations and would give the majority as well as the minority an opportunity of expressing their opinion through their own representatives in the main political forums.

This would also reduce tensions and frictions in society and may gradually eliminate the minority or regional group's sense of deprivation and frustration due to lack of participation. That is why it is believed that this system would, over the years, produce greater national cohesion in the society and act as a safety mechanism against emergence of separatist or fissiparous tendencies. The experience of countries which have more than one linguistic, religious or cultural groups with this system bears testimony to it. Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, North Ireland, "Israel" are instances in view.

## *2. Political Institutionalization*

Under this system a shift of emphasis takes place from individual candidate to the party on whose ticket he is operating. Individual influence is never totally eliminated yet the focus is more on the party and its national character. This brings about very revolutionary and very healthy changes in the operation and strengthening of the democratic processes in the country. As a party gets a mandate from the people the importance of party increases and greater effort is directed towards strengthening the party and its institutions. Secondly, party programme and manifesto become more important and the choice is made, not merely on the basis of a particular individual's influence, but on the basis of what programme the party offers to the people. This raises the level of discussion from individual traits to social and ideological issues and sets

the political process to move in the right direction. Organization of parties throughout the country gets a fillip, because the strength of a party in each area is tied with its strength in the rest of the country. Thirdly, there is better party discipline and greater chances of implementation of party programme when it comes to power. This produces greater discipline and accountability of politics in the country. And, finally, there is little political horse-trading and crossing of floors. All this helps in strengthening the democratic tradition.

### 3. *Political Education*

The adoption of the system of proportional representation may increase the possibilities of electing *educated and qualified candidates to the legislative bodies*. In case of nomination of candidates under majority system a party has to keep in mind the personal influence, status, tribal position, and so many other factors so that the candidate could win the seat. It is through this process, many a time candidates who are illiterate and inefficient get elected. But when the candidate is the party itself, these factors would be overlooked and the party can nominate politically experienced workers, highly educated experts and well informed persons in the list and thus could run the administration better. This will reduce the influence of traditional leaders, the vested interests and the traditional power-brokers and thus, improve the quality of politics in the country.

### 4. *Fair Elections*

The probability of fair election is much greater in proportional representation than in the majority system. If a party is involved in rigging it may change the percentage of votes marginally but it would never be in a

position to totally upset the results. For example, if a party commands 40 per cent of total votes and by rigging it secures 45 per cent then it will get 5 per cent more seats in the Assembly but if even 5 per cent rigging is done in the majority system the party may achieve 60 per cent or more seats and hence obtain absolute majority. In fact, there are cases where with 35 to 45 per cent of votes, parties have been able to get 60 to 70 per cent of the seats in the parliament. Such a situation is not possible in proportional representation.

### 5. *Crystalization of Ideology*

The voters will be trained in the light of ideology instead of being influenced by individual candidates and their *baradari*, class or tribe. During the election campaign the discussion would concentrate on party ideology and programmes. So the voters and political workers could be trained accordingly. The emergence of ideological parties has been helped by this process in a number of European countries and this has led to the reduction of tribal and money-power in favour of ideologically oriented political parties. Sweden is a classic example where traditional barriers were broken by the social democratic party because of this system.

### 6. *Political Equations*

It is also hoped, and this too is borne out by the experience of some of the European countries, that this system would gradually produce greater cooperation and even ultimate integration in political parties with the result that parties, through networks of agreements and alliances, become more national and more integrated. More or less permanent groupings of like-minded organisations emerge and cleanse the political climate of some of the fog and mist generated by too

many parties and rival political groupings. This is bound to reduce tendencies of polarization amongst political parties and encourage them towards regroupings and alliances.

### *7. Sense of Participation and Confidence*

Another very salutary effect of this method of representation is that it gives greater confidence to smaller parties by protecting them against the danger of total or virtual elimination, provided they have a certain minimum support in the country. It also reduces tendencies towards political violence by ensuring to each significant group a place in the national forum for decision-making. The divergence between the expected results and the actual results is normally narrow in this system. This also helps different political parties to accept the results of the election even if unfavourable.

### *8. Tolerance for Disagreements*

The long period influences of the system could also be very important. It gradually trains the people to accept differences and dissent and to accommodate them in the body politic. They begin to discover greater harmony of interests and a new equation is developed between different groups, which may be further strengthened by coalition governments. As every region gets proper representation and as every significant viewpoint gets a respectable hearing, this reduces parochialism and regionalism and strengthens the national character of the society.

No system is free from some weaknesses and the system of proportional representation is no exception. Nonetheless, it has demonstrated its superiority over

other systems and that is why many countries which had practiced the majority system have switched over to proportional representation in some form or other and it is very rare that a country has abandoned the proportional representation system once it has fully adopted it.

Earliest experiment with the system was made in Denmark, a country that introduced this principle in 1856. The system continues successfully and has been extended to the entire Scandinavian belt of Norway, Sweden and Finland. Germany began with single-member districts during the days of the Empire (1871–1918) but later moved to proportional representation and to a mixed proportional system. Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Austria, Turkey, "Israel", Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Guyana all have, over the years, adopted this system. The later four cases are important because all these countries were used to the British system of single-member constituency but they moved towards the system of proportional representation to rid the polity of the inequities of the majority system. Even those countries which are following the majority system are resorting to the system of proportional representation in case of election to a number of social and economic institutions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Some of the glaring examples are: France: Party List System with choice of one candidate within the list in Council elections of large towns; U.K.: Single Transferable Vote in the election of university MPs. (1918–45); Scottish Education Authorities (1918–28) Church of England, House of Laity (1920–70) Proctors (1921–70); General Synod, since 1970, Committees of Unofficial bodies including Liberal Party, Young Conservatives (Midland Countries Federation), Commonwealth Society, National Union of Students, National Union of Teachers; Australia: Single Transferable Vote in the election for Commonwealth Senate, since 1949, New South Wales Upper House, since 1932, many Town Councils; USA: Single Transferable Vote in the election for cities of Cambridge (Mass.) and New York (1937–47), National Council for Civil Liberties, Student Councils of Ohio, Vermont, Pennsylvania and Lehigh universities.

It would be unrealistic to assume that an electoral system can operate in isolation or that this one institution alone can determine the success or failure of democracy. Yet we feel that the method of representation is bound to play a crucial role in the future growth of democratic institutions and traditions in the country and the system of proportional representation is bound to help this process.

### c. An Islamic Perspective

Islam has laid the principle that the affairs of the Muslim society must be conducted through mutual consultation.<sup>5</sup> The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also emphasised the principle of mutual trust and confidence between the rulers and the ruled.<sup>6</sup> Although Islam does not prescribe a particular mode of election it has made it very clear that the leadership should enjoy the trust and confidence of the people.

There are two other basic principles of Islam which deserve to be recalled. First, that the *Muslim Ummah* is one ideological brotherhood and that all of its elements are parts of a family. This means that all shades of its opinion should be treated as parts of the spectrum and there should not be any majority-minority dichotomy in its body politic.

Secondly, Islam disapproves of the practice of self-candidature and does not like people who are seekers of political positions to be entrusted with political

<sup>5</sup>“And their affairs are conducted through mutual consultation”, (Al-Quran: 42:38, 3:159).

<sup>6</sup>The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said that your best rulers are those whom you trust and who trust you and for whom you pray and who pray for you and your worst rulers are those who curse you and whom you curse and who do not pray for you and you do not pray for them.

offices. On the other hand it wants the society to select the best and most trustworthy persons from amongst itself to serve its affairs.

When we reflect upon different systems of representation from this perspective we have no doubt that the system of proportional representation is nearer the spirit of Islam and has the capability of fitting in its framework. Even in this system many modifications may have to be made in the light of experience but in comparison with the majority system it seems to have a greater potential for realising the political objectives of the Muslim society.



## ***An Examination of the Case Against Proportional Representation***

Major objections to the system of proportional representation cluster round the thesis that as under this system all minority parties and groups are given the opportunity to have representation in the legislative bodies, this causes lack of any real control of any one party over the legislative body and over the administration of the government. Consequently, there is unceasing political instability with short-lived governments or governments by coalition.<sup>1</sup> The examples of Italy and France are particularly given in this respect. It is also said that coalition governments are incapable of giving to a country dynamic initiatives and decisive leadership both in national and international affairs.

An Indian constitutional expert Dr. Appadorai sums up the case against proportional representation in the following words:

<sup>1</sup> Finer, Herman, *The Case Against PR*, London, Fabian Society, 1935; Horwill, G., *Proportional Representation: Its Dangers and Defects*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1925; *Fixing Responsibility for Governing when no party has an absolute majority in Parliament*, Parliamentary Paper No. 17 of 1960.

*"But it may justly be contended that proportional representation, however, useful for a debating society, is useless as a means of establishing an instrument of government. For it has been the experience of most countries which have worked it that it leads to the return of a large number of small parties. A system which makes it possible for all parties, however small, (provided of course they are able to secure the quota) to obtain separate representation necessarily encourages such disintegration. This, in turn, leads to the instability of the Executive by necessitating fragile coalition governments, which fall when any section of opinion is outraged. Further, legislation under such conditions is likely to lose all coherence and creative force, because it will be the result of enforced compromises to meet the wishes of several groups. The system encourages 'minority thinking', the voters and the leaders all being encouraged to think in terms of and to fight for sectional interests. A legislature elected on this basis represents a number of isolated interests; it hardly helps to form the general will of the nation . . . For these reasons, the bulk of competent opinion is against proportional representation. To establish the system . . . is to organise disorder and emasculate the legislative power, it is to render cabinets unstable, destroy their homogeneity, and make parliamentary government impossible."*<sup>2</sup>

We have given this lengthy quotation because it contains a powerful statement against the system of proportional representation. But like some of the tirade against the proportional representation it is full of value-judgements couched in furious language with little concern for real facts. This candidly illustrates the

<sup>2</sup> Appadorai, *The Substance of Politics*, 1952, p. 476.

traditional approach of the political theorist, who is so obsessed with his logic that he never cares to check his facts.

An analysis of all the above and other arguments against proportional representation system reveals the following points:

1. that proportional representation leads to a proliferation of political parties and multiplication of splinter groups. This makes a mockery of the principle of representation;
2. that proportional representation is an invitation to political instability, weak coalition governments and political and administrative chaos;
3. that proportional representation assumes a high level of literacy as the system is quite complicated at both levels of casting of votes and their counting. It is, therefore, not suitable particularly for less-developed countries;
4. that the emergence of regional leadership, ensuring proper regional representation in the political organs of the state becomes difficult. This also affects the personal relationship between the MPs and the constituency and a kind of impersonalization of the relations takes place; and
5. in addition to the four patent lines of attack on the system of proportional representation it is alleged that the introduction of PR in Pakistan would impair the federal character of the state. It is suggested that representation from small

provinces would be further belittled and their excess votes will be transferred to other provinces. This has also been described by some hyper-sensitive politicians as "an effort to revive one unit".

We shall now briefly examine all these arguments. But before we take them up one by one we would like to make a few preliminary observations.

### The Key Question

First, in a debate on methods of representation; the real question that must be kept in view is the extent to which the said system ensures the objectives of democracy. If this is not the approach, then in the name of stability people are going to end up with dictatorship or a regime perpetuating the tyranny of a clever minority. Our real effort should be to find out what is the most in keeping with the spirit of democracy and what ensures justice and fair play for all.

### Realism

Secondly, the fallacy of relying too much on theory to the neglect of the actual experience of mankind must be discarded. The theoretical case for proportional representation is very sound but all the apprehensions cast in its face fall to ground when the operation of this system in practice is examined. It is only by looking into both these aspects that sound judgements can be arrived at.

### The Colonial Hangover

Thirdly, the conscious or unconscious practice of regarding the British model as the best and ignoring all

other experiences of mankind as irrelevant must also be discarded. It is a hangover of the colonial era that intellectuals as well as political parties in the sub-continent regard the British practice as the norm and the rest as deviation. Even in academic disciplines the contributions made in the continent of Europe are not taken into account. This obsession with the British tradition is an impediment to progress.

After these general observations we would like to critically examine each of these objections.

### The Myth of too Many Political Parties

All the critics of the proportional representation (PR) system repeat almost parrot-like that under this system the number of political parties multiplies. The fact that in certain countries where the system of PR prevails, there have been, in certain periods of their political history, a large number of parties does not prove that there is a causal relationship between the two. If proliferation of political parties is a *sine qua non* of the PR system then why is it that in a number of countries where this system has been in operation over long periods of time the number of political parties has remained fairly stable, within a reasonable range, and that in many countries where the majority system prevails there has been a staggering multiplicity of parties? In India and Pakistan the British model has been tried for the last sixty years. At the time of the first general election in India (1951-52) there were no less than *seventy-seven parties* in the arena and this forced the Indian Election Commission to introduce the rule (still in force) that only those political parties which polled at least three per cent of the total valid vote in the previous general election would be recognized as national parties. In Pakistan it has been reported

that there are over seventy political parties. What has this to do with the system of PR?

The evidence from Europe at the outbreak of the First World War is quite revealing and shows total absence of any relationship between the system of election and the number of parties (Table 8).

Table 8

*Number of Parties in Lower Houses under Various Systems of Election in 1913-1914*

System	No. of Parties	System	No. of Parties	System	No. of Parties
Majority System (First-Past-the-Post)		Majority System (Second Ballot)		Proportional Representation	
Denmark	4	Germany	21	Finland	6
United Kingdom	5	France	12	Belgium	4
		Italy	10	Sweden	3
		Netherlands	10		
		Switzerland	5		
		Norway	3		

The problem of multiplicity of political parties is an independent problem as such and many arise in the context of a given electoral system. There are ways to deal with it under both systems. It is not appropriate to put the blame at the doors of the PR system.

After making this analytical submission we would like to present relevant data from those countries which have practiced the system of PR. It will be abundantly clear from this data that the number of parties under PR has remained within reasonable limits.

### The Case of Denmark

One of the earliest experiments in the PR was made

in Denmark, primarily with a view to correct the imbalances produced by the single-member constituency system. An analysis of the results for elections held between 1913–1971 shows that over these sixty years the number of political parties remained between a range of 4 to 9 – 8 and 9 being exceptions in 1939 and 1943. Five and six are the model figures, with highest frequency. The number of parties increased from 4 in 1913 to 9 in 1939 and again came down to 5 in 1968 and 1971. Throughout this period effective control was in the hands of four parties, i.e. Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals and Social Democrats. Table 9 brings this out eloquently:

Table 9  
*Elections to the Folketing, 1913–1971*  
(Number of Seats)

Denmark

		Conser- vative	Liberal	Radical	Social Democrat	Comm- unist	Others	Number of Parties
	1913	7	44	31	32	—	—	4
	1918	22	46	31	39	—	2	5
April	1920	28	49	17	42	—	4	5
July	1920	26	52	16	42	—	4	5
Sept	1920	27	52	18	48	—	4	6
	1924	28	45	20	55	—	1	4
	1926	30	47	16	53	—	3	5
	1929	24	44	16	61	—	4	5
	1932	27	39	14	62	2	5	6
	1935	26	29	14	68	2	10	7
	1939	26	30	13	64	3	10	9
	1943	31	28	13	66	—	11	8
	1945	26	38	11	48	18	7	7
	1947	17	49	10	57	9	6	6
	1950	27	32	12	59	7	12	6
April	1953	26	33	13	61	7	9	6
Sept	1953	30	42	14	74	8	7	7
	1957	30	45	14	70	6	10	7
	1960	32	38	11	76	0	18	7
	1964	36	38	10	76	0	15	6
	1966	34	35	13	69	0	24	6
	1968	37	34	27	62	0	15	5
	1971	31	30	27	70	0	17	5

## Belgium

Belgium presents a similar picture (Table 13). With the introduction of PR in 1899 there has been stability in political behaviour and the number of parties has not posed any problem. This evidence belies the repeated assertion that this system produces such a large number

Table 13

*Elections to the Chamber of Representatives, 1898–1971  
(Number of Seats)*

### Belgium

	Catholic	Liberal	Socialist	Communist	Flemish National	Rexist	Other
1898	112	13	27	—	—	—	—
1900	86	34	31	—	—	—	1
1902	96	34	34	—	—	—	2
1904	93	42	29	—	—	—	2
1906	89	46	30	—	—	—	1
1908	87	43	35	—	—	—	1
1910	86	44	35	—	—	—	1
1912	101	44	39	—	—	—	2
1914	99	45	40	—	—	—	2
1919*	75	33	69	—	7	—	2
1921	83	31	68	—	3	—	1
1925	78	23	78	2	6	—	—
1929	76	28	70	1	11	—	—
1932	79	24	73	3	8	—	—
1936	63	23	70	9	16	21	—
1939	73	33	64	9	17	4	2
1946	92	17	69	23	—	—	1
1949**	105	29	66	12	—	—	—
1950***	108	20	77	7	—	—	—
1954	96	25	86	4	1	—	—
1958	104	21	84	2	1	—	—
1961	96	20	84	5	5	—	2
1965	77	48	64	6	12	—	5†
1968	69	47	59	5	20	—	12†
1971	66	34	61	5	22	—	24†

\*Adult male suffrage and votes for about 8,000 women (e.g. certain war widows). Remainders were utilised on a Provincial scale.

\*\*Women were enfranchised on the same terms as men, and the number of seats in the Chamber was raised to 212.

\*\*\*Election occasioned by the disputes over King Leopold.

†French-speaking parties.



Table 11

*Elections to the Swedish Lower House, 1911-1970*  
(Number of Seats)

Sweden

		Conser- vative	Agrarian	Liberal	Independent People's	Social Demo- cratic	Communist	Others	No. of Parties
	1911	65	—	101	—	64	—	—	3
Spring	1914	86	—	71	—	73	—	—	3
Autumn	1914	86	—	87	—	57	—	—	3
	1917	59	12	62	—	86	—	11	5
	1920	70	30	48	—	75	—	7	5
	1921	62	21	41	—	93	7	6	6
	1924	65	23	5	28	104	5	—	6
	1928	73	27	4	28	50	8	—	6
	1932	58	36	4	20	104	2	6	7
	1936	44	36	27	—	112	5	6	6
	1940	12	28	23	—	124	3	—	5
	1944	39	35	26	—	115	15	—	5
	1948	23	30	57	—	112	8	—	5
	1952	30	27	59	—	109	5	—	5
	1956	42	19	58	—	106	6	—	5
	1958	45	32	38	—	111	5	—	5
	1960	39	34	40	—	114	5	—	5
	1964	32	35	42	—	113	8	3	6
	1968	12	39	34	—	125	3	—	5
	*1970	41	71	58	—	163	17	—	5

\*The Upper House was abolished and the number of seats in the Lower House was raised from 235 to 350.

out of fifteen elections the number of parties remained stable at eight, with effective control in the hands of five parties (Table 12).

Table 12

*Elections to the Swiss National Council, 1917-1971*  
(Number of Seats)

Switzerland

	Radical	Conservative	Social Democrat	Liberal Democrat	Peasant	Communist	Other	Number of Parties
1917	102	42	19	12	—	—	7	6
1919	58	41	41	9	31	—	9	9
1922	58	44	43	10	35	2	6	8
1925	59	42	49	7	31	3	7	9
1928	58	46	50	6	31	2	5	9
1931	52	44	49	6	30	3	3	8
1935	48	42	50	6	21	2	18	10
1939	50	43	45	7	22	—	10	8
1943	47	41	51	8	27	—	20	8
1947	52	44	48	7	21	7	15	9
1951	51	48	49	5	23	5	15	8
1955	50	47	53	5	22	4	15	8
1959	51	47	51	5	23	3	16	8
1963	51	48	53	6	22	4	16	8
1967	19	45	50	6	21	5	24*	10
1971	49	44	46	6	21	5	29**	11

\*Mainly Independents.

\*\*Mainly Independents and right-wing Nationalists.

The evidence from Norway is very similar. The range is between 3 to 6 parties while effective parliamentary strength has been in the hands of four parties as shown in Table 10.

Table 10  
*Elections to the Storting, 1915-1969*  
(Number of Seats)

Norway

	Conser- vative	Agrarian	Liberal*	Socialist	Communist	Others	Number of Parties
1915	21	—	78	24	—	—	3
1918	50	3	54	18	—	1	4
1921	57	17	39	29	—	8	5
1924	54	22	36	24	6	8	6
1927	31	26	31	59	3	—	5
1930	44	25	34	47	—	—	4
1933	31	24	25	69	—	2	6
1936	36	18	23	70	—	3	6
1945	25	10	20	76	11	8	6
1949	23	12	21	85	—	8	5
1953	27	14	15	77	3	14	6
1957	29	15	15	78	1	12	6
1961	29	16**	14	74	0	17	6
1965	31	18	18	68	0	—	6
1969	29	20	13	74	0	—	6

\*Braunlas (*Das Parlamentarische Wahlrecht*, p. 394) lists separately from the Liberals a small Radical group appearing in 1918 with three members and decreasing to one in 1930.

\*\* Re-named Centre Party.

Evidence from Sweden reveals a similar pattern. The number of parties has ranged between 3 and 7. It increased from 3 in 1911 to 7 in 1932 and again came down to 5 in 1970. Effective control was in the hands of four parties. The secular trend that emerges from voting behaviour is that the votes concentrate on larger historic parties (Table 11).

A similar pattern emerges in Switzerland where the number of parties increased from 9 to 11 but in eight

of parties that any effective government is rendered virtually impossible.

It can be seen that the effective control in Belgium also has been in the hands of three parties.

### The Netherlands

The number of parties has been large in the Netherlands but this is true of its both phases, pre-PR and after PR. Nonetheless the number of parties has decreased from 15 in 1918 to 7 in 1956. It stood at 14 in 1972 (Table 14).

### Italy and Germany

Italy and Germany are said to be two problem countries. Party list system of proportional representation was introduced in Italy in 1919 again in 1945. As a matter of fact under majority system before 1919, deputies were elected due to their local influence rather than political or party support. Having no fixed political allegiance they sometimes bartered their vote for favours from administration. After the introduction of proportional representation there was no substantial increase in the number of political parties. There was a distinct tendency for the parties to become real political groups with national programmes. Far from preventing the emergence of stable governments the new system promoted this development.

Though Germany has representative institutions from late 19th Century but it always lacked organised political parties. The then operative political parties were not real parties but pressure groups consisting of different sectional, regional and confessional elements which maintained unity through bargaining. Up to early

Table 14

*Elections to the Dutch Second Chamber, 1913-1972*  
(Number of Seats)

## The Netherlands

	Catholics	Anti-Rev	Christ Hist	Liberal*	Liberal Democrat	Social Democrat**	Communist	Others	No. of Parties
1913	24	11	9	32	7	15	2	2	10
1918	30	13	7	10	5	22	2	12	15
1922	32	16	11	10	5	20	2	3	10
1925	30	13	11	9	7	24	1	1	11
1929	30	12	11	9	7	24	2	2	12
1933	28	14	10	7	6	22	4	9	14
1937	31	17	8	4	6	23	3	8	10
1946	32	13	8	6	—	29	10	2	7
1948	32	13	9	8	—	27	8	3	8
1952	30	12	9	9	—	30	6	4	8
1956	33	10	8	9	—	34	4	2	7
1959	49	14	12	19	—	48	3	5	8
1963	50	13	13	16	—	43	4	11	9
1967	42	15	12	17	—	37	5	22	11
1971	35	13	10	16	—	39	6	31	14
1972	27	14	7	22	—	43	7	30	14

\* This party included two groups in 1913 and 1918, the bulk of the Liberal formed the present People's Party for Freedom and Democracy while a left-wing section combined with the Social Democrats to form the Labour Party.

\*\* Labour Party -- see preceding note.

20th century she continued with the majority system which produced an impropotional distribution of seats and votes. So in 1918 Germany introduced proportional representation which did not produce any increase in the number of parties. There is not the slightest shred of evidence that the system of proportional representation led to any multiplication of parties in these countries.

### The Case of France

Lastly, we come to the case of France. It is widely believed that proportional representation was responsible for the proverbial political instability in France. But as a matter of fact this system was never introduced in France except in 1945 and 1946. The confusion was probably created due to repeated use of Second Ballot System in the country. *But that is one of the variants of majority system and has nothing to do with proportional representation.*

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the adoption of proportional representation does not lead to an "inordinate multiplicity of parties". *If there was some increase in the number of political parties at all it was not very different from what happens under majority system.* On the whole when proportional representation was introduced and practiced it gave stable democracies to Europe as in Switzerland and other Scandinavian countries. This system has been most successful in those countries where diverse ethnic groups were involved in conflicts regarding their proper representation. In some countries like Belgium and Switzerland national integrity has been maintained by this system. These countries have become more united and the rival groups are working under this system with greater communal harmony.

## The Bogey of Instability

The other apprehension about political instability is as unfounded as the first one about proliferation of political parties. In fact, the evidence we have cited from election results shows that there has always been a clear cluster of popular support around three or four parties and this has led to the establishment of stable governments by single parties or through coalition. The chronic examples of instability, given from France and Germany between the two World Wars or between 1946–1958, have nothing to do with the system of proportional representation. It is irresponsible to suggest that the French disease was a result of proportional representation. We have already shown that France was practicing a certain form of majority system and this shows that in certain circumstances political instability can be produced under any system. Even the United Kingdom had to have a number of coalition governments and the last Labour government of Mr. Callaghan had to do a lot of tight-rope walking and could exist only with the support of the liberals. Similar is the case of Germany where political instability was a product of a number of factors endemic to her political and economic situation. On the other hand, Germany has had a number of stable political regimes under the present system of mixed or personalized proportional representation introduced after the Second World War. The record of other European countries practicing the system of proportional representation is without blemish. We must not commit the fallacy of generalizing on the basis of insufficient or irrelevant data.

We give below, in chronological order, evidence of stable government administrations in countries which have practiced the system of proportional representation in Europe.

Data contained in the Tables 15, 16, 17 and 18 show that all these countries had fairly stable governments and even if there were some coalition governments they were normally stable and long lasting. In the face of this evidence it is extremely unjustified to allege that the system of proportional representation would be an invitation to instability.

Table 15

*Denmark — Governments between 1913- 1971*

Type	Duration
Radical Liberal with Social Democrat support	June 1913 — March 1920
Non-party	March-April 1920 April-May 1920
Moderate Liberal	May 1920—October 1922 October 1922—April 1924
Social Democrat	April 1924—December 1926
Moderate Liberal	December 1926—April 1929
Social Democrat and Radical Liberal	April 1929—November 1935 November 1935—April 1940
During the occupation, coalitions of all the major parties and Independents. No Danish Government between August 1943 and the liberation	April-July 1940 July 1940—May 1942 May-November 1942—August 1943 November 1942—August 1943 May-November 1945
Moderate Liberal	November 1945—November 1947
Social Democrat	November 1947—October 1950
Moderate Liberal and Conservative	October 1950—September 1953
Social Democrat	September 1953—May 1957
Social Democrat, Liberal, Justice Party	May 1957—September 1964
Social Democrat	September 1964—January 1968
Radical, Liberal and Conservative	January 1968—October 1971
Social Democrat	October 1971

Table 16

*Norwegian Administrations, 1913-1972*

Type	Duration
Liberal	January 1913-June 1920
Conservative	June 1920-June 1921
Liberal	June 1921-March 1923
Conservative-Independent Liberal	March 1923-May 1923
Conservative-Independent Liberal	May 1923-July 1924
Liberal	July 1924-February 1926
Conservative-Independent Liberal	February 1926-January 1928
Labour	January 1928-February 1928
Liberal	February 1928-May 1931
Agrarian	May 1931-March 1932
Agrarian	March 1932-March 1933
Liberal	March 1933-March 1935
Labour	March 1935-June 1945
Labour-Conservative-Liberal	June 1945-November 1945
Labour	Nov 1945-October 1965
Centre-Conservative-Liberal-Christian Peoples Party	October 1965-March 1971
Labour	March 1971-October 1972
CPP-Liberal-Centre	October 1972

Table 17

*Swedish Administrations, 1917-1973*

Type	Duration
Liberal-Social Democrat	October 1917-March 1920
Social Democrat	March 1920-October 1920
'Administrative'	October 1920-February 1921
'Administrative'	February 1921-October 1921
Social Democrat	October 1921-April 1923
Conservative	April 1923-October 1924
Social Democrat	October 1924-June 1926
Liberal	June 1926-October 1928
Conservative	October 1928-June 1930
Liberal	June 1930-September 1932
Social Democrat	September 1932-June 1936
Agrarian	June 1936-September 1936
Social Democrat-Agrarian	September 1936-December 1939
National Coalition	December 1939-July 1945
Social Democrat	July 1945-October 1951
Social Democrat-Agrarian	October 1951-September 1957
Social Democrat	September 1957-



Table 18

*Dutch Administrations, 1918-1972*

Ruys de Beerenbrouck	September 1918-September 1922	Catholic, Anti-Rev.
Ruys de Beerenbrouck	September 1922-August 1925	Catholic, Anti-Rev.
Colijn	August 1925-March 1926	Catholic, Anti-Rev.
de Geer	March 1926-August 1929	Extra-Parliamentary under Christ. Hist.
Ruys de Beerenbrouck	August 1929-May 1933	Catholic, Anti-Rev.
Colijn	May 1933-May 1935	'National', composed of Cons. groups
Colijn	July 1935-May 1937	"
Colijn	July 1937-July 1939	"
Colijn	July 1939-August 1939	"
de Geer	August 1939-September 1940	Catholic, Anti-Rev.
Gerbrandy (reconstructed several times whilst in exile in London)	September 1940-June 1945	Labour, non-party National
Schermerhorn	June 1945-June 1946	National
Beel	June 1946-July 1948	Catholic, Labour
Drees	July 1948-January 1951*	Labour, Catholic, Christ. Hist. Liberal
Drees	March 1951-June 1952	"
Drees	September 1952-January 1959	"
Beel (caretaker government)	January 1959-May 1959	Catholic, Anti-Rev. Christ. Hist.
de Quay	May 1959-May 1963	Catholic, Christ. Hist. Anti-Rev., Lab.
Marijnen	July 1963-April 1965	"
Caïs	April 1965-March 1967	Catholic, Labour, Anti- Rev.
de Jong	March 1967-April 1971	"
Biesheuvel	July 1971-November 1972	Anti-Rev., Catholic, Labour, Christ. Hist. D70

\*Dr. Drees resigned, and a crisis lasting some fifty days ensued before he again took office.

## Are Coalition Governments Un-wanted?

It may also be observed that coalition governments are not necessarily evil and as such unacceptable. If a coalition is based on an agreed programme it is in accordance with the spirit of democracy and can lead to harnessing best talents and maximum popular support in the service of the state. In developing countries where despotic regimes masquerade under the garb of democracy and where intolerance of dissent is the order of the day genuine coalition governments may prove a great blessing and act as a bridge towards real democracy. Pangs of transition may be eased through this process. Stability is desirable and there is no reason why it is not attainable under proportional

representation. But we must also realise that despotism must not be allowed to hold the way in the name of stability, and proportional representation may help in checking the rise of despotism and achieving genuine stability.<sup>3</sup>

### The Phantom of Illiteracy and Political Backwardness

Another point raised in this debate relates to the level of literacy of the people amongst whom the system of proportional representation prevails. Yet another nice point relates to the size of the population. It is being suggested that the system has successfully

<sup>3</sup>We gave earlier a lengthy quotation from Dr. Appadorai against the system of proportional representation. We may now give a quotation from Enid Lakeman to express the opposite view: "In considering the several countries using the list system, it has been seen that proportional representation does not lead to an inordinate multiplicity of parties or to unstable government. In no country previously free from them have those disadvantages developed as a result of changing to a proportional representation system. Countries that have used proportional representation continuously over long periods include the most stable democracies of Europe — Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and Finland (also Czechoslovakia during her independence). In those countries, the system did indeed encourage the rise of one or two additional parties, but these represented emerging sections of public opinion. They took their place in the parliamentary share, and often as elements of the administration, to the general advantage of the nation.

"In certain other countries, such as Italy and France, it has been shown that the introduction of proportional representation was not responsible for the large number of parties and political instability; these conditions had already existed under the discarded majority system. As a corollary to a denial that proportional representation leads to numerous parties and instable governments, it is clear that a majority system fails to prevent them either; it does not always crystallize public opinion within a few national parties, one of which is sufficiently powerful to support for any length of time a strong administration. This is amply illustrated by an examination of the political history of France and Holland in particular.

"Proportional representation has removed from the political life of certain nations disadvantages which a majority system was imposing, to the detriment of their well-being. In Switzerland and Belgium especially, it has been shown that the suppression of minority representation was creating serious internal discussion; those countries are certainly more united as a consequence of having adopted proportional systems."

Lakeman, Enid, *How Democracies Vote*, op. cit. pp. 226-227.

operated only where the electorate is literate and where the country is small.

The critics forget that the level of literacy in the European societies was not as high in the nineteenth century and even in the early decades of the twentieth century as it is now. The system of proportional representation has not been introduced in these countries in the last quarter of the twentieth century. When it was introduced the level of literacy was pretty low. But the system was introduced effectively and successfully.

It may also be added that when proportional representation was introduced in the Republic of Ireland its level of illiteracy was very high and the Irish Electoral Act of 1923 laid down careful regulations for the use of returning officers for assisting illiterate voters. Similarly in Malta the number of illiterates in the first proportional representation election averaged 41.5 per cent of those voting, and in some places exceeded 90 per cent. In spite of this background the system of proportional representation has been successfully introduced and is working well.

### Political Consciousness

The critics also ignore that political consciousness and literacy are not the same thing and there is no rigid positive correlation between the two. There are educated communities whose political consciousness is low and there are illiterate societies whose political consciousness is very high. They also ignore the role of the radio, the transistor, the television and even the newspapers on the general mass of people, literate or illiterate, in raising the level of political consciousness in otherwise predominantly illiterate societies.

It may also be mentioned that some of the critics ignore the fact that the argument from illiteracy is not exclusively directed against the system of proportional representation. In fact it is the stock-in-trade of those who oppose democracy as such and argue that democracy can operate only in a highly literate society. We are afraid they are wrong on both counts, democracy as well as proportional representation.

The argument from size of population is equally unfounded. Germany and Italy have populations roughly approximating Pakistan's population. The group of Scandinavian countries also makes a sizable chunk of population. All these are lame excuses not based on any perception of political realities of our time.

### **Regional Representation and Constituency Accountability**

This objection is also based on a confusion of issues. There is nothing inherent in the PR system to treat the whole country as one constituency. List system does not make it essential that the party list must be given on a national basis. Even under the system of PR a country is divided into many constituencies, but each constituency has a reasonably large number of seats. The distinctive feature is multi-member constituency — the number of seats allotted to a given constituency can vary in accordance with its size, regional location, ethnic cooperation and on other considerations. In most of European democracies following the PR system there are six to thirty-six member constituencies. Party lists can be given for each constituency. As such the regional principle can be easily taken care of. As the political parties have their offices in all parts of the country, in all its constituencies and as the party lists

can be made for each constituency, there is no reason to fear that regional leadership would not emerge and that there would not be personal rapport between the elected representatives and the constituency. The model we are suggesting in the latter part of this Study particularly takes care of this aspect, as we are suggesting each division to be a constituency for national elections and each district as a constituency for provincial elections. If a division is too large, it can be divided into two constituencies.

### Proportional Representation and the Federal Principle

So far we have discussed those arguments which were of a universal nature but were being applied to the specific case of Pakistan as well. Now we take up some of those arguments which have exclusive relevance to Pakistan.

First substantive argument relates to the alleged incompatibility of the proportional representation with the principle of federation. The critics, perhaps, ignore that Pakistan is not the only federation in the world. German Federal Republic and Switzerland are also federal states. Czechoslovakia was also a federation. Most of the European countries which have successfully introduced the system of proportional representation consist of more than one linguistic, ethnic, cultural or religious communities and they have found that proportional representation is one of the most effective instruments to preserve their identity and to get for themselves their proper share from the federation. In fact if the political parties are committed to do justice, or even favour the small members of the federation, they can *increase* the share of the weaker units of the federation by giving preference to nominees from those regions, in their party lists.

But if the smaller units of a federation feel that they would like to rigidly adhere to their share only and would not like to draw upon the national pool then there is nothing in the system which imposes upon them a condition to necessarily do so. The formation of constituencies can be on a number of criteria — total country, its provinces, or even smaller divisions with the condition that the smallest unit would also be a multi-member constituency. In France in 1945-46 there were two-to-ten member constituencies. In "Israel" there is one constituency covering the whole country. Sweden had 2-to-12 member constituencies in the 1968 elections and 2-to-36 member constituencies in the 1970 elections. Belgium had 2-to-32 member constituencies throughout 1946—1971. Finland has 9-to-21 seat constituencies. Italy 2-to-35 member constituencies. Malta has 4, 5 and 6 member constituencies. We can devise an arrangement which could satisfy the wishes of the provinces.

As far as we have been able to examine the issue there is no need for any constitutional amendment to introduce the system of proportional representation in Pakistan. Article 51 lays down the following conditions and all of them can be equally fulfilled whether we opt for majority system or for proportional representation:

- (i) The number of seats: 200
- (ii) Adult franchise
- (iii) Direct election

All the three conditions are satisfied *par excellence* in the proportional representation system. *Only the electoral law and rules will have to be amended.* A number of leading constitutional experts of the country uphold this interpretation. The critics seem to be engaged in the proverbial exercise of the blind philoso-

pher who was trying to catch in a dark room a black cat which was not there.

The suggestion that the people are unfamiliar with the system and that the counting of votes and their allocation to parties are too difficult for the common man is also unfounded. Counting is not to be done by the common man. He will have to put a mark on the ballot paper as he has been doing for ages. His job finishes at that. The counting is to be done by competent staff and they know their job well. We also have computer which was used in 1977 and would make the task easier today.

As to the question of familiarity we would only like to recall that the people are familiar with the two systems and have been debating their merits and demerits for the last fifty years if not more. The question of electoral system has been a live issue in the political debate which has been going on in open forums and not behind closed doors. As far back as 1930 the Simon Commission reported that "a system of proportional representation has been constantly employed in the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils for the selection of Committees. No difficulty has been found in its practical operation and the members fully understand it and appreciate its advantages".<sup>4</sup>

The Government of India Act, 1935, provided that the members of Provincial Legislative Assemblies should elect by proportional representation members of the Federal House of Assembly. Although this could not be put into practice because of the changed political situation and the intervention of the World War yet a similar machinery was used in India after the attainment

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, 1930, vol. ii, p. 118.*

of independence for the election of India's Constituent Assembly.

*"In Pakistan the principle of proportional representation has been invoked on a number of occasions. The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was elected under the leadership of the Quaid-i-Azam on this principle. The second Constituent Assembly was also elected on the same principle by the Provincial Assemblies. The Assembly of West Pakistan was also elected on the principle of proportional representation. Finally, the election of the Senate was held on the same principle under the Constitution of 1973".*

That the general voter is also informed on this issue is evident from the fact that a number of political parties, including the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan, and the Jamiatul Ulama-e-Islam, went to the people in 1970 on a manifesto committing them to the system of proportional representation. The manifesto of the PPP argues:

*"The existing electoral system is the most efficient mechanism for giving preponderance to the propertied classes in parliament. The cost of fighting an election is high which in no case can be afforded by a poor candidate unless he is supported by rich patrons. Even left wing political parties risk becoming dependent upon interested financial backing or have to give tickets to persons with ample private means."*

*"The electoral system will be so reformed as to give primacy to political programmes. This will be done by introducing the system of voting for party lists and not for individual candidates."*



*"The number of candidates elected in each party would be proportionate to the total number of valid votes cast. In the case of the National Assembly the total valid votes cast means the total in the whole country, both wings together. In the case of Provincial Assemblies the total refers, of course, to each province respectively."*

*"In this system it will depend upon the political party concerned how its candidates are placed in respect of priority in its list. If only rich men are at the head, or only men from a certain class, the voters will know at once what class interests that party actually represents, whatever be its published programme. Since the local boss cannot by merely spending money hope to get elected, unless his name stands high on his party's list, election expenses will quickly be confined to the essentials only. Political conviction will become more important than personal influence".<sup>5</sup>*

The manifesto of the Jammaat-e-Islami, Pakistan asserted:

*"We shall re-introduce the system of separate electorate. Every minority group would be allotted a number of seats in proportion to its population, for the whole of Pakistan we propose to introduce the system of proportionate representation."*

The above examples make it abundantly clear that the voter has been approached again and again with clear

<sup>5</sup> PPP Manifesto, 1970, pp. 51-52. The PPP Manifesto has also suggested that only that party be accepted as a National Party which is able to get at least 5 per cent of the votes cast.

statements about the merits and demerits of the two systems. Proportional representation would not come to him like a bolt from the blue. He has been discussing the need for this change over for quite some time and when it is introduced he would accept it as a fulfilment of a long felt need.

## ***A Proportional Representation Model for Pakistan***

Bismark once blurbed out: "When you say that you agree to a thing in principle you mean that you have not the slightest intention of carrying it out in practice". The phase of 'agreement in principle' is over. If electoral justice is what we aim at we should introduce the system of proportional representation without delay. It has been eloquently demonstrated in earlier chapters that the system of proportional representation not only embodies the substance of democracy but is also nearer to the spirit of Islam. It would be in the fitness of things to initiate this experiment. However, no system is perfect. We have suffered from the gross imperfections and inequities of the majority system for sixty years. Now is the time to switch over to the system of proportional representation. There is, however, nothing sacrosanct about the modalities through which the system should be introduced and operated upon. Necessary changes could be made to suit our special needs and we give below a model which, in our opinion, is suitable for Pakistan. Whatever arrangements we

## NWFP

8 seats of Federal Tribal Areas may remain as they are and proportionate representation may not be practiced there because the whole area is divided in small and big tribes. In Tribal Areas the old system of indirect election may presently be continued. The seats of settled districts of NWFP under this arrangement will be as follows:

1.	Peshawar Division	— 9
2.	Kohat Division	— 2
3.	Malakand Division	— 6
4.	Hazara Division	— 6
5.	D.I.Khan Division	— 3

## Sind

1.	Karachi Division	— 11
2.	Hyderabad Division	— 17
3.	Sukkur Division	— 15

## Baluchistan

1.	Quetta Division	— 3
2.	Sibbi Division	— 2
3.	Makran and Kallat Divisions	— 2

It is advisable that Makran Division (one seat) and Kallat Division (one seat) of Baluchistan are merged for the purpose of National Assembly elections so that the idea of multiple seats could be practiced there. Moreover, Makran does not qualify for one independent seat according to population. It qualifies only for 0.90 seat whereas Kallat Division qualifies for 1.68 seat. The Kallat division constituency is the largest in Pakistan, area-wise also population-wise.

therefore, necessary that there should be at least 4 constituencies for the four provinces, in principle, in affirmative with the provincial entities. But as there are great disparities in the population-size of the provinces, we are suggesting an alternative in the form of division as a constituency.

The idea behind making a division a constituency is to maintain the territorial representative character intact along with the representations of political parties and groups. Besides this, the arrangement will reduce parochialism and provincialism. In the case of elections of provincial assemblies, it is proposed that each district should be treated as one constituency. This will further eliminate the tendencies of *baradari* system and sectarian feelings and it will also help in enhancing the representative character of a Provincial Assembly by ensuring representation of every district in the Provincial Assembly.

The following will be the number of seats per division under this arrangement:<sup>1</sup>

### Punjab

1.	Lahore Division	— 17
2.	Multan Division	— 21
3.	Sargodha Division	— 10
4.	Rawalpindi Division (Including Islamabad)	— 12
5.	Bahawalpur Division	— 11
6.	Gujranwala Division	— 19
7.	Faisalabad Division	— 18
8.	Dera Ghazi Khan Division	— 8

<sup>1</sup> Distribution is based on the number of seats announced in 1979.

make for adopting this system in the country, the nation would have enough opportunities to improve it further through experience and experimentation. We will have enough opportunities to improve from experience whatever arrangement we make for proportional representation in the country. The most important thing is to make a beginning.

The system of proportionate representation in Pakistan may be based on the following premises:

- (1) For National Assembly the division will constitute a constituency, save in exceptional cases where a division may be divided into two constituencies.
- (2) For provincial assemblies each respective district will form a constituency.
- (3) A Party or Alliance of parties getting less than 5 per cent votes of the total votes cast in the country and also 4 per cent of votes cast in each province shall not be considered as a national party eligible to be represented in the National Assembly.
- (4) A Party or Alliance of parties which fails to get less than 5 per cent votes in the province in which it has contested elections shall not be eligible to be represented in the Provincial Assembly.

The reason for making every division a constituency is to guarantee territorial representation along with the representation of political parties and political groups. Due to federal nature of the State the country cannot be considered as one constituency as a whole. It is,

The entire election should be held on party list system.<sup>2</sup> There should not be any independent candidates.

As has already been suggested only that national party would qualify for seats in the National Assembly which gets at least five per cent of the valid votes cast in the country and at least 4 per cent *in each province*, and in the case of Provincial Assemblies at least 5 per cent in the province concerned.

The system of proportional representation symbolizes an effort to establish electoral justice and to enable every political party to have as many seats in the National Assembly as are justified on the basis of its electoral support. It is not a device to favour or punish anyone; it stands for justice for all. Let every party have a fair deal and let everyone realise what is its real political size. This can bring a lot of sanity back into politics and pave the way for a fuller participation of all significant parties and groups in the future reconstruction of our society. We as a nation must always try to opt for the best. Once it is clear what is just and hence, most desirable, we should not shirk in fulfilling our duty. What is good in principle, should be good for practice. And it is through practice that we can have our tryst with destiny.

<sup>2</sup>We disagree with the 1979 Election Scheme which provided for 50 per cent representation on party lists and 50 per cent on single member constituency basis (Majority System). It also provided for independent candidates if they could poll more than 50 per cent of the votes in the constituency. Instead we prefer the model given in these pages.

## ***Summary and Conclusions***

1. Pakistan came into existence as a result of a popular ideological and democratic movement and its destiny lies in its development as an Islamic democratic state, which depends on strengthening the habit and tradition of constitution.

2. Political stability depends on the strength of the institutions, processes and traditions, and not on individuals. Political legitimacy rests on the twin factors of: (a) loyalty to and abidance by the *Shari'ah*, and (b) the trust and confidence of the people.

3. Constitutional issues settled in the past should not be reopened. 1973 constitution should be adopted as the framework for the political process, in the country.

4. To arrive at a workable arrangement a national convention of all ideologically committed political forces of the country should be held to prepare a plan



for smooth inauguration of the democratic process. This convention should address itself to the problems of a caretaker government, with the specific objectives of making arrangements for national elections, including the question of the electoral system and if necessary the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the President and the Prime Minister, an issue on which the 1973 constitution did not enjoy national consensus and an issue which can be resolved to allay the apprehensions of the armed forces as well as of other political forces by modifying this arrangement in the light of the 1956 constitution which was framed by an equally if not more competent body and which has enjoyed national consensus.

5. The question of the introduction of Islamic political order must not be allowed to confuse the constitutional issues or delay the revival of the political process. Islam affirms:

- (a) political and legal sovereignty of Allah and the supremacy of *Shari'ah* in all matters;
- (b) *Shura* as the basis for creation as well as running of all major organs of authority in the state;
- (c) inviolability of Islamic fundamental human rights and obligations;
- (d) enforcement of justice and provision of basic needs of the people and ensuring basic development of the Islamic society;
- (e) solidarity of the Islamic *Ummah* and greater cooperation between Muslim countries; and
- (f) the mission of the *Ummah* to call humanity to the path of Islam.

6. The challenge that confronts the people of Pakistan is not to *discover* what is the Islamic political order but to *institutionalise* the principle of *Shura* in their political life, which means, structuring their representative organs to fulfil the letter and spirit of Islamic injunctions about *Shura* and to elect people who are qualified, competent and trust-worthy to run these institutions. In this respect two questions are of crucial importance, and they deserve to be resolved without delay.

There must be political parties committed to the ideology of Pakistan to act as links between the people and the Government and its organs.

It is the function of the political party to organize people on the basis of socio-moral ideals and programmes, to select leadership acceptable to the people, to ensure accountability for their performance in office by facing the people from time to time in the form of periodic elections and reinforce the stability and legitimacy of the political community. Elections provide a national forum for debate and discussion on public issues and for the articulation of the peoples opinion and aspirations and as such act as a means for the exchange of influences between the governors and the governed.

It may also be emphasized that there is nothing in the *Shari'ah* which goes against the formation of political parties in an Islamic policy. They are in the nature of the permitted (*Mubah*) and can be formed in the best interests of the *Ummah*. The Quran exhorts Muslims to have from amongst themselves an organized group to invite people to truth and to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. It is, therefore, imperative to have political parties to play their role in

activising the political process. In the case of Pakistan, their importance further lies in being the only institution capable of transcending the boundaries of *baradari*, class, tribe and region and bring about national cohesion in the people.

7. The other major issue relates to the questions of the system of election, most suited to the genius of the people and the demands of democracy.

The system of voting and of counting votes represents the mechanisms by means of which a people record and measure their approach and thinking on major issues of the day, enabling the organs of the state to reflect and fulfil their will. These systems should be as accurate, as reliable, and as impartial as possible. The success of democracy in a society depends, in the last analysis, on the effectiveness of the method of representation adopted in it. If it ensures just representation of all shades of opinion and assigns to each a weight in proportion to its total strength in the society, it would generate fair-play and strengthen the roots of democracy. If it fails on this count, it will impair proper working of democracy, in spite of all the trappings and symbols of a democratic order.

8. A number of methods of representation have been tried over the years in different democratic societies. All of them can be roughly grouped together under two major categories. The first major method is known as majority system, where the country is divided into a number of single member constituencies and whoever gets the largest number of votes in his constituency is treated as representative to that constituency in the national forum.

The other major system of representation is propor-

tional representation. It is based on the concept that the whole electorate, both majority and minority, should be reflected in the decision-making body in such a way that the strength of the representatives of a particular viewpoint in the said body should approximately correspond to their relative position in the population. There are many ways in which this method has been implemented. The central idea in all of these cases is that the real emphasis should be on the political weight of every group or party and that each party should carry a weight in the decision-making body in proportion to its electoral support.

Both these systems have their merits and demerits. The fact that in Pakistan we have been more used to the 'majority system' of the Westminster type should not blind us to the fact that this system prevails only in a limited number of countries and that other democracies have experimented with the other system with various degrees of success. The question of method of representation should be decided on the basis of its merits and not simply on the grounds of continuity or familiarity. Both these aspects are important but cannot be the sole criteria for judging a system. *The real issue is electoral justice.*

9. The case for proportional representation is based on three major grounds: first, the weaknesses and inequities of the majority system; second, the potential of the proportional representation system towards producing a more representative parliament and a more harmonious society; and finally, on the capability of this system to be more effectively assimilated in an Islamic framework and help in implementing the Islamic political precepts in contemporary environment.

The tragic experience of Pakistan also deserves to be

kept in view. The elections of 1970 established the hegemony of regionalist political parties and destroyed the balance between different political parties and groups. *But this situation was primarily a result of the electoral system, and not of the political preferences of the voters.* Table 4 gives province-wise summary of the results of 1970 general elections according to majority system and Table 5 translates these very results in terms of proportional representation. Awami League got 39 per cent of the total votes cast in Pakistan but 53.3 per cent of seats in the National Assembly. In East Pakistan it got 75 per cent of votes but 98.7 per cent of seats. If the elections were held on the system of proportional representation the complexion of the National Assembly would have been very different and Pakistan would have been spared the trauma of 1971. Similarly the position in West Pakistan would have been significantly affected.

*The real issue is not that of favouring party X and dis-favouring party Y but of ensuring that the party-position in the Parliament accurately reflects the exact party-votes enjoyed in the election. The political parties must realise that their positions can reverse, as has been happening in the case of the U.K. The question must be considered on its merits and on the criterion as to what extent a certain method of election ensures electoral justice and not on the basis of current vested interest.*

10. The proportional representation system is a device through which almost all the votes cast in an election become effective in producing some political weight in the decision-making body. *So long as the unit of election remains a single-member constituency, it is impossible to reflect in the parliament more than one shade of opinion prevailing in that constituency.*

Under this system a shift of emphasis takes place from individual candidate to the party on whose ticket he is operating. Individual influence is never totally eliminated yet the focus is more on the party and its national character. This brings about very revolutionary and very healthy changes in the operation and strengthening of the democratic processes in the country. As a party gets a mandate from the people the importance of party increases and greater effort is directed towards strengthening the party and its institutions. Secondly, party programme and manifesto become more important and the choice is made, not merely on the basis of a particular individual's influence, but on the basis of what programme the party offers to the people. This raises the level of discussion from individual traits to social and ideological issues and sets the political process to move in the right direction. Organization of parties throughout the country gets a fillip, because the strength of a party in each area is tied with its strength in the rest of the country. Thirdly, there is better party discipline and greater chances of implementation of party programme when it comes to power. This produces greater discipline and accountability in politics in the country. And finally, there is little political horse-trading and crossing of floors. All this helps in strengthening the democratic tradition.

11. The adoption of the system of proportional representation may increase the possibilities of electing *educated and qualified candidates to the legislative bodies*. In case of nomination of candidates under majority system a party has to keep in mind the personal influence, status, tribal position, and so many other factors so that the candidate could win the seat. It is through this process many a time candidates who are illiterate and inefficient get elected. But when the

candidate is the party itself, these factors would be overlooked and the party can nominate politically experienced workers, highly educated experts and well informed persons in the list and thus could run the administration better. This will reduce the influence of traditional leaders, the vested interests and the traditional power-brokers and thus, improve the quality of politics in the country.

12. The probability of fair election is much greater in proportional representation than in the majority system. If a party is involved in rigging it may change the percentage of votes marginally but it would never be in a position to totally upset the results.

13. The voters will be trained in the light of ideology instead of being influenced by individual candidates and their *baradari*, class or tribe. During the election campaign the discussion concentrate on party ideology and programmes. So the voters and political workers could be trained accordingly. The emergence of ideological parties has been helped by this process in a number of European countries and this has led to the reduction of tribal and money-power in favour of ideologically oriented political parties.

14. It is also hoped, and this too is borne out by the experience of some of the European countries, that this system would gradually produce greater cooperation and even ultimate integration in political parties with the result that parties, through networks of agreements and alliances, become more national and more integrated. More or less permanent groupings of like-minded organizations emerge and cleanse the political climate of some of the fog and mist generated by too many parties and rival political groupings. This is bound to reduce tendencies of polarization amongst political parties and encourage them towards regroupings and alliances.

15. Another very salutary effect of this method of representation is that it gives greater confidence to small parties by protecting them against the danger of total or virtual elimination, provided they have a certain minimum support in the country. It also reduces tendencies towards political violence by ensuring to each significant group a place in the national forum for decision-making. The divergence between the expected results and the actual results is normally narrow in this system. This also helps different political parties to accept the results of the election even if unfavourable.

16. The long period influences of the system could also be very important. It gradually trains the people to accept differences and dissent and to accommodate them in the body politic. They begin to discover greater harmony of interests and a new equation is developed between different groups, which may be further strengthened by coalition governments. As every region gets proper representation and as every significant viewpoint gets a respectable hearing, this reduces parochialism and regionalism and strengthens the national character of the society.

17. Islam has laid the principle that the affairs of the Muslim society must be conducted through mutual consultation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also emphasized the principle of mutual trust and confidence between the rulers and the ruled. Although Islam does not prescribe a particular mode of election it has made it very clear that the leadership should enjoy the trust and confidence of the people.

There are two other basic principles of Islam which deserve to be recalled. First, that the *Muslim Ummah* is one ideological brotherhood and that all of its elements are parts of a family. This means that all shades of its opinion should be treated as parts of the spectrum and



there should not be any majority-minority dichotomy in its body politic.

Secondly, Islam disapproves of the practice of self-candidature and does not like people who are seekers after political positions to be entrusted with political offices. On the other hand it wants the society to select the best and most trustworthy persons from amongst itself to serve its affairs.

When we reflect upon different systems of representation from this perspective we have no doubt that the system of proportional representation is nearer the spirit of Islam and has the capability of fitting in its framework.

18. Major objections against the PR system are five. They are:

1. that proportional representation leads to a proliferation of political parties and multiplication of splinter groups. This makes a mockery of the principle of representation;
2. that proportional representation is an invitation to political instability, weak coalition governments and political and administrative chaos;
3. that proportional representation assumes a high level of literacy as the system is quite complicated at both levels of casting of votes and their counting. It is, therefore, not suitable particularly for less developed countries;
4. that the emergence of regional leadership, ensuring proper regional representation in the

political organs of the state becomes difficult. This also affects the personal relationship between MPs and the constituency and a kind of impersonalization of the relations takes place; and

5. in addition to the four patent lines of attack on the system of proportional representation it is alleged that the introduction of PR in Pakistan would impair the federal character of the state. It is suggested that representation from small provinces would be further belittled and their excess votes will be transferred to other provinces. This has also been described by some hyper-sensitive politicians as "an effort to revive one unit".

These objections have been examined in detail and found without justification.

19. The system of proportionate representation in Pakistan may be based on the following premises:

1. For National Assembly the division will constitute a constituency, save in exceptional cases where a division may be divided into two constituencies.
2. For Provincial Assemblies each respective district will form a constituency.
3. A Party or Alliance of parties getting less than 5 per cent votes of the total votes cast in the country and also 4 per cent of votes cast in each province shall not be considered as a national party eligible to be represented in the National Assembly.

4. A Party or Alliance of parties which fails to get less than 5 per cent votes in the province in which it has contested elections shall not be eligible to be represented in the Provincial Assembly.

20. The reason for making every division a constituency is to guarantee territorial representation along with the representation of political parties and political groups.

The idea behind making a division a constituency is to maintain the territorial representative character intact along with the representations of political parties and groups. Besides this, the arrangement will reduce parochialism and provincialism.

The following will be the number of seats per division under this arrangement\*.

### Punjab

1. Lahore Division	— 17
2. Multan Division	— 21
3. Sargodha Division	— 10
4. Rawalpindi Division (including Islamabad)	— 12
5. Bahawalpur Division	— 11
6. Gujranwala Division	— 19
7. Faisalabad Division	— 18
8. Dera Ghazi Khan Division	— 8

### NWFP

8 seats of Federal Tribal Areas may remain as they are and proportionate representation may not be

\*Distribution is based on the number of seats announced for each district in 1979.

practiced there because the whole area is divided in small and big tribes. In Tribal Areas the old system of indirect election may presently be continued. The seats of settled districts of NWFP under this arrangement will be as follows:

1. Peshawar Division	— 9
2. Kohat Division	— 2
3. Malakand Division	— 6
4. Hazara Division	— 6
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### Sind

1. Karachi Division	— 11
2. Hyderabad Division	— 17
3. Sukkur Division	— 15

### Baluchistan

1. Quetta Division	— 3
2. Sibbi Division	— 2
3. Makran and Kallat Division	— 2

The entire election should be held on party list system. There should not be any independent candidates.

As has already been suggested only that national party would qualify for seats in the National Assembly which gets at least five per cent of the valid votes cast in the country and at least 4 per cent *in each province, and in the case of Provincial Assemblies, at least 5 per cent in the province concerned.*

To ensure the Islamic character of the public representatives the qualifications for Muslim members should

include basic knowledge of the *Shari'ah*, *Taqwa*, past public record of service to Islam and a reputation of respect for Islamic values and avoidance of Islamic prohibitions.

The system of proportional representation symbolizes an effort to establish electoral justice and to enable every political party to have as many seats in the National Assembly as are justified on the basis of its electoral support.



INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is once again in search for a political order. A new order is being promised. It is time to pause and reflect on the political malaise and search for a way out of it.

The challenge that confronts the people of Pakistan is not to *discover* what is the Islamic political order but to *institutionalise* the principle of *Shura* in their political life, which means, structuring their representative organs to fulfil the letter and spirit of Islamic injunctions about *Shura* and to elect people who are qualified, competent and trustworthy to run these institutions. *Proportional Representation and the Revival of Democratic Process in Pakistan* focuses on the issue of the revival of the political process in the country in this perspective and deals more exhaustively with the issue of the electoral system, i.e. question of single-constituency majority/plurality election, or proportional representation and of the qualifications of those capable of representing the people in an Islamic republic.

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