



An Analysis of Empowerment of the People through Parliament: The Case Study of Pakistan (2008-2013)

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Abstract: This descriptive and analytical study aims to investigate the empowerment of people through the mother of institutions i.e. Parliament which is regarded as the exclusive channel to represent the people's interests. All laws and acts passed by the parliament affect the life of the people. The period (March 17, 2008 – March 16 2013) has the credit that for the first time in the history of Pakistan, the elected parliament completed its term. During this period parliament introduce various constitutional measures for the betterment of the people. This study does not intend to analyse the important legislation in parliament, but it focuses on the way it empowers the general public. It discusses various procedures in the parliament. The findings show that there were positive trends in the parliament regarding the democratic culture. Although practically people of Pakistan are leading a very miserable life, at least at the theoretical level the culture of debates and discussion was introduced within the parliament. The passing of acts through consensus is the prerequisite of the parliamentary system. Strengthening parliament is actually empowering the people.

Introduction

Democracies under the modern era of the state system have enhanced the significance of legislative bodies. This modern era demands that multidimensional tasks should be performed through parliament. All socio-political and economic issues and other so many challenges faced by the people at large are to be addressed within the parliament. The mode of modern economies which is the market based compels the parliament to perform its constitutional role. For the better performance of these multi-dimensional tasks of the parliament, it is expected that the parliamentarians are professionals. So it is natural that in the changing scenario of the globalised regime, the legal and constitution-making bodies consist of professionals in their respective fields. It

is also recognised globally that parliament is the basic organ of the state and the fundamental part of democracies. Because, it encompasses maximum features of the society at large (Leston-Bandeira, 2017)

Generally, the important functions associated with the parliament are to formulate policies, and then the decisions and policies are legitimized by the parliament, sighting the activities and intentions of the government. It is also the jurisdiction of the parliament to maintain public space for discussion and wait for feedback. Again other functions are accountability within the parliament itself and also oversee the governance processes operating outside parliament. Among the three organs of the state, law-making is related to the people's empowerment. Norton (1990)

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opined that parliament is multi members' representative forum to discuss public issues. He further stressed that the function of parliament is also to give consent on behalf of a political community; parliament has various nomenclatures in different parts of the globe. The famous names are parliament, national council, congress (in the USA) national assembly and Majlis (Hague and Harp, [2004](#), p.247)

In Pakistan since 1947 (the time of the Indian partition) legislative and political processes was delayed due to various reasons. For the legislative process, it is necessary that parliamentary discussions and debates are encouraged in the parliament. It is very unfortunate that the initial history of Pakistan is lacking with such undemocratic culture. Governments depended on the presidential ordinances and many other previously made rules under the colonial setup. These ordinances were later on converted into acts. It was not the tradition of presenting the bills of private members in the parliament. Personal wills always remained dominant over the majority in the assembly. Dictators were facilitated by the main politicians to intervene in the legislative process just for the personal benefits of the ruling elites (Manent, P. [2003](#), pp. 114-25.)

Historically, from 1947 -1973, Pakistan had a unicameral legislature. In 1947, the first meeting of the Assembly was held in the Sindh Assembly Building (Karachi) where Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and first Governor-General was unanimously elected as the President of the Constituent Assembly. Unfortunately, after the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971, the reaming Pakistan promulgated the 1973 constitution passed by the national assembly. This constitution is based on a parliamentary system.

Since 1973 Pakistan is functioning under this constitution and if we discuss the thirteenth national assembly of Pakistan (2008- 2013), it was elected on 16 March 2013 through general elections 2013. It was the first time in the political and democratic history of Pakistan that power was smoothly transferred to the next elected government through elections. It was observed during this term that the role of the parliament remained satisfactory on the basis of its functions. Constitutional amendments were also introduced and were unanimously passed. If we analyzed the

case of empowerment during this period (2008-2013), parliament dealt with various issues of public concern. It was recorded that this assembly passed twenty private and government bills. The upper house of the parliament (Senate) also passed 49 bills during the first three years. There were also many other parliamentary procedures adopted which can be visualized as a way to empower the people. (Ul-Hassan, M., & Usman, M. [2013](#))

Methodology

This piece of research is a qualitative-based and mixed type of research where descriptive and analytical approach is used. The time period of research is 2008-2013 (the first ever complete term of the elected parliament). The study confines the internal procedures of the parliament for the empowerment of the people. So secondary sources are used for data collection and analyzed by reason and arguments.

Hypothesis

The different modes adopted by the parliament led to the people's empowerment in the political system of Pakistan during 2008-2013

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how far the functioning of parliament improves the empowerment of the people.
2. To know whether the people of Pakistan are empowered only through the working of parliament during 2008-2013.
3. To investigate the reasons and relevance behind the lack of empowerment.

Research Question

How the legislative process in the parliament leads to people empowerment in the political system of Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework (Parliament and Empowerment)

The different dimensions of Empowerment have been related to the procedures in the parliament. Therefore it is pertinent here to discuss the various dimensions of empowerment and then these will

be discussed in the light of legislation in the assembly.

If we look at the dimensions of empowerment, these are broadly divided into two categories. The first is psychological empowerment (which is not our concern here) and the second aspect is political empowerment. The psychological aspect of empowerment relates to the internal change which normally occurs on the level of an individual's sensations and consciousness. While the other aspect of empowerment is the external change which is associated with political empowerment. This outer aspect of empowerment (our main concern in this study) enables a person to take part in the decision-making process at the governmental level. The life of an individual is affected by the legislation in the parliament. So politically empowered people always augment and forcefully claim their fundamental rights. This situation on the part of the politically conscious people creates such an environment in the society which drove the masses to participate in the decision-making process for the sake of their own rights (Gruber and Trickett, 1987, PP.353-371)

Similarly, another philosopher Eyben (2011) presented the working definition of this concept. According to him, the different individuals of society and many groups of different strata are enabled to envision their universe differently. This is done through the sense of realization and strong conviction that they can alter the power pattern which caused their miseries and acute poverty. They also realize that this power pattern has restricted their voice and autonomy. This realization on the part of the general masses is called empowerment (Eyben, 2011, p.1-13).

Another philosopher, Rappaport (1981), also described that 'empowerment is a social policy.' He stressed that it is an approach to be included in the decision-making process. He maintains that many social problems stemming from the powerless state of the people can be solved by empowering them. This approach to empowering the oppressed and marginalized section of society enables them to gain their political, social, legal and economic rights honourably. He further maintained that it is the freedom of choice. It provides more chances for the oppressed to enhance their power and capacity and control over the state resources. Thus the poor people are enabled to hold accountable

the institutions of the government. Rappaport (1887) further relates this concept with power. Thus from the arguments of different philosophers, it is evident that the participation of the people in the democratic process is empowerment. So it is imperative to promote and enhance the democracies for the justifiable participation of the masses (Sadan, 1997, p.73)

From the perspective of the above-mentioned dimensions of empowerment, now we will discuss and analyze the parliamentary culture and different techniques to empower the general public.

People's Empowerment through Parliamentary Procedures: An Analysis

Parliament among the state institutions is the proper platform/forum of the people through which they manifest their powers. People elect their representatives through the power of the vote and expect that these representatives will be the custodian and present their demands and interests in the parliament. In the parliamentary system executive and legislature are part of parliament. Here the Prime Minister is answerable to the elected parliament.

There are different dimensions of Empowerment. It manifests in the parliament when the higher authorities, government officials and all the people at the helm of affairs are held accountable to the people. In this section, we will discuss the different procedures adopted in the parliament which may lead to the empowerment of the people. In other words, we can say that through different procedures, all the activities in the parliament are people-centric where only the interests of the people are presented. If we talk about the different procedures related to empowerment is the role of overseeing the activities of the cabinet. The debate on the constitutional matters by the members and session of question answer as well as legislation on public issues. Legislation on budgeting is also a very important tool to empower people.

Debates and Discussions During Legislation

Within the parliament, debates are necessary and considered healthy features of parliamentary democracies. The government's policies and its future planning are cleared through debates. There

are so many complications in legislation. Constructive debates within the parliament, not only remove the constitutional ambiguities through the expert opinions of the parliamentarians but also create a conducive working environment. This may be the better way to assess the performance and the intentions of the government. Sometimes there remains a difference between policies announced and their implementation. At this point opposition, parties do criticize the treasury benches. Thus the hoodwinking or any other lapse on the part of the government is averted which is directly related to the people's representatives in the parliament.

During the period under study (2008-2013) the famous issues debated and discussed were related to the defence budget, judicial restoration and national security. It is the bad luck of the people of Pakistan that issues debated and discussed in the parliament remained dormant. The government was not serious to implement them. The questions raised by the opposition members were not properly answered by the treasury benches which affects the credibility of the legislative body. The subsequent pages will discuss the famous cases related to the people's empowerment debated in the parliament. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. (2022).

Debates on Human Rights Cases

Many Human rights issues were discussed in the parliament. Issues like target killings, children's rights and missing persons (like Dr Aafia Siddiqi) were debated and discussed in the assembly. Parliament unanimously resolved that for the permanent security and life protection of the children and their survival, it would be necessary to establish a parliamentary forum. Other burning human rights issues were target killing in a different part of the country. Parliament discussed this issue and showed serious concern over the targeted killing and resolved to take necessary actions.

Debates on Strengthening Democracy

Strengthening democracy means empowerment of the people. Every politician whether he is a member of the assembly or not advocates democracy. But practically their attitudes are authoritarian. If we see the democratic culture

within the parliament, members debated the issues concerning the consolidation and development of democracy rather than the dictatorship in the country. They discussed and debated the causes of political instability. The issues of federalism like centre province relations, lack of rule of law and the public mistrust in the judicial process were debated. Members resolved that socio-economic wellbeing, national integration, issues of federation and progress of the common people be guaranteed with strong democratic institutions. The need for the constructive role of media in society was debated. Considering the accountability of the government is vital for democracy was also debated. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. (2022).

Debates on New Province in Punjab

Creating a new province in Punjab for the socio, economic and political uplift of the people of its southern part was debated in the parliament. Saraiki people since long had grievances of disempowerment with the federal government. Because elected parliament is supposed to fulfil the demands of the people, so a resolution was passed to ask the provincial assembly of Punjab. The provincial assembly was empowered to start legislation to change the constitution for the fulfilment of people's desire of creating a new province. Practically, for the bad luck of the people of the region, the government is yet reluctant to create a new province in Punjab.

Debates on Petroleum Prices

Inflation is the issue which every government claims to control it. This inflation will not be controlled if the proper mechanism of financial management is not tackled. Normally the price hike is linked with petroleum products. It has a direct effect on the life of common people. Because this assembly was led by Pakistan People's Party (PPP)-ideologically pro-poor, it debated the issue of rising prices of petroleum in the country. During extensive debates in the assembly on the issue, it stressed and instructed the government in power to immediately cut the prices of petroleum products in the country for the welfare of the people. But prices could not be controlled. Thus we can say it was just debated, practically people were not benefited. (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. (2021)

Debates on Drone Attacks on the Territory of Pakistan

Drone attacks were a very serious issue of national sovereignty. These attacks were allegedly permitted by the army chief and the then President (Musharraf) on January 2008. It is generally believed that the military president dealt with a secret agreement with US intelligence. Drone attacks were allowed to operate inside the FATA (now KPK province). The purpose behind these attacks was to target the terrorists of Al –Qaeda (terrorist network) but instead of targeting terrorists, 140 civilians innocent were killed against each drone attack. Reports from different sources confirmed that 90% of people killed in these attacks were not terrorists. It is alarming that killing the general people in the name of terrorism was creating serious problems not only for the legitimacy of the government but also for the security of the people. Thus parliament during this period debated and condemned the policy of drone attacks. In this regard, it was resolved by the parliamentarians to immediately stop the NATO supply to Afghanistan via Pakistan. Acting upon the resolution of the parliament, the government implemented it immediately in the best interest of the people (Khan, W. Z. 2014). The most common issues debated in the parliament are:

1. Cases related to Water and power.
2. Issue of Radicalization in the country
3. The highly sensitive issue of blasphemy in the country and abroad.
4. Trade deficit-related issues.
5. Growth in the agriculture sector.
6. Religious matters like Hajj (Pilgrimage) arrangements in Saudi Arab
7. Prices of daily commodities especially flour.
8. Increasing prices in the energy sector like gas and electricity.
9. Supply of electricity.
10. Releasing of funds to the educational sector (HEC)
11. Spreading of epidemics, especially Hepatitis.
12. Hoarding of daily commodities like Sugar.
13. Cases related to dual nationality (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. 2021)

Access to Websites for General Information

For empowering the people, it is encouraging that people have direct access to the parliamentary proceedings. Credit also goes to this parliament that for the first time it introduced websites for the general public. All Media channels were provided direct access to the live coverage of the proceedings in the parliament. The main information related to the national assembly and its legislative business agenda for the session is available on the website. Debates and questions and answers during the sessions are also available on the websites of the national assembly. Thus innovation like this will lead to transparency and ultimate empowerment. (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. 2021)

Role of Committees in the Parliament

The prolonged military rule in Pakistan did not provide opportunities for the democratic culture in the country. In the parliament, a strong committee system is a way to empower people. Because committees are considered eyes, ears and hands and to some extent the brain of parliament. The role of closely monitoring the activities and functions of the government is done through these committees. These committees are the source of link among the state institutions (executive and legislature) and the people. In parliament, there are two types of committees, standing and ad hoc. Their strength is according to the strength of the ministries in the government. Rule no. 198 of the assembly of Pakistan, stipulates that there shall be 'a standing committee' of the assembly for each ministry.

The procedure of the committee is that bills are referred to the committee, which after a comprehensive study submits their reports to the parliament. In this way, the public money is monitored for the better provision of services to the people.

In this regard, the important committee is the public account committee (PAC). Its role is to check the audited accounts of the federal government. Then forward its findings to the parliament. Thus, it is the procedure to hold government officials accountable before the people. Also, ministers remain cautious in spending

the public exchequer. (Begum, I., & Jamal, S. [2021](#)).

Historically, PAC in Pakistan dates back to 1948. But the proper function of the committee system started in 1951. PAC functions both at federal and provincial. It also functions at the district level to report to the head of relevant government. In PAC there are twenty-three members including the finance minister. During 2008- 2013, thirteen PACs performed their functions.

It is common practice that chairs in the lower house of parliament are elected by the government. This is the fortune of the people of Pakistan that this assembly maintained the parliamentary traditions. During this period of civilian government, the ruling party did appoint eleven committee heads from the opposition party. Chairman PAC is one of the important chairs in the assembly. Chaudhry Nisar Ali, the opposition leader in the house, was elected as the chairman of the PAC. Appointment of the opposition leader in such a sensitive committee is t empowering the people because it keeps an eye on the expenditures. Under the chairmanship of the opposition leader, this committee recovered worth Rs.15 billion from the audits. In this regard, the auditor general provided reports helpful for the recovery of the national money.

Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) is another important committee in the parliament. Secure the country from the scourge of terrorism in general and particularly in those days was a challenge for the Government. In November 2008, PCNS was formed through the joint resolution in the assembly. The main objective of this committee was to observe the policy of the ruling party regarding foreign policy measures with the US in the war on terrorism.

This committee addressed its primary objectives of Pakistan's security in a better way. In this regard, various meetings were held. During 2008-2012, there were 63 meetings were held on sensitive issues. Consequently, there seemed improvement in PAK-US relations. Parliament adopted its 16 points recommendations on national security. The overall government did not follow the recommendations of the parliament, but such like trends in the parliament are positive signs for democracy. (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. [2021](#))

This committee conducted the following important meetings:

1. A meeting was held on April 19th, 2011 regarding the Drone attacks on Pakistan territory.
2. This committee held a meeting on 19th July 2011 and discussed the Raymond Davis Case.
3. On 30th July 2011, a meeting was held and National Security issues were briefed by the secretaries.
4. Afghanistan Situation was discussed by this committee on 19th August 2011.
5. A meeting was held to endorse the Defense Committee Decisions on 3rd December 2011.
6. A meeting was held on 9th December, 2011 and discussed Pak-US relations.
7. A meeting was held on 21st December 2011 and discussed Memo Issue
8. A meeting was held on 24th December, 2011 and Pak-US relations were discussed.
9. A meeting was held on 10th January 2012 for NATO supply. (Haleemi, R. [2013](#))

Legislation on Public Issue

Another function or the primary function of the parliament is legislation. Representation throughout the country put forward their expert opinion and the diverse opinions make a good decision. During the period under study (2008-13), a large number of bills were unanimously passed. In the following pages, we will discuss the famous acts/bills passed by the assembly.

Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2013

This important bill was related to the personal appearance of the contesting candidates before returning officers at the time of submitting the nomination paper. At that time two popular leaders (Benazir Bhutto and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif) of the main political parties were exiled. It was the reign of General Pervez Musharraf who intended to oust them from politics. So it was necessary to remove this discretionary law - which was made for taking personal revenge from popular leaders, for the propagation of democracy. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. [2022](#))

It was unanimously resolved by the assembly that candidates can deliver their nomination papers to the returning officers through their nominees, proposers or seconder. Contesting candidates were authorized in writing or by their nominees. Then the returning officer shall acknowledge the receipt of the submitted nomination papers of the candidates with the proper date and time. (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. [2021](#))

Anti-Terrorism (2nd Amendment) Act, 2013

It was related to the anti-terrorism regime in Pakistan. Parliament unanimously resolved in this act that passports, licenses and credit cards would not be issued to the banned activists. Not only the banned activists but all those politicians who belonged to the banned organizations were disallowed to travel abroad. The detention period of the suspected terrorists would not be more than 90 days. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. [2022](#))

The Right to Free and Compulsory education act 2012

This act empowered every child of the country, irrespective of his/her race and sex or nationality to have the fundamental right to get free education in a government school. Providing free education to children up to 16 years is the fundamental duty of the government under the 25A article of the constitution.

The National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012

This act passed by Parliament on May 2012 was to provide relief in case of any human rights violation particular to the individual. For this purpose, a ten-member commission comprising one member from each federating unit was constituted. This commission was empowered to take suo motu action or become the party of the grieved person 'if any violation of human rights committed,' or any government official tried to create undue hurdles or showed his intentional negligence in the provision of human rights. Generally, the delaying tactics and lame excuses of the officials are the reasons to prevent human rights. Now with this act, the commission could initiate the proceeding

of pending human rights cases in different courts. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. [2022](#))

The Industrial Relations Act 2012:

On 14th March 2012, the national assembly passed this act to protect the rights of workers. This act intended to create friendly and conducive relations between employees and employers for industrial growth in the country. Employers were encouraged to establish unions to augment their demands. Through unions in the industries, they can settle their disputes and augment their rightful demands from the mill owners. One can expect that such acts will empower the labour class in society.

The Constitution (20th Amendment) Act, 2012

Free and fair elections in the country cannot possible without an independent election commission. An Independent Election commission is the requirement of democracy. With the passage of the 20th Amendment by the parliament on 14th February 2012, it became an independent institution. Another important clause inserted in this amendment was the appointment of the interim government. For the conduct of free and fair elections, a neutral interim government is encouraged. With this, the interim setup will be made through the consensus of all the parties in the assembly. Thus, this neutral arrangement was a step toward empowering the voters to elect a fair and impartial government in a transparent manner. (Khan, M. I., & Shafiq, M. [2021](#))

The National Commission on the Status of Women Bill of 2012

This bill was about the empowerment of the women's section of Pakistan. Generally, it is believed that women in Pakistan are deprived of their basic human rights. With the passage of this act women in Pakistan will be enabled to uplift themselves in socio-economic and political spheres.

The Anti-Money Laundering Bill, 2009

Money laundering is taking out money from the country illegally. The influential people take the national wealth out of the country for their personal gains. Actually, this national wealth is to

be utilized for the welfare of the people. But out of the country it is believed to be used for terrorist activities. Parliament took this bold step to empower the people. Under this bill, it was declared that 'the persons involved in money laundering will face a rigorous imprisonment'. It was further added in this bill that the punishment will be extendable up to ten years. The person involved in the money laundering will be fined up to one million rupees along with the fortification of the property. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. [2022](#))

The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010

This act was related to the protection of women from harassment in their duty places. It was the way to empower women. Under this act, culprits would be imprisoned along with the fine.

The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act 2009

It was an alarming situation for the people of Pakistan that some groups (blackmailing) poor people started donating their organs to foreigners. The assembly passed this act on 12th November 2009 and decided that donation related to organs of the body would be fully banned. It authorized recognized doctors to operate the human organ only for treatment purposes. The act declared the punishment up to ten years imprisonment along with a fine of worth one million for the persons involved in removing the organ of the body. (Bashir, H., Khan, A. B., & Qasim, G. [2022](#))

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2009

Domestic violence is very common in our rural society. It is the need of the hour that we as Pakistani should develop human values. This act passed by the parliament was related to the women, children, and families who were vulnerable to violence. This act formulated protection committees at the Tehsil level. The objective of the committee was to protect the victims from domestic violence. It comprised of a police officer, a lady SHO and two female councillors. It was incorporated in this act that these cases will be trialled under the criminal law category. Khan, (M. I., & Shafiq, M. [2021](#))

Eighteen Constitutional Amendment 2010

General elections were held in 2008, and the civilian government under the leadership of Asif Zardari was established. Earlier power-sharing arrangements of the federation were tilted towards the strong centre and the power of dissolving the assembly rested with the president. This power of the president was like a hanging sword on the elected parliament. It was the lasting desire of all the politicians that this power of the president must be curtailed. PPP government under Zardari initiated constitutional reforms. It was unanimous agreement of all the political parties that the parliamentary nature of the constitution must be restored so that the elected assembly may complete its five years term.

To materialize this objective, a parliamentary committee was entrusted with the task of introducing the new amendment i.e. eighteenth amendment in the constitution. The government constituted a committee comprising 26 members from all major political parties. The committee's recommendations were endorsed by the national assembly on 8th April 2010. On 19th April 2010, it became law after the final signature of the president.

With the passage of the eighteenth amendment, the powers of the Prime Minister were restored and the president's power of dissolving the assembly was curtailed. The amended Article 46 of the constitution empowered the PM not to inform the president on all internal and external matters. Article 48 also stipulates that the president is 'bound to act upon the advice of the PM'.

Thus the power of the parliament was restored as the power of the PM indicated the power of the parliament. Pakistan moved towards a Westminster-style political system. The 18th amendment not only empowered the leader of the house but the role of the opposition leader in the assembly was also enhanced. The opposition leader can use his role in important matters like the appointment of judges and other posts. He was also allowed to show his due role in the formation of a caretaker government. The power of the senate was also increased through this amendment which is the power of the federating units. (Arif, M. [2021](#)).

The 18th constitutional amendment was adopted to consolidate democracy in Pakistan. It amended 102 articles of the constitution. Among many others, the important features of this amendment were the revival of the parliamentary form of government, the federal structure which was incorporated in the original constitution and the independence of the judiciary. The controversial provision earlier inserted by the dictators especially to dissolve the elected parliament was changed. Appointing the honourable judges through judicial commission was devised. Earlier, graduation was mandatory for the contesting candidates. 18th amendment abolished this condition for the candidates. (Hussain, M., & Kokab, R. U. 2012).

The longstanding demand of the federating units of removing the concurrent list from the constitution was also done. Power was divided according to the three lists in the constitution. These three lists were federal, provincial and concurrent. Another demand of the provinces was also accepted. NWFP (North West Frontier Province) was renamed KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) according to the wishes of the people of the province.

More power of parliament was restored in many areas. For instance, the power of holding the referendum by the parliament was restored. Now the joint sitting of the parliament can decide the holding of the referendum. It was also inserted in this amendment that the mediatory committees will not function during the legislative process. Now parliament can do the legislation independently.

One more power of the president regarding imposing of emergency was brought under the control of parliament. This amendment bounds the president to consult with the parliament before imposing the emergency in the country. prior permission or approval from the parliament within ten days is necessary for the president to

impose an emergency (Hussain, M., & Kokab, R. U. 2012). Thus from the above discussion, it is concluded that the restoration of the power of the parliament means the empowerment of the people.

Conclusion

In the parliament, legislation is considered like blood in the body. It will only function if there are limitations on civil dictatorship which is reflected in the behaviour of the leading political parties and their chairmen. All other state institutions should work within their constitutional limits. If the elected members of the parliament, ministries and divisions are answerable to the people, it means that people are empowered according to the definition of empowerment. During this period, parliament introduced the 18th amendment in the constitution, which is a step towards empowerment. The 7th NFC award was another step to empower the people in the federating units. Besides, a proper procedure of appointment related to the judiciary, independent election commission and the neutral interim government were some achievements that led to the empowerment. To oversight the national expenditure, Public Account Committee was headed by the opposition leader. Another procedure of people's empowerment through parliament is the participation of people in the decision-making process. For this, it was evident that for the first time in the political history of Pakistan, the elected parliament completed its term and the change of the government took place through the election of 2013. The passage of the 18th amendment strengthened the democratic process as with so many other provisions, it took away the power of dissolution of assembly from the president. But overall critical issues like terrorism, financial problems and above all the implementation of local self-government could not happen.

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