

# Federal Cabinet of Pakistan: Composition and Stratification, 1988-1999

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## Abstract

The paper focuses on the Federal cabinet in two perspectives i.e. formation and stratification of the federal cabinet of Pakistan from the year 1988 to 1999. This period observed four elected governments with coalition set-ups. Ms. Benazir Bhutto led two cabinets, which were dominantly coalition teams. Mr. Nawaz Sharif, whose first cabinet was set up in coalition, led two other cabinets but the second one was largely a single-party cabinet, though it included two ministers from ANP and MQM each. Although the state machinery included a number of Ministers of State and advisers but the study deals with composition and stratification of full cabinet ministers who are considered permanent members of the Cabinet in parliamentary system. However, Ministers of State and Advisers, sometimes, play prominent role in decision-making but they do not enjoy full-time membership status of the cabinet and theoretically, cabinet is considered as the decision-making body in parliamentary institution. Stratification includes study of the appointment criteria and working of the Inner cabinet besides a brief account of social background of the Ministers, who served the state during period under study.

**Keywords:** Appointment criteria, Federal cabinet composition, Inner cabinet, Stratification

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## INTRODUCTION

This study evaluates the institution of the federal cabinet of Pakistan in two dimensions: first, its composition with the formation of every new government in the period between 1988 and 1999, second, categorization and representation of multiple political parties and social groups in this decision-making institution at the federal level. The period under study observed four general elections i.e. 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997; formation of four cabinets, while chairing it by two young political leaders i.e. Ms. Benazir Bhutto and Mr. Nawaz Sharif. The two cabinets of Ms. Bhutto were coalition, whereas first cabinet of Nawaz Sharif was coalition, yet his second cabinet was pre-dominantly a single party; few ministers, however, taken from ANP and MQM, too.

However, inclusion of such parties was not requirement of the PML-N government as it already had two-third majority in the parliament. The study also discovers that cabinets of Ms. Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif repeatedly appointed few ministers in both the terms. It explores the appointment criteria to get membership of the federal Cabinet, which largely remained similar during the four regimes of the period. The prominent standards of appointment were approval from the establishment, party-affiliation, recommendation from the coalition partners and nepotism. However, general yardsticks such as intellect, experience and qualification were usually ignored. Relying on inner circle for decision-making had remained a hallmark of the period as both PMs Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif relied on the inner cabinet usually wherever they had room for decision-making in presence of a strong establishment.

There is great need to academically explore the institution of cabinet as this institution only been added as a passing reference in few works on political developments of Pakistan. The paper has been produced on the basis of the accounts, written by various ministers of the regime including Sartaj Aziz, Gohar Ayub, Sayida Abida Hussain, Iqbal Akhund, Javed Jabbar, Mushahid Hussain; representatives of the establishment including Asad Durrani, Shuja Nawaz, Roedad Khan and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto besides sources available at National Documentation Centre, newspapers, books and others.

### **Formation and Composition of the Federal Cabinet**

This part of the paper looks into the formation and composition of the four elected cabinets from 1988 to 1999. The discussion explores that cabinets of this period included ministers from various political parties and enlarged in multiple stages. It gives an overview of the dismissal of the various governments, too.

#### First Cabinet, 1988-1990

General elections held on 16 November 1988; Pakistan People's Party won 93 seats out of 207 and was in a position to establish coalition set up only. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan did not invite Benazir Bhutto for fifteen days to form the government and met with the other party-leaders for formation of the coalition government without PPP.<sup>1</sup> The reason behind the delay was dissatisfaction and distrust of the establishment towards Benazir Bhutto. However, because of failure to form government without PPP, the President had to invite Benazir Bhutto who took oath

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<sup>1</sup> Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West* (London: ACBS Company, 2008), 197.

as Prime Minister on 2 December 1988. Meanwhile, the establishment had signed a five-point agreement with Ms. Benazir Bhutto, which prominently included that foreign policy as well as foreign minister i.e. Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, would not be change.<sup>2</sup> The government formed in coalition with Independents at the federal level. However, coalition set up been established in Sindh with MQM and in NWFP with ANP.<sup>3</sup>

Cabinet took oath on 4 December 1988 with eleven ministers. The number of ministers increased gradually, which reached to twenty-two, whereas, the number of Ministers of State reached to twenty-four. All Ministers who took oath on 4 December were from PPP except Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was an appointee of the establishment. PPP Ministers were Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Senior Minister without Portfolio, Syed Faisal Saleh Hayat, Minister of Commerce, Local Government and Rural Development and Industries, Mr. Makhdoom Amin Faheem, Minister of Communications and Railways, Agha Tariq Khan, Minister of Culture and Tourism later called Culture and Supports, Rao Sikandar Iqbal, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Syed Aamir Haider Kazmi, Minister of Health, Special Education and Social Welfare Education, Jehangir Badar, Minister of Housing and Works, Science and Technology and Petroleum and Natural Resources, Aitzaz Ahsan, Minister of Interior and Law and Justice, Makhdum Ahmad Awan, Minister of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Muhammad Hanif Khan, Minister of States and Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs later, Housing and Works, Syed Iftikhar Hussain Gillani, Minister of Law and justice.<sup>4</sup>

Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari was add up in the Cabinet on 28 December 1988 as Minister of Water and Power.<sup>5</sup> Eight more Ministers added in the Cabinet on 23 March 1989, five of whom had been elected in Independent positions. They were Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Minister of Education, Zafar Ali Leghari, Minister of Railways, Khan Bahadur Khan, Minister of Religious Affairs and Minority Affairs, Khawaja Ahmad Tariq Raheem, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Baz Muhammad Khan Khetran, Minister of States and Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs later Kashmir Affairs and Northern Affairs. Besides Ministers from Independent seats, PPP leaders Ali Nawaz Shah, Minister of Industries, Begum Rehana Sarwar, Minister of Women Development, Syed Yusuf Reza Gillani, Minister of Tourism Division and Housing and Works also took oath on the day.<sup>6</sup> Mian Ghulam Mohammad Ahmad Khan Maneka was included in the cabinet as Minister of Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis on 11 November 1989.

Total Ministers in her cabinet were twenty-two; however, it included twenty-four Ministers of State at maximum. Only five ministers were not elected on PPP tickets and belonged to independent cadres. Weiss has mentioned that on March 23, 1989, PM expanded her cabinet to forty-three, which is partially correct, as Weiss has included Ministers of State in the total number.<sup>7</sup> It was anomaly of the approach of the PM that within two months, the number of her Advisers and Special Assistants in addition to the Ministers reached to twenty-four. The new entrants in January

<sup>2</sup> Iqbal Akhund, *Trial and Error: The Advent and Eclipse of Benazir Bhutto* (Karachi: OUP 2000), 77-78.

<sup>3</sup> *Dawn* (Karachi), December 3, 1988 and I. A. Rehman, "Another Bhutto at the helm," *Dawn*, 28 October 2017

<sup>4</sup> First Cabinet of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Ministries of the Federal Government, Official Record prepared by the Cabinet Wing, National Documentation Centre, Islamabad.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Anita M. Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan," *Asian Survey Vol. 30, No. 5* (May 1990): 439 (433-445).

1989 were Rt. General M. Imtiaz Ali, Adviser on Defense Affairs, Malik Mohammad Qasim, Adviser for Political Affairs,<sup>8</sup> and they were appointed on recommendation of the establishment. Appointment of that large number of ministers, ministers of state and advisers could not get appreciation from intelligentsia,<sup>9</sup> who believed that PM must have relied on enhancement of quality of work. Total representation of Punjab was around 50 percent.<sup>10</sup>

Benazir mentioned that she had appointed a number of women in her cabinet.<sup>11</sup> Anita M. Weiss writes that on March 23, 1989, five women were included in the cabinet. They were Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Minister of State for Education, Begum Rehana Serwar, Minister of State for Women Division and later, Women's Development, Dr. Mahmooda Shah, Minister of State for Special Education and Social Welfare, Begum Khakwani, Minister of State for Population Welfare.<sup>12</sup> Practically, only two women in addition to PM i.e. Nusrat Bhutto and Begum Rehana Sarwar were included in the first cabinet of Benazir with ministerial portfolios. Whereas three were included as Ministers of State and it seems Weiss's opinion needs revisit. Even then, it was a positive sign. Her opposing groups ridiculed her. One more extra-ordinary development of this cabinet was establishment of Women Development Ministry.<sup>13</sup>

The cabinet survived a sever attack on the government in form of no-confidence motion. Retired military ISI officers tried to convince MNAs to launch and materialize no-confidence move against PM. This operation named as midnight Jackel.<sup>14</sup> Gen. Asad had mentioned that Military Intelligence and Military establishment initiated operation Midnight Jackal; pursued few MNAs of PPP to be in favour of no confidence motion but Ms. Bhutto successfully survived the attack on her government.<sup>15</sup> No-confidence motion faced failure but only after few months, this cabinet had to face disastrous dismissal with a stroke of President's pen on 6 August 1990. However, few facts led the cabinet to that end. Aitzaz Ahsan, Interior Minister had a hot talk with corps commander Lt. Gen. Nawaz on Exit control list. Commander insisted that PPP government was trying to punish its opponents while including their names in the list and that General was not ready to use the army for the said purpose.<sup>16</sup> All ministers of the federal cabinet had submitted their resignations to PM in 1990, though were working with full protocol,<sup>17</sup> but with great sense of insecurity. Running of democracy seemed to be difficult. Many ministers had appointed external advisors, too.<sup>18</sup>

Confrontation developed between PM and the military generals on issues of new appointments, Pucca Qila incident and rising corruption etc. PM also tried to interfere with the working of army's

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<sup>8</sup> Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad, *Wazir-i-Azam Benazir Bhutto: Namzadgi se Bartarfi Tuk (Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto: From Appointment to Dismissal)* (Lahore: Iqra Enterprises, 1995), 162.

<sup>9</sup> Mushtaq Ahmed, *Benazir: Politics of Power* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2005), 50.

<sup>10</sup> Shahid Mukhtar, *Quaid-i-Azam se Ghulam Ishaq Khan Tuk (Urdu) (From Quaid-i-Azam to Ghulam Ishaq)* (Lahore: Shahid Publications, 1993), 256.

<sup>11</sup> Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam*, 200.

<sup>12</sup> Anita M. Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women, 439.

<sup>13</sup> Saeed Shafqat, "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 7 (July 1996): 666.

<sup>14</sup> Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan Its Army and the Wars Within* (Karachi OUP, 2008), 433.

<sup>15</sup> Asad Durani, *Pakistan Adrift: Navigating Troubled Waters* (U.K: C. Hurst & Co, 2018), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 429.

<sup>17</sup> Prof. Gafoor Ahmad, *Wazir-i-Azam Benazir Bhutto*, 416.

<sup>18</sup> Inayatullah, *Pakistan Politics: A Personal View* (Lahore: Ferozsons Pvt. Ltd., 1993), 10-11

selection board. It led military's top brass to think that PM Benazir was violating the commitment that she would not interfere with the military's affairs. On the other side, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan insisted on informing him with all decisions of the cabinet, even those, which did not fall the jurisdiction of the President. PM Benazir disliked it.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, in the corps commanders' meeting in July 1990, the generals decided that they could no more 'accept the supremacy of the government; COAS conveyed their decision to the president.<sup>20</sup> President was already dissatisfied, so he dismissed Bhutto government on 6 August 1990. Ironically, few days before dismissal of the first government of Benazir, Defense Minister of State declared that 'there was no controversy between the political and military sides.'<sup>21</sup>

### Second Cabinet, 1990-1993

Following the dismissal of PM Benazir's Cabinet only after twenty months of its formation, a caretaker set-up was established under Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, who arranged for the elections in October 1990. Islami Jamhuri Ittehad, a combination of different political parties, won a comfortable majority. Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) was an alliance of the Pakistan Muslim League as major component, and the other smaller parties were, National Peoples' Party (NPP), Jamat-i-Islami (JI) and Niazi group of Jamiat-ul-Ulma-i-Islam (JUI).<sup>22</sup> Nawaz Sharif was leader of the Pakistan Muslim League, the largest party in the alliance, so he took vote of confidence as PM from the National Assembly. However, he included Mutihida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Awami National Party (ANP) as coalition collaborators, while setting up the government and appointing the cabinet.

First Cabinet of Nawaz Sharif took oath on 9 November 1990 with nineteen ministers and added only two Ministers of State. Ministers who belonged to ML were Sartaj Aziz, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Minister of Interior and Industries, Malik Muhammad Naeem Khan, Minister of Commerce, Lt. Gen (Retd.) Abdul Majeed Malik, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Muhammad Ijaz-ul-Haq Minister of Labour, Manpower & Overseas Pakistanis, Choudhri Hamid Nasir Chatha, Minister of Planning and Development and Science and Technology, Syed Fakhar Imam, Minister of Education, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (Addl. Charge), Sardar Yaqub Khan Nasser, Minister of Environment and Urban Affairs States and Frontier, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources, Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan, Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Syed Ali Gohar Shah, Minister of Youth Affairs, Syed Tasneem Nawaz Gardezi, Minister of Health, and Syed Tariq Mahmood, Minister of Housing and Works. Ministers from other political parties were Mr. Islam Nabi, Minister of Production (MQM), Rana Chandar Singh, Minister of Narcotics Control (Pakistan Hindu Party), and Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs (appointed on recommendation of the establishment), Maulana Muhammad Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi (JUP/IJI), Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Special Education & SW

<sup>19</sup> Samina Yasmeen, "Democracy in Pakistan: The Third Dismissal" *Asian Survey*, V. 34, No. 6 (June 1994): 576.

<sup>20</sup> Interview of Saeed Shafqat with a Senior Military Officer cited in Saeed Shafqat, "Pakistan under Benazir, 663.

<sup>21</sup> Ziring "Pakistan in 1990: the Fall of Benazir Bhutto," *Asian Survey*, Vol.31 Issue 2 (Feb. 1991): 113 and Iqbal Akhund, *Trial and Error: The Advent and Eclipse of Benazir Bhutto* (Karachi: OUP 2000), 305.

<sup>22</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Pakistan's Lingering Crises of Dyarchy," *Asian Survey* Vol. 32, No. 7 (July 1992): 618

(Addl. Charge), Ghulam Murtaza Khan Jatoi (NPP), Minister of Communications and Mir. Hazar Khan Bijrani<sup>23</sup> (Independent), Minister of Railways, Defence Production Division.<sup>24</sup>

PM had to include ten Cabinet ministers in the team on 10 September 1991 just to accommodate several others; its number reached to twenty-nine, then. The new entrants from Muslim League were Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Minister of Defence, Anwar Saifullah Khan, Minister of Environment and Urban Affairs, Shaikh Rashid Ahmad, Minister of Industries and Addl. Charge of Culture, Mian Abdul Sattar Lalika, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Muhammad Aslam Khan Khattak, Minister of Inter Provincial Coordination, Ch. Abdul Ghafoor, Minister of Law and Justice and Ch. Amir Hussain, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Youth Affairs. Ministers from other political partners were Ghulam Ahmed Bilor (ANP), Minister of Railways, Illahi Bukhsh Soomro (Nominee of the Establishment, elected as an Independent candidate), Minister of Science and Technology and Defence Production and Shahzada Muhammad Yousaf (Independent Candidate), Minister of Water and Power.<sup>25</sup>

Twenty ministers in this cabinet belonged to ML and nine belonged to other political parties or from group of independents. Ghulam Ishaq Khan majorly decided the composition of Nawaz Sharif's first cabinet but Nawaz Sharif started introducing changes after a few months.<sup>26</sup> He got rid of Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, Foreign Minister and Ijlal Haider Zaidi, the Adviser on Defense in quick succession.<sup>27</sup> Besides it, initially, he had appointed a cabinet of talented few, but later accommodated many partners of the alliance.<sup>28</sup> He also included Ministers from MQM, though on junior level i.e. Minister of State, without any consent from the partners in IJI<sup>29</sup> and from ANP, too, though both the Parties were not part of IJI.

On the occasion when Nawaz Sharif enhanced the number of his ministers, President Ishaq Khan was invited to take oath from them. Oath-taking ceremony was ready; ministers were standing in a queue, foreign ambassadors were waiting; President Ishaq reached, but demanded to include his son-in-law Anwar Saifullah in the cabinet. PM was not ready and President refused to take oath. After dialogue of one hour, Anwar Saifullah was included as Minister of State.<sup>30</sup> Ziring mentions that Nawaz Sharif's first cabinet was reasonably smaller than Benazir's first cabinet.<sup>31</sup> Practically, it was larger consisting of twenty-nine ministers than Benazir's first cabinet which consisted of twenty-two Ministers. However, PM Benazir's cabinet worked with twenty-four Ministers of State who are not directly part of the Cabinet on permanent basis. Nawaz Sharif's cabinet included

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<sup>23</sup> Mir. Hazar Khan Bijrani won the elections on an Independent Seat, though remained a leader of PPP during most of his political career.

<sup>24</sup> First Cabinet of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Ministries of the Federal Government, Official Record prepared by the Cabinet Wing, National Documentation Centre, Islamabad

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Sartaj Aziz, *Between Dreams and Realities: Some Milestones in Pakistan's History*, (Karachi: OUP, 2009), 113.

<sup>27</sup> Asad Durani, *Pakistan Adrift*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, (Karachi: OUP, 1999), 538.

<sup>29</sup> Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad, *Nawaz Sharif Ka Pehla Dor-i-Hakumat (Urdu) (First Regime of Nawaz Sharif)* (Lahore: Iqra Interprisers, 1997), 94.

<sup>30</sup> Rauf Kalasra in interview with Chaudhary Nisar Ahmed in Rauf Kalasra, *Aik Siyasat Kai Kahanian (One Politics Many Stories)*, (Lahore: Dost Publications, 2015), 50.

<sup>31</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, 533.

eighteen Ministers of State. His cabinet, too, accommodated personnel from all provinces but majority were from Punjab.

Nawaz Sharif's first regime came in first clash with the military high command on the policy related to Gulf War and second on army's intervention in Sindh without the approval of PM. Sending Pakistani troops for the protection of Holy places created problems for Pakistan on western front. However, strong public reaction was observe, which included burning of US flag and Bush's pictures, hoisting of Iraq's flag and Saddam Hussain's pictures. Such demonstrations were led by JI; one of the main components of IJI. Pak-US relations were at lowest point at that time.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, due to military intervention in Sindh, MQM-partner of IJI government- was highly critical and it started parting of the ways. Thirdly, Nawaz Sharif appointed Lt. Gen Javed Nasir as Director General ISI without getting usual list of the names of the Generals. Gen. Asif Nawaz was unhappy on that procedure of appointment.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, JI also left the coalition.<sup>34</sup> On 18 April 1993, Sharif's government was dismiss in 'pretext of the resignations of nearly a third of Sharif's cabinet.'<sup>35</sup> The case was file in the Supreme Court, which decided that Ishaq Khan's action was unconstitutional and it restored the Sharif government. Although it was a great victory for parliamentary system in Pakistan but practically, system of government came to a standstill point with the PM and the President at loggerheads with each other. Finally, both PM and President resigned with the involvement of Gen Kakar.

### Third Cabinet, 1993-1996

Waseem Sajjad, Chairman of Senate took over the charge of the Acting President and Moeen Qureshi appointed as PM. The 1993 elections brought the return of Benazir Bhutto as PM for the second time and Benazir Bhutto took oath as Prime Minister on 19 October 1993. Benazir discussed the issue of formulation of her cabinet in Maleeha Lodhi's home in 1993 after elections. Cabinet was form in coalition with the PML-J, Independents and a few small parties. Farooq Leghari appointed as foreign minister that time, though he wanted finance ministry. Meanwhile, he was elected as President.<sup>36</sup> Only two ministers of her cabinet including Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of Foreign Affairs, later, elected as President and Aftab Shahban Mirani, Minister of Defence took oath on the same day. Four Ministers were included in the Cabinet on October 21 1993. Two i.e. Dr. Sher Afgan Khan Niazi, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Social Welfare and Special Education and Major General (Retd) Nasirullah Khan Babar, Minister of Interior, Narcotics Control, Federal Investigation belonged to PPP. Whereas two others i.e. Brig. (Retd) Muhammad Asghar (PML-J), Minister of Industries & Production and

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<sup>32</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, (Karachi: OUP, 2013), 151.

<sup>33</sup> Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 452.

<sup>34</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, 152.

<sup>35</sup> Yasmeen, "Democracy in Pakistan, 578 and Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, 541.

<sup>36</sup> Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 484.

Mohammad Afzal Khan<sup>37</sup> Minister of States & Frontier regions, Kashmir Affairs & Northern Affairs, belonged to PML-J and Pashtunkhwa Qaumi Party (PQP).<sup>38</sup>

Two more PPP ministers i.e. Sardar Asaff Ahmad Ali, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Syed Iqbal Haider, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs were added in the cabinet on November 16 1993.<sup>39</sup> Federal Cabinet, further, welcomed eight more Ministers on January 26, 1994. Ministers with PPP background were Makhdoom Muhammad Amin Fahim, (Re-designated as Minister for Housing and Works from 28th July, 1994), Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Minister of Water and Power, Ch. Ahmad Mukhtar, Minister of Commerce, Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Khurshed Ahmad Shah, Minister of Education, Nawab Muhammad Yousif Talpur, Minister of Food, Agriculture & Livestock. However, Minister with other political belongings were Julius Salik, Minister of Population Welfare (Quami Masiha; head of Minority) and Anwar Saifullah Khan (PML-J), Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources.<sup>40</sup> Two more ministers of PPP background i.e. Prof. N. D. Khan, Minister of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Pir Syed Abdul Qadir Shah Jillani, Minister without Portfolio were made part of the cabinet on December 20 1994. In that way, Cabinet included ministers in many bits and pieces. Out of a total eighteen ministers, only four belonged to coalition partners.

This cabinet worked for most of the period with eighteen Ministers; however, a major shuffle took place on July 31 1996 and August 1 1996. That time eight more ministers made part of the Cabinet. Ministers with PPP background were Rao Sikandar Iqbal (PPP), Minister of Sports and Tourism, Haji Muhammad Nawaz Khokhar (PPP), Minister of Science and Technology, Jehangir Badar, Minister of Political Affairs & Religious Affairs, Ch. Abdul Sattar, Minister of Industries, Sayed Iqbal Haider, Minister of Human Rights, Asif Ali Zardari, Minister of Investment, Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of Privatization (and Minister of Finance only on October 28 1996), whereas the government was dismissed on November 5 1996. Only one i.e. Arbab Muhammad Jehangir, Minister of Narcotics Control, belonged to ANP, (who later, joined PPP).

Cabinet was working with twenty-six ministers during last months of the regime. PM Benazir's government came into clash with the military high command and wanted one junior officer be appointed as COAS, but President Leghari vetoed in favour of the institution's choice and appointed Gen. Jehangir Karamat as COAS.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, extra judicial killing were at rise,<sup>42</sup> which proved to be one of the charges of Benazir's dismissal as PM. President Leghari criticized Benazir on ministerial incompetence, too. It happened after Benazir's involvement in President's right of appointment of judges and military top brass.<sup>43</sup> Bhutto government signed some shady business deals and disposal of a gas field was one of such deals. President objected on it on Benazir and her few ministers. Other charges included, "undermining the independence of judiciary,

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<sup>37</sup> He was popularly known as Khan Lala. He was from Swat and dissented from ANP and established ANP Real, later merged in the PQP. Dr. Mohammad Taqi, 'In memoriam: Mohammad Afzal Khan,' *Daily Times*, 4 November 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Second Cabinet of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Ministries of the Federal Government, Official Record prepared by the Cabinet Wing, National Documentation Centre, Islamabad.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Laporte Jr., "Pakistan in 1996: Starting Out Again," *Asian Survey Vol. 37, No. 2* (Feb 1997): 118

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 120

<sup>43</sup> John Bray, "Pakistan at 50: A State in Decline," *International Affairs Vol. 73, No. 2* (April 1997): 317.

conducting a sustained assault on the judicial organ of the state.”<sup>44</sup> PM wanted sacking of the chief justice Sajjad Ali Shah, her own appointee. President Leghari opposed that move, too. Another rift was on Murtaza Bhutto’s case. PM and Zardari gave an impression of involvement of the President in murder of Murtaza Bhutto. Whereas, the President alleged that the whole police staff was appointee of PM and Zardari in Clifton area.

PM sent three ministers i.e. Rao Sikandar Iqbal, Khurshid Shah and Nawaz Shakoor to settle the issues with the President. President emphasized to control Zardari’s involvement in administrative affairs and his corruption.<sup>45</sup> However, no improvement was observed in the relationship of both the institutions and finally, President used his power of dismissal under eighth amendment on November 5, 1996. It is alleged that Abida Hussain played important role in dismissal of Benazir via President Leghari.<sup>46</sup> Meetings to discuss dismissal issue were held in Syeda Abida Hussain’s home.<sup>47</sup> Shuja Nawaz had mentioned that the primary cause of Benazir’s second dismissal was financial corruption of her and her husband and the lies of the government, which claimed that there were \$625 million foreign reserve, but those were actually \$325 million.<sup>48</sup> All such factors played their part in the dismissal of the government.

#### Fourth Cabinet, 1997-1999

Following the dismissal, Malik Meraj Khalid appointed as caretaker PM. Elections held in February 1997. Farooq Leghari nominated caretaker Cabinet under Malik Meraj Khalid, after second dismissal of Benazir. It is attributed that all such people who played their part in dismissal of her government were included in the cabinet. They were Najam Sethi, Irshad Haqani, Shahid Hameed, Abida Hussain, Shahid Javed Burki etc. Malik Meraj Khalid did not know the planning of dismissal.<sup>49</sup> The government arranged for fourth general elections in a period of less than ten years. Pakistan Muslim League won an overwhelming majority<sup>50</sup> and Nawaz Sharif’s second term of premiership started.

Nawaz Sharif took oath on 11 February 1997 as PM, whereas, his cabinet took oath on 25 February 1997 with only six ministers. They were Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister of Commerce, Industries and Investment, Sartaj Aziz, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Statistics, Gohar Ayub Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs & Northern Area and States & Frontier Regions and Interior, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Minister of Railways, Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Syeda Abida Hussain, Minister of Population, Welfare, Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education, Environment, Local Government and Rural Development and Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Minister of Water and Power, Petroleum and Natural Resources.<sup>51</sup> Muhammad Azam Khan Hoti of ANP was appointed as Minister of Communications

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>45</sup> Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 485

<sup>46</sup> Rauf Kalasra in interview with Chaudhary Nisar Ahmed in Kalasra, *Aik Siyasat*, 102-03

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>48</sup> Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 486.

<sup>49</sup> Rauf Kalasra in interview with Chaudhary Nisar Ahmed in Kalasra, *Aik Siyasat*, 110.

<sup>50</sup> Dawn, 4 February 1997.

<sup>51</sup> Second Cabinet of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Ministries of the Federal Government, Official Record prepared by the Cabinet Wing, National Documentation Centre, Islamabad

on 20 March 1997.<sup>52</sup> However, eleven Ministers were added in the group of Ministers on 11 July 1997 and many ministries were reshuffled. All new ministers, except one, were from ML.

They were Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Minister of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs, Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Minister of Education, Makhdoom Muhammad Javed Hashmi, Minister of Health, Raja Nadir Pervaiz Khan, Minister of Water and Power and communications, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Malik Abdul Majeed, Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas and States and Frontier Regions, Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan Nasar, Minister of Railways, Mian Muhammad Yaseen Khan Wattoo, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Division, Mian Abdul Sattar Laleka, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Raja Mohammad Zafar -ul-Haq, Minister of Religious Affairs, Zakat and Ushr and Minorities Affairs, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Minister of Industries and Production was from MQM.<sup>53</sup> The last two entrants to the Cabinet were Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed, Minister of Information and Media Development and Khalid Anwar, Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights. They took oath on August 8, 1997.<sup>54</sup>

Total Ministers in this cabinet were nineteen. All except Azam Khan Hoti and Dr. Khalid Maqbool belonged to the Muslim League-Nawaz. Syeda Abida Hussain mentions that after passing 13<sup>th</sup> amendment in the constitution and after budget session, Nawaz Sharif expanded his cabinet and added twenty ministers.<sup>55</sup> This understanding is not correct, as total ministers never exceeded nineteen. However, rest of the five were Ministers of State. On 25 February, Nawaz Sharif appointed a small cabinet of seven members and took five months to decide who else would be part of his cabinet. He faced difficulty to choose few out of many contenders. He added thirteen new members on July 1997. Nine were Ministers and four were Minister of State.<sup>56</sup>

The ministers who constantly maintained in both the cabinets of PM Benazir and Nawaz Sharif were few. Only Makhdoom Amin Faheem, Rao Sikandar Iqbal and Jehangir Badar, continued their positions with different portfolios in the two cabinets of PM Benazir. Comparatively, more ministers turned up for the second term as federal ministers during two terms of Nawaz Sharif. They were Sartaj Aziz, Chaudhey Shujaat Hussain, Abdul Majeed Malik, Ch. Nisar Ali Khan, Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Shaikh Rashid Ahmad and Mian Abdul Sattar Laleka. Anwar Saifullah, son in law of the President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, also served the two cabinet i.e. first cabinet of Nawaz Sharif and second cabinet of Benazir. Sahibzada Yaqub Khan also served first two cabinets of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

Both Prime Ministers could not develop very conducive and cordial relations with the majority of their cabinet colleagues. PM Benazir was impatient to hear opposite views or disliked difference of opinion. On various occasions, she was not ready or even did not permit to have debate on issues. She appreciated approval of her version mostly.<sup>57</sup> Javed Jabbar mentions that challenges, faced by the Cabinet were many and multifarious i.e. unconducive attitude of the President, distrust

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Syeda Abida Hussain, *Power Failure: The Political Odyssey of a Pakistani Women* (Karachi: OUP, 2015), 536-37.

<sup>56</sup> Sartaj Aziz, *Between Dreams and Realities*, 162.

<sup>57</sup> Javed Jabbar, *"But, Prime Minister..." A Political Memoir* (Karachi: Paramount Books, 2021), 200-201.

of the military establishment and non-cooperative attitude of the Punjab government. Sometimes, PM was not willing to permit ministers to express their opinions fully or to criticize the PM's policies or actions.<sup>58</sup> Overall, her assent considered compulsory on all policy decisions,<sup>59</sup> approved by the cabinet. Similarly, Nawaz Sharif did not share much of the power with the Cabinet. "Nawaz Sharif was not any better [than Benazir]. He would take decisions without consulting his cabinet or the National Assembly..."<sup>60</sup> Nawaz Sharif's personalized and whimsical political management alienated several allies and ethno-nationalist groups in the smaller provinces.

### **Criteria of Appointment and Social Background of the Ministers**

During both PPP regimes, major criteria for cabinet appointment were Party-affiliation, maintaining coalition, and sometimes even opposition candidates were given position in the cabinet just to weaken the strong opposition. First Cabinet of Ms. Bhutto even had to accept appointments made by the establishment i.e. Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan and V. A. Jaffrey who was Principal Secretary to the President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and appointed as Adviser on Finance affairs on the advice of the establishment. He mentions that on occasion of his swearing-in ceremony, PM entered the room and simply asked who among you Jeffrey is. He says that he stood up and introduced himself.<sup>61</sup> That was the way, his appointment taken place. The other negative appointment criteria was bestowing such MNAs from opposition benches who had not supported vote of confidence against PM in 1989. Mian Ghulam Mohammad Ahmad Manika appointed as Minister while following this criterion. His appointment set a negative trend in Pakistan's politics.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Benazir in 1996 appointed Haji Nawaz Khokhar, a convert from PML (N), in the federal cabinet. She wanted to weaken the opposition party.<sup>63</sup>

As Independent MNAs were coalition partners during first regime of Ms. Bhutto, so they were also given cabinet portfolios. Most of the PPP ministers, in the second term, belonged to rural constituencies as PPP had lost elections from urban areas.<sup>64</sup> Some ministers belonged to PML-J, Independents and smaller parties i.e. Quami Masiha. Direct appointees from the establishment were not given space on the portfolio of the Minister, though few of them were appointed as Adviser or Special Assistants, who were not part of the Cabinet technically. Nepotism had been emerged as an important criterion of appointment during both terms of PPP. Benazir's husband, father in law, mother etc. had been given with important portfolios. In the process of appointing cabinet ministers, relevance, intellect, expertise, wisdom, qualification etc. got lesser attention for appointment on higher portfolios of Federal Minister. Overall majority of the Ministers and Ministers of State belonged to PPP.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 201-202.

<sup>59</sup> Mushtaq Ahmed, *Benazir: Politics of Power*, 262.

<sup>60</sup> Laporte, Jr., "Pakistan in 1995, 182.

<sup>61</sup> Mushahid Hussain in interview with V. A. Jaffrey cited in Mushahid Hussain and Akmal Hussain, *Pakistan: Problems of Governance* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1993), 39-40.

<sup>62</sup> Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad, *Wazir-i-Azam Benazir Bhutto*, 416.

<sup>63</sup> Bray, "Pakistan at 50, 321.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew R. Wilder, "Changing Patterns of Punjab Politics in Pakistan: National Assembly Election Results, 1988 and 1993" *Asian survey*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (April 1995): 393

PM Nawaz Sharif followed more or less similar appointment criteria during his first term. He had to accommodate his alliance partners including ANP, MQM, JI besides Party-affiliates. He also had to accept appointment of foreign Minister, nominated by the establishment, during early months of his first term. Other appointees of the establishment in the cabinet were Hamid Nasir Chatha, Shiekh Rashid etc. One more nominee of the establishment was Mr. Anwar Saifullah, son-in-law of the President, who had been included in the Cabinet only reluctantly. He even continued in the second cabinet of Benazir Bhutto. In that way, Gen. Baig. Gen. Asad Durrani and Gen. Hameed Gul interfered in the process of formation of the cabinet.<sup>65</sup> Besides it, his cabinet gave space to coalition partner i.e. MQM and ANP. Nawaz Sharif also tried to maintain patronage through cabinet appointments by containing the majority of the parties on his side.<sup>66</sup> However, while appointing on sensitive ministries like finance and economic affairs, expertise and qualification was the most important criteria. While following this standard Sartaj Aziz appointed as Minister of Finance. However, few credentials for appointment was change during his second tenure. Faithfulness and Punjabi-base were two important credentials during the period 1997 and 1999 for appointment in the federal cabinet. Majority of the Ministers i.e. 85% of Nawaz Sharif's Ministers in the second cabinet were from Punjab.

At one time, all prominent positions i.e. PM, President (Rafiq Tarar) and Army Chief (Jahangir Karamat) were all from Punjab. ANP in response established a new anti-Punjab movement; Pakistan Oppressed Nationalities Movement.<sup>67</sup> Both Ministers of Finance Sartaj Aziz and later Ishaq Dar were from Punjab. Similarly, second Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz was from Punjab, though first Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gohar Ayub Khan was from Khyber Pakhtunkhawa. Although PML-N was in majority and could establish government single-handedly, yet it included ANP and MQM as coalition partners. One Minister from each political party was also appointed in the federal cabinet. This time, no direct appointee of the establishment was given space in the cabinet. Ministers in four cabinets of this period belonged to mostly feudal and business background as well as many of them were professionals. However, few ministers belonged to military, minority and religious background. Hallmark of the cabinets of this period was opening ministerial positions for women. Three out of four cabinets of this period included a small number of women, too. Following table further clarifies the social background of the ministers:

### Social Background of the Ministers, 1988-1998: Federal Ministers and Minister of States

	Feudal	Businessmen	Professionals	Generals	Women	Ulema	Minorities	Unidentified	Total
Benazir	15	1	14	3	4	-	1	6	44
Nawaz	12	9	12	1	-	1	2	2	39
Benazir	17	3	13	2	1	-	1	2	39
Nawaz	8	6	8	1	2	-	-	1	26

Source: Saeed Shafqat "Democracy in Pakistan: Value Change and Challenges of Institution Building," *The Pakistan Development Review Vol No 4*, (Winter 1998): 292

<sup>65</sup> Maliha Lodhi and Zahid Hussain, "Power Play in Islamabad", *Newsline*, Karachi, June 1992, pp.25-26.

<sup>66</sup> Bray, "Pakistan at 50...", 322.

<sup>67</sup> S.A. Kochanek 'Ethnic Conflict and the Politicization of Business,' *Pakistan in 1995* ed. C.H. Kennedy and R.B. Rais (Boulder Co: Westview Press, 1995), 62.

The above table is prepared while including both Ministers and Ministers of State. It shows that majority of the PPP coalition cabinets consisted of feudal lords and professionals. However, Nawaz Sharif's Cabinets had reasonable businesspersons besides equal number of feudal and professionals. Benazir's first cabinet had visible representation of women though all of the rest of the cabinets of this period had either nominal representation of women or even worked without women. The other significant feature of this regime's cabinets was appointment of the representatives of minorities and meagre representation of Ulamas. The most important appointment criteria in the federal cabinet were backing of the establishment, party-affiliation and coalition nominations. Whereas, lesser needs were experience, relevant educational background etc.

### **Inner/Kitchen Cabinet**

Inner as well as kitchen cabinet remained intact as a comparatively stronger component than cabinet of the government during the whole period under study. However, Benazir's government popularly elected and her cabinet was parliament-based yet President and his kitchen cabinet, mostly consisting of civil bureaucrats, was equally powerful during her first regime. The other institution i.e. military bureaucracy was even more powerful under its chief than the civilian institutions.<sup>68</sup> This whole power-game resulted in troika. Eighth amendment had actually made President a powerful and independent political actor. Military chief was also enjoying veto power and could play the role of arbiter in case of disagreements between the two other branches of power.<sup>69</sup> Besides President, his kitchen cabinet and military top brass, PM Benazir also had three sets of advisers, mostly out of the Cabinet team; though some of them were men of integrity and skill but not part of the cabinet. They were

1. Her father's favourites (Rao Rashid, Chief of Air Staff, Zulfikar Ali Khan, Nasirullah Baber, Iqbal Akhund and Khalid Ahmad Kharal)
2. Benazir Bhutto's own political friends and colleagues (Aitzaz Ahsan, Iftikhar Gillani and Tariq Rahim)
3. Her husband's cronies (Fauzi Ali Kazmi, Askari and Kamal Majeedullah)<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, among all power brokers, President with his kitchen cabinet remained a strong partner of the regime in place of Benazir's advisers during the first term of her office. During second term of Benazir Bhutto, the inner circle of the PM included Asif Ali Zardari, her husband, Aitzaz Ahsan and Yusuf Reza Gillani. During Nawaz Sharif's first regime, Cabinet ministers who hailed from central Punjab were given prominence and were appointed on important portfolios. Ministers from other provinces were often ignored in decision-making.<sup>71</sup> Chaudhary Nisar was the most prominent among the inner-circle ministers. He was always active to solve problems between President and PM and between Military establishment and PM. Prof. Ghafoor, Secretary General of IJI, has mentioned that Nawaz Sharif had established a working group consisting of some

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<sup>68</sup> Vyacheslav Y. Belokrenitsky and Vladimir N. Moskalenko, *A Political History of Pakistan, 1947-2007* (Karachi: OUP, 2013), 315

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 316.

<sup>70</sup> Mushahid Hussain and Akmal Hussain, *Pakistan*, 143.

<sup>71</sup> Hasan Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan in 1998: The Polity under Pressures" *Asian Survey Vol. 39 No. 1* (Jan – Feb 1999): 178 (177-184)

members of National Assembly and Senate and few belonged to other walks of life besides very few ministers. That working group was actually designing policies mostly; not the cabinet.<sup>72</sup> His father Mohammad Sharif was always part of the dialogue between PM and the President and with other prominent figures.<sup>73</sup> PM Nawaz Sharif had to face criticism in the cabinet meetings on heavy reliance on the inner circle from his cabinet colleagues, especially during last months of his regime. In meeting of 4 April 1993, his ministers blamed kitchen cabinet on worsening of the relations between President and PM and for political instability.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, during his second regime, PM Nawaz Sharif depended heavily on a small group of close associates from central Punjab, particularly from the city of Lahore. His father and an owner of a Lahore-based newspaper chain-neither of whom held official positions in the government-his younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif (chief minister of the Punjab), and a couple of trusted friends hailing from the Lahore-to-Islamabad area exercised disproportionate clout in domestic political management; cabinet members and coalition partners from other provinces were often ignored.<sup>75</sup> Gohar Ayub, foreign minister also has mentioned that Nawaz Sharif's kitchen cabinet consisted entirely of Punjabis who stuck to him like 'leeches.' He had added the name of Mr. Siddique Khan Kanju in the above list.<sup>76</sup> He further mentions that during Cabinet meetings even, if some of his inner cabinet colleague whisper in his ear, he was usually eager to discuss that issue or took decision in that direction. Besides it, PM usually had decided the issues in coordination with his inner circle prior to the cabinet meeting, brought slips with him on various issues and that cabinet meeting was only a formality.

He has quoted various examples where decisions been taken while following this style of dealing with the cabinet meetings.<sup>77</sup> Nawaz Sharif's reliance on his inner circle increased to that level that during first four months of 1999, no cabinet meeting was call. Eight ministers met with Nisar and shared the same fact. They said that they were bypass by the PM while taking decisions and that many summaries were in the line to get approval. Nisar, then met with the PM and suggested him to call a cabinet meeting.<sup>78</sup> Overall, kitchen cabinet with the president or inner cabinet with the PM, besides strong establishment, remained more powerful actors than the institution of Cabinet during the entire parliamentary decade from 1988 to 1999.

## CONCLUSION

The study finds that all four elected cabinets of this period were more or less coalition cabinets and consisted of large number of ministers. PM Benazir Bhutto's two cabinets consisted of twenty-two and twenty-six ministers respectively. Only five out of twenty-two were Independent and the rest of the ministers were from PPP during 1988 and 1990. Similarly, during her second tenure, again only five ministers at maximum out of twenty-six belonged to PML-J, ANP and smaller parties i.e. Pakhtunkhawa Qaumi Party and Qaumi Maseeha Party. Nawaz Sharif's Cabinets

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<sup>72</sup> Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad, *Nawaz Sharif Ka Pehla Dor-i-Hakomat*, 124.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 487.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 488

<sup>75</sup> Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan in 1998, 178.

<sup>76</sup> Gohar Ayub Khan, *Glimpses into the Corridors of Power* (Karachi: OUP, 2007), 285.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 285-287.

<sup>78</sup> Rauf Kalasra in interview with Chaudhary Nisar Ahmed in Kalasra, *Aik Siyasat*, 55.

consisted of twenty-nine and nineteen ministers respectively. Nine out of twenty-nine ministers belonged to coalition partners, including ANP, MQM and Independents, as well as IJI partners, including JUP and NPP etc. While only two out of nineteen were from ANP and MQM during second term of PM Nawaz Sharif. However, all four cabinets included a number of Ministers of State, Advisers and Special Assistants besides Cabinet Ministers. Appointment criteria of the whole regime included party-affiliation, maintaining coalition, pressure from the establishment, accommodating Opposition in some cases to get support from opposition parties etc. However, qualification and expertise were rare criteria and only few appointments were materialized on the basis of capability such as Sartaj Aziz and Ishaq Dar were appointed as Ministers of Finance one after the other on the basis of their expertise and qualification as well as experience. Unfortunately, Benazir Bhutto could not find any suitable person be appointed as Minister of Finance during both the terms. Foreign Minister including Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Sardar Asif Ahmed, Gohar Ayub and Sartaj Aziz appointed largely with the recommendation or at least approval of the establishment.

A large number of ministers had feudal lineage, though reasonable number of them belonged to business class and were professionals. Only few ministers belonged to religious groups, minorities and military-based constituencies. It was for the first time in the history of Pakistan that few women appointed as cabinet Ministers in multiple cabinets of the period under study. It has been analysed inner circle of PM Benazir necessarily included her husband besides Aitzaz Ahsan, Yusuf Reza Gillani during both regimes. On the other side, inner circle of PM Nawaz Sharif consisted of Chaudhary Nisar, Shehbaz Sharif, his father Mohammad Sharif etc. Besides inner cabinet of the PMs, Kitchen cabinet under President Ghulam Ishaq Khan also remained intact during first terms of both the PMs. No cabinet of this period could enjoy its due status and power, which is fixed for this institution in the parliamentary system. Only outer forces such as president and military establishment were not responsible for the low status of the cabinet but also PM and his/her reliance on inner circle for decision-making served as an important factor for weak standing of the institution.

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