

Women under zia's government

[Parts of the World](#), [Asia](#)



For a very long time, Pakistani writers have been criticising the brutal government of Zia, because it is impossible to talk about the coercive rule without taking his government into consideration. Sabyn takes his rule to show his use of Coercive as well as Persuasive tools in the history of Pakistan. Guha believes that there can be no manipulation, no control of an entire people if they are not under compulsion, as “ Coercion comes before Persuasion and indeed before all the other elements”(1998, p. 24). Sabyn tells that the General starts his mission with the help of coercive apparatus then perpetuates the power with the help of the ideological apparatus. Since the assassination of Rani's father, “ the Army and the Jihadists had run the country to the ground... now it was a prison; one giant cage for women and children, elderly and disabled, and all those others who weren't men enough or Muslim enough. We were the waste, to be swept under borders of black cloth. My country had been colorful once, now it was a sea of black. Black burqas, black beards, black burnt down buildings, pockmarked with bullets”(Sabyn, 2017, p. 17).

General Zia started his mission with the assassination of Bhutto, flogging of girls and boys, arresting of people. The coercive apparatus under Zia's government became more active than under any other government. His government took the country to the darkness and the slogan of people changed to “ What does Pakistan stand for? Hanging, lashing, General Zia!”(Toor, 2011, p. 125). Sabyn, through discursive narrativization of the event of Islamization, shows the use of force (Pakistani army and police) against its own people.

The dominant group claims that Coercive apparatus is responsible to enforce 'Order' in the land (Guha, 1998, p. 25). So, the cruel General claimed that he was maintaining order through floggings and hangings. Cohen explains that "Zia and his colleagues wanted to set Pakistan "straight," or, as Zia used to say, correct the politicians' qibla, or direction of prayer (2004, p. 125). When the Martial Law was imposed, Zia said on July 5, 1977 that the military force had to intervene in the political matters just for the integrity of the country (see appendix). To strengthen his fake claim of 'maintaining order', he tried to legitimize his government with the help of Islam. It is not wrong to say that subalterns are just the victim of the personal quarrels of the elites, because "Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of the ruling groups" (Guha, 1988, p. 35). He used coercive as well as persuasive tool to hegemonize the country. He justified his occupation of power in the word of "Order". He said he was ordering the country and saving the ideology of Pakistan. That is mere manipulation, because army justifies the Martial law as their duty to guard the geographical as well as ideological borders of Pakistan. Sabyn sheds light on conflict between the concepts of Shuracracy and Democracy created by Zia between. He banned political parties to take participation in election because they would be unislamic. According to Sabyn, Zia was distinguishing Islam from Democracy, because there was no political party when Islam was spreading "and no democracy either" (Sabyn, 2017, p. 10). Nobody can deny the fact that Islam had been used as a tool by Zia ul Haq. In every speech Zia claimed that he just wanted to ensure Islamic values in the country whereas agenda remained hidden.

Guha says that “ Danda is depicted as a male, there could be nothing wrong about exploiting women by force either for labor or for the sexual gratification of men. Indeed, punitive sanctions imposed on women for disregarding a code of sexual morality constructed entirely from a male point of view could be justified as essential for the maintenance of an undifferentiated moral order. In short, Danda was there to uphold a putative king's authority in every little kingdom constituted by D and S in all relationships of gender, age, caste, and class(Guha, 1998, p. 30). The nation suffered a lot during Zia's rule, but the suppression of women is inevitable. Zia's government created distinction between man and women. He provided privileges to man only and women were deprived of their basic rights. Moreover he used the coercive apparatus “ to cut through the maze of conflicting jurisdictions(Guha, 1998, p. 25) exercised by Bhutto. Sabyn sheds light on the coercion against Benazir Bhutto and her the people who supported her, as Rani Shah says “ the General tortured me mentally and physically, put me in a dark jail with rats and roaches, starved me, humiliated me, shamed me for being a woman- especially a woman who dared to dream. He tried to break me. Not only me, he killed our supporters, shot the protestors, hung the only legally elected Prime Minister the country had ever had...the fucking rat beheaded our party workers. He tried every which way to make me wither up and die(Sabyn, 2017, p. 39). He did all this to control the power. According to Guha, the coercive apparatus of the state “ armed with powers which can and often does muzzle free speech and censor the press, curb the individual's freedom of movement, and deny the right of assembly to the people—all in the name of Order(Guha, 1998, p. 25).

Such kind of ordering can be seen under the government of Zia ul Haq who “ quietly established his own authority..., suppressed the political parties, stopped mass rallies, and tried to depoliticize politics”(Cohen, 2004, p. 84-85).

Guha defines Danda as “ It emphasizes force and fear as the fundamental principles of politics. Source and foundation of royal authority, Danda is regarded as the manifestation of divine will in the affairs of the state”(Guha, 1998, p. 29). The state controls every action of the people and in order to make their government acceptable they use coercive apparatus. Sabyn in the novel shows the fear created by Zia during his government as “ The General's men are everywhere. People say he's worse than Hitler, far more paranoid than Qaddafi and even more brutal than Saddam. His spies will be watching your every move”(Sabyn, 2017, p. 37).

He knew that he could not stay in power if he would not turn the attention of the people from Martial Law to Islamic laws, so he introduced ‘ Hudood Ordinance’. Guha says ‘ Dharma’ helps the elites to justify their dominance as well as it helps “ to make their subordinates relate to them as nonantagonistically as possible(1998, p. 34). Zia pretended as a devoted Muslim and thought that he would prove more beneficial for the people as compare to less-religious politicians. In Guha's term it is called Dharma that can be used “ to mobilize the masses in a campaign of opposition... the nationalist elite make Dharma into a unifying and harmonizing principle of politics(1998, p. 36). Zia used the ideology of Islamization to convince people to accept his government. Zia took advantage of Soviet-Afghan war which

helped him to make strong his lied claim. His domination had no legitimacy, so he took advantage of Soviet's attack on Afghanistan in 1979. The war helped him to establish evidence that his services and authority were needed to Pakistan, Afghanistan and America. Sabyn thinks that the General was cashing the fear of America and sending his people to fight the Soviet Afghan war that " was not ours. In fact it's nobody's war"(Sabyn, 2017, p. 7).

The invasion of Afghanistan pave the way for Zia's rule. Akbar Zaidi on 1 November, 2017 explains in Dawn the consequences of Afghan war for Pakistan , that the refugees coming from Afghanistan, increasing drug junkies in Pakistan, dollars from US in aid to Pakistani military and Jihad was becoming an occupation. Besides, the military had been involved in all activities that were undoubtedly illegal. Despite all this, Zia was in need of some constitutional cover to extend the duration of his authority. The establishment of Majlis-e-Shura helped him to continue his mission. In fact, Shuracracy was the only mean which upheld his atrocious rule in the history of Pakistan. Sabyn shows the power of ' Persuasion or Ideology' which the General used to manipulate the nation, as, " I will not let the reins of my blessed country fall into the hands of disbelievers,' he raged on the TV screen. ' I ask you, my countrymen, do you want some Kafir running our beloved nation? Do you want someone who drinks alcohol and lives in sin as your guide? Do you want someone who is an agent of the West to be your leader? Tell me, my dear countrymen, do you want to be ruled by a woman? If not, then say yes to the referendum. Say yes to the country being run by Sharia laws, the way the Prophet, peace be upon him, intended it to be"(Sabyn, 2017, p. 70)

He stayed in power for long time with the help of religion only, otherwise he would not be able to get elected by people. He conflated the idea of Pakistan with the State of Pakistan to ensure his power. He took the responsibility of the ideological security of the country, by which he was merely fleecing the people. By coercion or persuasion, people were not given any other option except Zia. His departure from life became the cause of his departure from the reign and fled the people from his the brute place of detention in 1988.