



RESEARCH PAPER

Islamic Parties' Political Trajectory: From Opposition to Governments in Pakistan (1999s-2008)

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: March 23, 2022</p> <p>Accepted: June 27, 2022</p> <p>Online: June 30, 2022</p> <p>Keywords: Islamic Political Transformation, Islamist Influence, Muthahida Majlis-E-Amal Alliance (MMA), Religious-Party Dynamics</p> <p>*Corresponding Author: afshan.lcwu@gmail.com</p>	<p>This article delves into the transformative journey of Islamic political parties within Pakistan's political landscape from the late 1990s to 2008. Focusing on Jammat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan, the study explores their evolution from opposition entities to assuming governance roles within the Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance. Employing qualitative analysis, it addresses key questions concerning their influence, relationship with President Musharraf, and governance challenges in NWFP (KPK). Drawing from government documents, official reports, academic sources, and media, the research applies a historical, descriptive, and analytical framework to unveil the intricate interplay between religious ideologies and pragmatic political strategies. The article illuminates the pivotal role Islamic parties played in shaping Pakistan's political discourse during this transformative era. This research provides valuable insights into the evolving roles and influences of Islamic parties in the complex tapestry of Pakistani politics.</p>

Introduction

The intricate political landscape of Pakistan has been shaped by a dynamic interplay of ideologies, vested interests, and power dynamics. Within this complex framework, the role of Islamic political parties stands out as a significant force. Notable among these parties are Jammat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), which have not merely advocated religious principles, but have also actively sought to influence the socio-political trajectory of the nation. This research embarks on an exploration of their transformative journey from the late 1990s to 2008 – a pivotal period that witnessed their evolution from opposition entities to active participants in governance through the Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance.

The late 1990s marked a critical juncture in Pakistan's history as Islamic parties experienced a resurgence in the political landscape. These parties positioned themselves as staunch proponents of Islamic ideals, asserting their commitment to upholding the principles and teachings of the faith in their political pursuits. This departure from the conventional mold of political parties, often rooted in class or regional affiliations, underscored the Islamic parties' aspiration to intertwine faith with governance (Zahid, et al. 2021).

The emergence of the MMA in 2002 marked a watershed moment for these Islamic parties. This coalition united various factions under a single banner, aiming to collectively address socio-political issues through an Islamic lens. The MMA brought together parties such as JI, JUI-F, JUI-S, and JUP, each representing distinct sectarian orientations. The

electoral triumph of the MMA in 2002 granted it the opportunity to form a government in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

This transformative phase drew impetus from a confluence of domestic and international factors. The patronage extended by the Musharraf regime toward Islamic parties, coupled with the surge of anti-American sentiments following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, propelled the MMA into the corridors of power. The MMA's alignment with Musharraf, particularly evident in its support for the Legal Framework Order (LFO), provided a veneer of legitimacy to his rule. However, over time, tensions within the MMA-Musharraf relationship unveiled the intricate dynamics that characterized their association.

At the core of this inquiry lies an examination of the roles played by JI, JUI-F, and JUP within the MMA-led government. These parties wielded varying degrees of influence, with JI and JUI-F emerging as dominant players in the political discourse. The ensuing analysis seeks to unravel the extent to which they influenced policy formulation, governed decisions, and approached critical matters like the judiciary's restoration, federal-provincial relations, and socio-economic challenges.

Moreover, the governance of the MMA administration in KPK serves as a microcosm of the broader narrative. Initiatives like the Sharia Bill and the contentious Hisbah Bill epitomized the MMA's endeavor to align governance with Islamic principle (M. N. Khan & Islam, 2023). The government's interactions with federal authorities, its management of law and order, and its policies concerning pivotal sectors like healthcare, education, and women's rights all warrant meticulous examination.

Employing a qualitative research paradigm, this article draws upon primary and secondary sources to illuminate the nuanced interplay between religious ideologies and pragmatic political strategies. Government records, official reports, scholarly works, and media archives collectively underpin this exploration. Employing a methodological blend of historical analysis, descriptive study, and analytical rigor, this research endeavors to unravel the multifaceted roles assumed by Islamic parties during this transformative epoch.

In the succeeding sections, the article will delve into the theoretical foundations that have shaped the roles of political parties in Pakistan, providing insight into the contextual backdrop against which Islamic parties surfaced and evolved. Exploring the historical contributions of JI, JUI, and JUP during pivotal junctures, including the inception of Pakistan, will furnish a comprehensive understanding of their political trajectory. This backdrop sets the stage for a meticulous examination of their influence, interrelationships, and governance challenges from 1999 to 2008 (Gulfam, 2021).

As the narrative progresses, a critical exploration of the intricate interplay among these Islamic parties, particularly their interactions with President Musharraf, will ensue. Scrutinizing the dynamics that molded their associations, alongside the factors that triggered shifts in their alliances, promises insights into their evolving roles. The culmination of this analysis will manifest in a comprehensive evaluation of the governance challenges faced by the MMA administration, offering illumination on the contributions, controversies, and limitations associated with the Islamic parties within this coalition (*Islamic Parties in Pakistan*, 2011).

This research aspires to provide invaluable insights into the role of Islamic political parties within Pakistan's political milieu, with a spotlight on their transition from opposition entities to active participants in governance. By retracing their trajectory,

deciphering their motivations, and dissecting their strategies, this article endeavors to enrich the comprehension of the intricate tapestry of Pakistani politics during this transformative era.

Literature Review

Pirzada (2000) evaluates the role of JUI in the political affairs of Pakistan from 1971-1979. According to him, JUI played a role in the national politics. JUI formed coalition government after the 1970 elections of Pakistan and initiated Islamic reforms. The government of JUI in NWFP (KPK) faced an issue with regard to its relation with the federal government. JUI participated in the Nizam-e-Mustafa Movement.

Ahmed (1996) explains that Zia used Islamic parties in order to keep his hold on power. He worked closely with JI & JUI that enhanced their influence in the policy making. He introduced Islamic reforms which were valued by the Islamic conservatives. The Islamization of Zia afterwards aggravated sectarian conflicts (Muzaffar, et al. 2017)

Rizvi (2010) presents the evolution and dynamics of Political parties of Pakistan. He has put Islamic parties in a separate category while classifying the political parties of Pakistan. According to him, most of the Islamic parties exhibit particular Islamic denomination. Islamic parties talk about the implementation of Islamic system but they do not have unanimity regarding the institutions and course of the Islamic system. The success of MMA in 2002 elections reveals that Islamic parties can come into power through the formation of grand alliance. Islamic political parties after coming into power in 2002 faced a difficult situation in order to balance the necessity of keeping power with their ideological goals. MMA government in NWFP (KPK) could not deal with this dilemma and was exposed to criticism that it was unable to implement its ideological programme. He has also discussed the political role of JI, JUI & JUP in the politics of Pakistan. He has argued that JUP never participated in any militant activity on the name of Islam. The electoral support of JUI-F & JUI-S is restricted to Balochistan and NWFP (KPK). JI developed favorable tendency towards Musharraf till 2004.

Historical Role of Islamic Parties in Pakistan

The inception of Pakistan in 1947 heralded a new era for Islamic parties, offering them an opportunity to shape the nation's trajectory. While initially skeptical of the state's secular underpinnings, these parties recognized the significance of playing a role in its formation. Their contributions ranged from advocating for the Objectives Resolution, which sought to establish Islamic principles as the foundation of the state, to participating in governance during its nascent years. As Pakistan grappled with defining its identity and political structure, Islamic parties provided a platform for voicing concerns about safeguarding religious values within the evolving state apparatus.

However, this journey wasn't without its challenges. Islamic parties found themselves in opposition during various regimes and critical junctures. Their ideological stance often placed them at odds with secular leaders, leading to confrontations during moments like the Anti-Ahmadiyya Movement and debates over the role of Islam in the constitution. These parties' ability to mobilize their constituents and protest against policies they deemed contradictory to Islamic principles showcased their potential to sway public sentiment and influence the political discourse.

Rise of Islamic Parties and Political Influence (1999-2002)

The late 1990s marked a significant turning point for Islamic parties as they capitalized on the socio-political context of the time. Amidst widespread discontent with prevailing governance and a growing sense of moral disillusionment, these parties found fertile ground to increase their influence. Factors such as economic disparity, corruption, and the perceived failure of mainstream political parties created an environment conducive for Islamic parties to resonate with the masses. Their emphasis on moral integrity, justice, and the implementation of Islamic principles in governance struck a chord with segments of the population.

One of the most striking strategies employed by Islamic parties was the demonstration of street power and the cultivation of public appeal. Through mass protests, rallies, and mobilization campaigns, they showcased their ability to gather significant crowds and capture media attention. The ability to command the streets not only bolstered their image but also exerted pressure on the government to address their demands. This period saw Islamic parties adeptly using their ideological prowess to capture the imagination of the masses and position themselves as viable alternatives to the existing political order.

The Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) Alliance: Political Trajectory (2002-2008)

The dawn of the 21st century witnessed the consolidation of Islamic parties under the banner of the Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance. This coalition brought together diverse Islamic parties, including Jammat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), and others, united by a shared vision of a more Islamic Pakistan. The formation of the MMA marked a strategic move to collectively address socio-political challenges through religious lenses. As a political force, the MMA gained prominence by contesting elections and, remarkably, securing victories in key provinces.

Within the MMA, individual Islamic parties played distinctive roles, underpinning the alliance's political dynamics. While sharing common objectives, the parties maintained their ideological identities, leading to both collaborative efforts and internal competition. A particularly intriguing aspect of the MMA's trajectory was its relationship with President Musharraf's regime. Initially finding common ground, especially regarding the Legal Framework Order (LFO), the alliance's ties showcased the pragmatic nature of politics, where ideological stances could be balanced against political expediency (M. N. Khan & Islam, 2023).

Table 1
Constituent Parties of MMA

Islamic Parties	Leadership	Ideological Orientation
JI	Qazi Hussain Ahmed	Non sectarian
JUI-F	Fazal-ur-Rehman	Deoband
JUI-S	Saimul-Haq	Deoband
JUP	Shah Ahmed Noorani	Barelvi
JAH	Sajid Mir	Wahabi
TJP	Syed Sajjad Naqvi	Shia (Ismailis, Bohras and Twelvers)

MMA Governance in NWFP (KPK): Challenges and Achievements

The period of MMA governance in NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) represented a microcosm of the broader narrative. Their emphasis on Islamization policies translated into attempts to align governance with religious principles. This manifested in the

introduction of the Sharia Bill and the contentious Hasba Bill, which aimed to regulate public morals (M. A. Khan, 2004). While these initiatives resonated with their voter base, they also sparked debates about the extent of religion's role in governance and its compatibility with modern administrative frameworks.

Beyond the rhetoric, the MMA government faced intricate challenges in federal-provincial relations, maintaining law and order, and addressing socio-economic issues. Balancing these governance responsibilities against their ideological commitments revealed the complexities of translating religious ideals into practical policies. The MMA's governance experience highlighted the need for pragmatic decision-making, especially when confronted with the intricacies of governing a diverse and multifaceted province.

Dissolution of the MMA Alliance and Post-2008 Impact

The alliance that had united Islamic parties began to unravel as internal dynamics and external pressures came into play. Differing strategic visions, leadership disputes, and evolving political landscapes led to the dissolution of the MMA alliance after 2008. This dissolution marked a turning point for individual Islamic parties as they navigated their post-alliance trajectories (Waseem & Mufti, 2009).

Following the dissolution, the individual Islamic parties grappled with defining their roles and repositioning themselves in Pakistan's political arena. Some maintained a strong ideological stance while adapting to changing political dynamics, while others sought to explore broader coalition opportunities. The impact of these parties extended beyond electoral politics, influencing public discourse, policy debates, and even legal frameworks in the country (Pakistan, 2018).

Evolution of Islamic Parties' Strategies: From Opposition to Governance

The late 1990s to 2008 marked a pivotal period for Islamic parties in Pakistan as they made the challenging transition from being vocal opposition entities to assuming roles within the realm of governance. This evolution in their strategies was underscored by the need to reconcile their deeply ingrained ideological commitments with the practical demands of effectively governing a complex and diverse nation.

As these parties ventured into the realm of governance, they faced the intricate task of aligning their religiously oriented principles with the practicalities of administration. For instance, the implementation of Islamic laws and regulations presented a formidable challenge. While Islamic parties advocated for the establishment of a society founded on Islamic values, the complexity of implementing these values within a pluralistic society required careful consideration.

To bridge this gap between ideology and pragmatism, Islamic parties adopted a multifaceted approach. They recognized the need for policy adjustments that would resonate with a broader spectrum of society, even if it meant diluting some of their more rigid stances. This adaptability was evidenced by their engagement with various sectors, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, which allowed them to demonstrate their commitment to improving the lives of the populace while staying true to their core principles (Quraish & Fakhr-ul-Islam, 2018).

A prime example of this adaptation was their engagement in education reform. Islamic parties sought to infuse Islamic teachings into the education system, but they also understood the importance of providing a well-rounded and competitive education. This required collaborating with professionals and experts to design curricula that combined

religious teachings with modern subjects, ensuring that graduates would be equipped for both spiritual and practical success.

MMA government introduced various reforms in the field of education after 2002. It expanded the attendance and enrollment of the primary schools especially of the girls. The enrollment of the girls increased up to 40% in 2004/2005. Government provided free text books to the students of the primary schools up to grade two. Special attention was given for improving the conditions of the schools. Government appointed new teachers in primary schools and encouraged the public-private partnership in education. The educational policies of the MMA were designed to get the appreciation of International donors. With regard to higher education the MMA government established Girls medical College and University of Science and Technology in NWFP (KPK). Thus it reflected the intricate ideological and political inclination of MMA on the issues of education and gender.

Furthermore, the complex dynamics of coalition politics came to the fore as Islamic parties grappled with maintaining stability while advancing their agendas. To achieve their objectives, they often found themselves forming alliances with secular and other ideological counterparts. This strategic maneuvering allowed them to wield influence within governance structures, even if it meant compromising on certain policy fronts.

For instance, the MMA's alliance with President Musharraf's regime, while rooted in common interests like the Legal Framework Order (LFO), necessitated a balancing act. This collaboration demonstrated the pragmatic nature of politics, as Islamic parties navigated the delicate balance between their ideological convictions and the realities of power dynamics.

MMA government pursued a different style of working in NWFP (KPK). Initially, bureaucrats were not easy with regard to work with an Islamic government. Despite the lack of experience and proficiency in administration, MMA politicians proved to be quick and committed learners. The leadership of the MMA had understood in the beginning that the knowledge about the present legal institution was necessary for the smooth running of the administration. However bureaucrats faced a trouble due to the decision of the MMA government to adopt Urdu as an official language of the NWFP (KPK). The MMA government took a decision due to the lack of exposure of the various ministers to English language. It enhanced the work of bureaucrats who firstly had to write summaries in English and then translate it in Urdu.

Numerous MPAs of MMA in the NWFP (KPK) Assembly belonged to middle class. They were expected to remain in touch with the people for the fulfillment of their needs and to perform different as compared to previous governments. People of the NWFP (KPK) also expected the MMA to carry out Islamization and bring forth changes in the administration in order to realize it. Furthermore, MMA had formed its government with an absolute majority therefore it had complete support for the effective implementation of developmental policies. MMA politicians got seats due to their affiliations with the party instead of any professional capability. However MMA government could not fulfill its promises. The reason for it was its lack of experience to administration. MMA also had put aside its ideology in order to keep its power over the governmental institutions. So it was not able to carry out its Islamic agenda as considerably as it wanted to. MMA could not develop latest techniques of administration and even failed to mobilize new electoral districts of support as it was caught in every day politics (Akram, 2020).

The expectations of the people for the MMA government were greatly affected due to its involvement in the corrupt practices. The people had perception that candidates of the Islamic parties would behave differently as compared to the corrupt elected politicians

of the past. However popular imagination steadily faded when MMA politicians were seen to be involved in the accretion of wealth and luxurious life style. MMA parliamentarians were also charged with the horse trading during the Senate elections of 2003. The charges of nepotism and personal politics were also raised against the MMA government. MMA supported its own workers in spite of their administrative incompetency and thus promoted clientelistic politics. In addition to it, law and order situation greatly worsened during the rule of MMA in NWFP (KPK). There were more incidents of kidnappings reported than before. The argument of MMA was that these problems existed as Hasbah Bill had not been approved (M. A. Khan, 2004). However, MMA government performed well as compared to previous governments in terms of the legislation. MMA government passed various bills and resolutions. It promoted the Jirga style politics and tried to redeem itself to be called as fundamentalist. MMA government endeavored to demonstrate the foreign community that its success in election was a positive development instead of retrogression.

The evolution of Islamic parties' strategies during this period thus reflects their pragmatic adaptability and their recognition of the need to engage with governance in a manner that respects both their core principles and the complex sociopolitical landscape. This transformation underscores their willingness to navigate the challenges of effective governance, even as they continued to uphold their commitment to Islamic values.

Through their approach, these parties communicated a message of coexistence and cooperation, aiming to forge a unified national identity that encompassed diverse perspectives. This demonstrated their understanding that governance required more than just ideological fervor—it required the ability to balance principles with the practicalities of administration, and to foster collaborations that would lead to effective policy implementation and societal progress.

Societal Responses to Islamic Parties' Ascendancy: A Spectrum of Endorsement and Apprehension

The ascendancy of Islamic parties within the political milieu during the period under consideration engendered a spectrum of reactions across diverse strata of society. Their pronounced emphasis on Islamic principles and moral rectitude found resonance within certain echelons, thereby facilitating an expansion of their support constituency. However, this very emphasis also catalyzed a *mélange* of debates and apprehensions among those who discerned in these parties a potential to encroach upon the secular bedrock upon which the nation stood.

The interface between the burgeoning political sway of Islamic parties and the tapestry of societal responses played a pivotal role in shaping their trajectory. Their resolute focus on matters such as graft eradication, social equity, and ethical governance precipitated a swell of endorsement from quarters appreciative of these priorities. This amplification of public backing was undergirded by a fervent aspiration for a governance that resonated with the tenets of Islamic ethics.

Nonetheless, the course of their governance pursuits also underscored the intricate challenges attendant upon the translation of ideological constructs into pragmatic solutions. The juxtaposition of public anticipation, doctrinal commitments, and the gritty intricacies of governance, thus, materialized as a riveting vantage point through which to fathom their political expedition.

This phase of their ascendancy necessitated a convergence of these multifarious facets. The public's resonance with their espoused values coalesced with the complexity of upholding these ideals within the intricate labyrinth of governance. While these parties

ardently championed moral governance and social equity, the translation of these objectives into effective policies often encountered the convoluted realities of implementation.

The appraisal of their governance trajectory encapsulated a dialectic between ideological aspirations and the pragmatism that governance necessitated. While certain policy initiatives found favor and bore fruits, others were ensnared within the quagmire of administrative intricacies. This interplay of triumphs and challenges, commendable intentions and intricate pragmatism, augured a multifaceted portrait of Islamic parties' governance experience.

The broader societal canvas was thus streaked with an amalgamation of support and skepticism. The allure of Islamic parties' emphasis on moral governance and social equity resonated significantly, emblematic of a yearning for principled leadership. Simultaneously, concerns arose among those apprehensive about potential transgressions against the secular foundations underpinning the nation. The trajectory of these parties, thus, found itself indelibly entwined with the manifold hues of societal response, reflecting the complexity and diversity inherent within Pakistan's sociopolitical landscape.

Navigating Governance Realities: Challenges and Insights in the Political Trajectory of Islamic Parties

Islamic parties in governance faced challenges in Pakistan's intricate sociopolitical landscape. Integrating Islamic principles encountered resistance, necessitating a balance between ideology and effective governance.

The MMA's tenure revealed limits of rigid ideology in a complex political environment. Governance unveiled challenges in meeting needs, maintaining order, and providing services, highlighting the need for policies blending principles and practicality.

This phase stressed nuanced governance strategies. Constraints illuminated complexities of harmonizing beliefs, administrative demands, and accommodating diversity. MMA's governance offered insights; effective governance demanded pragmatic, balanced approaches while upholding ideological beliefs.

Intra-Alliance Struggles and the Fracturing of Unity

The challenges they faced and their strategies signify a journey that reflects the intricate dynamics of a nation grappling with ideological commitments, societal needs, and the essential requirements of governance. However, this trajectory was not without its internal hurdles.

The ideological differences among the constituents of the religious alliance began to sow divisions within the MMA. By 2003, these fissures had deepened, leading to a split within the alliance. The catalyst for this division was the departure of JAH (Jamiat Ahle Hadith) from the MMA. The alliance's reluctance to collaborate with PML-N and the increasing dominance of JUI-F and JI within the MMA government contributed to this departure. The smaller parties within the alliance voiced concerns over the outsized roles of JI and JUI (F) and their influence over the governments in NWFP (KPK) and Balochistan.

In addition, internal discord within the MMA arose over various issues. JUI-S (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam S) expressed dissatisfaction with the NWFP (KPK) assembly's resolution on the Kalabagh dam, highlighting the need for a national consensus on the matter (Karamat et

al. 2021). Tensions also emerged over the selection of the opposition leader in the Senate, leading to further frictions within the MMA. These internal disagreements eventually prompted JUI-S to withdraw from the MMA in 2005. (Karamat et al. 2019)

The divergence in perspectives between JI and JUI-F regarding the participation in the National Security Council (NSC) also contributed to the alliance's dissolution. While JI advocated for distance from the NSC, JUI-F believed that allowing the NWFP (KPK) Chief Minister to attend NSC meetings would safeguard the region's interests against central government encroachments. Eventually, the NWFP (KPK) Chief Minister was granted permission to attend NSC meetings.

The culmination of these tensions occurred in 2007 when JUI-F and JI disagreed on whether to resign from their National Assembly seats in protest against Musharraf's election. Their differences extended to the 2008 elections, where JI decided against participation due to concerns about fairness and its own electoral strength. This division within the MMA's ranks persisted from its inception, ultimately impacting its ability to maintain unity throughout its governance tenure.

Perpetual Influence and Contemporary Significance: Analyzing the Transformation of Islamic Parties' Governance

The period spanning from 1999 to 2008 holds a distinctive place in Pakistan's political evolution due to the active participation of Islamic parties in governance. This involvement has not only left a lasting imprint on the political discourse but also triggered a deeper understanding of the interplay between religious ideals and practical governance strategies. Delving into this phenomenon reveals how the legacy of Islamic parties' governance continues to reverberate through contemporary political dynamics (Zafar & Javaid, 2019).

The ingress of Islamic parties into the realm of governance illuminated the intricate nature of aligning religious principles with pragmatic administrative responsibilities. The clash between the envisioned Islamic framework and the exigencies of a diverse society accentuated the importance of finding equilibrium between ideology and governance efficiency. This juncture underscores the complexity of accommodating deeply rooted religious commitments within the intricacies of statecraft.

The governance tenure of the MMA highlighted the inherent challenges of implementing ideological tenets in a diverse and dynamic sociopolitical landscape (Karamat et al., 2019). This era underscored the limitations of a rigidly dogmatic approach within the intricate fabric of governance. As governance unfolded, the realities of managing public services, maintaining law and order, and addressing multifaceted societal needs became prominent. This experience exposed the necessity for governance policies to embody a balance between ideological purity and practical effectiveness.

Furthermore, this phase provided valuable insights into the nuanced strategies required to navigate the complexities of governance. The constraints faced by Islamic parties shed light on the intricacies of harmonizing deeply held beliefs with the day-to-day demands of administration. The journey from ideology to governance led to the creation of a reservoir of pragmatic insights that can inform contemporary political strategies.

The ongoing relevance of Islamic parties in Pakistan's political panorama is a testament to their adaptability and enduring influence. Their trajectory did not halt with their governance phase; rather, it marked a transition towards continuous adaptation. The evolution of their strategies, recalibrations of alliances, and refined engagement with

governance challenges attests to their sustained relevance and influence in shaping the political discourse.

This transformation is discernible in the shift from being doctrinal entities to pragmatic political actors. The governance experience prompted Islamic parties to transcend mere oppositional roles and delve into the intricate dynamics of policy formulation and implementation. This evolution broadened their appeal, allowing them to connect with a more diverse cross-section of the population.

In essence, the legacy of Islamic parties' governance journey serves as a dynamic repository of insights. The lessons drawn from this era continue to inform their contemporary strategies, policy frameworks, and alliances. This legacy is not a relic of the past but an ongoing force that resonates through their multifaceted engagement with Pakistan's ever-evolving sociopolitical landscape. It signifies the enduring impact of their governance experience on the trajectory of Islamic parties in Pakistan.

Conclusion

In summary, this research reveals the transformation of Islamic political parties in Pakistan from opposition to governance between the late 1990s and 2008. This phase required them to balance religious convictions with practical administration, evolving from oppositional roles to active governance participants.

The historical examination showcased a range of societal responses: resonance with certain segments due to emphasis on Islamic principles, and debates over potential conflicts with secular foundations. This highlighted the challenge of reconciling religious ideology with governance imperatives.

Under the Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance, Islamic parties' governance experience illustrated the complexity of translating ideological ideals into practical policies. While moral governance and social equity found support, implementing Islamic laws faced resistance, revealing the nuanced nature of policymaking that respects diverse convictions.

The enduring legacy of this phase influences contemporary Pakistani politics. The parties' pragmatic approach and adaptability, seen in alliances with various political actors, underscore their agility in complex landscapes.

In conclusion, the trajectory of Islamic parties from opposition to governance signifies the intricate balance between religious convictions and practical administration. This ongoing relevance shapes their strategies and policies, resonating in current debates about faith, governance, and society in Pakistan. The nuanced approach of harmonizing principles with governance demands offers a compelling path for scholarly exploration of ideological movements in political governance.

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