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## Election of 2018 and its Impact over the Political System of Pakistan

### Abstract

*Modern era is the era of representative democracy. For the continuation of democracy and participation of public in decision making process of state, the electoral process has pivotal importance in democratic setup. Elections work as a tool to gage the opinion of people about policies of government. Free and fair elections guarantee the stability and continuation of democratic political order. In Pakistan elections are held after the period of five years. During last twenty years, four general elections were held, with periodic intervals. Each and every time governments that were elected as a result of these elections made different impacts over the political system of Pakistan. The current research will evaluate the impacts of the 2018 election over the political system of Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Elections, Democracy, Political System, Political Order

### Introduction: Importance of election and political system

In Pakistan General elections held after every five years. The last elections were held on 25 July, 2018. The time period between elections of 2013 and elections of 2018 had led great changes in political set-ups and thinking pattern of voters. Since last 30 decades two parties PML-N and PPP have ruled over the Pakistan. In these 30 years PML-Q has ruled for 8 years. In 2013, Nawaz sharif has formed the govt. by joining 19 Independent MPs and became prime minister of Pakistan. On 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 Imran khan the leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led Azadi March and demanded to form a judicial commission to investigate electoral rigging in four constituencies during elections of 2013, and also demanded for re-elections. The judicial decision was in the favour of PML-N that elections were fair and just. The sit ended with the sad incident of Peshawar school Massacre in the name of national unity. (Ullah, Ahmad, & Azim, 2020) Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the court when opposition leader Imran khan filed a petition for disqualification of Nawaz sharif as his name was in Panama papers of secrets released by International Consortium of investigative journalists (ICIJ). The Court has disqualified Nawaz Sharif Because he does not fulfil the criteria of section 62 and 63 of Constitution of Pakistan for the seat of member of National Assembly and Prime Minister. Nawaz Sharif was unable to provide solid evidence against the allegations. The Panama Papers and judicial decision has turned the table for PTI Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. And in 2018 elections PTI won the majority of seats and form a government. PTI has secured 149 seats in National Assembly while PML-N has secured only 82 seats in National Assembly which is exactly the half number of seats of 166 which PML-N has secured in the general elections of 2013. Panama Papers and "Ihtisab Tehreek" of PTI has de-famed PML-N in Pakistan. It has secured 61 seats in Punjab and only 2 seats in KPK while PML-N was not able to secure any seats from Sindh, Baluchistan, Islamabad, and FATA. While PTI has won seats from every province. (Shah & Sareen, 2018)

This was the one side of the picture, on the other hand the approach of PTI towards national issues is totally differs from PML-N Govt. PML-N govt only focused on the projects which can be seen by eyes or shown on the surface of the land such as Metro Projects, Orange train, Overvaluation of exchange rate, inauguration new public enterprises without making any strong reforms which led heavy debt accumulation (Reporter, 2018). On the other hand, PTI govt. has touched each and every sector including agriculture, seed, irrigation, small enterprises, business subsidies, exiting firm's subsidies, subsidies on electricity and gas, and for the biggest issue of electricity or energy crisis Khan has decided to construct damn. It will have two-folded benefit. It will reduce the energy crisis as well as irrigation sector. But all these positive steps of govt. followed by the unfortune of Pandemic which has detract the economic and social sectors of the country. The pandemic

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has eaten up the income sources of poor, burdened the health sector, destroyed the educational sector as lockdown has to be implemented to save people from COVID-19.

Narrowly, Political system is defined as the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a government or a state. (Heslop, 2020) Broadly, Political system seen as a set of processes of interactions or as a sub-system of the social system interacting with other non-political subsystems such as economic system. (Heslop, 2020) political system and economic system together influence the social system of any country. Every election brings changes in economic and social system because of different economic and social preferences of elected government. But political system changes only when institutional constitutional reforms are introduced in the country. The opposition of Imran Khan in the government of 2013 and the government of Imran Khan in 2018 has brought many economic changes but he has failed to introduce institutional and constitutional reforms which are required for the fast growth and development of the country.

### Background of 2018 election

In Pakistan General elections held after every five years. The last election was held on 25 July, 2018. The time period between elections of 2013 and elections of 2018 had led great changes in political set-ups and thinking pattern of voters. Since last 30 decades two parties PML-N and PPP have ruled over the Pakistan. In these 30 years PML-Q has ruled for 8 years. In 2013, Nawaz Sharif has formed the govt. by joining 19 Independent MPs and became a new prime minister of Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif took oath and PTI formed opposition and demanded to set-up judicial commission to explore the rigging in four constituencies during 2013. The supreme Court and the government of Pakistan has not taken these demands and requests on serious note. After a struggle of approximately one year Khan has planned a march towards Islamabad and named it as Tsunami March later the march was named as Azadi march (Zafar, 2014). On 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 Imran Khan the leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led Azadi March started from Lahore, and marched towards D-Chowk, Islamabad. The leader Imran Khan had several demands such as Resignation of Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, and Chief Minister of Punjab Shahbaz Sharif, Audit of Government Expenditure of last 14 months, Judicial decision against the persons who were involved in rigging in elections of 2013, electoral reforms for next elections, re-elections and interim government. (Ullah, Ahmad, & Azim, 2020) The sit-in ended after 126 days due to the incident of Peshawar school Massacre. Imran Khan said in his address that

“Pakistan cannot afford [our] opposition in these testing times... we have to end our sit-in.” (Zaman, 2014)

He further said that

“We have taken this decision for the sake of our country and want to see you [Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif] take the next step for the sake of democracy.” (Zaman, 2014)

The PTI chief Said that

“We expect that you will set-up a judicial commission” (Zaman, 2014)

The PTI and its followers were seeking that PML-N and Supreme court of Pakistan would set up a judicial commission to unveil the rigging during elections in 2013. On the demand of Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, a judicial commission was formed but the decision of judicial commission was in the favour of PML-N that elections were fair and just. Imran Khan has accepted the decision of Judicial Commission and stopped his March and Protest against govt.

Later Panama paper had unveiled the corrupt leaders of Nations and Nawaz Sharif was also one of them. Nawaz family owned 8 offshore companies, his children Maryam Nawaz, Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz were linked to four offshore companies which acquired luxury flats in London during 2006 to 2007 (Shah S. , 2016). After leaking Panama papers the opposition leader Imran Khan filed a petition for disqualification of Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif. Siraj-ul-wit, and Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad were supporting the petition (Ghumman, 2016). Joint Investigation Team was formed and supervised by Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan, Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, Justice Ijazul Ahsan. The Members of JIT were Wajid Zia Additional Director General, FIA, Ameer Aziz managing Director SBP, Bilal Rasool Executive Director SECP, Irfan Naeem Mangi Director General NAB, Brigadier(r) Nauman Saeed Director ISI, Brigadier Kamran Khursheed MI (Bhatti, 2017).

The JIT submitted the report that Nawaz Sharif and his children could not justify their assets and its sources. It was also proved that Maryam Nawaz has two offshore companies moreover she also allegedly

submitted the fake report before Supreme Court. The final verdict was made on the report of JIT and Supreme court disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and he resigned from the public office of Prime Minister and National Assembly (Rehman, 2017) (Rasmussen, 2017) (Dawn, Full text of Supreme Court order in Panama Papers case, 2017). Presiding Justice Athar Minallah suspended the verdict on the ground that NAB did not provided any solid proof of financial links between Nawaz sharif and the apartments but he was sentenced for 7 years imprisonment with fine of 5 billion Rs. In case of Al-Aziz Steel Mill. Nawaz sharif got bailed on medical grounds and flew away from Pakistan for medical assistance in abroad (Hashim, 2018).

As Panama papers revealed the assets of Nawaz Sharif and his children and provide evidence of corruption and money laundering, they lost their trust of voters and party Members. After these allegations the main members of PML-N joined PTI. Panama Papers has paved the way for PTI to win the next election.

#### **PTI Govt. vs PML-N – Policy approach**

Thinking pattern, approaches towards political, economic, and social issues, foreign affairs, bilateral and multilateral relationship, management of public finance, PTI has adopted different approach than PML\_N. Imran khan has tried to touch every economic as well as social sector which can invest in economic growth. Imran khan has proposed policies to support business community to stable and save them from financial crisis. He has assured the continuity of development projects. He has accelerated the progress of pending cases on tax evaders, and process of tax returns. (Tribune, 2019) For educational policy Imran khan has announce uniform curriculum in public and private schools to eradicated the class system. (Abbasi, 2020) Imran khan has subsidised the Farm inputs such fertilizer, brought reforms in seed sector, introduced National water policy (2018). The main aim of the project is to build 7 dams for water storage to improve and enhance irrigation sector to increase agricultural growth as well as to improve energy sector also. Moreover, also several steps have been taken to support the livestock business in agriculture sector. (EconomicSurvey, Chapter 2: Agriculture, 2021) For development of Industrial sector Imran khan has Subsidized electricity and gas, removed regulatory duty and Additional Custom duty on various item of raw material, special package for industrial sector have been announced. Moreover, tariff has been removed from textile industry, and manufacturing sector. (EconomicSurvey, Chapter 3: Manufacturing and Mining, 2021) The policies of PTI government are supporting every economic aspect of country for its growth. But unfortunately, the economy has been burdened due to Pandemic COVID-19.

The main focus of PML\_N govt. was the infrastructure of Pakistan that is constructions of roads, bridges and public transport. PML\_N inaugurated the project of motorway, constructed Metro Buses in Multan, Lahore and Islamabad. Inaugurated Orange train in Lahore. The PML-N did not introduce any strong policy for industrial and agricultural sector due to which the growth of both sectors has decreased. PML-N overvalued exchange rate by 27%. Moreover, rather supporting existing companies the PML\_N govt. started several new public enterprises which led heavy debt accumulation. Several energy projects were started without any calculation of cost-benefit analysis. No proper strategy was adopted to manage the storage of water. No public reforms were made. (Reporter, 2018) In short, PML-N has focused only on the project which are visible to eyes of the voters without any normative analysis.

#### **Supreme Courts/Judicial decisions against leaders of PML-N**

Imran khan and his party has proved very daring and strong opposition for PML-N government. After wining election of 2013, Imran khan announced AZADI MARCH, in which he alleged that the elections of 2013 were rigged and demanded a judicial inquiry. A judicial commission was formed by the govt to inquire the allegations and according to its verdict the elections were conduct by fair means. Later in case of Panama papers, on 29 August, 2016 the opposition leader Imran Khan along with Sheikh Rasheed and Siraj-ul-Haq filed a petition for disqualification of Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister because he does not fulfil the eligibility criteria stated in Article 62 and 63 of Constitution of Pakistan. (Ghumman, 2016) The hearing of the cases was started on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2016 and Salman Akram Butt and Aslam Sheikh were the defence council of PML-N leaders. Bukhari and Hamid Khan represented the Imran Khan. Chief Justice Jamali headed the five-member bench for hearing of the cases. The defence council of PML-N not only failed to prove the sources of income but also provided a fake Qatri letter in which they had shown the business ties between his father and Prince if Qatar. On 20 April, 2017 court released the final verdict of the cases against Nawaz Sharif. Court announced that there is no solid evidence that could lead the disqualification of PM Nawaz Sharif. But court ordered to formulate a joint Investigation Team to inquire the corruption charges against PML-N Leaders. (Jamal, 2017)

The three-member bench of the supreme court finalized the six-member joint Investigation team to investigate the corruption and money laundering cases against PML-N Leaders. The Team has the following members.

1. FIA: Additional Director General Wajid Zia. Zia will be heading the JIT.
2. SBP: BS-21 officer Amer Aziz. JIT member.
3. SECP: Executive Director Bilal Rasool. JIT member.
4. NAB: Director Irfan Naeem Mangi. JIT member.
5. ISI: Brig Muhammad Nauman Saeed. JIT member
6. MI: Brig Kamran Khurshid. JIT member.

The Supreme Court gave the complete authority to JIT to formulate own team, as well as also authorise them to use local and foreign experts to facilitate the investigation. The supreme court ordered to provide the budget of RS 20 million to JIT and form its offices (Bhati, 2017). The JIT has to investigate the assets, liabilities, and investment of gulf steel and links with Jaddah, Qatar and UK; Sources of means of Hassan and Hussain Nawaz Sharif to purchase flat in London; reality of Al-Thai letter; owner of Nescoll Limited and Nielsen limited; sources of the 810 million rs gift of Hassan Nawaz Sharif to Nawaz Sharif; establishment of hill metals; and investment of flagship investment Limited. (Iqbal, 2017) After detailed investigation JIT has submitted detailed report on 10 July, 2017, and court has announced its final verdict on 28 July, 2017. The court disqualified the Nawaz Sharif for holding public office of Prime Minister as well as the president of PML-N. Moreover, the court ordered the NAB to file reference of corruption against Nawaz Sharif, His family and Ishaq Dar. (DAWN, 2017). After filing the references from NAB, In case of Avenfield, on 6 July, 2018 The court sentenced Nawaz Sharif, his Daughter Maryam Nawaz, and Son-In-law Captin Safdar (R) 10 years, 7 years and a year respectively. In September 2018, the high court suspended the decision on the ground that NAB did not provide any strong evidence to sentence Nawaz Sharif and his daughter and son in law. On 24 December, 2018 again the court sentenced Nawaz sharif for 7 years on the basis of lack evidence in case of flagship investment enterprises. After the decision of court Nawaz sharif applied for bail of medical grounds. The bail was granted for medical treatment in Pakistan. Later he applied for permanent bail and medical treatment from abroad. On 7 may, the court turn down both appeals and sent him to the jail again. (Bhatti, 2019) During the judicial trial against Nawaz sharif, his name was put in the ECL to prevented him to leave Pakistan. After the struggle of several month the name of Nawaz sharif has removed from ECL and allowed to go London for medical treatment on several condition. The Nawaz sharif has signed a court approved undertaking that he will come back within four weeks and Shahbaz Sharif has also signed an undertaking and ensure the return of his brother. Finally, he got bail on ground of humanitarian basis and left the country in air ambulance. (Shekih & Taimoor, 2019)

#### Major Political Parties in 2018 election

Following is the list of Major Political parties participated in general elections of 2018

1. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)
2. Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N)
3. Pakistan People's Party (PPP)
4. Muttahida Qaumi Moment-Pakistan (MQM)
5. Pashtunkhuwa Mili Awami Party (PMA)
6. Awami National Part (ANP)
7. Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP)
8. Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP)
9. Baulochistan Awami Party (BAP)
10. Bauluchistan National party (BNP)
11. Grand Democratic Alliance (GNA)

### Prominent Political issues and manifestos of political parties

The political issues in Pakistan are multi-dimensional as economy, governance, economic and social issues are interlinked. The major political issues in Pakistan are Corruption, lack of transparency, nepotism, lack of accountability which leads bad governance. The economic issues in Pakistan are energy crisis, budget deficit, inflation, macroeconomic instability and social issues includes the lack of health and educational facilities, lack of proper sanitary system, lack of clean water, shelter etc. All these issues led to the difference in manifestos of Political parties.

### Manifesto of PTI

The First agenda in manifesto of PTI is the Transformation of Governance by ensuring the accountability, empowerment of people, reforms in justice system, strengthening the role of police, civil services reforms, institutionalised e-governance, ensure freedom of the press, and legislative reforms. The second agenda in manifesto is to strengthen the federation by consolidate integration of FATA with KP, reconciliation in Baluchistan, political and socio-economic empowerment in Gilgit Baltistan, ensure constitutional rights for minorities, alleviation of poverty, transform Karachi and ensure greater stake for oversee Pakistani. The third and main agenda in manifesto of PTI is inclusive economic growth by making Pakistan business friendly, fixing energy crisis, implementing policy framework, creation of employment opportunities and building houses, boost the tourism industry, FBR reforms, ensuring SME growth, acceleration of IT sector growth, building dams and conserve water, uplift agriculture, and CPEC along with revolutionise social services and national security. PTI has written its manifesto in detail to influence the voters of Pakistan. (Khan, 2018)

### Manifesto of PML-N

The manifesto of PML-N in 2013 has the economic and social dimensions with main points of increase in employment opportunities, resolving financial and debt crisis, resolve energy crisis, 7 percent GDP growth, provision of transport facilities in terms of infrastructure building etc. The PML-N government has started transportation projects like Metro Bus in Multan Lahore and Islamabad, Orange train has also constructed in Lahore.

The top issues in Pakistan are the part of manifesto of political parties. These parties use these issues as their slogans to attract the citizens of Pakistan. The promises made in political debates and routs are never fulfilled according to the promises. In fact, these political promises are not made on technical and ground of cost benefit analysis, these promises are made to attract the voters. Technically, it is time taking process to produce employment opportunities, and cost-benefit analysis and heavy investment is required to resolve energy crisis.

### Media Campaigns

Nowadays, Media plays very significant role in shaping the mindset of society. Print Media, Electronic media, social media has changed the world dramatically.

The report of European union (E.U, 2018) observed the whole scenarios of before elections of 2018 and published the report. According to this report the media was handicap by military led establishment and main role of judiciary in political affairs. The main concern of army and judiciary was the disqualification of Nawaz sharif for life time. Media has neither the right of freedom of expression not allowed to publish and on air the interview of Nawaz Sharif. In may 2018, The distribution of Dawn Newspaper was disrupted. GEO News was taken off air in cantonment area, and several parts of Pakistan during the campaigns of Nawaz Sharif. Media has been stopped by on-airing the anti-judicial speech. It has been stated in the report that state actors have control the media to influence the political narrative of the nation.

### Election Day and Voters Turnout

The general election was held on 25 July, 2018 to elect the members of national assembly. 11 parties have participated in the election PTI, PML-N, BNP, BAP, MQM, PSP, TLP, PPPP, ANP, GLA, and PMA. At the end of the day, PTI won the majority of seats and formed a collated government with PML-Q and MQM. PTI won 31.82% votes while PML-N received 24.35% votes. There is a huge difference between turnout of voters in 2013 and 2018. In 2013 PML-N has won the majority of votes but Azadi March and Panama paper realities has turned the table and PMLN has lost its voters and trust. The following table is showing the comparison of total seats won by three major parties in elections of 2013 and 2018.

### **Comparisons of total seats won in NA**

Party Name	2013 Elections	2018 Elections
PTI	35	149

PML-N	166	82
PPPP	42	54

The above table is showing the great victory of PTI, in 2013 election they won only 35 seats while in 2018 they have won 149 seats. The Number of seats of PML-N has shown that they have lost their trust and only won 82 seats which is the half of 166 seats won in 2013 elections. In 2018, PML-N with other leaders such as Maulana fazul-ur-Rehman, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of PPP has formed opposition and alleged that the election has been rigged on large scale. The leaders of PML-N have given the statement that election has been stolen from them. The great success of PTI has led anger and aggression in opposition.

#### Election Results and Post-Election Scenario/Election Results and its impact on Political system of Pakistan

There are 342 seats of National Assembly of Pakistan out of which 60 seats are reserved for women quota, and 10 seats are reserved for minorities. 172 seats have to be secured by political party to form a single party govt. The following table is showing the results of 2018 General elections

Name of the party	Total Seats
PTI	149
PML_N	82
PPP	54
MMA	15
ANP	1
MQM	7
PML-Q	5
BAP	5
BNP	4
AML	1
JWP	1
Independent	12
Postponed	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>

As PTI has secured most of the seats the formation of govt. is left on PTI alone. PTI needs 23 more seats to form the govt. After negotiation with different parties MQM-P, BPA, BNP, PML-Q, GDA, AML, JWP and Independent members decided to support PTI to form the govt. (Repoter, 2018) The Defeated Parties were full of aggression and they alleged that elections were rigged and they will stand up against puppet leader. (Hussain & Chaudhary, 2018)

Since Imran Khan has taken oath as Prime Minister, he has adopted several valuable policies for economic stability but he has failed to achieve his first agenda of his manifesto that is Transform Governance by ensuring the accountability, empowerment of people, reforms in justice system, strengthening the role of police, civil services reforms, institutionalised e-governance, ensure freedom of the press, and legislative reforms. He has not introduced any constitutional, and institutional reforms. As Pakistan was the part of subcontinent and she was the colony of British, thus at the time of independence she has adopted the constitution and institutions set by the British government. and history tells that in colonies only extractive institutions are practiced that are made to extract the resources of the country and to control the people of the colony (Daron Acemoglu, 2012). From the Independence of Pakistan constitutional development has been taken and Zulifiqar Ali Bhutto had designed a comprehensive constitution for Pakistan. But to exercise good governance in Pakistan detailed and comprehensive institutional reforms have to be introduced and practiced in executive, judicial and legislative branches of the government. The government of Imran khan has failed to bring institutional reforms in the country. Policies provide the solution of the problem while the appropriate institutions increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy.

#### Conclusion

If we compare the policies of PTI and PML-N, we found that the policies of Imran khan are far better than PML-N and PPP. PML-N and PPP just focus on one or two industries or sectors of Pakistan. PPP

focused on agriculture sector; PML-N lead the infrastructure of the country. But Imran khan has crawled in every sector and sub-sectors, he heavily subsidises the agricultural sector and industrial sector. He has designed the policies for the most ignorant sector such as seed industry. He has planned to construct several dams to increase the storage capacity of water in country to resolve the energy crisis and support the irrigation department. The PTI govt. has vision and mission to achieve the best level of economic growth as well as has the capability to stabilise the each and every sector of Pakistan. But The government of Imran khan has failed to fulfil his first and foremost agenda of his manifesto and the agenda of His AZADI MARCH in 2014 that was to introduce the reforms in institution and constitution bring transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the executive, judicial and legislative branches of the government.

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