

Muhammad Waris Awan\*Farzana Zaheer Syed\*\* Asif Farooq\*\*\*

### Pakistani-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021: An Analysis

#### Abstract

*Valley of Kashmir has a historical milieu where much battled because of its strategic position. In 1846, the valley went under the control of the Dogra kingdom of Jammu and Dogra dynasty ruled the expanse till the division in August 1947. India claims the entire former British Indian princely state of Jammu and Kashmir whereas Pakistan claims that the natives of the expanse are Muslim-majority population and wanted their right of freedom under the Independence Act (1947). Azad Kashmir situated in the northwestern part of the subcontinent is known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir territory under Pakistani administration. Pakistan has been given a special autonomous status to it and even during the military governments; the region enjoyed democratic setup. The politics in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) are decisively underneath the rain of the government of Pakistan. General Elections were held in the region on July 25, 2021, and Pakistan Tehreek- e- Insaf won a majority of the seats. The study has especially focused on the General Elections (2021) and the factors behind the victory of Pakistan Tehreek- e- Insaf. It has also investigated the factors of former ruling party lose in the General Elections. A qualitative exploratory approach based on available sources was applied and it finds out that the poor administration, blame game and unattended core issues were the factors behind this defeat. The educated voters in the new digital age are fully aware of their rights and keep an eye on the administration, so the winning party and the new opposition both need to focus on performance for good governance and prepare themselves for next elections.*

**Keywords:** Azad Kashmir, Elections 2021, Pakistan Tehreek- e -Insaf, Voting behavior, Governance, Role of Social media

#### Prologue:

The beautiful Kashmir Valley enriched with resources has a historical background. The Jammu and Kashmir State (AJ&K) covers 84,471 square mile area in the North East of Pakistan and North West of India. It also joins the borders with China and Afghanistan in the North. The AJ&K State was considered the largest princely state in the sub-continent among the 562 at the time of 1947 division and it still asserts the similar status (Gilani 2008).

The Muslims started an emancipation movement against India in 1947 in the region. India and Pakistan fought a war in some parts of the Kashmir came beneath the control of Pakistan known as AJ&K. The new government established in the Pakistani –administered part on 24th October, 1947 (Muhmmad Aurangzeb 2020).

In the beginning, the newly established government started working as a war council. Later the Rules of Business were formulated and management of AJ&K was maintained. The executive position was vested to the President. The courts started work in 1948 for the judicial execution and a few former laws “*Jammu and Kashmir princely State*” were implemented. Later, in 1952, the “*Rules of Business*” for the State were modified. The legislation and administration was mentioned in the re-drafted “*Rules of Business*” (Mahmud 2006). In 1957 “*Rules of Business*” were third time redesigned.

In former system exercised from 1947 to 1960, only nominated person from “*Working Committee of Muslim conference*” could work as president of the State. The President was the Executive Head, who was assisted by some ministers. In 1960, “*votes of basic democrats*” system was implemented for the “*Presidential nomination and Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Council*” were formulated being elected by the Basic Democrats. The Council was comprised of 12 members chosen on the basis of single adult vote, where 12 members were elected by the refugees inhibited in entire Pakistan. In 1964,

---

\* Dr Muhammad Waris Awan, Assistant Professor, GC University Faisalabad

\*\* Dr Farzana Zaheer Syed, Assistant Professor, [fazanasyed@gmail.com](mailto:fazanasyed@gmail.com)

\*\*\* Dr. Asif Farooq, Directorate of Advanced Studies, GC University Faisalabad  
[drasif.farooq@gcuf.edu.pk](mailto:drasif.farooq@gcuf.edu.pk)

“AJ&K Government Act- 1964”, was ratified, and provision for the “State Council” revised (Mahmud 2006).

The Chief Advisor was certified to recommend the nomination of Council Chairman by using authority under the Act, 1964 from amid the Members. The Chairman further worked as the State President. In 1968, the “AJ&K Government Act, -1968”, was implemented and 8 Council members were now elected (Gilani 2008). The Chief Advisor (also ex-officio President) was authorized to select 4 members amid the refugees inhabited in Pakistan. In 1969, a new set up to run the State affairs as “caretaker government “was initiated into office.

The year 1970 was historic because the adult franchise system first time introduced through a constitutional amendment and a new democratic era started in the State of Azad Kashmir under “AJ&K Act, 1970”. The first Legislative Assembly was elected on an adult suffrage basis. The President was also elected following the same procedure. The Constitutional refugees of AJ&K settled in Pakistan. The Assembly consisted of 24 elected members and one co-opted lady member (Wajahat Ali Ghulam 2019).

The new presidential system remained functional about 4 years and later in 1974, the parliamentary form of government was implemented under the “AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974. In 1974, the State Assembly elected 40 members along with two female members, whereas 8 appointed members among whom 5 were ladies, 01 members from Ulema-e-Din, 01 from AJ&K technocrats and 01 from Jammu and Kashmir nationals’ but overseas (Wajahat Ali Ghulam 2019). The nomination of the Prime Minister is following the parliamentary procedure like in Pakistan (Gilani 2008).

In AJ&K, Prime Minister is the head of the Executive while the President is the head of the State under the “Interim Constitution Act 1974”. The political skeleton of AJ&K is identical to Pakistan with a few differences .The “*Prime Minister of Pakistan is the Chairman of the State Council, 06 voted members, 03 ex-officio Members (President AJK as Vice-Chairman of the State Council), Prime Minister of AJK or his nominee, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, and 05 Members to be nominated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan from amongst the Federal Ministers and Members of the Parliament*”. The Council is responsible to assign specified activities and few responsibilities of the Federal Government in Pakistan like defense, Foreign affairs foreign trade, security, and currency (Mahmud 2006). The Federal Government of Pakistan is responsible for all the above-mentioned State affairs of AJ&K. The legislative Assembly in the State is Unicameral and elect for a period of five years .In July 25, 2021 the new General Elections were announced by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commissioner .The ruling party in Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (AJ&K) has won 25 seats with simple majority and now will execute. The study has particularly focused on the General Elections (2021) and the reasons following the win of Pakistan Tehreek- e- Insaf. It has also explored the causes of ex-ruling party drop in the General Elections. In the technological age voters are effusively awake of their rights and can examine the administration performance, so both the new government and the opposition must to focus on the better performance and governance if they want to win next General Elections.

#### **Research Objectives:**

1. To analyze the significance of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021?
2. To explore the factors behind the victory of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (AJ&K) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021.
3. To find out the factors following the defeat of ex-ruling party Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (AJ&K) in the General Elections 2021 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Research Questions:**

1. Why the Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021 were significant?
2. What are the factors behind the victory of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (AJ&K) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021?
3. What are the factors following the defeat of ex-ruling party Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (AJ&K) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2021?

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The study is unique in the manner that it will contribute the literature available on Kashmir and Pakistani-Administered part of AJ&K .The General Elections held in the region to foster the democracy. The AJ&K elections got national and International attention and media is comparing it with the elections held n Indian occupied part. It will give the impression of the reader and scholars that how the people are free and fair in using their right to vote in the region with no pressure. It also

opened up the root causes of PML-N defeat in the General Elections and PTI success factors analysis presented in the study.

### **Kashmir: Historic Outlook**

The Jammu and Kashmir basin, comprised of Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Jammu & Kashmir form the former Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir, instigated by Maharaja Gulab Singh, but before 1947 division it occupied an area of 2,22,236 sq km . Indo-Pak had a war in 1947 over this region which continued from 1947 to January 1948 (Gilani 2008).

The Northern area encompasses “Himalaya rising to Jamgarh Peak”. The river Jhelum and its greater tributaries, with the Punch River .the Jhelum comprise of the western edge of Azad Kashmir (Zain 2010). The southern part has a thin zone of plains in Punch area which has sandy alluvial fans. The famous eating crops like “Wheat, barley, corn (maize), millet” grown in the region .People raise livestock in the lower part of valleys .In upper part of the valleys, corn, livestock, and forestry are the source of economic well being (Mahmud,2006). The mountains in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur produce “*graphite at Mohriwali, bauxite, silica, chalk, zircon, and low-grade coal*”. People in extreme weather stay inside and make carpets, wooden objects and handmade shawls’. The “Pakistan’s Ministry of Kashmir Affairs” looks up the matters and connect officially to Muzaffarabad, which is linked with Abbottabad (Zain 2010).

### **Azad Jammu and Kashmir Political Milieu:**

The people Kashmir were willing to join Pakistan under a revolution declared by “All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference” which was made on 19th July, 1947. Whereas Hindu Maharaja wanted to join Indian, so mobilizing movements started at both ends in Jammu areas. An armed clash started between the two groups of Muslim and the Dogra militia .The clash converted into killing of Muslims by Dogra forces, the news arrived at Pakistan (Zain 2010). Various groups in Pakistan moved towards Kashmir border and arrived at Srinagar on October, 1947. Maharaja Hari Singh did not surrendered and mail telegrams to the “High Commissioners of India and Pakistan” concurrently on August, 1947 and asked for an agreement. Pakistan accepted the offer whereas India rejected it. Hari Singh purportedly joined India. The carnage of natives in Kashmir continued even after Azad Government established. On January, 1948, the India approached “President of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)” and blamed Pakistan for supporting the natives of Kashmir and involvement in the region (Zain 2010).

The India registered its protest under the “Article 35 /VI of the United Nations” “*pacific settlement of disputes*” and neglected chapter VII that stated “acts of aggression” (Ankit 2013). Both countries held responsible to each other in the United Nations. The UNSC performed the role of a mediator and approved a Resolution No. 38 on January, 1948.According to it; both countries were bound to take steps to recover the situation and cease any action which disrupt the existing environment (Ankit 2013) . The United Nations established a commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) of three United Nations members and one from each India and Pakistan .It had completed three different stages for the resolution of Kashmir dispute;

- A Cease fire
- talks under the ceasefire accord
- holding an unbiased plebiscite

Pakistan is responsible of AJ&K defense, currency, security trade and foreign aid under Section 31(3) of AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974. Now an Interim Constitution of 1974 works in AJ&K which was passed by AJ&K assembly under the State of Pakistan (Mahmud, 2006).

The AJ&K first established own government on 24th October, 1947 as a war council. New “Rules of Business” were set and later developed to govern the region .the executive and legislative powers were delegated to the President. The former laws of Jammu and Kashmir remained operative (Hayat 2016). The Rules of Business were revised in 1952 and new legislation and Sate affairs were set accordingly .In 1957 the Rules of Business were redesigned and it remained functional till 1960. In 1960 under the new provisions “Presidential election system” with “votes of basic democrats” introduced in AJ&K (Chandrashekhhar 2018). A new institution 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Council' consist of 24 members formulated and its members would be elected by the “Basic Democrats” (Shafiq 2015). In 1964, the system removed and new “Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government Act, 1964” implemented.

In 1965, another constitutional amendment was introduced and two members were added on the nomination by the President from the refugees inhibited in Pakistan (Shafiq 2015). In this Act (1964) the Chief Advisor would nominate “Chairman of the Council” amongst the existing members (Shafiq 2015). The Chairman would be the as the President of AJ&K. In 1968, the Chairman of the Council would be elected by the Councilors. A caretaker government introduced in 1969 in AJ&K .Later in 1970 a new democratic set up launched where the adult franchise was allowed in AJ&K under the Act, 1970 (Shafiq 2015). It was the era when Legislative Assembly members and President were bound to contest elections on adult suffrage basis .The refugees in Pakistan were also granted the right to vote. The Assembly comprised of;

- elected members= 24
- woman member chosen by other members= 01

The presidential system worked 4 years and later in 1974 it converted into parliamentary system under the “AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974 (IMTIAZ-UL-HAQUE 2012) .The Constitution Act, 1974 defines State organs as ;

- Legislature
- Executive
- Judiciary

The legislative Assembly of the AJ&K comprise of 49 members where 41 are elected by locals on basis of adult suffrage and Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan (IMTIAZ-UL-HAQUE 2012). Out of total seats 08 seats reserve for “technocrat, overseas Kashmiris, Ulema, Mushaikh and women”. The Council would consist of;

- Prime Minister of Pakistan (ex-officio Chairman)
- President of AJ&K (as Vice Chairman)
- Prime Minister of AJ&K/ any individual chosen by the PM(AJ&K)
- Elected members 06 by the AJ&K Legislative Assembly
- nominated members 05 by the PM of Pakistan

The AJ&K Council is delegated executive powers of enactment of those laws made by the AJ&K Council. Pakistan is empowered to exercise executive authority in few matters to run the affairs of the AJ&K expanse administration (IMTIAZ-UL-HAQUE 2012).

#### **Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission (AJK EC)**

The Election Commission in the AJ&K was established under the Interim Constitution, Article 50 where the Chief Election Commissioner will be the Chairman and two other members (Hayat 2015). According to the Constitution the Chief Election Commissioner and Members will fulfill the terms and conditions as;

*“No person shall be appointed as the Commissioner unless he has been a Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court or has been a civil servant of BPS-21 and above, in the service of Azad Jammu and Kashmir”*

The Commission’s authorization is mentioned in sub article (7)

*“It shall be the duty of the Commission to organize and conduct the election for the office of the President, the Assembly, the Council and local government bodies and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with the law”.*

#### **Terms and Conditions:**

the Chief Election Commissioner and its Members tenure is five years and sub article (12) of the article 50 describes that they can be removed under the conditions mentioned in article 42-E (Hayat 2015).The Commission is liable for the free fair elections for the following posts of:-

- President AJ&K
- Council Members of AJ&K
- AJK Legislative Assembly Members
- Local Govt. bodies members
- Rearrangement of the Constituencies of the assembly
- Conduct Elections and updation of Electoral lists

### AJ&K Elections 2006, 2011, and 2016: An overview

The Constitution 1973 of Pakistan declares the sovereignty of the AJ&K terrain in the hands of the people but hold the defense and security. What is interesting to note is that the political process in the AJ&K has continued despite the martial laws imposed in Pakistan (Hayat 2015). The governance of the region also remains undisturbed if a rival political party has a federal government in Pakistan.

The elections were watched by the international media and agencies as they compared these elections with the elections held in Indian occupied Kashmir. So the observers from the European Union were present to observe the AJ&K election .In 2006, 32 political parties participated in the elections. The registered voters were 3.2 million out of which male were 1.75 million and female voters were about 1.46 million (Hayat 2015). The legislative assembly seats were 53 (33 directly elected from ) the AJK and 12 seats were for Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan. The overseas Kashmiris were also granted right to vote on single seat. Women were nominated on five seats in reserved quota same as two seat were reserved for Ulema-e-Din/ Mashaikh and technocrat (Hayat 2015).

The AJ&K assembly has power of enactment of laws .The Legislature has single house (Mahmud, 2006).The elections process never stopped in the AJ&K even when there was undemocratic regimes working in Pakistan .The study would focus on General Elections July, 2021 with reference to General Election, 2016 for the comparison of success and defeat of the two major parties PTI (AJ&K) and PML-N (AJ&K) (Hayat 2015).

#### Azad Kashmir General Election, 2016

Election

Commission of the AJ&K conducted legislative assembly elections in the State on July 21, 2016.In which general public elected their representatives of legislative assembly. Candidates filed nomination papers on June 16, 2016. After review and detailed Checking papers .The candidates could register appeals on June 17 against their papers rejection (Snedden 2017). Election Commission heard their issues and take decisions on appeals from 25 and 26 June. Candidates could draw their nomination papers on June 27 and a final candidates list displayed on June 28th.The symbols allocation completed on 29th June. AJ&K Legislative Assembly elections were held on 2016.Total 2,674,586 registered voters cast their vote in the elections. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz won the majority and formulated its government See table 01 for result details) (DAWN, 2016).

**TABLE.01: AJ&K GENERAL ELECTIONS -2016 PARTY POSITION**

Party Name	Seats
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	31
Pakistan Peoples Party	03
Muslim Conference	03
Pakistan Tehraik Insaf	02
Jammu Kashmir People Party	01
Independent	01

Source: <https://www.electionpakistani.com/azad-kashmir/party-postion.html>

#### Azad Kashmir General Election July 25, 2021: An overview

The Legislative Assembly of AJ&K had completed her tenure of five years in 2021 and for the follow of democratic regimes; it was obvious to conduct new General Elections in the terrain. New elections held less than 13 days following the closure of the existing Legislative Assembly, which has completed her time period of five years on February 28 2021 dissolve earlier. The new elections held on 25th July .The elections held in total 33 constituencies in AJ&K and 12 constituencies of the refugees. Over 2.82 million populace of Azad Kashmir cast their vote. About 724 candidates stood for 45 General seats out of which 579 candidates competed for 33 constituencies within AJ&K whereas 145 competed for 12 refugee seats comprising settled in Pakistan (Election Commission of AJ&K 2021).

This year few seats were added in Legislative Assembly and “Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Sudhanoti/Poonch and Kotli” districts granted additional seats assembly seats elevated from 49 to 53.

<b>TABLE 02 : PAKISTAN ADMINISTERED AZAD JAMMU &amp; KASHMIR GENERAL ELECTIONS REGISTERED VOTERS</b>			
<b>General Elections</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2016</b>	1,483,747	1,190,839,	2,674,586
<b>2021</b>	1,752,788	1,468,005	3,220,793

**Source:** <https://www.electionpakistani.com/azad-kashmir/election-result-2016.html>

All major political parties in their party elections campaigns claimed to win the majority in Legislative assembly and formulate their government .They presented their development agenda to fascinate the voters.PTI offered a long list of their promises and presented their manifesto (See table).The PTI leader Zulfikar Abbasi presented his party manifesto (Daily Times 2021). In which PTI has announced numerous plans as given below;

- Representation in decision-making bodies of NFC ,CCI and NEC
- New “District Finance Commission” (DFC) will establish
- Women’s quota seats will be increased up to 17% in the legislation process
- A unique Economic Zone in Mirpur will set up
- Mangla Dam Up-Raising project will be accomplished
- Projects of Clean water supply will be started
- Focus on the advancement in the fields of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries
- Forests, Climate Change Projects will be well attended
- Revolutionary reforms in education sector
- Bank of Azad Kashmir will be established
- Kashmiri overseas and refugees issues will be resolved

Whereas PML-N also contributed and conducted successful processions, Shahbaz Sharif in a media talk presented his future plans and promises for the people of AJ&K after getting majority in elections (Daily Times 2021) . He said his party has future plans for Kashmiri people and they will serve the people .His manifesto points were;

- New Progress Plans and Chapters will open for AJ&K
- Building motorways
- Health projects
- New Education policies
- will set an example of services delivery in the terrain

Pakistan People’s Party young leadership Bilawal Bhutto and Asifa Bhutto also participated in election campaigns and numerous promises made but no clear agenda or manifesto presented before the public. Few points collected from PPP leaders speeches in the processions addresses;

- Basic necessities of life for common man
- Welfare programs for poor and needy
- Health and education Projects

<b>Table 01: Pakistan Administered Azad Jammu &amp; Kashmir General Elections-2021: Party Manifestos</b>	
<b>Party</b>	<b>Manifesto for General Elections-2021</b>
<p>Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) (Chairman of the Manifesto Committee Zulfiqar Abbasi)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation in the federal decision-making bodies (the National Finance Commission, the National Economic Council, Council of Common Interests and IRSA).</li> <li>• District Finance Commission (DFC) will be established</li> <li>• Women's seats will be increased by 17% on federal and provincial lines to ensure an effective participation of women in the legislation process</li> <li>• A Special Economic Zone will be set up in Muzaffargarh</li> <li>• Projects related to Mangla Dam Up-Raising will be completed.</li> <li>• Clean water supply</li> <li>• Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries will be promoted.</li> <li>• Forests, Climate Change Project</li> <li>• Revolutionary reforms will be introduced in the field of education".</li> <li>• Bank of Azad Kashmir</li> <li>• solve the problems of Kashmiri migrants</li> </ul>
<p>Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Presented by Shahbaz Sharif)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New chapter of progress, development and prosperity under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif</li> <li>• Build motorways</li> <li>• Health Projects</li> <li>• Education projects</li> <li>• Set an example of public service delivery</li> </ul>
<p>Pakistan People's Party (PPP) (Presented by Azeefa Bhutto &amp; Bilawal Bhutto Zardari)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic necessities of life for common man</li> <li>• Welfare programs for poor and needy</li> <li>• Health and education Projects</li> </ul>
<p>Sources: Authors contribution after Review of the Literature available at <a href="https://dailytimes.com.pk/782353/pti-ajk-releases-election-manifesto-promises-wide-ranging-reforms/">https://dailytimes.com.pk/782353/pti-ajk-releases-election-manifesto-promises-wide-ranging-reforms/</a> and <a href="https://www.dawn.com/news/1636249">https://www.dawn.com/news/1636249</a></p>	

### Pre Election Gallup Survey Statistics

The General Elections grabbed the National and International attention .All political parties especially the major parties PML-N, PTI and PPP organized processions in various parts of the region and claim the popularity. Many surveys were also conduct at private level to measure the popularity claims of all political parties .Gallup Pakistan conducted a pre –poling survey and published its report.

- **Gallup Pakistan**

Gallup is Pakistani affiliate institution that has International recognition .It is an oldest national research organization and collect public opinion .Gallup Pakistan conducted its survey on July 10, 2021.Accroding to the results people of AJ&K showed satisfaction about 38% with the former government of PML-N whereas 32% were dissatisfied. According to the survey results, 44 % in AJ&K shared that PTI (AJ&K) would get majority seats in the General Elections while 12 % said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and 9 % Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will win.

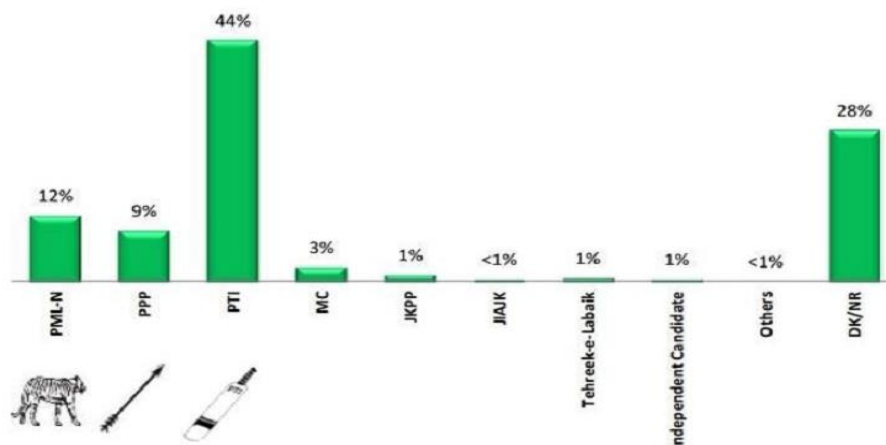


Social and Political Pulse of Azad Jammu Kashmir  
Topic 5: Voting Intention and Expected Voting Behavior

Blank

**Item 5.1: Key Finding**

Question: **Which party do you think will win in the general elections that are to be held on 25th July 2021?**



Source: Survey Conducted by Gallup Pakistan, July 10 - July 15, 2021

Survey conducted from 500 people of 10 districts in AJ&K. Gallup survey report revealed that .Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf Chairman appeared as the “most trusted” political personality (GALLUP PAKISTAN 2021).

**Elections Results: An Overview of all Parties Position**

Election Commission conducted free and fair General Elections on July 25th .The poling started from Moring till 5.PM.The counting started after the deadline .The result were counted .According to the official results PTI AJ&K has won the simple majority seats in the elections but the former ruling party won only 6 seats (See table).

**Table 03: Pakistan Administered Azad Jammu & Kashmir General Elections Overview**

Party Name	General Elections June 26,2011	General Elections July 21,2016	General Elections August 25,2021
Pakistan People’s Party (PPP)	21	03	11
Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)	10	31	06
Pakistan Tehreek –e-Insaf (PTI)	Nil	02	26
Kashmir Muslim Conference (MC)	04	03	01



<i>Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)</i>	<b>02</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>
Independent	<b>Nil</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Nil</b>
Jammu Kashmir (PP)	<b>Nil</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

Source: <https://ec.ajk.gov.pk/> Retrieved on August 1, 2021

### Factors behind Pakistan Tehreek –e- Insaf Success (AJ&K) in General Elections-2021

The PTI has won 26 seats indirect election in AJ&K and now effortlessly can establish her government. The PTI's serious use of Social media and digital platforms for the campaign also played a part in her win. Another reason of winning is their manifesto for the elections. The huge project's promise was announced for the AJ&K for example, participation in the NFC, NEC, and CCI. The promise of a provincial status was also a source of attraction for the people. New economic zones, education projects; health sector reforms were appealing to the voters (Daily Times 2021). The politics of propaganda and blame game was also a cause of former party defeat and PTI win.

### Factors behind Pakistan Muslim League (AJ&K) Defeat in General Elections-2021

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (AJ&K) won the 2016 General elections with a majority of seats in the AJ&K assembly and completed her tenure. The new elections and Vice-chairman for PML-N Maryam Nawaz started the election campaign and addressed the people, but the party stood in the third position and secured six seats only (Daily Times 2021). The media and analysts criticized the poor performance and bad governance in the region, but these were not the only factors behind the loss. A senator from the PML-N shared his critical views with Business Recorder there were five reasons we lost the election. According to him these were the factors,

- (i) Establishment Role
- (ii) Internal disputes in PML-N
- (iii) Difference in PML-N and Muslim Conference (MC) with same ideology and it divided their vote bank in AJ&K elections
- (iv) Absence of good governance in AJ&K by Raja Farooq Haider former prime minister of AJ&K
- (v) Federal officials under the instructions of “*Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur*” propaganda against PML-N in AJ&K

But Rana Sanaullah denied these statements that any conflict exists in PML-N during AJ&K elections campaign. He claimed that Shehbaz Sharif as a party president has leaded the campaign for polls. He said;

*“This does not mean that Maryam Nawaz has been sidelined. She as well as other party leaders including Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal and I are actively engaged in AJK election campaign”*

He moreover opened up; “You have seen the results of recent by-elections and you will see the results of AJK polls. PTI is destined to face humiliating defeat” (BUSSINES Recorder 2021).

Talking to Bol News Channel, PML-N party member said;

*“The Nawaz camp has a policy of going hard on the establishment without any substantial evidence and accuses state institutions, whereas, Shahbaz, who is the party president is against bashing of [the] state institutions and wants [the] PML-N to target the Imran-led PTI government like a true opposition party,”* (BUSSINES Recorder 2021).

The media reports and analysts opinion was collected to find out the major factors behind PML-N defeat and it was find out that following were the key reasons.

- (i) Governance (2016 to 2021)
- (ii) Leadership Issues

- (iii) Bashing State Institutions
- (iv) Blame game
- (v) Outspoken political Speeches
- (vi) Similarity in the Ideology of MC and PML-N
- (vii) Establishment role
- (viii) Anti-establishment narrative
- (ix) Voting behavior
- (x) Rigging Blame

The poor performance of PML-N in the recent AJ&K elections has created internal disputes in the party. The anti-establishment narrative and poor governance contributed to the defeat. According to party insiders, debates claimed that party workers have rejected vice president Maryam Nawaz's ideology and narratives against state institutions. It was pre-assumed that a number of political rallies and election campaigning PML-N would secure a number of seats but it failed. The AJ&K losses highly damaged the party (BUSSINES Recorder 2021). It is also said that Maryam Nawaz's hate speeches had damaged their position. It is also that the Nawaz narrative of losing popularity and party workers demanding Shehbaz Sharif as the upcoming leader of the party.

Political analysts believe that now it's the time that Nawaz Sharif needs to be careful in his statements and should act as a moderator. Another major factor is PML-N did not start mega development projects in the terrain and service delivery was unattended. The infrastructure and government did not perform well in the last five years. The people in AJ&K are in opinion that health, education and infrastructure were not the priorities of the PML-N former government (BUSSINES Recorder 2021).

### Conclusion and Discussion

On the basis of available data and media reports, it is found that the PTI has won the simple majority in the AJ&K General Elections 2021. It has exposed that the people in AJ&K preferred PTI over PML-N. They rejected the narratives of the PML-N. The manifestos analysis uncloaked that only PTI offered mega projects and big promises impressed voters and mobilized them to cast their vote in favor of the winning party. The PTI in AJ&K exposed and blamed the former AJ&K ruling party's bad performance in the governance. The people of the region are educated and well-awarded community, so they preferred to experience a new leadership. The PML-N was defeated due to her narratives, poor governance, poor management, no educational reforms, no health projects, unattended major problems etc. The people of the region now wanted to test a new party and young leadership. The analysts and International Media opened up many reasons behind the triumph of PTI but the truth is that the losing parties themselves provide a platform for the new winning parties by their poor performance.

Another reason is that it is observed that people in AJ&K always follow the voting behavior of Pakistanis and always select the ruling party in their region. So it is concluded that in the digital age it is tough to mobilize people through big rallies and speeches. The voters in this digital era are wise and keep an eye on the performance of their government and ruling party. It is suggested that the new government that has presented a long list of promises needs to work hard to serve their people; otherwise, the new elections in 2026 would be hard to win. The PML-N's leading leaders must warn their party vice-president to not use harsh language against State institutions.

### References

Ankit, Rakesh. "Britain and Kashmir, 1948: "The Arena of the UN"." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 2 (2013): 273-290.

Chandrashekhar, R. *Pakistan Occupied Kashmir*. Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, (2018)

Daily Times. *PTI AJK releases election manifesto, promises wide-ranging reforms*, (2021). <https://dailytimes.com.pk/782353/pti-ajk-releases-election-manifesto-promises-wide-ranging-reforms/>

DAWN. (2016) *PML-N grabs 31 seats in AJK elections*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1272615>

Election Commission of AJ&K. *Azad Jammu & Kashmir Election Commission*

*General Elections, 2021* (2021) <https://ec.ajk.gov.pk/election-results>

GALLUP PAKISTAN. *Social and Political Pulse of Azad Jammu Kashmir*, 2021.  
<https://gallup.com.pk/>

Gilani, Manzoor Hussain. *The Constitution of Azad Jammu and Kashmir : in the historical backdrop with corresponding Pakistan, India & occupied Jammu and Kashmir Constitutions*. Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2008.

Hayat, Javaid. "Pakistan's Relations with Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan: Recognising Internal Self-Determination-A Way Forward." *European Academic Research* 111, no. 12 (2016): 12815-12830.

IMTIAZ-UL-HAQUE. "DETERMINING THE POLITICAL STATUS OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN-FUTURE PERSPECTIVE." *Ph.D Dissertaion* . NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, 2012.

Mahmud, Ershad. "Status of AJK in Political Milieu." *Policy Perspectives* (Pluto Journals) 3, no. 2 (2006): 105-123.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Saleem Akhtar, Kamran Ali, Nasar Hayat, Shamaila Amir. "Kashmir Struggle for Freedom: Proposed Solutions." *International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2020): 61-68.

Shafiq, Sumaira. "18th Amendment and the Constitutional Structure of Azad Kashmir." *Pakistan Perspectives* 20, no. 2 (2015).

Snedden, Christopher. "Azad Kashmir." *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation* (2017): 113.

Wajahat Ali Ghulam, Waqas Ali, Muhammad Masood Khan, Raja Nasir Ali Khan, Muhammad Farooq. "Investigating Factors Influencing Brain Drain of Citizens of Azad Kashmir Pakistan." *The Journal of Social Sciences Research* (Academic Research Publishing Group) 5, no. 3 (2019): 782-788.

Zain, Omar Farooq. "A Socio-Political Study of Gilgit Baltistan Province." *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)* 3, no. 1 (2010): 181-190.