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Manifestoes and Governing Practices of Political Parties in Pakistan: Comparative Study of PTI & PML (N) 2013-2023

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ABSTRACT

The research paper "Manifestoes and Governing Practices of Political Parties in Pakistan: A Comparative Study of PTI & PML(N) 2012-2023" examines the differences between the two main political parties in Pakistan, PTI and PML(N), and their election manifestos. The study emphasizes how crucial political parties are to the process of democratization and how they have shaped Pakistan's political environment, which has been tainted by military takeovers and flimsy democratic institutions. The study compares the platforms of the PTI in the 2018 election and the PML(N) in the 2013 election, examining the promises made by each party and the degree to which they were carried out after gaining power. The economy, health, education, and international policy are important areas of analysis. Using primary materials like official papers and manifestos and secondary sources like books and articles, the study uses a qualitative methodology.

The results show some inconsistency between the parties' declared policies and their actual ways of governing. While the PML(N) made strides in improving education and the economy, it had difficulty being independent and handling international affairs. PTI, on the other hand, struggled with foreign policy and missed its educational targets despite having great success with healthcare efforts thanks to the Sehat Insaf Card. The study comes to the conclusion that although both parties saw some success, many of their campaign pledges were not kept, which left the people feeling pessimistic and distrustful. This study emphasizes how complicated governance is and how many internal and external variables affect how political promises are carried out.

Key Words: Manifestoes, Establishment, Pakistan, PML (N), PTI, Development

Introduction

Pakistan, since its establishment in 1947, has been trembling to achieve democratization. Our 75-year history is marked by military interventions and the

dissolution of democratically elected governments. Frequent military interventions and dissolution of the elected governments led to the weakening of political institutions. Political parties are key players in any country's political and democratic process. Political parties play a crucial role in democratization from the grassroots to the highest level. In Pakistan, we have a multi-party system, but unfortunately, these parties have failed to achieve the objective of democratization of the society as well as the government structures. This dilemma is because political parties in Pakistan are undemocratic in their internal structure. Most political parties are established on a regional, language, or religious basis. Even the main political parties in Pakistan are influenced by the personality cult and are predominated by the influence of a family or individual.

The most important fallout of all these factors is that political parties in Pakistan have never succeeded in their manifestos. The promises they make during the election process and the manifestoes they present before the nation for implementation if they are elected and form the government are never fulfilled in true letter and spirit. This lack of implementation of their manifestoes has very negative impacts, making them irrelevant in the eyes of most common people. This irrelevance of major political actors, such as political parties, leads to mistrust and hopelessness among the masses. This hopelessness and mistrust provided hurdles in the people's political participation, directly impacting the political process.

Pakistan has many political parties, but only a few have national-level representation, such as PTI, PMLN, PPP, JI, etc. This study will discuss the manifestoes of the PMLN (2013) and PTI (2018), the two mainstream political parties in power for the last decade.

Literature Review

The manifesto document of the PMLN (Manifesto P., 2013) during the 2018 elections reveals its achievements during the 2013 -18 tenure, in which almost 0.7 million out-of-school children were brought back into schools. Ten thousand schools were either revamped or newly constructed. Overall, 17 billion rupees in scholarships were given to needy students to continue their studies. The recruitment of 300,000 teachers and 30,000 AEOs was another benchmark for the education sector. Higher education funding was increased by 75%. Providing laptops to bright students on merit and establishing 27 new colleges and 04 universities was another step toward developing education.

According to the Manifesto of PMLN for the 2013 elections (Manifesto P., 2013), in the sphere of health, the government of PMLN worked hard for immunizations, vaccines, and safe deliveries of children. They reduced the polio cases from 306 in 2014 to 06 in 2018. Access to private hospitals was given to 3 million Abject poor people. During five years, 7000 hospital beds were increased all over Punjab, and the health budget increased by 200%. During their tenure, three medical universities and four medical colleges were established.

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On the other hand, in its manifesto (Manifesto T.-e.-I., 2018), PTI promised to upscale Sehat cards across Pakistan. They claimed to focus on increasing human resources in the form of lady health workers, nurses, and doctors, and particular emphasis will be given to their training and practices. It will also ensure that a basic health unit is established within a 10km radius of every village. Revamping old hospitals and providing the best health facilities with public-private partnerships were among the top priorities of the PTI regime.

According to a report by Prime Institute (Institute, 2018), the PMLN government, during their tenure from 2013-2018, achieved the maximum targets they set during the election campaign 2013. The report explores that it was claimed in 2013 that the GDP growth rate would be doubled during the government's tenure. He says that according to the documents, in the last year of the PMLN government, it was recorded at 5.8% in 2017. The report also reveals that the government of PMLN also achieved the target of bringing down the budget deficit to 4%. However, the other side of the report indicates that PTI sustained the momentum of GDP growth till the fiscal year 2022 despite the worst kind of lockdowns due to COVID-19.

On the foreign policy front, Mr. Shahid Iqbal's article; Foreign Policy Preferences of Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis 2008-2018 (Iqbal, 2018), describes that the PMLN government shifted its preferences from the previous governments. They ended the Pak-Iran Gas pipeline project. The relations with Saudi Arabia were enhanced, and the ex-army chief of the country was sent to Saudi Arabia to lead the 36 Muslim states' army. Pakistan also tried to mend its ways with India and Afghanistan. In his relations with China, the grand CPEC project emerged. However, Pakistan could not manage its relations with Afghanistan, and even its greylisting in FATF was another setback for the PMLN regime during 2013-18.

Hashmi's article PTI's Educational Reforms (Hashmi, 2020) describes that PTI had four objectives in its educational policy: bringing all out-of-school children into schools, uniform syllabi, quality education, and emphasizing vocational and technical education. He says that they bitterly failed to achieve these objectives. All these needed new initiatives and reforms that PTI could not initiate. A large quantity of new schools was required to bring out-of-school children back. The dream of a uniform syllabus was good but could not be implemented in actual letter and spirit.

According to another article, PTI vs. PMLN, by a news agency, Mattis Global (Global, 2023), a massive increase of 322 in per capita income was recorded, while it decreased during the government of PTI. The article also reveals that during the PMLN government, there was neither an increase nor a decrease in exports, while during the PTI government, there was an increase of 7.7 billion \$.

On the other hand, the PTI government faced multiple challenges on the foreign policy front. He wanted solid and friendly relations with China, which could not materialize due to China's failure to act upon its wishes. In terms of

India, PTI wanted peace and resolution of all the disputes, but the vents like Palwama deteriorated these efforts. India's 05 August 2020 move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir further added oil to the fire. PTI government's support of Russia over the Ukraine War and later on its condemnation was another setback for the foreign policy of Pakistan. However, Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, fought the case of Muslim Umma in the United Nations against islamophobia and respect for Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).

Theoretical Framework

The current study aims to have a deep insight into the manifestoes of both political parties. Further, the study will analyze whether or not these parties' policies were by their manifestoes. Policy feedback theory will be used for the study. The theories emphasize studying and mending current policies according to their feedback on implementation.

One of the earliest proponents of Policy Feedback Theory is Paul Pierson, a political scientist known for his work on the dynamics of policy change and institutional development. (Busemeyer, 2022). While these scholars have made significant contributions to Policy Feedback Theory, it is important to note that the theory has evolved through the collective efforts of researchers in political science, public policy, sociology, and related fields. As a result, Policy Feedback Theory represents a broad theoretical framework that continues to be refined and expanded through empirical research and scholarly debate.

Research Rationale

As suggested by the topic in this study, we will discuss the manifestoes of the political parties such as PMLN and PTI. PMLN won the elections of 2013, and the government was formed. We will study their manifestoes based on which they contested the 2013 election. We will also analyze whether, after forming the government, they adhere to the promises and claims they made in their election manifestoes or failed to fulfill them. Similarly, we will study PTI Manifestoes during the 2018 election, and an analysis will be made on whether they fulfilled the promises made during the 2018 elections.

Research Questions

I have also formulated two research questions. My main focus in this study will be answering these two questions.

How do PMLN and PTI differ in terms of implementing their manifestoes during their governments in 2013 and 2018, respectively?

- I. What were the major challenges PMLN and PTI faced during their governing periods of 2013-18 and 2018-22 in transforming their manifestos into policy outcomes?

Variables

In this study, we will discuss the performance of the political parties in terms of their manifestos. The manifestos will be the guiding or independent variable. The following 04 dependent variables will be studied to judge and compare their performance. These dependent variables include foreign policy, economy, education, and health.

Operationalization of Research Design

This research will use the qualitative method to understand whether both political parties succeeded in implementing their electoral manifestoes when they came into power. It will explain how and why they could not. It will also include a comparative study comparing the implementation of manifestoes by both political parties during their governments.

Primary sources like political party manifestos and official governmental documents will be used for the data collection method. Secondary sources include books, journals, articles, etc.

Manifestoes of PMLN and PTI in the 2013 and 2018 General Elections Respectively

In Pakistan's political history, the year 2013 was very significant in terms of crucial political development. Among these political developments, the most important was that PMLN formed the government by securing the majority in the province of Punjab and the center of Islamabad. Another was the rise of another political party named PTI, which went from a low-profile party to the national level. At the same time, the previous government of PPP was very much controversial due to charges of corruption, inflation, and conflicts with the establishment, particularly on the issue of the Memo Gate scandal.

Hence, it was a significant time for PMLN to put forward manifestoes that could highlight the miseries of the people of Pakistan and bring solutions to these miseries. Under such circumstances, PMLN presented its manifesto during the 2013 elections in March 2023. Mian Nawaz Sharif, speaking on the occasion of the launching of the manifesto, said, "We consider these elections are not just about change but about the future of Pakistan." (Tribune, 2013)

Pakistan Muslim League (N) Claims in 2013 Manifesto

Pakistan Muslim League (N) claimed that they have one of the best teams to deal with the economic crisis the country is suffering. In the sphere of economy, they claimed to double the GDP growth rate from 3% to 6% during the next five years if elected. Bringing down the budget deficit was another target of PMLN, which announced up to 4% of GDP in its manifesto. PMLN also claimed to increase the

tax GDP ratio by up to 15%. Tax collection and widening of its scope have always been a challenge for Pakistan's economy.

The PMLN, in its manifesto, claimed that it would broaden the scope of the tax net and that the informal economy would also be brought into the tax net. They also claimed in their manifesto to move towards self-reliance despite foreign debt. Another claim was to decrease the budget deficit and increase the per capita income of people in Pakistan during the next five years. The country facing an acute energy shortage was another challenge, which PMLN claimed to overcome within five years of their government.

In foreign policy, the PMLN formulated a comprehensive strategy in its manifesto, claiming that Pakistan will not allow foreign interference and that its soil will not be used against any other state. The PMLN also supported Iran's nuclear program under the IAEA and showed its resolve to resolve all disputes through peace and dialogue. Respect for the independence and sovereignty of states was another trademark of the manifesto during the 2013 elections.

Education for all was the main motto of PMLN in their manifesto. They also claimed to provide free and compulsory education for children between 6-16. More focus was on vocational and technical education by claiming to build a vocational and technical institute in every district and district. Revival of National Teachers' Day was another claim to be materialized during the next five years. PMLN also claimed to give a national education policy for developing, improving, and uplifting Pakistan's education. PMLN also claimed to increase spending on education up to 4% of GDP.

In a country like Pakistan, where the per capita income of individuals is low according to international criteria, health has always been a significant issue. PMLN in its manifesto in 2013. The most important was the expansion of Rescue 1122 services and infrastructure beyond the district level. The provision of clean drinking water was another priority of PMLN in its manifesto of 2013. Spending 2% of its GDP on education was another claim made by PMLN during the elections in its manifesto.

Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf Claims in 2018 Manifesto

Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf was established in 1996 but could not get public support until 2011. In the elections in 2013, it emerged as one of the major political parties and formed its government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, in 2018, PTI secured a majority to form government in the center and Punjab. Since their popularity in 2011, they have been claiming to be the alternative to all these political parties governing the country for the last four decades, some of the way. In this election, they presented their manifesto with the Establishing a Naya Pakistan slogan.

In its Naya Pakistan campaign, PTI raised the slogan of accountability, empowerment of people at the grassroots level, depoliticization of police, and reforming civil services structure and criminal justice system. In its manifesto, PTI

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showed its resolve to reform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with robust, proactive, and specialized foreign services. PTI also claimed in its manifesto that its mutual interest and international norms and traditions will be the guiding principle for Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan will adopt a conflict resolution approach and improve relations with our Western and Eastern neighbors. Politico economic diplomacy will be prioritized to achieve economic benefits through trade and foreign direct investment.

PTI's manifestoes claimed that 10 million jobs would be provided during the next five years. Federal Board of Revenue will be reformed through a robust tax policy mechanism, efficient administrative structure, and effective enforcement mechanism. A campaign will be started against corrupt practices leading to tax evasion, and their names will be publicized. Another project dreamed of building 5 million low-cost houses for people living in illegal settlements or slums, etc. Digitalization of business was proposed to make Pakistan a business-friendly state. A strong will was announced to complete all CPEC-related projects, and we promised to make it a reality.

Healthcare for all was the main slogan of PTI manifestoes for the 2018 elections. They claimed to provide universal healthcare coverage to all people across Pakistan. For this purpose, the Sehat Insaf Card was proposed with a public-private partnership. The number of female health workers will be doubled, and basic health units will be established within a 10km radius of villages. Depoliticization of hospitals was also proposed in the manifesto through autonomous professional boards.

As laid down in its manifesto, the education policy of PTI was very ambitious, proposing reform at every level of education. Bringing out of school's children back to school was one of the main objectives of PTI, as claimed in its manifesto. PTI also claimed the establishment of new colleges and universities in its manifesto. Particular focus was given to vocational education, and for the said purpose, ten technical universities were supposed to be established during the next five years. Another vital proposal was a uniform syllabus for all public and private schools, including madrassas.

Comparative Analysis of Implementation of Manifestoes OR Governing Practices by PMLN (2013-2018) and PTI (2018-2022)

PMLN (2013-2018)

The history of democracy in Pakistan is troubled by military interventions and the dissolution of governments based on poor performance. One of the main reasons behind this poor performance is a deviation from manifestoes by the political parties that form governments after getting a majority vote. All over the world, political party manifestoes serve as the core foundation and highlight the agendas of the political parties. In Pakistan, electoral politics is more dependent on

personality and the baradari system rather than the manifestoes of the political parties. Therefore, political parties in Pakistan need to pay more heed to the slogans raised in their manifestos after coming into power. Moreover, frequent interventions by the non-democratic forces have also played their role in deviating political parties to act upon their manifestoes.

There are mixed situations in the cases of PMLN and PTI. In some areas, parties have successfully implemented what they claimed in their manifestos, while on the other hand, their claims have remained dreams. Many internal and external factors have contributed to the manifesto's non-implementation.

PMLN came into power in 2013 after a long break of fourteen years. During this period, the internal dynamics of politics changed. The incident of 9/11 also changed world dynamics. Internally and externally, Pakistan was confronted with many challenges and problems. These problems and challenges were dangerous for the integrity of Pakistan. Inflation, unemployment, and the ever-increasing worst scenario in the social services sector of Pakistan were significant problems to be dealt with. Energy crises and terrorism were the foremost challenges to be addressed as soon as possible. Energy crises and terrorism resulted in the shutting down of the industrial sector and the loss of human lives. In the international arena, Pakistan was being proclaimed as a terrorist state. American operation to kill Usama Bin Laden added fuel to the fire. All these scenarios require a comprehensive policy framework to cover all aspects and handle these problems and challenges.

PMLN, during their government from 2013 to 2018, performed well in most sectors or arenas. In the economic arena, PMLN achieved the target of increasing the GDP growth rate when it came into power. At that time, the GDP growth rate was 3.9% in 2013 to 6.1% in 2018, taking the country's GDP from 258 billion \$ to 356 billion \$. Inflation was another severe problem the people of Pakistan were facing. The PMLN-led government succeeded in reducing inflation.

According to Mettis Global News report (Global, 2023), the country achieved progress in terms of fall in prices, with the PML-N government successfully managing to curb inflation during their tenure, reducing CPI inflation by 270bps, food inflation by 330bps, and core inflation by 380bps. Pakistan received foreign direct investment during this period, which indicates that a business-friendly environment existed there. However, the trade deficit could not be decreased. Instead, it increased with exports falling only 2.6% of GDP. During the governing period of PMLN, the external debt and other liabilities also could not be controlled and increased, which was alarming for the country's economic conditions. The per capita income variable also witnessed a massive increase of around 322 \$. This led to an increase in the purchasing power of the individual, directing the minimization of the impacts of inflation.

In the sphere of foreign policy, the newly established government of PMLN had to face multiple challenges, such as hostile neighbors and transforming the world from a unipolar to a multipolar world. These situations demand foreign policy based on your geopolitical and strategic location and the world scenario.

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One of the main successes for the PMLN government was to achieve victory against terrorism. Pakistan's resolution to support Kashmiris in their fight for freedom remained stagnant during this period. Pakistan gave one of the best answers to Indian bigotry by arresting Kulbhushan Yadev and presenting him before the world community, thus ending Indian rhetoric that Pakistan interferes in Indian internal matters and supports state-sponsored terrorism.

This also served as an answer to sabotage the Indian attempt at the SAARC Summit in 2016. In the wake of Afghanistan, Pakistan made efforts to heal the tortured relations. The reconciliation process was supported by Pakistan in Afghanistan. Six thousand scholarships for Afghan students, waiving off duties on their products, and handling their 5 million refugees paved the way for friendly relationships between states. Mr. Khurram Dastgir, a Federal Minister, in his article PMLN's Foreign Policy Achievements, states that in the wake of the US, we remained actively engaged with them but could not succeed in continuing the Pak-US strategic dialogue.

The CPEC is more than enough to describe the relationship between China and Pakistan. In the elections of international bodies, Pakistan won 27 out of 30.

Like other sectors, education also grabbed top priority under the PMLN government. According to PMLN Manifesto 2013 (Manifesto P., 2013), around 17 million scholarships were provided to needy students. Recruitment of teachers and other necessary staff was also made on merit through the Punjab Public Service Commission. Teacher's training was also made compulsory for the education department teachers. A digital monitoring system was also developed for the schools to bring them into the chain of accountability. Moreover, 14 billion funds were provided to the schools for improvements and development. In higher education, all appointments are made based on merit. Quality enhancement cells were also established at the universities. The ratio of female students increased by 48%, while the faculty ratio increased by 60%. Pakistan Education Research Council was established to improve education research.

The manifesto of PMLN (Manifesto P., 2013) explains the PMLN government's contribution to the health field by encouraging improvements to be made. The immunization and safe deliveries ratio substantially increased. If not ended, then definitely reduced polio cases to 03 nationwide. That was a significant achievement. Another successful initiative was taken to revamp BHU, THQ, DHQ, and all the major hospitals in all the districts of Punjab. New BHUs were also added, along with 1000 beds and 933 ambulances.

PTI (2018-2022)

2018, after the general elections, PTI won victory and formed the government. The history of Pakistan shows that challenges and problems will always remain abundant for the upcoming government. However, the expectations people attached to the government of PTI increased the level and intensity of these

challenges and problems. People had voted for PTI after being fed up with the prevailing political parties. People PTI is the only party that can make their miseries to the ending level. Therefore, this weight of responsibility also increased the PTI's responsibility. People were imagining Imran Khan, the party leader, as their savior. But the situations were not different from history.

Mettis Global critically analyzed the performance of the PTI-led government in their article PTI vs. PMLN. (Global, 2023). The PTI-led government claimed in their manifesto that 10 million jobs would be provided to the people. But this claim proved to be a daydream. The government of PTI could not increase the GDP growth from 6.1%. The economic growth rate is one of the most important economic indicators to judge the economic situation of any country in which PTI if not failed, could not succeed. They also failed to control the inflation rate, which increased to a higher level. The CPI inflation rose from 4.7% in 2018 to 12.2% in 2022. Similarly, food inflation also rose by a staggering 960bps, indicating a higher burden on consumers, while core inflation also rose by 230bps. However, the PTI-led government succeeded in increasing exports by up to 1.7%. However, they should have increased foreign direct investment. Like previous governments, they also increased debt.

Under the rule of PTI, the foreign policy sphere has seen a shifting of strategies and priorities. Imran Khan, the former prime minister, said in his very early speech after resuming the prime minister's charge that we would adopt the negotiation approach rather than the military approach to resolve all the problems with India, including Kashmir. However, this could not work, and Pakistan had to face the day of 05 August 2020, when India changed the status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, the issue of surgical strikes further deteriorated relations between the two countries. The PTI-led government tried to establish normal relations with its neighbor India, and in 202, Pakistan opened the Kartarpur Corridor. However, only some of these factors could help normalize relations between neighboring countries.

The PTI government does not have an amicable and close relationship with the USA. They further deteriorated with Imran Khan's allegations of throwing his government out of office through US conspiracy. PTI government has also been criticized for not handling the CPEC program with China. In many sectors, the CPEC initiative programs were halted. The engagement of Pakistan and China during the PTI-led government has been a low-key affair. PTI government's U-turn on the Ukraine war further led to a mess in foreign policy.

In education, the PTI government doubled the nation's hopes. Unfortunately, it could not act according to the expectations of the public. The government's policy regarding single or uniform curriculum could not materialize because it needed more training of the teaching staff at schools. Moreover, it could only reduce the quality of private schools without enhancing the quality of government schools because this initiative was started without considering the fallout of this plan. Moreover, the structure of this curriculum did not support critical thinking either.

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Secondly, the PTI government wanted to bring 23 million out-of-school children into schools, which requires nearly doubling the number of schools that already exist.

However, in this regard, more initiative was needed. Emaan Siddique believes campaign rhetoric began to intensify in the months leading up to the 2018 general election. In an advertisement by the PTI, the party proudly showcased a 2017 article by *The Economist* titled “Imran Khan’s party improves services in Pakistan’s wildest province.” (Siddique, 2021). While the article started flattering, it soon gave a more critical lens to the PTI’s efforts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province synonymous with the party. In particular, the article took issue with PTI’s claims that “about 100,000 students have chosen to switch from private to public schools,” stating that this assertion was “based on dodgy data.”

In the health sector, the most significant achievement of the PTI government was providing accessible health facilities to all the public through the Sehat Insaf Card. This is considered one of the boldest initiatives of PTI in the health sector. Through this initiative of the Sehat Insaf Card, they promoted public-private partnerships. However, their claims of doubling the number of lady health workers and depoliticizing the hospitals remained unattended.

Conclusion

There is a complexity in judging the performance of both the political parties. Hence, state crafting is an art, and this art is technical in nature. Therefore, chances remain that the loophole cannot be covered despite unending efforts. Every political party that comes into power desires to act according to the claims they made during the election to grab public support. However, many internal and external factors lead to creating hurdles in their way.

A very complex situation emerges after a comprehensive study of the manifestoes of both political parties and an analysis of the implementation of claims made in the manifestoes. In some fields, PMLN’s governing practices have been based on the claims made in the manifestoes. Inflation, energy crises, GDP growth increase, and an increase in foreign direct investment are the hallmarks of PMLN’s performance in the country’s economic sphere during their rule.

On the other hand, they still need to claim self-reliance by availing themselves of colossal debt. Similarly, the PTI government failed to reduce inflation, increase GDP growth, etc., but it succeeded in its manifesto’s claim to increase exports by reducing the trade deficit.

So, the claims made by both political parties in their manifestos and governing practices remain partially contradictory. Hence, the hypothesis proposed at the start of the research is partially proved: there is a contradiction between the manifestos and the governing practices of the PMLN and PTI.

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