

## Journal of Social Sciences Research & Policy (JSSRP)



### Analyzing 2018 General Election in Pakistan: (A Study of Voter Behavior and Electoral Outcomes)

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**How to Cite This Article:** Ullah, D. S. (2025). Analyzing 2018 General Election in Pakistan: (A Study of Voter Behavior and Electoral Outcomes). *Journal of Social Sciences Research & Policy*. 3 (04), 468-481.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71327/jssrp.34.468.481>

**ISSN:** 3006-6557 (Online)

**ISSN:** 3006-6549 (Print)

**Vol. 3, No. 4 (2025)**

**Pages:** 468-481

**Key Words:**

Voter's Choice, Floating Voters, Rigging Issue, PTI Performance, Debating Military Role

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**Abstract:** Literature on elections based on ethnic voting of regional political parties and theory of clientelism based on Patron-client approach in Pakistan's electoral system is very scarcely present although ANP as Pakhtun representative party contested various elections but detailed data has not been collected. This paper will elaborate the concept of both these theories and will explore the pros and cons both for ANP and the electorate of KP. ANP's vote bank lies mostly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for which different constituencies (national and provincial) of three regions (Central, Northern and Southern) of KP were taken randomly in 2018 elections for which Scientific method was incorporated to the study to compare the results of ANP in last general election of 2018 and the results were comparatively analyzed on the basis of ethnicity, personality, hereditary, military, terror, floating voters, religion, media and party structure as the dynamics which led the party's (ANP) vote bank towards downfall as compare to PTI in KP region. The depressed socio-economic conditions and politics of kinship and ethno-national feelings inversely impacted the electoral politics of ANP and so voters opted for other options in elections of 2013 and 2018 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa falsifying the truth about the dynamic feature of the voting behavior of the province as ANP was twice ousted and PTI with the slogan of 'change' and 'Naya Pakistan' became victorious.

### Introduction

Fair, free, genuine and periodical elections are the most visible form of political participation for both political parties and people. These are the reflections of will of the people and government and authority for the political parties in a democratic system of a state. Steiner in his work, describes,

*"Countries with markedly different political systems have termed political participation the vital human right. In its absence, it is said; all others fall to a perilous existence"* (Steiner, 2004).

The electoral politics among the political parties render the comprehensions that what are the strategies of the political parties, how government's policies operate about election and how do people behave. Almost all political parties choose influential candidates among the electorate and these influential candidates use their political parties to get victory with in their constituencies for the accomplishment of their interests. Factors which determine voting behavior in electoral politics are the local, provincial and national affairs to which the political parties give importance, socio-economic

conditions of the society and related issues, religion, family influence and the most important people's conscious feeling regarding contesting candidates in various constituencies. Among other reasons, kinship (family) and paternal political impact on the elections is deeply rooted in Pakistan especially in (KP). Political affiliations of parents for a party, is later on transmitted to their young ones through political socialization. But the success and failure of the candidates depend upon the rate of political awareness created by the political institution before and during the electoral process. During elections common people are mostly interested in issues (war and peace, development, prosperity, depressions, corruption and governance) concerning the state with their resolution by the political parties.

A voter's motivation compels him to study the issues confronting the election and so will give time and energy by participating in election campaigns to make supportive environment for the candidate in coming election. It should also be kept in mind that his efforts be dually rewarded but if not he may change his affiliation or will become less interested in the same party by decreasing the investment in terms of energies for the upcoming elections. The process of voting gives the individual a solid opportunity to respond to the stimulus in electing or rejecting the candidate and thus the voting process provides a helpful method to illuminate political behavior. Upon the choice of preferences votes are converted into parliamentary seats. While on the other hand candidates' interest of getting re-elected by people, say the same language and thought which a common man has but in reality he does not mean that what he says nor he understands the issues. However, election results are the reflections of advantages and disadvantages of people to people and people to political parties depending upon their interests. Depending upon the satisfaction of an individual needs, a relationship is established between the person and the party, the outcome of which is later on shown by the election results. Stronger the support of a specified number of voters from a geographically defined area (constituency), higher will be the obligation of the candidate from the public office of the respective candidate of the party after election.

According to 'rational choice theory' interests of both the voters and political parties or their candidates are not clear and certain whether would be achieved or not, however reciprocally important for both. This situation of uncertainty becomes the backbone of electoral politics. A politician utilizes energy and acts to get elected to get more power, prestige and income from a public office. The only goal is to reap the reward (achieving personal benefits) from public office sown during election efforts. Political parties in Pakistan devise policies with a view to win election rather than to win elections to make policies for the welfare of the common voters. Election is a multi-dimensional phenomenon in which it is difficult to comprehend that how an election is won or lost. Election process is not only influenced by the social features of individual voter but also by institutional arrangements like election laws- that how many seats can a party win in the national or provincial assembly. In a two-party system result is declared as complete victory for one and defeat for the other while in multi-party system it is difficult to convert parliamentary seat into coalition partner. Election in any state encourages the element of accountability of political parties and their candidates in a polity and can be achieved either in greater extent or less. Accountability and political development of a state are co-relevant; higher the degree of accountability higher will be the political development of the state. Chris Wheeler analyzed,

*"A civil polity is one in which the public interest is served by process of accountability"* (Wheeler, 2013).

Whereas Samuel Huntington is of the view,

*"Elections in many states are nothing but to boost the power of troublemaking and often intolerant social forces for small term basis"* (Huntington, 1991).

In polls parties put themselves on view to provide an unrivaled opportunity to test their organization, personnel performances and policies of the parties. In heterogeneous states where different voters have different psychological and emotional attachments with different political groups or parties have two different perspectives, traditional perspective and revisionist perspective. According to traditionalists, party's identification is basically concerns with the emotional attachment and not with the individual's considerations that the said party would serve his interests better or not so his affiliation to the party is purely psychological and not based on party's policies. This thinking can be declared as rational because with change in time the ties with the party strengthened due to frequent use of vote without paying any attention to the issues confronting the state and policies of the party about. On the other hand, revisionists are of the view, that citizen's partisanship is not psychological but political and is the reflection of individual's judgment about party's performance on the national issues important to common man. This shows that masses control the public representatives by influencing them at the ballot boxes in a rational mode. It means voter before polling the vote takes into consideration the party, election manifesto, candidate and issues concerning the state and people.

In short issue and the party response greatly contribute a lot to the individual's partisanship regarding success or a failure of the party in elections. The theory of voting behavior as described by Down is based on cost and benefit of voting behavior in which the voter presupposes the maximization of the gains on preferring one party or its candidate upon the other. As it is known that a good democratic system derives out of popular vote so voting behavior is imperative to understand voter's will. Making, unmaking and remaking of voting behavior in Pakistan by the political parties is of two levels. First is, socio-cultural setting of the society affecting the behavior of the voter is religious conviction, communal assemblage (class, status and ethnicity), feudal structure, seat adjustment, power and ability, another level affecting voting in electoral process is rumors, deception, conspiracy theories and hyper giving statements of opponent candidates of respective parties alter the behavior of the common man as well. In the result of this, polling vote to an appropriate candidate becomes difficult for the common voter. A survey was conducted by "The Explorer" taking 600 respondents of different sex (383 males and 217 females) and age (young, aged and old) inquiring criteria for election and the conditions set for responding of people in terms of casting votes to different parties. The result of the survey revealed that participation in electoral process is useless if free will of the voter is not taken into account or valued rather in a traditional society like Pakistan external factors like (head of the family belongs to a religious family, feudal lord, economic affiliations or possessing ethno-national feelings) and so on contribute a lot in shaping voting behavior. That is why, according to ECP, turn out of the votes shows great diversity in terms of religion, ethnicity, personality economic gains and political affiliations.

### **Selection of Political Party and Voter's Choice in Changing Circumstances**

In the words of Hansen and Jansen, "political parties are service providers". Selection of political parties in elections is based on the result of service delivery made previously for the good of common man and so obviously voters will support that party and vice versa. Fluctuation or change of voters in political parties is seen in general elections in KP showing voter's rationality and strategy about electoral politics in future ( Hansen, T., and Jensen, J. M., 2007). So in order to inquire that whether voter should change the party loyalty in accordance to changed circumstances or not. The responses of the voters in different regions recorded were as such that out of total 100% in Northern, Central and Southern region 3.4, 1.6 and 2.6 % respectively agreed to a large extent while 6.9% in central region agreed to some extent that (Yes) party should be switched off if the old party is not in accordance to the well of common man. Keeping in mind that ANP as a chief exponent of Pakhtuns community and strong hold in

Central KP but still voters opted for PTI in general election 2018.

It is a common routine that before commencement of general election, party tickets are allotted by the central committee of a concerned party with mutual consultation of the party leadership. During this time the proposed candidate performance in previous election, his financial position, popularity in public, participation in social gathering (*GhamKhadi, Roghajorra, jirga*) and sacrifices for the party are considered as bases for his selection in future (Hassan, 2008). Besides all these, likes and dislikes of the central committee also play a key role in selecting a contesting candidate. It is also a fact sometimes a popular personality but weak in finances are ignored by the party although the candidate would be in pioneers and among the founders of the party. On the other hand, voters who are attached to a specific party, pass that candidate who is allotted ticket as they are affiliated with the party not with the person but there are some who give weightage to person, his popularity and performance in previous election (Hasnain, 2008).

For instance, PK17 in 2013 and PK 58 in 2018, the same constituency in district Charsadda but was represented by different candidate in both elections so the response of the voter was also different. Muhammad Ahmad khan got 22.42% votes in 2013 while Aimal Khan secured 28.54% in 2018 from the one and the same area, although both of them failed in that specified constituency but however Aimal played well as compared to Muhammad Ahmad Khan because of his high level of popularity and have a good reputation in politics (Jennings, M. K, and Niemi, R. G., 1968). If a candidate has a good reputation and sacrifices for the party but if ignored so the party voters may switch off to any other party as a reaction, leaving affiliation to the old one. Taking the example of voters switching old party as a reaction to ANP decision against Abdul Shakoor Khan in 2013 and 2018 and leaving ANP by Arshad Abdullah and ANP's decision against Arshad Abdullah -one of ANP's important provincial candidate but as ticket was not given in 2018 election so left the party along his supporters and joined JUI post 2018 election. Mean, the candidate may also switch off for any new political party if his efforts were neglected by the leadership (Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L., & Bowers, J., 2009). However, some of the voters are as such who are hung in between as to which party and candidate be voted. In the end it can be said that in winning or losing election all factors weather related to political party, candidate concerned or common voters should be considered in advance, if success is required and have a say in ruling the state.

Depending upon the party's policy, manifesto, past experience or services provided to the common man, expectations can then be viewed in future that the party is possible to be successful in achieving such and such percentage from the masses and so will acquire government (Kuhn, 2009). For this reason, a question was asked about the candidate's victory representing different political parties. It was expected that out of 100% turn out, the expected turn out for ANP candidates in different regions would be as such (North of KP 1.8% as compared to 12.5% of PTI, Central region ANP chances were 7% as compared to PTI who was expected to get 8.2% from the same region. Similarly, 2.2 % chances of ANP 's candidate victory were expected from Southern region while expectations from PTI candidates from the same region were predicted to be 8.5%). Keeping in minds that such predictions were proved true regarding almost all political parties including ANP. In central region of KP, ANP was successful while in northern region was led by PTI and southern region was dominated by JUI as usual (Khan J. , 2014).

**Table. 1: Party-wise Position in National Assembly (Election 2018)**

Political Party	Sindh	Punjab	KP	Balochistan	FATA	Islamabad	Total
MMA	0	0	5	5	3	0	13
PTI	16	66	30	2	6	3	123

<b>PML(N)</b>	0	64	3	0	0	0	67
<b>PPPP</b>	36	6	0	0	1	0	43
<b>ANP</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Independents</b>	1	0	0	1	2	0	4

The table cited above shows that voter's preference or choice with respect to election of 2018 has greatly changed the politico-electoral scenario of major political parties in Pakistan. It is worth mentioning that religious parties have become limited to KP and Balochistan only, mean rest of provinces' voters opted for parties other than possessing religious card. It is also notable that PTI has made in-roots in Punjab and its seats are equal to PML(N) showing popularity index of PTI in Punjab. However Balochistan has has not only ousted PML (N) and PPPP but also PTI. Electoral results of 2018 general election in Kp has not only undermined religion but ethnic feelings of the electorate as well, as ANP secured only one seat while got 30 seats of national assembly. It means the monopoly of the old political parties has been broken by the voter's choice as their demands have never been satisfied and so common man opted for the third option which was PTI.

#### **Floating Voters and its impacts on Electoral Performance in Election 2018**

Collins Dictionary has defined floaters in term of election as,

*"Voters who are not firm supporters of any political party and whose votes in an election is difficult to predict"* (Dictionary).

John Zaller has described floating voters as individuals who are less informed and ideologically innocent regarding a party move back and forth in election campaign and casting votes. They are not loyal rather loyalties change with the change in time. Some researchers have termed them as 'know nothing voters' (Zaller, 1992) Pakistan, possessing a multi-party system, the parties are classified into several of religious, ethnic and national clusters. Among these ANP, QWP and such others perform ethnic politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Besides all other political groups, the voters of Pakhtun region are confused as to which party should be switched on and which should be switched off (Shah S. W., 2007) The basic ideology and manifestos for elections are almost same as both ANP and QWP and to some extent PTM have the same program and agenda. In such case the voters are then motivated by the personality of the candidate. If the charisma of representation (MNA/MPA) lies in a person other than these political parties so, vote is casted in favor of him (Wilder A. R., 1999). In such a case, usually the independent candidate secures more votes as compare to prevalent political parties. Although ANP, QWP and PTM holds such personalities like Asfandyar Khan, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao and Manzoor Pashteen etc. but can't succeed due to resemblance in respective electoral manifestos. This is the reason that the strength of retrospective voters is proportionally decreasing election by election and opting for a new one. Is it not right that in spite of blaming other parties for incompetency, party (ANP) should elaborate its own past achievements during election campaign and procession? One of ANP's workers admitted that this wrong trend is of course going on in Pakistan that drawbacks of others are counted and ignore theirs. Instead of such blames and counter attacks each party must focus on its own performance and should aware the public for future programs.

Another important factor affecting electoral politics is that despite of discussing issues related to common man in respect of his daily life and demands to be fulfilled by the party while comes in government, the party sticks to its traditional issues of identity and ethnicity and to some extent international issues of the state with neighbors like India, Afghanistan and Iran are discussed in electoral campaign. A common man is now fed up of these narratives and wants a party or an individual to cope with the socio-economic problems of the middle class and so voters jumped into another political group

(Shah S. W., 2007 ).

Similarly making pre-poll alliances is also an electoral tactic used by the parties to compete a certain party or candidate to win a constituency for which sometimes seat to seat adjustment is also made. In such a case, like in election 2013, alliance of JUI, ANP and PPP was made in KP in order to put PTI in hot water by keeping their respective ideologies to a side. The ideologies of PPP and ANP are to some extent relevant but contradictory to JUI but still alliance was made. It is due to this reason that ideological workers of ANP didn't tolerate and switched to other party ( Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P., 2006 ). A common worker or voter loses his confidence and floats either to any other party or vote to an independent candidate.

#### **Role of PTI in Voting Behavior and Electoral Performance**

Pakistan Tahreek-e- Insaaf, a political party led by Imran Khan- performing its role for the last twenty-two years with the ideology of justice, transparency and accountability. The party aims at the elimination of corruption and provision of social services especially widening tax base, reforming institutions and job opportunities. In order to achieve these objectives PTI vigorously campaigned itself as the only alternative to the state's two main political parties- PPP and PML(N) which are known for their corruption, money laundering and poor governance in terms of financial dependency upon others and economic underdevelopment (Khan I. , 2018). The party owned anti-West, denouncing US Drone attacks and pro-Taliban policy and supporting peace talks with Taliban raised its popularity both right-wing as well as left-wing party and so finally won the election on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. PTI emerged as the single largest party but short of majority in national Parliament securing 115 seats so to cover half way (171 seats) in National Assembly PTI has to get support of independents, smaller parties like PML(Q), BNP(M), BAP and MQM (Dawn, 2018). Victories of other parties across the state's constituencies were also revealing- sweeping success of PTI in KP, 90% score of PPP in rural Sindh, while urban Sindh was dominated by PTI, PML (N) got more seats in eastern and central Punjab while north, west and south areas of Punjab were scored by PTI and only Baluchistan province was such in which patchwork was done by different political groups (Dawn, Polls Explained in Colours: General Election 2018', 2018).

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it is presumed that voting behavior in this region has remained ever-change. Pakhtuns never opted for the same party to be re-elected if the party performance does not suit to the expectations of the electorate and this is the reason no party can claim persistency in its executing the province but this perception has also been failed in 2018 election by PTI sweeping almost all the regions of the province, PTI won 39 seats from all over KP. If election in 2013 noticed routing of ANP in province, this election predicted culmination of PML-N's effect in KP, party won two seats in election of 2018 as compared to four in 2013 for national assembly. ANP secured only one seat with a margin of only 35 votes from Mardan, the rest of all 13 seats were clean swept by PTI. Peshawar valley was hoped for the revival of ANP and other parties including MMA but neither ANP nor QWP made any impression in electoral playfield as both were holding the flag of *Pakhtun* Nationalism and its real representation, though ANP used the slogan of "*Bacha khani Pakar Da*" in its electoral campaign so that *Pakhtuns* may be united against any other party but failed in its ambitions. Instead of that two seats of National Assembly from FATA (Former) were won by PTM candidates ensured its popularity among the *Pakhtun* tribes though the Movement has made an announcement that PTM will neither support any party nor will stand its candidates in the current election. According to Manzoor Pashteen,

*"It is quietly a non -political movement endeavoring for its due rights from the government and Pakistani army"* (Pashteen, 2016).

But actually it was a sign of revival of a neo-*Pakhtun* nationalist movement (Dawn, 2018). According to

FAFEN, 11.7 % increase has been occurred in the votes which have been rejected or declared as invalid in forty-nine NA constituencies. Out of these 49 seats, 6 belonged to KP in which one seat was won by ANP candidate Ameer Haider Khan Hoti.

(FAFEN, 2018)

Despite of the terrorist attack occurred in Quetta killing 30 people, voter's turnout recorded to be 53% along with 10% in women turnout but as the political and electoral culture going on in Pakistan, election of 2018 faced controversies with allegations of rigging and irregularities which are of no doubt a new phenomenon in Pakistan. ANP's vote bank is degrading election by election. What are reasons? a question asked by the researcher. ANP's leader answered that in Pakistan, elections are usually manipulated by non-political actors. Elections are usually rigged. If the electoral process is reformed and is made transparent, ANP will get its vote bank back and surely be successful. The state's Human Rights Commission declared the election as the most dirtiest and mismanaged one because the fact can't be denied that a leveled playing field was not provided to all political parties rather it was a favored election in Pakistan's history – strong support for one and only party (PTI) (Juanidi, 2018). Mismanagement on the part of ECP, counting votes, delaying tactics in declaration of results through RTS, were suspicions posing questions on the fairness and rigging in election. Post poll irregularities were that independents and small parties were corralled for PTI so that the beloved party (PTI) may be able to form government in center as well as in provinces especially in Punjab (Jose, 2018).

However, the EU observing election commented that delay in results was due to new system of transmitting results which took weeks. Overall EU mission report on election gave the polls themselves a green light and stated that EU positively assessed vote count process in 2/3 of its observations (Services, 2018). According Gallop survey 54% of Pakistani were satisfied with democracy working in Pakistan while 45% argued in dissatisfaction (Gallup Pakistan, 2018). The international observers along with the national one noted the lack of the military neutrality for competing political parties and freedom of media from influence of state institutions. Newspapers and TV stations noticed restrictions and limitations while they were reporting election process (Rashid A. , 2018). A meeting which took place between PML(N) civilian government and army personnel and the growing rift which was reported by Dawn which was intimidated, harassed and imposed ban on selling of newspaper (BBC, "Pakistan Relief after Abducted Journalist Gul Bukhari is Freed",, 2018). Cable operators were asked to take Dawn TV channel off the air. Same was the case with Geo news and Jang newspaper, the proprietor of that was asked not to pay three months salaries to the staff until a compromise may not reached between them and army. (Dehlvi, 2018) PILDAT also judged the partiality of NAB and dependence of judiciary. A coup was established by judiciary as no action was taken against the harassment of journalists, free speech, salary payments and killing of political career of PM Nawaz Sharif, his daughter and son-in-law as disqualified from politics on charge of massive corruption (PILDAT, 2018).

Considering and comparing the results of 2013 and 2018, it is worth mentioning that the number of votes registered has been increased from 2013-2018 and the votes scored by ANP candidates in various constituencies have also been increased but still faced failure in majority constituencies instead of few ones like PK 16, PK22, PK 35, PK 53, PK 57 and PK 70.

### **Electoral Politics and Prediction of Rigging in 2018 Election**

Elections in Pakistan held in different regimes were spoiled by different types of techniques both (civil and military). Various reasons cause this wrong doing but one of the important things is expedition for power for which the manipulators left no stone unturned to have leading position in election results. The election of 2008 was the most crucial in which massive rigging was tried both pre and post polling

by Musharraf and King's party PML(Q) however the attempt was made unsuccessful as military and intelligence agencies were not on the back of the Sovereign's party. Turn- out was either upper than other elections in electoral history of Pakistan though 20 thousand fake votes were polled by the manipulators but couldn't achieve desired results. It was also the fact that certain loopholes did happen and rigging occurred but these were few areas which suspended the provincial elections results however at the national level PPPP got through in acquiring and making government at the center. So ways and means like ((independence of Election Commission, media, judiciary and favorite role of state agencies) should be devised to avoid such unlawful practices in future. Voters must be educated that they may not be owned with money by any party and election observers at national and international level to ensure free and fair elections in Pakistan.

Elections in every state are indeed the peaceful method of change and setting up of a democratic government but unfortunately these do not reflect the popular choice of electorate rather these are easy tools for political parties and their elites for their power re-instatement. The political leaders enter into politics are then driven with the desire to avail all personal gains and not by the pledges and commitments they often do with the common man. The resources of the state as valuable prizes for politicians and electoral constituencies for the specified term are availed and so therefore patron-client relationship is made on the basis of haves and haves not or holder of state control and chasers of public facilities. Decisive right upon the resources rests with personages and not with institutes. Client-patron relationship progressed from this instinct. In. words of Sayyed, Pakistan is very much like that of Hobbes state of nature where every national or regional group clashed against every other group for the pursuit of certain political goals and this is very ruthless and ceaseless struggle for power. This search for power is so intensive that both military establishment and politicians have subverted the electoral course and contents. It is commonly understood by different social groups in Pakistan that elections in a state are nothing but a mean of power and so the contesting candidates, civil-military bureaucracy and political leaders of the parties find in these elections an easy legal cushion to retain this power for the long run. However, all this in the end leaves behind blames of electoral frauds and anti-democratic attitude among different political and non-political groups.

Elections in Pakistan in general and in KP in specific, it is very difficult to presume that a party in majority in one election would sustain its majority in next election. It has become a politico-electoral culture of KP electorate and voting behavior of the common voters that the candidates being elected in 2002 (MMA) not recalled in 2008, rather ANP was elected to rule over the region but in 2013 once again the voters' choice changed and PTI was invited to make provincial government. However, the election of 2018 was a litmus test for the PTI in which the party got through in provincial election and formed government in KP for the second consecutive term. This success of PTI against ANP especially was shocking news to the ethnic party of the province on the one hand and challenge to a changing voting behavior of the KP people on the other. That's why Rafghatullah Orakzay commented to BBC in written that,

*"The ANP has been badly defeated by the ruling party PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the last two general elections and the number of its elected members in the provincial assembly has dropped significantly. It is being speculated that if the PTI maintains its victory in the province in the next elections, it can pose a serious threat to the survival of the long-ruling ANP in KP (Orakzay, 2019)".*

As KP has always been the axis of ANP politics, where it had its own government in 2008-13 and had been part of other governments (Coalition). But 2013 onwards its vote bank has plummeted. It is due to

this bitter reality that ANP had to join hands with its rival JUI in order to nullify the return of PTI with the slogan of rigging and interference of establishment and so called PTI government as *Na-Ehl* and *Na-Jaiz Hokomat* by the losers in 2018 election. Reason behind the ANP-JUI alliance is that both prominent leaders of the two parties Asfandyar Wali Khan and Maulana Fazal-e- Rahman had lost their own respective constituencies and therefore one of ANP leader pronounced,

*"The whole world knows how this government came to be. We came out only to demand our rights and win democracy (Shoib, 2020)".*

Similarly, Dr. Abid Abassi commenting on Asfandyar Khan statement issuing on TV channel in 2017 hosting by Hamid Mir that,

*"I am telling you that Imran khan was being brought to power, whether he has support or not (Abbasi, 2020)".*

However according to FAFEN report, smaller or regional political parties were of the view that their vote bank in most of the constituencies and polling stations were scattered because of which they faced failure in GE 2018. Taking the example of ANP- a regional party, 83% of vote bank ANP has been lost in 2018 election and got victory in 17% of polling stations.

#### **General Election 2018 and Debating Role of Pakistani Military**

As it is generally understood that political parties in a state are its columns on which the whole structure of a state rests. Interestingly, the difference of views or beliefs makes political parties.

*"A political party, as such is polity or organized political system authority equipped containing power distribution loaded with representative process and paradigm of electoral and decision making mechanism. A political party is a connecting bridge between the public and the government emanating and taking its roots from the general masses. It helps people to have a forum to identify, express and articulate their interests (Aziz K. K., 2001)."*

In perspective of emergent consequence, folks sense intensely vis-a-vis chaos, redundancy, extremism and vehement tricks of fanaticism. Foreign relations round a globe also dictate a meeting to grab such troubles. Political parties are measurements to measure political hotness of realms. Parties oblige functions of catalytic agent to activate indolent governments and whip them into accomplishment (Dawn, 2019).Unlike other democracies of the world, political parties in own state haven't election manifestoes or programs up to wishes of common masses and so military very easily mould the ambitions of voters and distrust on civil leaders awake in man's mind by fading role of political leaders and so prolong their dictatorial rulings considering military as the competent ones (Rizvi H. A., 2001).The instability in democracy is because of unable leadership and ill established political parties in a state just as Pakistan's political culture which is dominated by feudal system and it negates norms of democracy as the military establishment does and so the birth of same genes and means overpass the competency in politics inhibited by common workers of the same party like ANP, QWP, PML(N) and PPP. Mean to say that political system devised by political parties is basically the antithesis of democracy which believes in opportunity for all upon the basis of competency. Eventually, the political power slithered from the hands of political parties to military establishment or civil bureaucracy (Finer, 2002).Regrettably, the political parties, their leaders and military rulers are symmetrical in approach administering the state. Both civil and military show personalized hybridism taking decisions and actions imaginatively. A political party is basically important for those who are in power whether democratic or undemocratic. That's why people are now trying not to be deceived the false promises of political parties and so during

this time regional or parochial political groups emerge with obvious parody of democratic norms leading the state into a new confusion electoral hesitation by the common man (Hafiz, 2001).

Pakistan though possesses multicultural character but is perceived that the rest of cultures are dominated by Punjab and so political cohesion is complex for the various identities within the system. The parties on the other hand also not capable of meeting the public expectations rather they are of the view that political leaders try to build bridges where there is no river. Mean to say that when nimble is seen at an end of warren by them, they leave the same to make or buy a new one. Family and caste based electoral politics has made the politics weak in Pakistan which ultimately leads to confrontation in democracy (Malik H. , 2001).

*'Our politicians are not interested at all in the integrity and solidarity of our country'. 'They safeguard their interest by inviting foreign intervention'. 'Our politicians are myopic in their approach and are also not able to see beyond their vested interests (Kukreja, Military Intervention in Pakistan: A Case Study of Pakistan, 2005)."*

Political parties and electoral politics is dynastic in Pakistan. They are accountable to one and only and that is party leader (owner). ANP is now headed by its fourth leader belonging to same family, the result is that ANP in spite of renouncing the hatred created by its rival (military) and advocating democratic norms in electoral politics, it sharpens its bad image due to its dynastic policy in state politics.

*"Weak civilian leadership or representation on the part of parliament pulled the military into the politics of Pakistan. Weak social structure along with poor economic conditions led to military intervention (Lodhi, Pakistan beyond the Crisis State, 2011)."*

According to Hassan Askari Rizvi,

\ *"less organized and less integrated political parties led to the development of the military regime (Rizvi H. A., 2001)."*

The latest general election of 2018 was portrayed and publicized as a contest of not only two political parties (PMLN and PTI) but an electoral rivalry between Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan although Nawaz Sharif was by himself banned from all type of politico-electoral activities by Supreme Court upon not fulfilling articles 62 and 63 of Pakistani constitution and so was ousted from PM office (M.Ahmad, 2009).It is generally viewed by the critics that after the election 2013, through overwhelming majority got in parliament, Nawaz Sharif could very easily repeal all those articles and provisions incorporated into1973 constitution during different dictatorial rulings but was not actually done by PML(N). if such an initiative would be taken by the PML(N) such adverse situations will surely not be occurred before and after 2018 (Gupta, 2018). Another incident which made Nawaz and military stand in front of each other was the alleged leak issued by Dawn in Oct. 2016. The army viewed this leaks as intentionally leaked by Nawaz in order to harm army's image both inside and outside the state borders and proving army as strong supporter of *jihadis* (Media, 2018).On the other hand, upon army had also the allegation that the establishment had planned to replace Nawaz Sharif by Imran Khan if a political vacuum is created by Nawaz ousting or is sent to jail by the judiciary (Zaidi S. A., 2018).Imran Khan once stated,

*"And if you [referring civilian establishment] don't have moral authority, then those who have physical authority assert themselves. In my opinion, it is Pakistan Army and not an enemy army. I will carry an army with me" (Masood S. , 2018).*

According to Hassan Askari Rizvi,

*"Imran has realized that if you want to run Pakistan, you have to work with the military because of internal and external challenges". "By fighting with the military you can't run the state" (Rizvi A. , 2019).*

So in order to decrease the vote bank of PML(N), hardliners of right wing parties like TLP, JuD, MML and ASWJ were given projection in Punjab (Rehman Z.-u. , 2018). Similarly, the ethnic groups like Muhajirs and *Pakhtuns* (ANP) added further complications for PPP in elections in Sindh. However, to compete PTI in KP, MMA was revived with the enthusiasm of electoral success got during 2002 election. It is interesting to note that till 2013 efforts were committed to bring all ethno-nationalist political groups (ANP, PkMAP) into main stream national political parties but this time in 2018 election, the establishment is no more willing and so candidates of ANP seem to be snubbed by the establishment in election of 2018. The ANP on its part however challenged the existence of MMA (Anti American plus Musharraf backed) and PTI (populism) on its home bases as the electoral environment in 2018 was different from 2002 and 2013 (Sabih, 2018). As the province of KP has the political culture of not returning back the incumbent Party or alliance back to power at provincial level. Although each one of these political parties or alliance (MMA) was hopeful in securing votes again in 2018 depending upon the previous record i.e 20.3 % received by MMA in 2002, 16.66 by ANP in 2008 ,18.99 got by PTI in 2013- a difference of round about 2-3% in between these political groups. (Pakistan E. C., 2013) There is no doubt that remarkable developmental works had been done by ANP from 2008-2013 and more in worth than PTI but still the provincial election of 2018 was swiped by PTI falsifying the political culture of KP electorate of not giving second chance to a party to rule (Haneef, 2018).

Other reasons like military involvement, induction of PTI in national politics and embracing by country's youth in electoral battlefield, some facts incurred by PTI in KP 2013-18 were the reforms introduced in health and education and police reforms were appreciated and acknowledged nationwide (Correspondent, 2018). Although the threat factor of TTP keeping secular parties like ANP and PPP on the hit list in 2013 election hitting political figures of ANP (Bahir Bilour, Haroon Bilour) now in 2018 general election this threat was however very much less (Ahmad M. , 2010). Keeping in mind that PTM strongly condemn the loss of valuable lives from among the ANP members during past years and through these two platforms (ANP/PTM) *Pakhtuns* of KP generally and FATA specifically demanded data or information about the missing persons and extra judicial killing of FATA region by the state. This *Pakhtun Tahaffuz Movement* was appreciated and projected in Baluchistan and Sindh as well. The perception was that these demands could impact the electoral mood of inhabitants of Peshawar valley in favor of ANP but the successes achieved by ANP in 2018 were discouraging securing 12.85% votes while MMA received 18.83% and PTI sought 29.9% of the total votes in KP (Malik R. , 2018)".

The *Pakhtun* ethnic parties ANP in KP and PkMAP in Baluchistan once had become establishment parties and were not able to make coherence in alienated tribes of KP region. It was PTM leadership which had become successful in articulating *Pakhtun* nationalist aspirations through PTM. The current *Pakhtun* movement is different from the old one run by ANP which was ideological while the latter one is on issue based and therefore has bridged southern region of KP to central and northern region for political gains (Azfar-ul-Ashfaque, 2018). Answering the question that ANP aimed at integration of *Pakhtun* social group but this group is divided into three i.e. ANP, QWP and PTM. Why?

Aimal Khan negates this perception that *Pakhtun* has been divided. Anyone who fights for *Pakhtun's* rights is our brother and we respect him. However, ANP has started this struggle nearly a century ago. So ANP will never permit any person or party to dominate Bacha Khan's family role for *Pakhtun* nation. Any individual who believes in uplift of *Pakhtun* identity must join ANP. ANP has also tried its best to knock different regions of KP for their respective agenda and votes. However, it was interesting to note that PTM candidates has made inroads to vote share of ANP in southern region and has passed its electoral candidates successful in 2018 election. Similarly, Karachi possessing third largest *Pakhtun*

ethnic group but no party has ever remained successful in availing *Pakhtun* vote as *Pakhtun* in Karachi been divided in different mainstream political parties. Twice in electoral history of Karachi, *Pakhtun* come closer and united, once against PNA in 1977 and second against MQM in 1980 when ethnic rivalry between Muhajirs and *Pakhtuns* was on peak. Even ANP vote bank was disturbed by ranger's operation due to its involvement in ethnic clashes and disturbances and so its followers switched off to any other political party. Recently ANP could not exploit PTM support factor in Karachi and so not a single seat was won by ANP in 2018 general election (Azfar-ul-Ashfaque, 2018).

### Conclusion

Since independence, various national, ethnic and religious political parties are playing their due role in political development and electoral politics of Pakistan. Each and every party has its own ideology and election manifesto, religious parties use religion as the tool to accumulate votes, ethnic parties in each province raise ethnic issues to be discussed in election campaign and nationalist parties stress on strong federation and national integration. The electoral politics in Pakistan is no doubt also based on primordial structure of society in which biradari system, elders and friends have an impact on the win and loss of a political party. But in 21<sup>st</sup> century, using social media by the youngsters and the political socialization of the new parties like PTI, the voting behavior has now been altered. Today, a young of a family will persuade the elder of a family to cast vote in favor of concerned party. Moreover, the people are now fed up of ethno-national issues and its politics and are willing to resolve those matters confronting the common men.

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