

## POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN GENERAL ELECTIONS 2018 AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN PAKISTAN

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### Abstract:

General Elections (GE) 2018 provided a new momentum to the democratic process in Pakistan as youth played a very active part in the whole electoral process. It is worth to explore the impact of participation of youth on the results of General Elections 2018. This paper analyzes how the participation by youth in the electoral process has actually strengthened the democratic norms in Pakistan. GE 2018 has in fact changed the political landscape as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) first time emerged as the third major political party that contested and won the elections. Its victory was mainly possible because of the active participation of young generation of Pakistan. GE 2018 manifested that political behavior of the people can be changed and if the political participation of youth is increased, it could be a turning point for a political system. In this qualitative study, descriptive-analytical method has been used to elaborate the collected data.

**Key Words:** Elections, political participation, youth, manifesto, federal, democracy.

### INTRODUCTION

Elections are a great source of political participation and political mobilization which leads a federal state towards a democratic transfer of power and if elections are conducted on free and fair lines, it also reflects the political will of the people. Elections can be conducted on party and non party basis but usually truly democratic states hold the elections on party basis. Political parties are a true source of political mobilization. Unfortunately, elections and political parties remained under fire in Pakistan during the authoritative regimes. Pakistan had to wait till 1970 for its first general elections (GE) but the ensuing crises led to the disintegration of the country. The results of GE 1977 were not accepted by the combined opposition which launched a protest movement that ultimately led to the imposition of third Martial Law in Pakistan. GE 1985 conducted on non-party basis by the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq, were boycotted by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and other opposition parties (Shafiq, Khan, Liaqat, & Shah, 2020). The country witnessed four GE in 11 years of civilian rule (1988-1999), an era marked by political intrigues, palace conspiracies, instability and corruption charges due to which no government could complete its five years term. However, these elections led the emergence of a two-party system and strengthening of democratic process and political culture in the state. During Pervez Musharraf regime (1999-2008), GE 2002, were held on party basis in a manipulated environment to keep opposition parties out of power (Naazer, Mahmood, & Ashfaq, 2017). GE 2008 proved to be a transition from military regime to a civilian rule that kindled the new hope of rule of law, constitutionalism and strengthening of democracy. The ensuing period witnessed first ever peaceful transfer of power from a civilian leader to

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another and completion of a term by an elected government after a long time. GE 2013 and 2018 further consolidated the democratic institutions, and political culture of the country (Naseem, & Mahmood 2019).

The objective of this research is to analyze the role of youth participation in GE 2018 and bringing political change in the country. Research highlights that youth has a great role in elections and government-making process. It comprehensively analyzes GE 2018, especially the factors that helped Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) win the contest. Along with these research objectives the effort has been made to discuss: how GE 2018 introduced a new era of political culture in Pakistan? How did GE 2018 put federalism in Pakistan on democratic path?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Elections in Pakistan mostly if not always remained controversial and except the election of 1970, every election in Pakistan has been termed as rigged by all loosing political parties. Before GE 2018, along with other factors, disqualification of Nawaz Sharif, electoral reforms and formation of Junoobi Punjab Sooba Mahaz (JPSM), benefitted PTI to strengthen its roots (Shafqat, 2018). Youth participation played a vital role for PTI in the elections. Through the use of media, though in a controversial manner, PTI set a better ground for winning the elections. GE 2013 was declared as an election of “Returning Officers” (ROs) by PTI and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) besides other political parties termed GE 2018 as rigged by the establishment. In GE 2018, PTI performed well in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Karachi and Balochistan (Islam, Zubair, & Muhammad, 2019). Population belonging to age group (18-40) is 60 percent of the total population of Pakistan and PTI mobilized its supporters very well (Saud, Ida, & Mashud, 2019). Elections, in the past were not conducted in a systematic way and during Zia regime elections were rigged for institutionalization of political power (Shafiq, Khan, Liaqat, & Shah, 2020). In order to strengthen federalism in Pakistan political participation of the masses in regular elections is necessary (Ali & Musarrat, 2020).

### **Elections, a Source of Political Participation**

Elections are a major source of political participation in any democratic state. In elections people express their will for electing the democratic government. Through the power of vote they can reject or accept the policies of any regime but if they are denied this right, their anger bursts and ethnically divided state finds it hard to remain integrated. History reveals that delay in elections can cause a huge damage to the integrity of a state. Pakistan that emerged as a federal state on the map of the world on August 14, 1947 witnessed first provincial elections in 1951 and then 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1954. The people of Pakistan had to wait for its first free and fair elections till 1971. The era of dictatorship that was introduced on October 7, 1958 by General Ayub Khan, introduced method of indirect elections and masses were deprived of their right of electing their representatives directly. During the indirect elections of 1965, complaints of rigging in elections infuriated the youth who launched a campaign against Ayub Khan. Particularly the young people of East Pakistan turned against the west Pakistani rulers and also against the West Pakistan. Opportunist leadership of East Pakistan presented six points: a nonfederal agenda that was widely lauded by the youth of East Pakistan and when they got the opportunity to maximize their political participation in the form of GE 1970, they supported Awami League that became a source of disintegration of Pakistan (Naseem

& Mahmood, 2019). After imposing Martial Law on July 5, 1977, Zia-ul-Haq conducted a rigged referendum for presidential election and then decided to conduct Elections on non-party basis for the parliament which created political unrest in the state (Shafqat, 2018). Elections during Pervez Musharraf rule held on party basis on October 10, 2002 but before these elections, political engineering was done and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) was created out of PPP and PML-N (Naazer, Mahmood, & Akhlaq, 2017). During the GE 2008, people of Pakistan got an opportunity of casting their votes in a free and fair manner, and they elected PPP to rule the country after the murder of Benazir Bhutto. The democratic government worked for the purification of federalism in the state according to the wishes of the people (Ali & Musarrat, 2020). In 2013, youth was inspired by the economic agenda promised by PML (N) as well as the promise to restore peace and curb terrorism (Naazer, Farooq, & Khattak, 2017). The youth was also annoyed over the charges of corruption against the PPP leadership and, thus, it turned towards the PML (N) and the result was that the party came out as victorious in these elections and Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister of Pakistan for the third time. After GE 2013, Chairman PTI, Imran Khan put the charges of corruption and election rigging against Nawaz Sharif and started “*Dharna*” (sit-in) in Islamabad. In this sit-in young people were very enthusiastic. Thus, Imran Khan succeeded in mobilizing youth in his favor. During GE 2018, the young voters mostly voted for PTI. They voted for the change, electoral reforms, corruption free Pakistan and 10 million jobs. In this way PTI won the elections and Imran Khan became the Prime Minister of Pakistan (Saud, Ida, & Mashud, 2019).

#### **GE 2018 and Election Manifestos of Major Political Parties**

PPP was the first among the three main political parties that published its manifesto on June 28, 2018 with the main slogan “*Bi Bi ka waada nibhana hai - Pakistan bachana hai.*” This manifesto promised the alleviation of poverty, reshaping of the economic system, promotion of democracy, provision of basic rights to the people and lifting Pakistan to its right place in the foreign affairs. This manifesto was the replica of its 2008 and 2013 elections.

PML (N) published its election manifesto on July 5, 2018. As, its party head Nawaz Sharif was ousted from the office of Prime Minister in Panama Scandal Case, its main focus was on judicial reforms, sustained increase in economic growth up to 7 percents, eradication of poverty, normalization of ties with India through dialogue, strengthening of relations with China and Russia was also the part of its manifesto.

PTI published its manifesto on July 9, 2018 with its major slogan “Road to *Naya* (new) Pakistan.” The party chairman Imran Khan promised the masses to convert Pakistan into true Islamic welfare state, zero tolerance for corruption, provision of autonomy to the National Accountability Bureau, bringing up radical changes in judiciary, harmonization of Balochistan by understanding the problems of the province, making South Punjab a new Province, bringing up educational reforms by introducing changes in curriculum, provision of 10 million jobs to the youth and construction of 50 lac homes. This manifesto has all its attractions for youth.

GE for 272 general seats of National Assembly (NA) and for 577 general seats of four provincial assemblies (PA) were held on Wednesday July 25, 2018 in Pakistan (Mohsin, 2018). According to the Election Commission of Pakistan 11,855 candidates contested elections for 849 general seats of national and four provincial assemblies; 3,459 candidates for 272 NA and 8,396 for 577 PA general seats. These elections have great importance for the democratic federalism in Pakistan especially

for two main reasons: Firstly, for the second time assemblies in Pakistan completed their term of five years and that was a great land mark in the history of federalism in Pakistan because democracy is a key element of federalism. Secondly, after a long time a third major political party, i.e. PTI emerged on the national political front as a single largest party in the centre. It gained clear majority in KP where it rules for the second tenure. It was able to form coalition governments as a leading party in the centre and Punjab which is a healthy sign for federalism in Pakistan. PTI also secured its representation in Sindh and Balochistan assemblies. After a long time, political hold of MQM in Karachi was broken down by a federalist party.

### **ANALYSIS OF GE 2018 RESULTS**

The National Assembly of Pakistan comprised 342 seats including 272 general 60 reserved for women and 10 for minorities. In elections 2018, PTI came out as the single largest party with 123 general seats, PML-N won 67, PPP 43, Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) 13, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) 4, Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) 4, Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) 2, Mutahidda Qoumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) 6, and Balochistan National Party (BNP) 3 seats. Awami Muslim League Pakistan (AMLP), Awami National Party (ANP), and Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP) secured one seat each while independent candidates won 4 seats. Out of 357 political parties registered with Election Commission of Pakistan only 12 won any NA seat (Yousaf, 2018).

#### **Election Results in Islamabad**

PTI won all three NA seats reserved for federal capital suggesting its popularity among the people including government servants and educated people of the country.

#### **Election Results in FATA**

FATA was yet not completely merged into the KP-Province and till the GE 2018 it kept its distinct status. In FATA, the political battle was mainly between the two main political parties, i.e. PTI and MMA. MMA, an alliance of a five religious political parties, had its great strength in FATA. MMA was opposed to the merger of FATA into KP. While the PTI having its own ideology, contested the elections on its slogan “*Naya Pakistan*” supported the merger. The ideology of PTI prevailed and it won six out of 12 NA seats in the area. MMA could manage to win three seats only. The defeat of MMA in FATA might be due to its stance on the merger issue with KP. The victory of PTI in FATA has been viewed as a good sign for the federation. A worrying thing, however, was the victory of two of the main leaders of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) in South Waziristan and North Waziristan. PTM is the regional based Pashtun nationalist movement with an anti-state rhetoric that gained its support in recent years in FATA. Although PTM announced to remain indifferent to these elections and its leaders contested elections as independent candidates but their victory has been quite significant for Pashtun nationalists and a matter of concern for pro-centre elements in Pakistan.

#### **Election Results in KP**

The history of KP shows that people of this province never gave second opportunity to any ruling political party but this record was broken by PTI in GE 2018. It won 30 out of 39 NA seats in KP. It also won 65 PA seats and formed provincial government for the second time in KP. PTI swept

elections, albeit under the shadow of rigging allegations, in all parts KP. PTI routed the influence of ANP and PML-N from the province. In GE 2013, PML-N had won four NA seats from KP but in GE 2018 its strength was reduced to only two seats (Ahmad, 2018).

Hazara region was the stronghold of PML-N in GE 2013 but in GE 2018, the party could win only one seat from this area while PTI won three out of seven seats. Other parties such as PPP, ANP, MMA and PML-N were expected to give tough time to PTI in Swat and its nearby areas that formed the Malakand region but these parties could not mobilize mass support. In Malakand, PML-N and MMA secured one seat each. In Malakand region, PTI won eight out of nine total seats. In Peshawar region, out of the total 14 NA seats, PTI won 13 while only one seat was won by ANP. Although in Peshawar region two main Pashtun nationalist parties, ANP and Quami Watan Party (QWP) led by Aftab Sherpao also contested the elections but they could not resist the popularity of PTI. Southern part of the KP was thought to be the home of religious people and MMA hoped to win maximum out of total eight seats but PTI surprised here by winning six seats. MMA won only two seats. Even the main leader of MMA, Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman lost elections on two seats including his native constituency.

### Provincial Assembly Results and Formation of Government in KP

Table 1: Party Position in Provincial Assembly of KP in GE 2018

S. No	Name of The Party	No. of Seats
1.	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf	65
2.	Mutahidda Majlas e Amal	10
3.	Awami National Party	7
5.	Pakistan Muslim League-N	5
6.	Pakistan People's Party	4
7.	Independents	6

**Source:** Election Commission of Pakistan

In PA elections too, PTI swept the elections and won 65 seats and once again was in commanding position to form the provincial government. MMA with 10 seats was the second largest political group in the assembly followed by ANP with seven seats, PML-N five seats, and PPP four seats. PTI formed its ministry in the province and Mehmood Khan became the new chief minister of KP.

### Election Results in Punjab

With its immense population and major share of representation in NA, Punjab always remained a main battlefield for major elections contesting political parties and during GE, 2018. The representation of Punjab in NA is 141 out of 272 general seats. In GE 2018, PTI and PML-N were the main contesters in Punjab and it was a critical province to win for both of them. Other prominent political parties that ran in elections were PPP, PML-Q, and Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP).

Punjab has three main regions, northern Punjab, central Punjab and southern Punjab. Before the GE 2018, Punjab based PML-N which ruled the province (2008-18) and centre (2013-18) had to face a serious setback when its leader and sitting Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from the assembly membership and also from leading the political party by the judiciary in Panama papers' case for not showing his assets in the nomination papers for 2013 elections. In GE 2018 elections,



another blow for PML-N was the creation of JPSM comprising its own splinter group that later joined PTI.

Northern Punjab mainly comprised Pothohar region commonly known as “martial belt.” It has 13 NA seats and PML-N having strong candidates expected much of these seats. But PTI and its allies won 11 out of 12 seats of the region. Elections were not held on a seat. PML-N could not grab even a single seat from this area. PPP secured one NA seat from the region. Apparently, the stance of PML-N leadership against the military and anti-establishment speeches costed them heavily as the voters turned against the party. Another factor that caused PML-N’s defeat in this area was the internal frictions in the party. It is believed that sidelining of Chauhdry Nisaar Ali Khan, a senior party member and former Interior Minister thought to be close to the establishment and who contested election as an independent candidate also created a doubt in the minds of PML-N voters and they swayed towards PTI in many constituencies of the region.

The focus of both PTI and PML-N was on central Punjab especially Lahore, the capital of Punjab, and its adjoining areas such as Shekhupura, Qasoor, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Jhang and Gujraat. Central Punjab has generally been the strong fort of PML-N but PTI was trying to break the hold of PML-N since 2013, was also expecting much support in the area. PML-N, however, performed very well and won 50 out of total 82 NA seats in this region. The vote bank of PML-N in this area remained firm to the ideology of the party. The disqualification of Nawaz Sharif and his daughter and son in law in Panama papers case and sentencing them to jail rather created a sympathy factor for PML-N. The party was also firm and intact in this area and political engineering did not worked well in this bastion of the PML- N. PTI showed better performance in the region than GE 2013 and won 27 seats. Besides, its ally PML-Q secured two seats only.

Southern Punjab which comprised 11 districts with approximate 31.58 percent of the total population of Punjab was really a test case for PML-N and PTI. The representation of this region increased by three seats each in NA and PA after 2017 census; i.e. it rose from 43 to 46 in NA and from 91 to 94 in PA. This is the most deprived region of Punjab with much poverty, poor infrastructure, less education, and health facilities. The people of Southern Punjab were already been raising their voices for a separate province of their own (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019).

In April 2018, PML-N had to face a serious setback when some of its prominent MNAs and MPAs separated from the party and made a new political group JPSM led by Khusro Bakhtiyar. The creation of JPSM was thought to be a part of political engineering by establishment for supporting PTI in the elections. This group was merged into PTI on May 8, 2018. This provided PTI winning candidates in the region and its political strength increased manifold. On the other hand, PML-N had to face serious difficulties and some of its strong candidates had to return PML-N tickets and switched their loyalties to PTI. The party was left in a situation where it found hard to nominate its candidate on half a dozen constituencies. In this situation the reorganization of the party in this area was very difficult. Another issue that harmed the PML-N in GE 2018 was the use of religious card, especially the controversy over some legislation related to electoral reforms that allegedly altered some rules related to candidate’s belief regarding Khatam-e-Nabuwat (the finality of prophet-hood after Hazrat Mohammad S.A.W.). Due to this controversy, many traditional religious circles and clerics turned against the league and started supporting PTI.

In South Punjab, PTI emerged as the most popular party and won 26 NA seats and its ally PML-Q grabbed one seat. PML-N despite all hardships competed well and won 11 seats while PPP won four seats of its traditional landlords. An interesting thing that happened was the success of less independent candidates. In GE, 2013, 12 independent candidates had won from the region but in GE 2018, only 6 independents returned to NA.

In total, out of 141 total NA general seats in Punjab, PTI won 66, PML-N 64, PPP six, PML-Q four, while AMLP grabbed one seat. An interesting outcome in Punjab was the sweeping victories by the main parties in clusters of seats from a particular area or city. For instance, in Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Kasur, Okara and Pakpattan, all seats were won by PMLN. PTI managed to win all seats in Gujrat (in alliance with PMLQ), Khushab, Mianwali, Jhang, Multan, Layyah, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur. In two biggest cities of the Punjab, PML-N won the bulk of the seats in Lahore while PTI in Faisalabad. PPP won three out of four seats in Southern Punjab which were from Muzaffargarh.

### **Provincial Assembly Results and Formation of Government in Punjab**

Punjab is the main province of the federation of Pakistan. The party that wins the PA election of Punjab mostly takes lead in the elections for NA as well.

Table 2: Party Position in Provincial Assembly of the Punjab in GE 2018

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of The Party</b>	<b>No. of Seats</b>
1.	Pakistan Muslim League-N	130
2.	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	122
3.	Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam	7
4.	Pakistan People's Party	6
5.	Independents	30

**Source:** Election Commission of Pakistan

In GE 2018, elections for 297 general seats out of total 371 PA seats were held. A close contest was observed between PTI and PML-N. The latter emerged as the single largest party with 133 PA seats followed by PTI with 122, PML-Q 7, PPP 6, and Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party (PRHP) one seat. Independent candidates returned on 30 seats. In the most influential province of the federation, the independent candidates played a vital role in the formation of the government as they supported PTI amid allegations of political maneuvering and horse trading. Thus, a coalition government of PTI and PML-Q was formed. PML-Q leader Pervaiz Ilahi, a former Chief Minister of Punjab was elected as the speaker of PA and Usman Buzdaar who was returned to the PA for the first time became the new Chief Minister. He was just elected to normalize the ethnic tensions in Southern Punjab and to satisfy the politicians of Southern Punjab who joined PTI. It has been viewed positively in Southern Punjab where after GE 2018 very few voices have been raised for separate province.

### **Elections in Sindh**

Sindh is a province in which rural and urban divide is clear since early 1970s and especially after Mohajir Qoumi Movement (later on renamed as Mutahidda Qoumi Movement MQM) emerged as a linguistic based ethnic party in 1980s. MQM has stronghold in urban Sindh particularly Karachi and Hyderabad while PPP is popular in rural areas. In GE 2018, Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) was formed to challenge PPP's support-base in the rural areas. PPP, PML-N and PTI challenged MQM in Karachi.

PPP was expected to win majority of NA and PA seats from Sindh and the election results largely met the expectations. GDA could not perform according to the expectations and some of its main candidates like the Pir Pagara and Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi (the former federal minister) were defeated by the PPP candidates. GDA was able to win only two NA seats while PPP grabbed 32 out of 35 NA seats of the rural Sindh. Although, questions were raised about the PPP's governance during its last ten years rule in the province but PPP got these results only due to the political management of the party. The gigantic change was witnessed in the urban areas especially in Karachi where PTI ended the hold of MQM by winning 14 out of 21 NA seats while MQM could win only four seats from Karachi besides the two seats it secured from Hyderabad.

MQM faced serious setbacks from the delimitations of constituencies and mainly due to the speeches of former party chief Altaf Hussain against the state and the army due to which paramilitary forces arrested the top leadership of the party and sealed its offices. Meanwhile, the party was divided into splinter groups. MQM Pakistan led by Farooq Sattar tried to distance itself away from Altaf Hussain and save the party workers from wrath of the state. Sattar was sooner deposed from his position that further weakened the party that coupled with other factors caused defeat of the party in GE 18. Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP), led by Mustafa Kamal, for District Nazim Karachi and a close aid of Altaf Hussain who had left MQM in 2014, badly failed to win any seat in GE 2018. It also caused division among supporters of MQM and its ultimate defeat in the election.

The call to boycott GE 2018 given by Altaf Hussain and low turnout in the polling also affected the MQM's performance. As stated by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the voters' turnout in GE 2013 stood 55 percent that was dropped to 40 percent in GE 2018 (Waseem, 2018). Apparently, a considerable number of MQM supporters either boycotted the elections or supported PTI. PML-N and MMA also showed good performance in Karachi and lost few seats with very thin margin amid allegations of rigging in the elections. Thus, PTI emerged as the most popular party in Karachi (Rehman, 2018).

The change in the rural areas of Sindh has been viewed as a healthy sign for federalism in Pakistan as the voters apparently rejected the politics based on ethnic and linguistic divide. PPP was able to win only three seats from Karachi but it lost its stronghold on "Lyari seat" for the first time since the 1970 elections. (Yousaf, 2018).

### Provincial Assembly Results and Formation of Government in Sindh

Table 3: Party Position in Provincial Assembly of Sindh in GE 2018

S. No.	Name of The Party	No. of Seats
1.	Pakistan People's Party	76
2.	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	23
3.	Mutahida Qaumi Movement	16
4.	Grand Democratic Alliance	11
5.	Tehreek e Labaik Pakistan	2
6.	Mutahidda Majlas-e-Amal	1

**Source:** Election Commission of Pakistan



In Sindh, rural and urban divide also manifested in PA elections. PPP that had been ruling the province since 2008, secured 76 PA seats, mostly in rural areas and was in a commanding position to form its government. PTI won 23 seats in urban Sindh and filled the vacuum created by the divisions in MQM that won only 16 seats in Karachi and Hyderabad. GDA grabbed 2 seats in rural Sindh. TLP, a new religious political party led by Khadim Hussain Rizvi, contested elections for the first time and was able to win two seats while MMA secured one seat. After having absolute majority, PPP had no problem in forming the new government in Sindh. The party decided to elect former Chief Minister Muraad Ali Shah once again as the Chief Minister of Sindh. PTI and MQM formed an alliance and joined hands in centre and in provincial assembly also.

### **Election Results in Balochistan**

As in the past, the mandate for NA seats was split among different political parties. There were 16 NA general seats in the province. MMA performed well in the Pashtun areas where it won four out of five seats defeating mainly Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), a Pashtun nationalist party. National Party (NP) a pro federalist middle class party representing the Baloch nationalists was also on the losing side in Balochistan. This party could not win any NA seat. Both PMAP and NP were part of coalition government led by Nawaz Sharif in the centre from 2013 to 2018 and contested GE 2018 in an alliance with PML-N. The performance of PML-N and PPP also remained very poor. The Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) which was created just before the GE 2018 by the leaders deserting PML-N in a mysterious manner and contested elections under the leadership of Jam Kamal won four NA seats. Balochistan National Party Mengal (BNP-M) won three seats while PTI for the first time won two NA seats from Balochistan.

### **Provincial Assembly Election Results and Formation of Government in Balochistan**

Table 4: Party Position in Balochistan Provincial Assembly, Election 2018

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name of The Party</b>	<b>No. of Seats</b>
1.	Balochistan Awami Party	15
2.	Mutahidda Majlas-e-Amal	8
3.	Balochistan National Party-Mengal	6
4.	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	5
5.	Awami National Party	3
6.	Balochistan National Party(Awami)	3
7.	Hazara Democratic Party	2
8.	Jamhoori Wattan Party	1
9.	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz	1
10.	Pakhtoonkhaw Milli Awami Paty	1
11.	Independents	5

**Source:** Election Commission of Pakistan

BAP won 15 PA seats followed by MMA with eight seats, BNP-M six, ANP three, PTI five, BNP (Awami) three, and Hazara Democratic Party two seats. JWP, PML-N, and PMAP secured one seat each while independent candidates returned on 5 PA seats. After PA of the Punjab, second largest number of independents returned to PA of Balochistan. Analysis of the election results show that no

mainstream political party has strong roots in Balochistan that is worrisome for federalism in Pakistan. In the absence of strong federalist political parties in a unit, federalism always remains in danger as was proved in the case of East Pakistan. Ten political parties that are mostly the regional parties share 65 PA seats and no party is to form provincial government alone. Balochistan presently faces insurgency and needs strong role of mainstream political parties.

In PA of Balochistan, BAP emerged as the single largest party and formed a coalition government with the help of ANP, PTI and some independent candidates and its leader Jam Kamal was elected as the new chief minister of the province. In Balochistan, PTI supports BAP while in centre BAP is a coalition partner of the PTI government.

### NA Election Results and Formation of Government in the Centre

In the assembly of 342 members, PTI won 123 out of 272 NA general seats. It also secured 28 out of 60 and five out of 10 NA seats reserved for women, and minorities, respectively. Its total strength in NA went up to 156 seats but it required 172 seats to get simple majority needed to form the government. PTI emerged as the single largest party in NA but it needed support of other parties to form the government.

Table 5: Province Wise Party Position in National Assembly of Pakistan in GE 2018

S. No.	Name of The Political Party	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan	Islamabad	FATA	Total	Women	Non-Muslim	Grand Total
1	Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	5
2	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	66	16	30	2	3	6	123	28	5	156
3	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz	64	0	3	0	0	0	67	16	2	85
4	Pakistan People's Party	6	36	0	0	0	1	43	9	2	54
5	Mutahidda Majlas-e-Amal	0	0	5	5	0	3	13	2	1	16
6	Balochistan Awami Party	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	1	0	5
7	Grand Democratic Alliance	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
8	Mutahidda Qaumi Movement	0	6	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	7
9	Balochistan National Party	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	4
10	Awami Muslim League Pakistan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
11	Awami National Party	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
12	Jamhuri Wattan Party	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
13	Independents	0	1	0	1	0	2	4	0	0	4
	Total	141	61	39	16	3	12	272	60	10	342

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

On August 17, 2018, PTI chief Imran Khan was elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He secured 176 votes against PML-N candidate Shahbaz Sharif who secured 96 votes in the contest (Fahad, 2018).

### **Factors Responsible for the Success of PTI**

A party that managed to win only 31 NA seats in GE 2013 became the largest political party in GE 2018 due to the following reasons:

1. Among the total registered voters in Pakistan, 35 percent belong to the age group of 18 to 35 years and 58 percent registered voters belong to age group of 18 to 40 years. PTI leadership focused on the young voters from the beginning, established very active youth wing of the party and kept it highly motivated during protest movement, rallies, public gatherings before and during election campaign and through print, electronic and social media. Most of the young voters casted their votes in favor of PTI (Islam, Zubair, & Muhammad, 2019).
2. People of Pakistan wanted corruption free Pakistan. Leader of PPP Asif Ali Zardari was targeted on charges of corruption by PML-N leadership during election campaign in 2013 and PML-N secured majority of NA seats to form the government. In GE 2018, PML-N faced the same situation. PTI chief Imran Khan leveled similar charges against PML-N leadership and attracted the voters in the name of making Pakistan a corruption free country (Wu, 2020).
3. Political slogans raised by PTI leaders like “vote for change,” “vote for new Pakistan” impressed the masses and then manifesto of PTI, containing promises of new jobs, eradication of poverty from state and economically strong Pakistan changed the political behaviour of the voters (Rao, 2020).
4. The leadership of PML-N alleged establishment and the intelligence agencies of the state of backing PTI in the form of making JPSM, that mainly comprised PML-N dissenters who merged their group into PTI enabling it to get majority in NA.
5. Decision of Supreme Court of Pakistan against the PML (N) Party leader and the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Panama Papers case also favoured PTI in GE 2018.

### **CONCLUSION**

Elections provide an opportunity to the masses to undertake a democratic change of government. Elections are also very important to keep the federalism on the democratic path. Regular elections, according to the constitutionally fixed tenure, provide people with an opportunity of political participation. Mostly young and energetic people are the torch bearers of revolution and political change. It is evident from the GE 2018 in Pakistan that political leadership can motivate the youth for gaining a positive support for change. In GE 2018, PTI stood victorious through the change of political behaviour and succeeded in forming the government at national level and also in three provinces of Pakistan. Now, it is the responsibility of the PTI government to fulfill its promises and try to act upon its election manifesto so, that Pakistan can become a true welfare and democratic state.

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