

**DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN PAKISTAN:
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PTI AND PMLN ERA
(2013-2022)**



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي
وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

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DEDICATIONS

*This thesis is dedicated to my **parents**, whose unwavering support, inspiration, and love have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Your belief in me has been the foundation of my success.*

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FORWARDING SHEET

The thesis titled “*Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan: Comparative Study of PTI and PML-N Era (2013-2022)*” submitted by **Maria Sharif**, Reg No: 168-FSS/MSPS/F22 in the partial fulfillment of my MS Degree in Political Science, which I have completed under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied with the quality of the student’s research work. She may be awarded an MS Degree in Political Science after fulfilling other requirements of the said degree.

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DECLARATION

I, Maria Sharif, Scholar of MS in Political Science bearing Registration No. 168-FSS/MSPS/F22, Faculty of Social Science, International Islamic University, Islamabad, doat this moment declare that the thesis titled “*Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan: Comparative Study of PTI and PML-N Era (2013-2022)*” submitted by me in the partial fulfillment for the requirement of MS degree in Political Science is my individual and original work under the supervision of Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Naazer. The material consulted in this research work is also acknowledged in the text.

MARIA SHARIF

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Awami National Party
CPEC	China- Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
EU	European Union
EVMs	Electronic Voting Machines
FAFEN	Free and Fair Election Network
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDPs	Internally Displaced Person
IJI	Islami Jamhuri Ittehad
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JUI-F	Jamiat Ulema -e- Islam Fazal
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPIC	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
NAB	National Accountability Bureau
NACS	National Anti-Corruption Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
PAT	Pakistan Awami Tehreek
PATAs	Provincially Administered Tribal Areas
PILDAT	Pakistan Institute Legislative Development and Transparency
PKMAP	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
PPP	Pakistan people's Party
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf
TTP	Tehrik -i- Taliban Pakistan
UK	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to comprehensively analyze the role of two major political parties in Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), in promoting democratic norms in the country during the critical period of 2013-2022. The proposal investigates the background of the study, highlighting the significance of democratic consolidation and the challenges Pakistan has faced in this regard. It expresses clear research objectives and questions, emphasizing the need to understand the contributions and challenges faced by these parties. The study employs a qualitative research design, combining primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources include interviews with political analysts, party manifestos, speeches of political leaders, and government documents, while secondary data sources include books, articles, research papers report etc. Data analysis will involve thematic analysis to identify key themes related to democratic consolidation and comparative analysis to measure the progress in democratic norms during the PML-N and PTI eras. The research is guided by the Democratic Consolidation Theory, which suggests that democratic systems develop and stabilize over time through effective governance, the rule of law, and a democratic culture. This theoretical framework allows for an in-depth assessment of democratic institutions in Pakistan, including the independence of the judiciary and the functioning of the election commission. This study holds massive significance as it provides an examination of Pakistan's democratic evolution during a fundamental decade, marked by the presence of PML-N and PTI. It sheds light on their contributions to democratic consolidation, governance records, and their impact on key democratic institutions. The results of this study are useful for people who make policies and scholars who study how democracy grows. It gives important insights into the difficulties and prospects for making democratic values stronger in Pakistan.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction section of this thesis provides a short-term overview of the background of the study, the problem statement, the significance of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the delimitations of the study. It sets the phase for the rest of the research by providing a framework and establishing the needs of the research.

1.1. Background of the Study

Democracy is a way of running a country where the power is given to the people themselves, either directly or through the leaders they elect. It allows all citizens to have a say in the decisions that impact their lives and how the country operates. In a democracy, people usually have the right to vote, share their opinions openly, and get involved in political and community activities. The term "democratic consolidation" refers to the process where a newly formed democracy becomes more steady, robust, and firmly established as the normal way of governing in that country over time.

It is the phase in the development of a democratic system where democracy becomes the norm, widely accepted by both political elites and the general population, and less vulnerable to backsliding into instability. Democratic consolidation refers to the unwritten, shared principles and standards that guide the behavior of individuals, institutions, and government officials within a democratic society. Democratic consolidation refers to the process by which a newly established democracy becomes more stable, strong, and firmly rooted over time. It is a complex and long-term process that involves the strengthening of democratic institutions, the development of a democratic political culture, and the establishment of norms and practices that support democracy.

Democratic consolidation involves the establishment and strengthening of democratic institutions such as a constitution, a functioning judiciary, a free and independent media, and a strong electoral system. Political parties are essential actors in a democracy, and their development and functioning are important for democratic consolidation. Parties should contest fairly and transparently, and they should be responsive to the needs and preferences of the electorate (Schedlew, 1998). A democracy becomes consolidated when a country has a rule of law, freedom of speech, civilian supremacy, and sovereignty of parliament and if a country has an independent election commission, then we can say that this country has a democratic

consolidation. This definition of consolidation looks at how political actor's work. When democracy is well-established and accepted, breaking democratic rules becomes unattractive and destructive for politicians and other political players. These norms help to maintain the integrity of the democratic system and ensure that it functions effectively. Some key democratic norms include the belief that all individuals, including government officials, are subject to and must abide by the law. It safeguards fairness and equal treatment under the legal system. Democratic norms prioritize the protection of individual rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and the press, as well as the right to a fair trial.

Democratic norms require elections to be conducted in a transparent, open, and competitive manner, allowing citizens to freely choose their representatives without undue interference or manipulation. Government officials are held accountable for their actions and decisions. Transparency in government operations and decision-making processes is fundamental to maintaining public trust. Democratic norms encourage active civic engagement and participation by citizens in political processes, such as voting, voicing opinions, and joining peaceful protests. An independent judiciary ensures that legal disputes are resolved fairly and independently, protecting the rule of law and individual rights.

The democratic norms collectively contribute to the functioning of a healthy democratic society, where government is accountable to its citizens, freedoms are protected, and citizens can shape the policies and direction of their nation. It's important to note that both the PML-N and PTI have faced criticism and admiration for their actions related to democratic norms. The evaluation of which government strengthened democratic norms more during the specified time can be subjective and influenced by several factors (Bergan, 2021).

It is important to note that martial law usually involves the suspension of civilian government and the imposition of military control over the government. During martial law, democratic institutions are often weakened, civil liberties are restricted, and political opposition may face suppression. While some argue that martial law was imposed to restore order or address identified governance issues, these actions often resulted in hindrances to democratic consolidation and processes.

Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, Pakistan has experienced numerous challenges in establishing and strengthening democratic norms. Democratic values have been damaged by authoritarian regimes, military interventions, and prevalent corruption. Nevertheless, the past

decade witnessed the emergence of two parties promising to strengthen democratic norms, PML-N and PTI. The periods of martial law in Pakistan resulted in the weakening of democratic norms, suppression of political opposition, and concentration of power in the military or executive branches. These periods often led to obstacles for democratic governance and institutions. While some military rulers introduced economic and administrative reforms, these actions were typically complemented by restrictions on civil liberties and political freedoms. It is implication noting that the restoration of civilian rule after each martial law period often required efforts to rebuild democratic institutions and norms.

However, it is important to identify that the overall track of democratic norms is influenced by a collection of factors, and progress in certain areas might have been compromised by obstacles in others.

1.2. Problem Statement

Pakistan has faced a lot of political instability and authoritarian rule, which has made it difficult for democracy to grow. From 2013 to 2022, Pakistan's democracy went through an important phase, with the two main political parties, PML-N and PTI, heavily influencing the country's politics. Though, it's still not clear how much these parties have helped in developing democratic practices. This study looks at the role of PML-N and PTI in promoting democracy in Pakistan during this period. The study aims to examine the policies of these parties and evaluate their effect on the democratic institutions and processes in the country. The study will also explore the challenges and obstacles faced by these parties in promoting democratic values and identify the areas where further improvements are needed. This research provides insight into both successful and unsuccessful practices of parties like PML-N and PTI. The research also analyzes factors affecting the party's success in contributing to the strengthening of democratic consolidations and the policies necessary to secure sustainable democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This research holds enormous significance as it offers an examination of Pakistan's democratic evolution during a crucial decade. With Pakistan's history of political unrest and military interventions, understanding the contributions of major political parties like PML-N and PTI to democratic consolidation is vital for assessing the country's prospects for sustained democratic stability. This research not only sheds light on how these parties engaged with

democratic norms, governance, and electoral politics but also provides valuable insights into their role in the promotion of accountability. Furthermore, the findings will have practical implications for both Pakistani policymakers and scholars interested in democratization, offering a critical perspective on the challenges and opportunities for strengthening democratic institutions in Pakistan. This research can raise public awareness in Pakistan and beyond about the importance of democratic consolidation and institutions. This research can serve as a basis for future research in the field of democratic consolidation and political behavior of political parties, with a particular focus on Pakistan. Future studies can build upon the findings, identify any improvements or limitations in this research, and continue to explore new factors and contexts that contribute to democratic norms.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- i. To explore the contributions of the governments of PML-N and PTI in the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan.
- ii. To examine the challenges that PML-N and PTI faced in promoting democratic values in Pakistan.

1.5. Research Questions

- i. How did the governments of PML-N and PTI contribute to the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan over the past decade?
- ii. What challenges have the PML-N and PTI faced in promoting democratic values in Pakistan?

1.6. Delimitation(s) of the Study

The study focuses specifically on the years 2013 to 2022, dismissing any events, developments, or political dynamics that occurred before or after this period. The study primarily focuses on the PML-N and PTI as the two main political parties for analysis. Other political parties and their roles are also mentioned only about their interactions with PML-N and PTI. The research focuses on specific political norms and democratic principles, such as elections during these eras, rule of law, freedom of speech, media, and accountability. Other aspects of democracy, such as economic policies, are not the primary focus of the study.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistan has experienced a stormy political history with recurrent military intervention democratic transitions and a hybrid political system since its inception. The years 2018-2022 observed crucial developments in democratic consolidation in the country. This literature review aims to investigate the roles of two major political parties, the PML-N and PTI in this process.

1.7.1 Review of Related Literature

Saeed (2020) explores the remarkable flexibility exhibited by political parties in the face of discouraging challenges faced by authoritarian regimes. Through a comprehensive analysis, the book sheds light on the factors enabling these political entities to tolerate, familiarize, and often flourish in environments where democratic norms are under threat. Furthermore, the book investigates the strategies employed by political parties to navigate the delicate balance between coexisting with authoritarian rule and actively advocating for democratic change. By examining the complicated interaction between political parties and the political landscape, Shafqat's work provides valuable insights into the broader discourse surrounding the struggle for democracy in complex political environments.

Subhan (2020) Pakistan's political landscape is characterized by an animated and diverse multi-party system, where numerous parties represent a wide range of interests, ideologies, and electorates. Given this rich political textile, it becomes authoritative to evaluate how different parties interpret and implement party democracy within their ranks. The investigation of party democracy within the framework of party statutes is instrumental in understanding the state of democracy in Pakistan.

Ullah et.al., (2020) explores the motivations behind the protest, the key actors involved, and the strategic elements that shaped the protest movement. By analyzing the PTI dharna, the author contributes valuable insights into the broader scene of political mobilization and activism in Pakistan, providing an understanding of the role of protest in the country's political discourse.

Bibi (2018) examines the concept of democracy and its specific challenges within the context of Pakistan. The primary thrust of this article is to explain the multifaceted nature of democracy and the unique hurdles it faces in the Pakistani political landscape. Through an in-depth literature review, the author investigates various dimensions of democracy, from its theoretical foundations to its practical application in Pakistan. By cracking light on the specific challenges and obstacles that Pakistan encounters in upholding democratic principles, her work

provides a significant contribution to the scholarly discourse on democracy, especially as it relates to the Pakistani context.

Ali et.al. (2021) present a crucial exploration of the challenges posed by a hybrid political regime to the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan, particularly during the period covering from 2008 to 2015. This article serves as a significant contribution to the literature, highlighting the complex interaction between democratic objectives and the continuing influence of non-democratic elements in Pakistan's political landscape. Through a widespread review of experimental data and scholarly analysis, the authors outline the obstacles and dynamics that hindered the country's path toward democratic stability during this critical period, so offering valuable insights into the broader discourse on democratic governance in Pakistan.

Mirza, & Fatima (2020) highlight the sub-systemic and normative dimensions of institutionalization brought about by the amendment. By analyzing the changes introduced through this constitutional reform, the authors shed light on how these changes have influenced the country's democratic framework. This article not only investigates into the details of institutional development but also explains their role in shaping democratic norms and practices, thereby providing valuable insights into the ongoing discourse on democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

Tahir et.al. (2020) examine the relationship between socioeconomic indicators and the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan. This article serves as a vital contribution to the literature by investigating the complicated interplay between socio-economic factors and the establishment of a stable democratic system in Pakistan. Through empirical analysis and a comprehensive review of data, the authors investigate how various socio-economic indicators have hindered the country's democratic consolidation. By shedding light on these connections, this article provides an understanding of the complex challenges and opportunities that Pakistan faces on its path toward democratic stability.

Hussain et.al. (2023) analyzed how press freedom has grown and been influenced by shifting political regimes in Pakistan. Through empirical data and a comprehensive review of historical and contemporary contexts, the authors investigate the changing degrees of media freedom, censorship, and state control during different eras. By drawing parallels and differences between these periods, this article offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between political governance and the freedom of the press in Pakistan, which is of supreme importance in understanding the broader dynamics of democracy and authoritarianism in the country.

Afzal (2019) navigates the complicated landscape of Pakistan's political history, offering readers an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that have shaped the nation's democracy. This book investigates the historical backdrop of Pakistan's democratic evolution, including pivotal moments such as the 1971 East Pakistan crisis and periods of military rule, providing essential context for the current political landscape. The author's keen analysis of the 2018 general elections and their impact on governance and political dynamics underlines the book's central argument that Pakistan's democracy has reached a critical interval. The author argues that this inflection point has the potential to attendant a new era of strengthened democratic institutions, and her work sheds light on the role of civil society in this process. However, it also raises questions and presents areas where further research and exploration are needed to fully understand the complexities and distinctions of Pakistan's evolving democracy.

Iram et.al. (2022) explore the multidimensional relationship between freedom of expression and censorship in Pakistan's democratic framework. The authors cross this complicated landscape by discussing the historical evolution of censorship in Pakistan, highlighting the role of state institutions, and estimating the impact of censorship on democratic processes and individual liberties. They also shed light on the various forms of censorship, such as media restrictions and online investigation, which have emerged in the digital age. However, a prominent gap in the article is the absence of an in-depth examination of the social and cultural dimensions of censorship's impact on freedom of expression.

Khan et.al. (2022) explores the dynamics of democracy in Pakistan through a complete analysis of the 2018 general elections. The authors, investigate the election processes, voter turnout, political parties, and the role of various stakeholders in shaping the democratic landscape of Pakistan. They judge the level to which democratic principles are upheld during these elections and provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that emerged. Through a combination of empirical data and qualitative analysis, the article sheds light on the ongoing path of democracy in Pakistan, offering valuable insights for scholars and policymakers interested in the region. However, it lacks a critical examination of potential electoral controversies that may have occurred during the election process.

Hassan et.al. (2020) explores a systematic analysis to assess the frequency and nature of hate speech within these demonstrations, shedding light on the role of political rhetoric in shaping public discourse and potentially influencing voter sentiment. The authors provide valuable insights into the use of hate speech as a political strategy and its implications for the democratic process in Pakistan. However, this article lacks a comprehensive discussion on the

values and impact of such hate speech on the broader political and social fabric of Pakistan.

Shamshad (2022) provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolving role of the judiciary in Pakistan over eleven years. The study explores the transition of the judiciary from a phase of restoration to one characterized by increased activism. The author examines key judicial movements, including the pivotal 2007 lawyers' movement, and its implications for judicial independence and activism. The article delves into the interplay between the judiciary and other state institutions, highlighting how the judiciary's proactive stance has influenced political and social dynamics in Pakistan. Through a detailed review of legal reforms, court decisions, and political interactions, the study contributes valuable insights into the judiciary's impact on Pakistan's governance and the broader socio-political landscape.

1.7.2. Research Gap

The research topic investigates into a critical period in Pakistan's political history marked by the presence of two prominent political parties: PML-N and PTI. While this subject is certainly significant, a comprehensive examination of the roles played by these parties in shaping the democratic norms of Pakistan during this period reveals several research gaps.

Firstly, a longitudinal assessment of PML-N and PTI activities, strategies, and policies covering the years 2013 to 2022 is notably lacking. Existing research often provides fragmented insights into specific events or election cycles, but rarely offers a complete view of how these parties evolved and impacted democratic norms over time.

Secondly, there is a lack of research on how PML-N and PTI influenced key democratic institutions in Pakistan. This includes investigating their role in shaping the independence and effectiveness of institutions like the judiciary and the Election Commission etc. Understanding whether these parties weakened the institutional pillars of democracy is a critical aspect that remains underexplored.

Additionally, there is a need to evaluate the governance records of PML-N and PTI during the specified period. Researchers should investigate whether these parties upheld democratic principles in terms of transparency, accountability, and obedience to the rule of law.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of a study is a set of theories, concepts, and models that provide a foundation for the research. It provides a roadmap for the study by clarifying the relationships between the variables being studied and the underlying theoretical assumptions that guide the research.

1.8.1. Democratic Consolidation Theory

The concept of Democratic Consolidation Theory is not attributed to a single writer or scholar but has evolved through the contributions of various political scientists and academics. Some of the important thinkers who have contributed to the development of ideas related to democratic consolidation include:

Juan J. Linz (1926) A Spanish-American political scientist, made significant contributions to the study of authoritarianism and democracy. His work often researched the challenges of democratic transition and consolidation. "*Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*" by Juan J. Linz is an influential work that separates the complicated challenges of transitioning from authoritarian rule to democratic governance, as well as the subsequent effort of consolidating democratic systems. Linz highlights the dangerous nature of transitions, recognizing the competing interests and uncertainties that challenge both former authoritarian elites and democratic reformers, which can lead to democratic breakdown. He underlines the essential role of political culture in the success of democratic consolidation, stressing the need for the embrace of democratic values and norms. Linz investigates the distinctions of institutional design, measuring the advantages and disadvantages of different governance systems and the necessity of sound constitutional frameworks. Furthermore, the book delves into the crucial topic of civil- military relations, emphasizing the importance of civilian control over the military. Additionally, Linz addresses the potential crises that can threaten democratic consolidation, such as economic downturns, political polarization, and regional conflicts, offering insights into strategies for crisis management and the anticipation of democratic breakdown.

Samuel P. Huntington, an American political scientist, is known for his work on political development and transitions. His book "*The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*" is influential in the field of democratic studies. It is a ground- breaking work that analyses the global phenomenon of democratization from the mid-1970s to the 1990s. At its core, the book outlines three distinct waves of democratization in modern history.

The first wave, in the 19th century, led to the establishment of liberal democracies in

Western Europe and North America. The second wave, following World War II, brought democracy to Western Europe and parts of Asia. The third wave, the focus of Huntington's analysis, observed a remarkable flow in democratization efforts across Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. This wave saw the overthrow of authoritarian regimes and the birth of new democracies in diverse countries such as Chile, South Korea, and Poland. Huntington argues that this wave was unique in its global reach and the variety of countries involved. He identifies key factors, such as social mobilization and the role of external actors, which contributed to the success of democratization, while also acknowledging the concept of "reverse waves" where some countries initially embracing democracy later experienced setbacks or authoritarian regression. Overall, "The Third Wave" provides valuable insights into the complex process of democratization and its challenges in the late 20th century (Munroe, T. 1994).

The theoretical framework that could be applied to analyze this topic could be the 'Democratic Consolidation' theory. This theory explains how a democratic system can emerge and become stable over time. Democratic Consolidation theory suggests that the strengthening of democratic institutions is a complex and gradual process, and it involves the rule of law, freedom of speech, independence of judiciary, sovereignty of parliament, independent election commission media freedom, etc. (Schneider, B. 1995).

In the case of Pakistan, the Democratic Consolidation theory could be applied to understand how the PML-N and PTI have contributed to the strengthening of democratic norms, and where the political system stands in terms of consolidating democracy. This framework can also help to identify the factors that have hindered the consolidation of democracy such as the corrupt political culture. Therefore, by applying the Democratic Consolidation theory, one can understand how the ongoing democratic process in Pakistan can be consolidated and strengthened through the efforts of PML-N and PTI. This theory allows for an institutional analysis, evaluating the strength and effectiveness of democratic institutions in Pakistan. This includes evaluating the independence of the judiciary, and the functioning of the election commission. The democratic Consolidation Theory view enables an assessment of civil liberties and human rights, evaluating whether there were improvements or regressions in areas such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, etc. during the specified eras.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.1. Research Design

The research is Qualitative and will involve exploratory and comparative methods.

1.9.2. Data Collection

The research includes qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected from party manifestos, speeches of political leaders, semi-structured interviews of party leaders, government documents, etc. Secondary data are collected from books, articles, research papers, reports, etc. The convenient sampling method is used for the selection of interviewees.

1.9.3. Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns within a dataset. It is commonly used to analyze interview data and involves a systematic process of organizing and interpreting the data to uncover underlying themes or patterns. Here are the steps involved in conducting Thematic Analysis:

In conducting the Thematic Analysis for this study, the data obtained from interviews with political analysts, analysis of party manifestos, and review of government documents will be analyzed. The aim is to identify and explore key themes related to the role of the PML-N and PTI in the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan during the years 2013-2022.

1.9.4. Sampling Population

The study will include political analysts, lawyers, media people, civil society (NGOs), etc. for interview as a population. For sampling the research will include a purposive sampling design in which units are selected.

1.9.5. Comparative Analysis

Analyze the data within and between the two eras, comparing how democratic consolidation progressed or regressed under the leadership of PML-N and PTI. Identify factors that contributed to or hindered democratic consolidation in each era.

1.9.6. Ethical Considerations

The ethical treatment of data and sources will be ensured including protecting the secrecy of interviewees and following research ethics guidelines.

1.10. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Democracy

Democracy refers to a form of government where power is held by the people or their elected representatives. In a democratic system, citizens typically have the right to participate in decision-making processes, either directly through voting or indirectly through their elected representatives.

Consolidation

Consolidation, in a political context, refers to the process of strengthening and solidifying democratic institutions and practices within a nation. Democratic Consolidation means how a democratic system can emerge and become stable over time. Democratic Consolidation proposes that the strengthening of democratic institutions is a complex and gradual process, and it involves the rule of law, freedom of speech, independence of judiciary, the sovereignty of parliament, independent election commission media freedom, etc.

Transition

Transition, in a political sense, refers to the process by which a country moves from one form of government or political system to another. It often involves a shift from an autocratic regime to a more democratic one.

1.11. Organization of the Study Chapter 2

An Overview of the History of Pakistan's Democracy

Chapter 3

To explore the contributions and challenges that PML-N faced in the process of democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

Chapter 4

To examine the contributions and challenges that PTI faced in promoting democratic values in Pakistan.

Chapter 5

The study's key findings will be summarized, and further work is discussed.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF PAKISTAN'S DEMOCRACY

Democracy functions within a specific set of rules and structures. Within modern societies, there are institutions and processes designed to represent democratic values in how the government cooperates with its people. These include the protection of civil rights, ensuring government accountability, fostering active civil engagement, and supporting political organizations. The media plays a vital role in facilitating communication between citizens and the government, in those ways upholding democratic principles. In a democracy, citizens typically have the right to participate in decision-making, either directly through voting or indirectly through elected governments. Political transition includes a country shifting from one form of governance to another, often from authoritarian rule to democracy. Since the "Third Wave" of democratization, scholars have highlighted the importance of democratic consolidation in studying democracy and its transitions (Huntington, 1991).

The term "democracy" was first used in the political lexicon of the Greek city-state of Athens in the years 508-507 BC by Cleisthenes. Ever since, Cleisthenes has been referred to as "the father of Athenian democracy." There were two main characteristics of this type of direct democracy. The first was the appointment of common people at random to judicial and administrative positions within the government. The second was the legislative assembly, where non-landowners, men under twenty, slaves, foreigners, and women were prohibited from speaking or voting but were still able to establish the laws of the city-state. Democracy is seen as the foundation of the political, social, and economic development of the state and is the backbone of the governing structure. Without sound governance, it is difficult to run the government. Democracy's guiding values include equality of citizenship and non-discrimination based on race, religion, or place of origin. A democracy requires promises, and Pakistan's democracy has been called into question since its founding and these promises have not been met. Owing to the gradual and effective process of demarcation, there was a significant degree of sensitivity to democratization initiatives, which prevented the possibility of civilian forces ruling (Donno, 2013).

Over the last 25 years, the "third wave" of global democracy has accompanied democratic governance in over sixty countries, shifting them away from authoritarian regimes. Maintaining democracy may be just as challenging as building it, which makes this achievement remarkable. How to support and stabilize these new regimes has become a critical issue in the immediate wake of all these democratic changes. Since The spread of

democracy has now slowed, political scientists in newly formed democracies have focused more on what has come to be known as "democratic consolidation." Democratic Consolidation refers to the process by which a newly established democracy becomes stronger, and deep-rooted in the political landscape of a country (John Higley, 1995).

A democracy becomes consolidated when a country has a rule of law, freedom of speech, civilian supremacy, and sovereignty of parliament, and if a country has an independent election commission, then we can say that this country has a democratic consolidation. Democratic norms require elections to be conducted in a clear, open, and good manner, allowing citizens to freely choose their representatives without unnecessary interference. The strengthening of democratic institutions is a complex and gradual process, and it involves the rule of law, freedom of speech, independence of the judiciary, the sovereignty of parliament, independent election commission media freedom, etc. (Schedler, 2001).

The research focuses on specific democratic principles, such as elections during this era, the rule of law, freedom of speech, media, and accountability. Other aspects of democracy such as economic policies will not be the primary focus of the research. If a country has such type of indicators of democratic consolidation, then we can say that that country is strong democratically.

In August 1947, Pakistan and India gained their independence and became democratic nation-states. They inherited the same legal system, armed forces, and government structure as outlined in the Government of India Act of 1935. Additionally, it seems that the people of Pakistan, including the wealthy middle class, civil society, intellectuals, and media, believe that the rule of law, the supremacy of the constitution, the protection of state institutions, and the independence of the judiciary are crucial for Pakistan to develop into a modern democratic state. Now, a democratically elected administration is ready to make such a system stronger (Lal, 2010).

The Quaid-I-Azam one year after Pakistan was founded, on September 11, 1948, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the country and the first Governor-General, passed away. On October 16, 1951, his right-hand deputy Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister was killed. With regret, Jinnah said of other Pakistan Muslim League (PML) leaders, "he had false coins in his pocket," referring to their lack of experience in leading the country's independence campaign (Khan, 2001).

Pakistan's constitution was developing slowly due in large part to the country's two

wings being divided by around one thousand miles of hostile territory. While the western wing had up to four provinces and was significantly larger in area, the eastern wing had just one province and was more populated. In the parliament, the eastern side's majority representation was not something that the western wing was willing to give up.

Following a nine-year conflict between the two wings, a quasi-federal structure with equal representation was the answer formulated in the 1956 constitution, which neutralized most of the eastern wing and made room for the western wing's controlling domination. Because of the Western side's dominance in government, the eastern wing began an insurgency, which ended in Bangladesh's split and independence in 1971 (Khan Y., 2008). Pakistan was designed to be a location where an economically marginalized minority could run a democracy on its own, not as a theocracy. It was done to protect the public from religious intolerance and the overbearing influence of a dominant religion. Furthermore, it became a sovereign state in the subcontinent's Muslim-majority regions. However, as Pakistan's constitution was being drafted, several religious and secular organizations quickly began to make opposing requests. In his speech on August 11, 1947, Mr. Jinnah urged political plurality and stated that "religion or caste or creed has nothing to do with the business of the State." The speech was given to Pakistan's first legislative and constituent parliament (Jinnah, 1989).

Political parties are mostly accountable for preserving democracy in a nation. Political parties capable of advancing the representative form of government have been absent from Pakistan since its founding. For instance, in Lahore, the province capital, violent sectarian rioting and the declaration of martial law resulted from a conflict between the Punjabi leadership and the federal administration as early as 1953. Prime Ministers and their cabinets were repeatedly removed from office, national and provincial parliaments were repeatedly dissolved, and the conflict between the PML and the PPP continued until the decade of civil supremacy (1988-1999). In 1999, the military took control, marking the end of it. Bureaucratic, military, and political elites have ruled Pakistan "since its inception." Overall, the political elite lost ground to the bureaucratic elite as the former grew more forceful and collective greater authority (Ibid., 878).

In Pakistan's history, democracy has been disrupted three times: in 1958, 1977, and 1999. This is because political parties are inherently weak, and their incompetent leadership has allowed the civil-military bureaucracy to dominate power. Pakistan's progress towards democracy was hindered by the security state it became due to ongoing threats both from the

outside and from within. A danger to an effective democratic government is corruption in the political and administrative spheres. A democratic nation with a federal framework was what the Pakistan movement envisioned. According to Dr. Ainslie T. Embree, a retired Columbia University professor, the goals of governance are democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice as articulated by Islam, allowing Muslims the freedom to live their lives in accord with the teachings of Islam while granting minorities the full freedom to practice their religions. These goals are reflected in all three of Pakistan's constitutions (Haq, 2010).

Pakistan has experienced military challenges from the East throughout its entire history. The West is now posing a threat to the nation as well. Being active on Pakistan's western frontiers and applying pressure from both the East and the West is an ideal chance for Indians. The country can fight just as well, if not more effectively, under a democratic system of governance as it can under an authoritarian one. It is believed that to fight and win a war, "democracies are more capable than other systems of mobilizing their resources" (Evangelista, 2008).

The conflict between civil and military only added to the problem, without much focus on improving the economic, social, and cultural well-being of citizens. Despite this, Pakistanis constantly showed a strong preference for democracy whenever they got the chance to vote. They even stressed dictators like General Ayub Khan in the 1960s and General Pervez Musharraf in the early 2000s to start making democratic reforms. Despite these rulers boasting about economic progress, state-controlled initiatives continued to overshadow a flourishing private sector (Mamoon, November 2018).

When Pakistanis were given the chance to show off their democratic maturity, they publicly showed their uncertainty in the 1970 elections by vacating the Muslim League and other parties to support Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Novice Party. This demonstrated how Pakistanis rejected the idea of a single head and traditional values, as opposed by Islamic critics. With full democratic spirit, they cast their votes for change. After ten years of martial law and a risky border battle, the country finally experienced stable democracy in 1988. For Pakistan, it was a watershed moment as democratic elections were held for the first time in ten years. Several political groups requested representation from the electorate, presenting unknown faces and manifestos. Under Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's leadership, the Pakistan People's Party succeeded. A lot was expected of the government, but when widespread corruption and nepotism predominated, disappointment set in. Since the people's will was the basis for the

government's establishment, it used street politics to hold onto power (Paracha, 2018).

The initial encounter with democracy in Pakistan did not meet the expected standards. Partisan affinities exposed the darker side of Pakistani political thought and caused more harm than good. This was proven to be untrue by the subsequent democratic government, which was led by Nawaz Sharif and known as the Government of Islami Jamhuri Ittehad. Sharif's administration implemented economic reforms to gain power again by focusing on other considerations outside street politics. Inter-party competition, however, has the potential to undermine the system because politics is not an easy affair. Declining law and order are also a result of reciprocal politics and disobedient opposition. The IJI administration was sent home with the same 58-2(b) constitutional privilege as the president, as shown in the legal affairs department.

In the 1990s, four governments departed the National Assembly before their terms were up. At the time, there was a serious constitutional issue that exposed the system by giving the head of state a constitutional right that allowed him to veto decisions made by the government, even if it allowed for a parliamentary form of government. After a decade of democratic rule, Pakistan was devoted to tackling this problem. In 1997, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government took a significant step by passing the 13th Amendment. This amendment got rid of Article 58-2(b) and the restrictions on the government's autonomy to make decisions independently (Mahmood, 2003).

When India and Pakistan tested nuclear bombs in 1998, raising serious doubts about a peaceful future after nearly going to war during the Kargil crisis, it provided a cause for the then-chief minister Pervaiz Musharraf to grasp power in a coup in 1999. Again, this puts the 1973 constitution on hold. The world was not kind to Pakistan at the time since it had nuclear weapons and was arming the Taliban in Afghanistan. Additionally, a coup had resulted in democratic sanctions. Nowadays, the world is more in favor of democratic regimes than of military ones. However, Pakistan's evolving constitution has not found a balance when it comes to appropriate accountability (Shafiq, 2020).

However, military rule and interference are viewed as a necessary obstacle to political stability. It has been said that practicing democracy and democratic processes makes them more effective and long-lasting. Democracy and democratic procedures will remain weak and inactive if they are prevented from maintaining themselves by persistent military interferences and shady dealings. The elections come after two that were held in 2002 and 2008 when the

governments that were elected during these elections finished their tenure in office. In the case of Pakistan, where political parties have only ever completed one full term in office Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government from 1972 to 1977 this is a serious achievement (Siddiqi, 2013).

2.1. Overview of the Military Rule of General Ayub Khan

Throughout history, Pakistan has perceived a wide range of governance styles, ranging from democracy to dictatorship and from parliamentary to presidential systems, alongside shifts between civilian and military rule. The country has encountered several challenges since its inception, including internal divisions between East and West Pakistan, conflicts between central and provincial authorities, immigration of refugees, tense relations with neighboring countries, and a lack of cohesive leadership. These problems have hindered the progress of democratization and political stability within the nation. Linguistic, cultural, and cultural differences further complicated the functioning of parliamentary democracy. The resulting instability paved the way for military intervention in the political process. In 1958, the democratic government dissolved, leading to General Ayub Khan assuming power through a military.

Throughout Pakistan's history, there have been several efforts to establish a stable civilian democratic government. Unfortunately, these efforts have often been interrupted by military intervention in the political process, undermining the progress made. The first attempt to establish democratic rule came shortly after independence. Though, this period was short-lived, as in October 1958, General Ayub Khan took control and abolished the existing constitution (Rizvi, 2011).

The key role of the military in any country is to protect against both internal and external threats, rather than getting involved in political decision-making. Unfortunately, Pakistan has experienced four military coups in its history, starting with General Ayub Khan's coup in 1958. The political disorder and ineffective leadership made it easier for the military to take hold of power. Since the imposition of martial law in 1958, civilian governments have functioned under the influence of the military, either directly or indirectly. Ayub Khan's rule saw the formation of an alliance between the Punjabi army and the civil bureaucracy, along with the emergence of a powerful industrial class. This period also observed modifications to the parliamentary democracy system, including the introduction of Basic Democracies, to improve grassroots participation. However, this system weakened democratic principles and failed to empower citizens in the political process.

There has been an important constant debate about which form of government suits Pakistan best: the parliamentary system or the presidential system. Initially, Pakistan implemented a parliamentary system like India after gaining independence. However, several factors such as unsuccessful leadership, lack of political experience, widespread disorder, and confusion have led to the failure of this system in Pakistan. Meanwhile, India has been constant with its parliamentary system since the partition of united India. Pakistan, on the other hand, has experienced multiple experiments with different governance systems, including shifts between democracy and dictatorship, parliamentary and presidential systems, as well as transitions between civilian and military rule (Ahmad, 2010)

Pakistan took nine years to finalize the 1956 constitution, which did not function for more than two years before being canceled, in contrast to India, which was able to draft the nation's constitution in under two years after gaining independence in 1949. In 1962, military dictator General Ayub drafted the second constitution, which was only meant to be in effect while he was in charge. Ultimately, following the division of East Pakistan and a period of over 25 years (1947-1973), elected representatives of the people, led by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, drafted an agreement constitution that intended a parliamentary system of government and a federal, democratic framework for the nation. Two democratic breakdowns in 1978 and 1999 have not stopped our constitution from existing, and it will remain after all. However, by allowing the Governor-General's autocratic rule to be tolerated for seven long years (1947-1956), the delay in creating the constitution restricted the development of political democracy and established this dishonorable tradition in the nation. Strong and well-established political parties are necessary for the efficient operation of any healthy constitutional and political system. Sadly, Pakistani political parties have not succeeded in becoming potent symbols of the country's political will (Khan, 2001).

2.2. Zulfikar-Ali-Bhutto's Rule

The second try to set up a stable democracy happened in December 1971 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to power and led a civilian government. While some believed that Bhutto was just a puppet of the military, his success was not exclusively due to military backing, he also had significant electoral support. Pakistani politics has long been obsessed with certain norms, with a key aspect being the dominance of personalities. Rather than voting for parties, people tend to vote for specific leaders. This inclination has led to political parties with strong leaders but weak organizational structures, eventually undermining political institutions. Bhutto held

dual roles as both president and chief martial law administrator, making him the first civilian to undertake such a position. His government was responsible for drafting the 1973 constitution, which planned a parliamentary system of government. However, the military later deployed this system to their advantage, turning it into a quasi-parliamentary setup to consolidate their power further (Khan H., Constitutional and political history of Pakistan., 2009)

2.3. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif Democratic Rule

Between December 1988 and October 1999, Pakistan observed its third attempt at establishing a civilian democratic government. Throughout this time, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, and Ms. Benazir Bhutto both took turns serving as Prime Minister. Ms. Benazir Bhutto notably became the country's first female political leader and was devoted to reforming the political system, especially considering the Islamization policies implemented by Gen Zia-ul Haq. Despite her efforts to uplift women's status and enact significant changes, in the administrative and economic sectors, she faced numerous problems. These challenges included resistance with the military, constant pressure from religious factions and the opposition, as well as disagreements with her own political allies. Moreover, a motion of no confidence was raised against Ms. Benazir Bhutto during her tenure (Khan, 2009).

In the 1990s, a significant political event took place in Pakistan when President Ghulam Ishaq dissolved the national assembly under Article 58(2)(b) of the constitution. After this, general elections were held in October 1990, and Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the Islami Jamhoori Itehad (IJI), won and became Prime Minister. At first, Sharif and the president got along well, but they later disagreed over proposed changes to the constitution and the appointment of the Chief of Army Staff. As a result, the president dissolved the national assembly and removed Sharif from office.

In 1997, President Leghari stepped down from his position, pointing fingers at Nawaz Sharif for the legitimate crisis gripping the nation. Following Leghari's notice, Muhammad Rafiq Tarar was appointed as the new president. During Nawaz Sharif's tenure as Prime Minister, he pursued to consolidate more power, leading to strained relations with the armed forces. The Kargil crisis made worse tensions, marking the culmination of Sharif's term. As the standoff between the military and the Prime Minister worsened, General Pervez Musharraf declared martial law in 1999 (Khan, 2009).

2.4. Overview of Military Rule of Pervez Musharraf

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's sudden decision to remove the Army Chief while he was

away allowed the military to take control of the civilian government on October 12, 1999, without any violence. Unlike previous military takeovers, one of the main reasons for this coup was the ongoing conflict between Nawaz Sharif and the Army, as well as the power struggle between the civilian and military leadership. After taking over as the Chief Executive of Pakistan, General Musharraf declared a state of emergency under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), suspending the Constitution and dissolving the assemblies on October 13, 1999 (Mehmood, 2015).

, In his brief speech to the nation on October 17, 1999, General Musharraf outlined his future, which included restoring democracy, forming a new government, ensuring good governance, reviving the economy, maintaining accountability, and continuing Pakistan's foreign policy. He also stated that the Constitution was suspended to save the nation, and the military had no intention of staying in power longer than necessary to establish true democracy. During his speech, he announced a seven-point agenda: rebuilding national confidence and morale, strengthening the federation, resolving inter-provincial conflicts and restoring national unity, reviving the economy and restoring investor confidence, ensuring law and order with quick justice, depoliticizing state institutions, devolving power to the grassroots level, and ensuring swift and comprehensive accountability.

After the military coup, there was a strong negative reaction from the international community towards the new military rule in Pakistan. The Commonwealth of Nations suspended Pakistan's membership, and General Musharraf was seen by the world as someone who had seized power illegitimately. The United States also tightened sanctions that had already been in place since May 1998, following Pakistan's nuclear tests. In response, Musharraf expressed his determination to restore democracy as quickly as possible. However, the situation shifted when Musharraf became an ally of the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks (Owen, 2002).

2.4.1. Devolution Plan

To decentralize the system and share power more broadly, General Musharraf created the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), led by General Tanvir Naqvi. The NRB developed a 'Devolution Plan,' which led to local government elections being held on a non-party basis between December 30, 2000, and July 5, 2001. These local governments officially started functioning on August 14, 2001. According to the Local Government Ordinance of 2001, local bodies were established at three levels: District Governments, Tehsil/Town Governments, and Union Council Governments. This system was implemented across all provinces, except for

cantonment areas, which remained under military control. It was also not applied in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)(Shafqat, 2008).

The plan to devolve power received mixed reactions from the public and political parties. While many people found it helpful for addressing local issues, political leaders viewed it as a system that sidelined political parties. Critics also argued that the local bodies were used as tools in the 2001 referendum and the 2002 general elections to support a government-backed party (Mezerra, 2010).

The new system gave a lot of power to elected Nazims, which came at the expense of bureaucrats and politicians at the provincial and national levels. Weakening the bureaucracy, especially by eliminating the post of deputy commissioner and failing to implement the Police Order of 2002, led to a decline in service delivery and governance, reducing the ability to govern effectively. These reforms also increased identity politics and encouraged patronage, like what happened during Zia-ul-Haq's regime. The influence of local politics, like police station and court politics, spread to the provincial and national levels, further politicizing the local administration, and making already weak institutions even more vulnerable. The weakening of the bureaucracy and the removal of the old magistracy system damaged the working relationship between bureaucrats and elected officials (Niaz, 2011).

Another step toward accountability and transparency was taken by transforming the existing Ehtesab Commission into the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Led by General Amjad, NAB was tasked with investigating corrupt practices among politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen. However, after some time, General Amjad was asked to ease up on investigations, especially to satisfy the concerns of the finance department, civilservice, and other groups. When he refused to compromise, he was replaced by General Shahid Aziz in October 2005. The new directive was to go easy on certain politicians until the next election. NAB once again started investigating high-profile cases, such as those involving sugar and oil prices and their impact on the national treasury. However, these cases were later dropped on General Musharraf's orders, leading to General Amjad's resignation due to such interference (Aziz, 2012).

The cases against well-known corrupt politicians were dropped when they switched their loyalties to pro-government parties, while opposition politicians were targeted with numerous legal cases. This led to allegations that NAB had become biased and was being used for political purposes. The NAB Ordinance was challenged in the Supreme Court, but the Court ruled that it was not unconstitutional. However, the government was instructed to make some

changes to the NAB Ordinance based on the Court's recommendations (Siddiqa Agha, 2007).

Preparation for the local bodies' elections began in August 2004. The government announced that the elections would be held on a non-party basis, as before, but this rule was not strictly followed. During the election campaign, flags, banners, and party symbols were widely used. It was clear which party each candidate was associated with: PML (Q) candidates called themselves "enlightened moderates," PPP candidates used the label "friends of the people," MMA candidates were known as "truthful," and PML (N) candidates were called "friends of the homeland." During the campaign, ministers and parliamentarians, whose party ties were obvious, announced development projects to gain public support for their candidates. The elections were held in two phases on August 18 and 25, 2005. Candidates supported by PML (Q) won the most seats, followed by PPP, while PML (N) and other parties performed poorly (Team, 2005).

It is important to note that during Musharraf's rule, the judiciary supported the government, but for the first time, it disagreed with a decision made by the military regime in the Pakistan Steel Mills Corporation (PSMC) case. During this period, there was an increase in violence, suicide attacks, and sectarian clashes. Militants began targeting high-profile figures and made multiple attempts to assassinate Pervez Musharraf, as well as the Prime Minister and top military officers. Several scandals, including sugar hoarding, an oil scandal, and a stock market crash, also became known. However, no investigations were launched against the influential individuals involved. Additionally, other security-related issues gradually started to slow down the process of returning to civilian rule (Farouqi, 2013).

2.5. Pakistan People's Party (PPP)'s Democratic Rule

In 2008, despite their differences, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) teamed up to remove General Musharraf from the presidency. Their alliance succeeded, and General Musharraf resigned in August 2008, allowing Asif Ali Zardari to become the 11th president of Pakistan. One significant achievement during this time was the passage of the 18th Amendment, which aimed to increase provincial autonomy and strengthen democratic principles in Pakistan. One of the key requirements of this amendment was the removal of clause 58(2)(B) from the constitution, which aimed to rebalance the powers between the president and the prime minister. This constitutional repair restored the authority of parliament, shifting away from past tendencies where parliamentary bodies often acted as mere instruments in the hands of authoritarian forces (Altaf Khan, 2021).

During the tenure of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), emphasis was placed on

completing their full term in office, prioritizing subsistence over governance. Therefore, while there were notable developments, the primary objective was to maintain political stability rather than steering in transformative changes. Thus, it can be characterized as a period of democratic transition rather than an inclusive transformation of the country's political landscape.

Pakistan's political culture and democratic procedures have undergone a significant shift in the 2000s as well. Since 2008, opposition parties' overall stance and those of the 2000s have been more accepting of the political climate and have opposed the efforts of military establishment-backed opposition parties to collapse elected administrations.

The 2013 general elections offer grounds for optimism and a transformed political landscape, which can be summed up as follows:

- i) The army's support of candidates and electoral procedures to safeguard that the people, not the president (by the now-void Article 58 (2) (b)) or the army through a military takeover, decide on a peaceful transition of government.
- ii) A strong judiciary and an Election Commission that has taken extraordinary measures to guarantee that candidates meet the minimal requirements to run for office.
- iii) A strong print and digital media that has reliably advocated for elections as a means of strengthening democracy.
- iv) The emergence of new political parties such as Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf, indicates that Pakistan's political party landscape is becoming more diverse and that new forces are entering the country to challenge established political parties like the PPP and PML (N). It is not enough to just hold elections to address the challenge of consolidating democracy.

While electoral democracy is necessary for stability, liberal democracy must be perfected in several ways. This guarantees that individuals are defenders of the freedoms and freedoms that the state has granted them, in addition to having the ability to select who leads them (Hoffman, 2011).

In July 2018, Pakistan conducted its eleventh round of general elections. Transferring power from one elected administration to another after its term occurred just twice in Pakistan's history. In 2013, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz PML(N) took over the government from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) for the first time. The Movement for Justice Party's (PTI) leader, Imran Khan, became Pakistan's 22nd prime minister after taking the oath of office on August 18, 2018, marking the country's second democratic power shift. An important turning point in Pakistani political history occurred with the return of a democratic political process in 2008. This came about following nine years of military dictatorship. The first democratic changeover

from one elected to another in 2013 gave rise to optimism about democracy's future and the potential decline of the military's influence in politics. On the other hand, the reality appears different. The concept that the military is the country's political authority even under civilian rule is strengthened by this election (Abi- Habib, 2018). The military was unable to fully determine the results of the last two general elections. Deep mistrust in civil-military ties and a crisis in governance resulted from the attempts of both the PPP and PML(N) governments to operate independently of the military. It was becoming clear well in advance of the 2018 general elections that the military was ready to determine the outcome. There have been grave allegations that the military manipulated the election process. Although this allegation is hard to contest, the election result is what the military wanted.

A political system where the military would not take over democracy but would instead assist it in choosing its political rulers is beginning to take shape, as seen by Pakistan's second successful democratic transition. A structured democracy, which is a formal democratic structure upheld and authorized by elections, may serve the military, which may not enjoy the duties of power any longer. It follows that the imagined democratic disguise would conceal the military's true institutional position and strength in the civil-military relationship. It was clear from these elections that a great deal of dishonesty had gone into determining the result, casting doubt on the democratic process's fairness (Behera, 2018).

Though the leaders of the PML-N, demanded that a "grand dialogue" be started among important State institutions to sustain democracy, the party's 2018 electoral manifesto says nothing about the matter, despite the party's continuous affirmations ahead of the 2018 General Election, claiming it faced systematic and active bias from the military leading to biased accountability against it. The party only pledged to "strengthen the National Security Committee (NSC)," not claiming credit for the NSC's founding in 2013. This contrasts with the format used for its 2018 manifesto, which places each pledge before the party's description of its "Performance 2013-2018" and "Promise 2018-2023." The party also made the pledge to "strengthen inter-institutional dialogue to develop a shared vision and better understanding of strategic issues" (Shehzad, 2018).

Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) role in Pakistan's political development from 2013 to 2022 was a dynamic and transformative journey with many important turning points and challenges. Founded by Imran Khan in 1996, PTI saw significant growth in the 2013 general elections, becoming the third-largest party in the National Assembly. Forming a coalition government in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), PTI faced a steep learning curve in governance during its early years (2013–2018). During this time, the party's importance on good

governance and anti-corruption rhetoric served as important foundations (Masood,2023).

The PML-N administration has focused heavily on energy and economic issues, to the exclusion of everything else. The main progress they have made so far has been in these areas. They see success in the economy and energy sectors as the basis for their political legitimacy and the main way to measure their achievements. They have neglected the development of education and have primarily focused on roads, flyovers, and other construction projects. The Panama leaks scandal damaged Nawaz's reputation both at home and abroad. According to the BBC, the PML-N is considered one of the world's most corrupt parties (Gul,2020).

The Election Commission of Pakistan declared that elections for Pakistan's presidency would take place on August 6, 2013, following President Asif Ali Zardari's five-year term ending in September 2013. Mamnoon Hussain had been the nominee of the ruling party, the PMLN, for the position. As is customary, the opposing parties, however, split up to propose a single candidate for the admired office. Khursheed Shah of the PPP, the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, assembled a conference to foster agreement among the opposition parties to run a united candidate against the ruling party. The other two main opposition parties, the MQM and PTI, were not convinced, though. As the main opposition party in the Parliament, PPP was able to secure the backing of smaller opposition parties including ANP, QWP, and BNP-A. Chief of ANP Asfandiyar Wali Khan declared that his party supports the PPP's decision (Rehman, 2013).

As per the official results, Mamnoon Hussain of the ruling party PML-N received 432 votes, while Justice (r) Wajihuddin Ahmed, the candidate challenged by the opposition party PTI, received seventy-seven votes. In summary, the opposition can offer the administration some flexibility nevertheless, the chance was lost due to a lack of confidence and trust between the opposition groups. There was no agreement reached by the two main opposition parties, PPP and PTI, to field a single candidate. All the same, the PPP managed to convince the minor opposition parties to accept its stance and withdraw from the presidential contest (Hussain, 2013).

A major part of Pakistan's history has been characterized by democracies, protests, and tensions during the 2013 general elections, there were notable protests asserting election rigging. With PTI receiving the most votes but not securing a majority, the 2018 General Election was contentious. Polling integrity was compromised by pre-election interference and political engineering that favored the PTI over rival political parties.

CHAPTER 3

ROLE OF PML-N IN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Political parties serve as the foundational supports upon which the structure of nations stands. Each party exemplifies a different political identity within a broader system, comprising hierarchical structures, power distribution mechanisms, electoral processes, and decision-making contexts. Societies are inherently diverse, including individuals with varying perspectives and ideologies. This diversity is the spirit of political parties, as they emerge from the clash of differing opinions. Democracy flourishes on this diversity, embracing the discordance of voices, ideas, ambitions, and political aspirations that characterize a vibrant political landscape (Afzal, 1986).

People often observe themselves as the true driving force behind political parties, believing they hold significant impact and serve as the primary source of strength. Though, unlike in other democratic nations such as the UK, USA, and even India, political parties in Pakistan lack clear manifestos and ideologies to appeal to the general population. This absence makes them vulnerable to management by dictators seeking to extend their rule and expand their authority. The root of political instability in Pakistan can be credited to a lack of experienced leadership and the absence of well-structured political organizations, as noted by Aziz (2001). Rather than being grounded in coherent ideas, parties in Pakistan often revolve around individual personalities. For instance, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is perceived as a political unit dominated by the Bhutto family, with leadership constantly emerging from within the same lineage. Similarly, the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) PML-N has been led by a select group of individuals since its beginning (Malik, 2001).

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) signifies the long journey of Muslims in South Asia. During the colonial period, Muslims faced many hardships, leading their leaders to unite and form a political group in the early 1900s to protect their interests. On December 30, 1906, Muslim leaders met in Dacca and established the "All India Muslim League." In 1930, at the league's annual conference, Allama Iqbal suggested creating a separate homeland for Muslims in South Asia to solve their political and economic problems.

Under the energetic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, on March 23, 1940, the All-India Muslim League assumed the historic Pakistan Resolution in Lahore, committing to struggle for the creation of an independent state. Within seven years of persistent democratic struggle, Pakistan emerged as a sovereign nation on the world

map on August 14, 1947, fulfilling the long-standing objectives of Muslims in South Asia.

Following the achievement of independence, the All-India Muslim League transformed into the "Pakistan Muslim League" (PML). Despite facing several challenges in the initial years, the leadership of PML successfully navigated the country through turbulent times. Unfortunately, democratic processes were disordered in the mid-1950s due to military intervention, ending in the imposition of Martial Law in 1958. PML suffered difficult phases under various Martial Law regimes, weakening its influence on that of a mere discussion group. However, under the dynamic leadership of Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, PML experienced a revival and emerged as a distinguished political force in the country during the 1990 elections. In the October 1993 elections, it secured the largest share of the popular vote. In February 1997, PML attained another milestone in the nation's political history by safeguarding a two-thirds majority in the general elections, becoming the only political entity to win seats in all provinces. This marked the beginning of wide reforms across all sectors of the economy and society (Ayesha Malik, 2023).

During the 1988 general elections in Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz party experienced a split into two groups. One party was led by Nawaz Sharif, who was serving as the chief minister of Punjab at the time, while the other party was led by Mr. Junejo. The group led by Nawaz Sharif experienced further divisions into factions in 2001, leading to the formation of the Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam by the rebellious members (Gul, K. n.d).

The year 2013 marked substantial milestones in Pakistan's democratic journey, signifying a stable path towards consolidation. One prominent achievement was the completion of the first full five-year term by an elected civilian government. Instead of the typical executive notice, power transitioned smoothly to an elected successor, reflecting the development of the democratic process among competing civilian political factions. Moreover, after an interruption of 14 years, Nawaz Sharif reclaimed the position of Prime Minister for the third time. Another unique event was the detention of a former military ruler, Pervez Musharraf, on various charges. Though, despite these positive developments, challenges persevered. The military retained significant political influence in matters of security. The election emphasized the regional rather than national bases of political parties. Furthermore, the country continued to contend with issues such as political violence, power shortages, and economic differences. To help with Pakistan's balance of payments problems, a new plan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was approved in 2013 (Malik, 2014).

3.1. Elections of 2013

In the months leading up to the May election, several major events influenced the electoral landscape, posing challenges to the process. In January, Sunni religious leader and anti-corruption advocate Tahir-ul-Qadri systematized a three-day protest rally in Islamabad, drawing tens of thousands of followers. He claimed that corruption was undermining the truthfulness of the upcoming elections and demanded measures to prevent corrupt politicians from seeking re-election. Moreover, he called for the dissolution of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government and the establishment of a caretaker government in meeting with the military and judiciary. While opposition parties like the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) abstained from participating, fearing potential military intervention, the meeting concluded after Qadri reached a deal with the government regarding candidate eligibility (Hashim, 2013).

After spending four years away from Pakistan since leaving in 2008, former military leader Musharraf returned to Pakistan in March. He said he wanted to "save Pakistan" and planned to run as a candidate in the parliamentary elections. However, an Islamabad court issued an arrest warrant for him, which was the first time in Pakistani history that a former army chief faced criminal charges. However, there were problems with the legal process. The main prosecutor was killed, and one of the cases against Musharraf was dropped. Also, the trial has been delayed because there is not enough direct evidence, leading many to think the military might interfere to influence the outcome. In November, the government announced plans to charge Musharraf with disloyalty for imposing emergency military rule in 2007.

During the campaign period from late March 2013 until the May election, there was a lot of violence. At least 117 people, including at least two candidates, were killed, and many others were injured. Some attacks were organized by the Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) against groups they saw as not following their religious beliefs. But there was also violence from clashes between supporters of different candidates. One big incident was when Ali Haider, a candidate from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Multan and the son of former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani was kidnapped during a rally in May, just before the election. As of mid-December 2013, Haider is still missing and has not been found (NEWS, 2013).

In another surprising event, former cricket star Imran Khan, who is widely seen as the country's most popular politician, got hurt in an accident during a May election rally, and it was shown on TV. Even though they were political rivals, other candidates wished him a speedy recovery, speaking more calmly than usual. These moments of unity, along with Khan's emotional speech on TV from his hospital bed, where he talked about his commitment to

creating a 'Quaid's Pakistan,' helped inspire new voters and made people feel less negative about politics.

3.1.1. Movement Strategies of PML-N in 2013 Elections

Think of a campaign as the support of an election. Just like our backbone supports and keeps us upright, a movement supports the election process by motivating people to grasp its implications. Without a campaign, an election lacks its vital support system. The outcome of an election hinges on the quality of the campaign; a better campaign typically gives better results. It is like a race where the one with access to the best possessions often develops as the winner. An effective campaign authorizes a candidate to rally the voters to their cause, while also spreading political awareness among the public. However, it is disheartening when our leaders recourse to using immoral language and rude behavior during campaigns. This behavior should not be endured. Leaders need to preserve control over their conduct, even when criticizing their opponents (Usman, 2013).

Candidates connect with voters through marches, where they showcase their party's successful projects and increase their own leadership qualities and party achievements. These meetings serve as crucial avenues for mobilizing citizens during a campaign. However, relying only on rallies and marches is not always guaranteed. Take, for instance, the experiences of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), who organized large rallies and processions but did not achieve the desired consequences. These campaign methods are tools applied across the board during elections, as seen in the 2013 elections. At the grassroots level, in neighborhoods and streets, politicians use these tools to promote trust and confidence among voters. Ignoring to prioritize these methods could potentially harm the campaign's results. (Usman, 2013).

The PML-N relies heavily on its candidate-focused movement strategy. Selecting the right candidates is a critical feature of their strategy, often presenting challenges and problems for the party. During this process, the party must exercise attention and diligence. PML-N places special importance on its party workers, granting tickets based on their preferences to establish that the power lies with them. This approach leads the party to investigate deeply into grassroots levels to identify suitable candidates.

Charismatic leadership plays a fundamental role in the candidate-focused strategy of the PML-N in Pakistan. Many PML-N supporters hold a highly positive view of their leadership, considering them expert political figures who possess a comprehensive understanding of both domestic and international issues facing Pakistan. They believe in their

leader's ability to navigate Pakistan through various challenges with the help of their team. According to respondents, Nawaz Sharief precisely selects candidates with the aid of a competent selection committee, ensuring that they represent diverse populations effectively. Respondents argue that the central leadership and selection committee precisely choose talented, intelligent, and hardworking candidates (Bagchi, 2013).

The 2013 parliamentary elections in Pakistan stand out as a substantial milestone in the country's democratic journey. They indicate a vital moment as power transitions from one elected government to the next, marking the completion of a full term by a civilian government for the first time in history. Despite this progress, the political landscape remains unstable.

Pakistan's semi-presidential system sets up a two-part parliament. There is a 104-member Senate, chosen by provincial lawmakers for six years, and a 342-member National Assembly. While 272 seats are up for direct election, sixty are set aside for women and ten for non-Muslim minorities. These reserved seats go to parties based on how well they did in the election. The President serves for five years and can be re-elected but only for two terms in a row.

Two main parties mostly control the country's political scene: the Centre-left Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Centre-right Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML- N). They have taken turns running the government over the years. However, in the 2013 elections, a new player entered the game: the Pakistan Movement for Justice, led by former cricket star Imran Khan. The PTI gained momentum quickly, grabbing attention from the media and the public because of its leader's popularity. They promised to change the usual political scene. By focusing on criticizing the way things were and the widespread corruption, the PTI became the fastest-growing political power in Pakistan (Commonwealth, 2013).

3.2. The Electoral Situation

The 2013 general elections marked a substantial step forward for Pakistan, as they were the first to be conducted per the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Pakistan had devoted in June 2010. Since the previous elections in 2008, several amendments to the Constitution have improved the legal framework. Especially, the method of selecting the Chief Election Commissioner shifted from presidential nomination to consistent selection by a Parliamentary Committee.

A notable change from the 2008 Supreme Court decision eliminated the requirement for candidates to hold a university degree, increasing the pool of eligible candidates. However, certain moral standards continued in electoral law, such as the requirement that candidates

maintain "good character" and uphold Islamic principles. Moreover, the practice criticized by the 2008 EU Election Observation Mission, where candidates could contest elections in multiple constituencies, continued unchanged.

The Election Commission unconfined the initial provisional election results on May 14th, revealing the Pakistan Muslim League, led by Nawaz Sharif, as the winner with the highest number of votes and seats. Nawaz Sharif is expected to undertake the role of Prime Minister once the results are finalized. However, due to violence disrupting voting in some polling stations, re-polls are arranged for June 1st and 5th. Despite this, the number of voters affected by the re-polls is not expected to significantly change the overall election results (Cookman, 2013).

3.2.1. Role of PML-N in Strengthening of Judiciary

From 2013 to 2018, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) worked hard to improve the judiciary in Pakistan. During this time, they introduced several new laws and initiatives designed to make the judicial system stronger and more accountable. Their efforts were focused on ensuring that the rule of law was upheld and that the judiciary functioned more effectively.

3.2.2. Judicial Reforms

They also worked on improving local governments to make administration more efficient and increase access to justice at the local level. The PML-N was committed to ensuring the judiciary could operate independently. They supported the judiciary's active role in overseeing public policy through actions and reviews, allowing the courts to address governance issues effectively. During this period, the judiciary became more active in handling political disputes and enforcing accountability, often stepping into areas usually managed by the executive branch. This increase in judicial activism was partly due to the PML-N's reforms and support.

Despite these efforts, there was criticism. Some people felt that the increased role of the judiciary led to tensions with the executive branch, raising concerns about the balance of power and the proper separation of roles between different branches of government. During its tenure from 2013 to 2018, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) played a pivotal role in shaping the executive branch of the Pakistan government. Under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, the party pursued a range of reforms aimed at addressing economic challenges, improving infrastructure, and enhancing governance. These reforms were designed to promote development, ensure stability, and improve the quality of life for the people of

Pakistan.

One of the most notable achievements of the PML-N government was the launch of the China- Pakistan economic Corridor (CPEC). This multi-billion-dollar project was part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and aimed to enhance Pakistan's infrastructure through the construction of roads, railways, and energy projects. CPEC was seen as a game-changer for Pakistan's economy, promising to create jobs, boost trade, and attract foreign investment. The PML-N government worked closely with Chinese counterparts to ensure the successful rollout of CPEC, which included several energy projects that significantly reduced electricity shortages in the country (Waseem, 2024).

In addition to CPEC, the PML-N government undertook measures to stabilize Pakistan's economy. These included efforts to broaden the tax base and improve tax collection, which were crucial for reducing the budget deficit and achieving fiscal consolidation. The government also aimed to control inflation and stabilize the Pakistani rupee by implementing monetary policies that encouraged economic growth while maintaining price stability. Furthermore, the PML-N focused on boosting exports by providing incentives to various sectors, including textiles, which is a major contributor to the country's GDP.

The PML-N placed a strong emphasis on infrastructure development, recognizing it as a key driver of economic growth. The party initiated and completed numerous projects aimed at improving Pakistan's road network, with significant investments in motorways and highways connecting major cities and trade routes. For instance, the construction of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway (M-2) and the Hazara Motorway were completed during this period, facilitating smoother and quicker transportation of goods and people. These infrastructure projects were not only aimed at improving domestic connectivity but also at enhancing regional trade through better links with neighboring countries.

The energy sector was another area of focus for the PML-N government. Pakistan was facing an acute energy crisis when the party took power in 2013, with frequent power outages severely affecting businesses and daily life. In response, the PML-N government prioritized the construction of new power plants, including coal, gas, and solar projects, to increase the country's electricity generation capacity. The introduction of projects such as the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Plant and the Sahiwal Coal Power Project played a crucial role in mitigating the energy crisis and reducing load shedding, which in turn supported economic activities and improved public confidence in the government.

In terms of governance, the PML-N aimed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government institutions. The party introduced various reforms to streamline bureaucracy,

reduce corruption, and improve service delivery. For example, the introduction of the Punjab Saaf Pani Company was aimed at providing clean drinking water to rural and urban areas in Punjab, addressing a long-standing public health issue. The government also took steps to improve healthcare services by launching health insurance programs like the Prime Minister's National Health Program, which aimed to provide free medical treatment to low-income families (Ayesha Malik, 2023).

3.2.3. Role of PML-N in 2018 Elections

The biggest challenge to strengthening democracy in Pakistan is the relationship between the military and the government. By 2018, Pakistan had been ruled directly by the military for over thirty out of its 71 years of independence, and no elected Prime Minister had completed a full five-year term. In 2018, Pakistan held its 11th General Election, with the previous government completing its five-year term. The PML-N introduced its 2018- 2023 manifesto called “Respect for Vote, Vote for Service” on July 5, 2018. The PML-N President, Shahbaz Sharif, presented the manifesto along with former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and other key party leaders.

The party was in power from 2013 to 2018. During this time, it mostly talked about its accomplishments. Apart from showing numbers on how terrorism decreased, the party also points out the following things it achieved while it was in power.

1. Empowered NACTA and established a National Internal Security Policy.
2. Constructed a national anti-terrorism narrative through media and by revising madrassah curricula.
3. Developed an inclusive National Action Plan against Extremism (PML-N exposes party manifesto for elections 2018).

Like the 2013 manifesto, there is not a specific part about civil-military relations. In the 2013 manifesto, the party promised to give more power to Parliament to watch over the defense budget. They also said they had set up and given power to Parliamentary committees to watch over defense, national security, and civil-military relationship matters. But in the 2018 manifesto, the party's stance seems to have changed. They briefly mention the National Security Committee and discussions between different institutions, but they do not talk about Parliament overseeing national security issues.

In the 2018 manifesto, under the National Security section, PML-N only says they will 'strengthen the National Security Committee (NSC),' without mentioning that they set up the NSC in 2013. This is different from their 2018 manifesto style, where each promise is introduced by talking about what they did from 2013 to 2018, followed by what they promised

for 2018 to 2023. They also promised to 'improve discussions between different institutions to create a common vision and better understanding of strategic issues.'(PML-N manifesto, 2013).

In 2013, the PML-N Federal Government set up Pakistan's first proper National Security Committee and created a new National Security Division to support it. However, the party did not highlight this achievement, unlike in their 2018 manifesto where they detailed their performance alongside their promises. Leading up to the 2018 General Election, PML-N complained about facing systematic and active bias from the military, which they said led to unfair accountability against them. While their leaders called for a 'grand dialogue' among key state institutions to support democracy, their 2018 election manifesto did not address this issue. (Shehzad, for democracy: Sharif says ready to sit with the army, 2018).

3.2.4. PML-N Role in Rule of Law

The rule of law covers all aspects of an individual's life, including political, social, and economic aspects. It protects people's rights from being mistreated by a king or other authoritarian figures. In politics, it means having the freedom to think and express oneself, the right to form a political party, the right to vote and run for office, and the right to criticize constructively. In the political realm, the rule of law should safeguard democracy, liberty, equality, freedom of thought and expression, universal voting rights, separation of powers, autonomy of provinces, and the independence of the judiciary.

Politicians often only focus on their interests. For instance, in the 1970 election, Mujib had a clear majority, but Z.A. Bhutto refused to share power. He even threatened his ministers, saying he would break their legs if they attended the assembly. Another issue is the tradition of family leadership, where only the Bhutto family controls the PPP, and the Nawaz family controls the PMLN party. So, there is more of a family-centric concept of democracy rather than a true representative democracy (Good Governance & the Rule of Law, 2015).

3.3. Important Bills Passed By The National Assembly 2018

Date	Title
31 st May, 2018	President's Salary, Allowances, and Privileges Act 2018
24 th May, 2018	Evening Courts, Act 2018
18 th May 2018	The Finance Bill, 2018

11 th April, 2018	The COMSATS University Islamabad Act, 2018
14 th April, 2018	The ICT Child Protection Act, 2018
13 th February, 2018	The FPSC (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Source: [National Assembly of Pakistan](#)

3.3.1. Laws Passed by PML-N (2013-2018)

Besides the 136 Acts of Parliament, the National Assembly passed 189 laws. In the following years, the National Assembly continued to approve these bills.

YEARS	TOTAL NUMBER OF BILLS
2013-2014	11
2014-2015	08
2015-2016	50
2016-2017	57
2017-2018	63

antoday.com.pk/2018/05/31/major-laws-passed-by-pml-n-govt-in-its-five-year-term/

3.3.2 KP-FATA Merger Bill

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passed the measure with a two-thirds majority before sending it to the National Assembly and Senate. It was an important event. However, the PML-N government's supporters, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and Jammat Ulema-e Islam Fazl (JUI-F), opposed the law. They were concerned that FATA would no longer have separate representation after the merger, and the number of Senate seats would also be reduced. The bill also merged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan's Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATAs).

3.3.3 Transgender Bill (2018)

During the PML-N's rule, a groundbreaking law to protect transgender people's rights, both publicly and privately, was passed. When the Transgender Protection Bill of 2018 was approved by acting President Sadiq Sanjrani, it became law.

The Punjab government passed a bill to protect women from abuse in 2015, and Governor Malik Rafiq Rajwana signed it into law in 2016. Despite facing strong confrontations from its members, the legislation made physical abuse, verbal abuse, persecution, cybercrimes, sexual assault, and psychological and emotional abuse against women crimes. This was another historic victory for women. Additionally, the government set up a toll-free number for complaints.

Marvi Memon introduced an Acid and Burn Crime Bill in the National Assembly, which received full support from the opposition. Human rights activists across the nation appreciate the law. The bill ensures that acid attack victims receive free medical care and allows for the accused to be tried quickly. If someone uses acid to commit a crime that results in death, they

should receive a life sentence (Salman Amin, 2020). In 2013, the PML-N formed the government, with Nawaz Sharif serving as prime minister for a historic third term. The PML-N highlighted solving economic and energy crises. However, in 2017, Nawaz Sharif was declared ineligible to serve as prime minister. During its time in power, the PML-N introduced significant initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

3.4 PML-N Role in Freedom of Speech & Media Freedom (2013-2018)

Freedom of speech is commonly regarded as a foundation of human rights, and it is guarded by various regional and international treaties, charters, and frameworks. Freedom of speech and expression guarantees that people will be able to participate in the functioning of democracy successfully. Freedom of speech in a democratic society helps policymakers understand the strength of opposing perspectives and encourages acceptance of such viewpoints (Varenes, 2021).

Democratic governments confront certain hurdles in today's globe regarding freedom of speech. In a community with many different opinions, faiths, and beliefs, the most challenging duty is to find a balance between freedom of expression and upholding law and order, peace, and security. In most of the liberal democracies in the globe, such as the United States, freedom of speech and expression is limited. These constraints are found in our own experience, which leads us to believe that total freedom of speech does not exist. Uncontrolled media freedom inevitably results in disorder and anarchy.

Because every democracy has some mechanism that limits freedom of speech, though, it is usually not recognized as an intrinsic right. According to an article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, freedom of speech is limited when it clashes with other rights, and may have legal, social, or both consequences. Like other democracies, the constitution of Pakistan guarantees freedom of speech subject to religious and national security restrictions. This research aims to examine the present state and developing trends in Pakistani freedom of speech (Knox, 2020).

The Constitution of Pakistan gives citizens the right to freedom of expression through Article 19. The country has also approved the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which forms a key component of international human rights law and whose article 19 specifies the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The constitutional provision and the international commitment create an obligation for the State to ensure that all citizens can freely exercise this right. But Pakistan's record for protecting the freedom of expression of

its citizens in practice is terrible. Prolonged periods of dictatorship in Pakistan's history imposed strict edges on media freedom and political expression. During democratic tenures, these controls on opinion and information assumed a regulatory nature (Khokhar, 2018).

There should be limits toward what freedom of speech involves, as well as controls to guarantee that it is not used for incitement, false statements of truth, or intolerance, among other things. Furthermore, while Pakistani newspapers are allowed to oppose the government, the armed services, security agencies, legislators, and the courts seek to smother the mainstream press in Pakistan. As per a study by the Freedom Group, the year 2014 was one of the worst Pakistani records for press and journalism, with fourteen reporters, news workers, and a writer murdered. Additionally, the death of Sabeen Mahmud, a well-known and vocal human rights activist, earlier this year exemplifies the "increasing.

Impact of extremist ideology and the diminishing room for political dialogue "Since 2015, the (PEMRA) has established governing standards of conduct that prohibit journalists from discussing specific issues during the live broadcast. These are usually security procedures, hijackings, terrorist attacks, religious aggressive language, and so on. The rules are in place to defend public safety.

Hamid Mir, a famed Pakistani reporter (who made it out alive after a terrorist attack in 2014) continuing to work for a foremost media channel, said in a discussion (Dietz, 2015) that the media outlet is no longer free after the strike "we have been constrained to speak regarding rights abuses in certain areas of Punjab, as well as requested not to criticize the role in the government of some former commanders. "Accusing journalism and freedom of expression advocates argue that everything the news represents in fact, is opposed to popular belief. He claims that several incidents covered by the media genuinely happened and that they were not made up. People are always fearful that if they voice their political, religious, terrorist, activist organizations. According to him, such terror has made Pakistani society "academically bankrupt, ethically foolish, and Islamophobic.

In addition, it is the only Party in the history of Pakistan to receive a two-thirds majority in parliament absolute through parliamentary elections, in 1997. The party is the largest conservative force, and according to the Republican Institute, PML-N is the most popular political party in the country (HRCP, 1992). However, the latest trends in restricting media freedom have been increasingly concentrated in major cities, becoming more set under the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party from 2013 to 2018.

In the previous 10 years, restricting the press has been finished, utilizing various means including new legitimate systems, viciousness against writers, and media closures. While government officials might vow to further develop press opportunities out of the office, the press environment has kept on debilitating over progress organizations. For example, the PML-N guaranteed to pass a journalist's protection law regulation in its 2013 political race; but this remained on hold throughout its tenure until 2018. Instead, in 2016, Pakistan's National Assembly approved the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill (2015), which allowed for "sweeping censorship of the internet" and was criticized especially for giving substantial power and discretion to enforcement agencies (Nazeer Mahar, 2023).

Like other administrations before the PML-N-led alliance government initially promised press reforms and announced its intentions to "disband" the PMDA as Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif boasted his commitment to "freedom of press and speech." However, despite these bold promises, press freedom thus far has only appeared to decline further. This time, journalists promising the PTI narrative of "regime change" are at the receiving end of censorship and violence. Pakistan is not an isolated case. Since at least as early as 2017, political communications researchers have been warning policymakers about the adverse impacts of the fake news industry which has managed to penetrate every internet platform to changing degrees. Social media platforms have been used by populist leaders to push political narratives unsupported by facts to a wide audience in the USA, the UK, France, India, and Spain. Experts now consider such 'Weaponized disinformation' as a major challenge to democracy in the Asia-Pacific with at times disturbing consequences (Paper, 2023).

It is a center-right, financial custom political party in Pakistan, being the biggest moderate political power and second largest political party. Its powerful community lies in the center of Punjab territory. His party safeguarded a greater number of votes than expected to achieve, a greater part in the house alongside its partners. He had been chosen for the workplace. Opposing Nawaz Sharif were Makhdoom Amin Fahim of the PPP, and Makhdoom Javed Hashmi from the PTI. Pakistan's electoral history is extremely unsatisfying. Six general elections have been held in the 63-year and 4,444-year history of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Three out of 4,444 elected parliaments failed to complete their appointed terms as the government was ousted on 4,444 different allegations by hidden forces unaligned with democracy.

The period 2008-2018 was a critical period for Pakistan's democratic development. During this period, the 13th and 14th National Assembly ended his five-year term. Successive elections were held in May 2013 and July 2018, respectively, and power was transferred to a

newly elected civilian government. Voter audience also increased in the 2013 and 2018 elections. In the 2013 election, turnout was the highest since his first election in the 1970s. (Andleeb, 2016).

CHAPTER 4

PTI ROLE IN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION:

Back in ancient times, especially in places like Greek city-states, they ran things through direct Democracy but as nations grew bigger and more complex, that system was changed out for representative democracy. This newer setup puts political parties front and center, acting as the go-between for those in power and the public. In today's democratic landscape, these parties are like the main mechanisms turning to make sure people's political goals and interests are met. They are the key players in shaping and voicing public opinion.

In developing countries, democratic governments are often seen as weak because they often transition from authoritarian regimes, like military rule, or from the outcome of colonization, which left behind its challenges. Social scientists have recognized these challenges and are working to establish solid political structures to maintain stability within these emerging democracies (Khan I., 2019).

In Pakistan's ever-changing political scene, a diverse collection of political parties has emerged, each with its own set of beliefs, strategies, and impact on the country's political evolution. Duverger categorized democratic party systems based on factors such as the number of parties, their discipline, dependence on principles or practices, and whether they operate within a dualist or multipolar framework. In 1951, he outlined four primary types of pluralist party systems first, the genuine two-party systems similar to Britain, characterized by firm, autonomous, and specialized parties, second, the pseudo-two-party setups like that of the United States, featuring adaptable parties, third, the apparent multi-party systems showing a dualist, bipolar structure with two fairly uniform, lasting, and disciplined alliances, or a dominant inflexible party opposed by a durable coalition, alongside technical and dependent parties; and finally, the true multi-party systems (Novák, 2015).

A political party is a group that shapes broad agendas and fields candidates during elections. It includes any organization that puts forward candidates for positions in elected bodies. Such a party is formally recognized by a name and participates in elections by presenting candidates for public office, whether the elections are free or not. Moreover, a political party is an orgoles andity that plays a role in informing the public, identifying, and approving individuals for public roles, and acting as a vital link between the public and decision-makers in government. What sets it apart from other groups is its devotion to

influencing policymaking on a significant scale, ideally by assuming governmental control, and its devotion to established electoral processes, particularly in peacefully gaining public office (Crotty, 1970).

In Pakistan, the "first-past-the-post" voting system inspires political parties to play purposefully. They often adopt moderate stances to appeal to a wide range of voters, seeking to secure a majority of votes in each public. As a result, power tends to consolidate among a handful of powerful parties. For instance, the PML-N and PTI have emerged as the major political parties in the country, saving significant backing from various regions.

However, Pakistan's political scene also diverges from Duverger's theory. Instead of a strict two-party system, Pakistan displays a multi-party setup. Factors like decentralization, ethnic diversity, and historical influences contribute to this difference. Parties such as the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh, the Awami National Party (ANP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Karachi all draw support from distinct regions and demographics. The complex sociopolitical fabric of Pakistan, which cannot be fully captured by Duverger's theory alone, is evident in this multiparty dynamic (Sartor, 2005).

Duverger thought that ideological groups in Pakistan are obsessed simply with philosophy and face difficulties because of the huge job of family lines and modified legislative issues. Hereditary ties frequently shape party characters and impact citizen faithfulness, going afield from the theoretical structure of party development established in belief systems and strategy positions. This phenomenon can be seen, for instance, in the importance of the Bhutto family in the PPP and the Sharif family's impact on the PML-N.

We do not have a sensible handle on how individuals participate strategically, particularly about objecting to a ballot, and how that influences the country's political excursion. Besides, we are not overall certain about the specific ways ideological groups shape the country's advancement. There is a lot of research on these subjects, but we do not have any in-depth studies that focus on the influence of parties, like PTI, on Pakistan's political path from 2013 to 2022. It seems like researchers have ignored this part of how ideological groups impact Pakistan's political section.

Human Rights, which promises the protection of people's welfare. Political parties contribute to citizens choosing their representatives in both developed and developing

democratic nations. Promoting democratic traditions and principles needs elections and political parties. Furthermore, a party's strength is increased when democracy inside it keeps it from turning into a hereditary monarchy (Ahmad M., 2016).

Compared to many other political parties, PTI proficiently and more democratically held internal party elections. By unification under the banner of "change," they attempted to challenge established political agreements. The party directed internal elections in March 2012, with famous attorney Mr. Hamid Khan serving as chief election commissioner. Various stages of the election process were tracked at the union level, elections were conducted where the voters chose the whole membership. These voters were active in politics, and the party's voter registration lists consisted of their names. The party then chose delegates who were committed to voting for candidates at the district, territory, and local levels. As indicated by PTI, the genuine objective of the election was to lay out a democratic structure inside the party and select new leaders to complete these undertakings.

Khan firmly went against Musharraf's deal with the PPP and PML-N, naming US pressure following the 9/11 attacks. He guessed these parties ought to be considered responsible for their defilement and corruption before partaking in elections, driving him to decide not to cast a vote in the presidential elections in 2008 (Haq N. u., 2018).

PTI started off as a social and political movement before becoming an authorized political party. Addressing challenges inside Pakistan's key governing groups, including the military, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was its main objective. PTI is persistently dedicated to conserving the dignity and self-respect of the country while constructing a just society founded on humanitarian ideals. PTI refused the 2008 elections despite taking a strong stand against corruption. However, it re-emerged in politics in 2013 with over 7.5 million votes, making it the second-largest party.

Even its most passionate critics acknowledge that the PTI's main objectives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were to fight extensive corruption, ensure equal justice, establish an independent and neutral police force, revive government schools to the tune of over 34,000 students switching from private to public schools, and implement workable reforms in health care to help the less privileged. After achieving an unbelievable rise to power in just two election cycles, PTI emerged as a major player in the political landscape (Zeidan, 2024).

4.1. Political development of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI)

After Imran Khan's big win in the 1992 Cricket World Cup, he became popular. His successes made him consider options outside of cricket. In addition, he dreamed of building a hospital in Shaukat Khanum's honors but understanding that determination required a great deal of work and extensive funding. A non-political conference was conducted in Karachi in 1993. General Hamid Gul wished for the formation of a political party composed of prominent individuals during this event. Khan first associated himself with General Hamid, but their alliance was short-lived. Their objectives gradually began to separate. During Benazir Bhutto's time as prime minister, in 1994 or 1995, some of his friends told him he needed a political platform to effectively chase his goals, including social reform. So, the PTI's foundation was established in 1996 (Khan Z., 2016).

PTI upholds the doctrines of Islamic welfarism and imagines a day when a developed Islamic state will guarantee the welfare of its citizens by employing intercommunal collaboration and support. The party works to promote social consistency, political stability, and economic prosperity among all racial, ethnic, and religious groups. By doing this, PTI aims to reunite Pakistan's rich cultural and ethnic variety with traditional social and religious values, in line with Allama Iqbal and Jinnah's vision of a democratic society that defends the rule of law and social security. Its last objective is to restore Pakistan's political and economic independence by providing reliable leadership establishing a strong, corrupt-free system, and taking back command of Pakistan's political and economic affairs by providing reliable guidance (Javid, 2022).

A political party's organization, including its leaders, members, and activists, is essential to the process. It oversees selecting officials and making sure they fulfill their constitutionally authorized responsibilities. Three components usually make up a party the organization itself, the ruling party, and the party as seen by the constituency. Over the years, PTI's organizational structure has progressed, and its constitution invites everyone to come and join, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, beliefs, or place of living. A party is a network of locality organizations joined by organizing bodies.

In the democratic environment of today, political parties are vital for introducing citizens to politics and encouraging their appointment in the electoral process. To vote is simple to participate in elections in the goodwill of the candidates one prefers. Voting is recognized as a fundamental right of all qualified citizens by the Universal Declaration of

4.1.1 2013 ELECTIONS IN KP

During the 2013 general election, there were allegations against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for extensive cheating. PTI strongly encouraged a thorough investigation into so-called irregularities in four specific national assembly seats, NA 57, NA 110, NA 122, and NA 125. Imran Khan insisted on the counting of votes in the remaining twenty-five national assembly seats as well. To document their claims, PTI Research compiled an inclusive 2100-page book specifying the assumed fraud. PTI made widespread efforts to draw attention to election mismanagements, emphasizing the need for the Supreme Court to interfere. Feeling discouraged by the lack of progress through legal channels, PTI officially declared its movement against electoral fraud on April 22, 2014. This announcement was followed by protest marches across Punjab and in Islamabad. Then, PTI announced plans for Dharna in Islamabad, planned for August 14 (Khattak, 2019).

After getting success in the elections in May 2013, PTI gained control of KP and formed an alliance government with the Qaumi Watan Party and Jamaat-e Islami. PTI stressed the significance of avoiding proxy wars and declared that Pakistan was not answerable for the United States' fight against terrorism. However, PTI encountered difficulties in re-establishing peace in the Malakand area, disorderly NATO supply lines, and fighting terrorist activities. To address these challenges, PTI presented new anti-terrorism legislation like the Explosive Substance Act and the Protection of Pakistan Act. Moreover, the PTI administration tried to focus attention on the welfare of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the deportation of Afghan refugees. They additionally supported the consolidation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with federally administered tribal regions to suppress violence, rebellion, and extremism (Fakhr-ul-Islam, 2018).

4.1.2. Administrative and Legislative Efforts

PTI's government struggled to implement its strategy for funding the province's bureaucracy or to reclaim control over it as delegated by Articles 129 and 139 of the 18th Amendment. PTI made its mark in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by ratifying significant legislation and amending others. Various bodies were set up to implement these laws, including the Police Act, Local Government Act, Conflict of Interest Act, Right to Information Act, Right to Services Act, and Whistle Blower Protection Act, among others.

However, there was little obvious effort to improve service delivery and accountability. In 2014, the government recognized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission

(KPIC) and passed the Right to Information Act 2013 with undisputed support from the provincial legislature. This move aimed to simplify public access to government data. As a result, tens of thousands of citizens now enjoy better reach to public information held by government agencies, courts, secretariats of the governor and chief minister, independent organizations, and press clubs (Daudzai, 2018).

4.1.3. As an Opposition Party in the National Assembly

Following the 2013 general elections, PTI implicit the role of the primary opposition party in Pakistan's National Assembly. Following are some famous aspects of PTI's tenure as the opposition in the National Assembly in 2013.

4.1.4. 18th Amendment and PTI

The 18th Amendment of the constitution of Pakistan detached a section related to internal party elections. This was because many political parties did not seem powerful on fostering new leadership or empowering grassroots workers. In contrast, PTI proclaimed plans to hold internal party elections through public voting, starting from the local union council level up to the national level. The aim is to bring in a fresh, obsessive, and ideologically ambitious leadership within PTI. Young individuals played a key role in shaping PTI's agenda and philosophy.

4.1.5. Dharna and PTI

Demonstrations and public agitation are all essential parts of the democratic political process. They influence several aspects of politics, and the economy, thereby shaping a nation's politics. Throughout Pakistan's history, political involvement and protest have played a key role. Particularly, there were major protests and election irregularities, particularly during the 2013 general elections, which Imran Khan and PTI claimed were rigged. Initially, Imran Khan requested recounts in four electorates, but the PML-N government declined to examine them. In response to the government's delay, PTI organized protests in Punjab. For protection against electoral fraud, PTI called for a long march, leading to the Azadi March, a sit-in dharna, and a 126-day protest at D-Chowk in Islamabad, all planned under Khan's leadership.

4.2. General elections of 2018

In July 2018, Pakistan perceived the third successful transfer of power from one civilian government to another in its history. Though, the 2018 general elections were overshadowed by controversy. The Human Rights Commission condemned these elections as the "dirtiest, most controlled" in Pakistani history (Junaidi, 2018).

The electoral process has been stained by pre-political management and political obstruction pointed toward supporting PTI over other ideological groups, so denying them of a fair opportunity and subverting the voting process's honesty. Despite PTI emerging as the winning party, it fell short of a majority in the National Assembly. According to FAFEN, there has been an 11.7% increase in the number of ineligible ballots in the 2018 elections. FAFEN (Free and Fair Elections Network) data discloses a consistent rise in rejected ballots across the last thirty elections since 2002. It is concerning that in 49 National Assembly seats, the number of canceled votes exceeds the number of valid votes cast. The 2018 election highlighted an important political polarization in the nation, with many closely disputed races and several seats where the margin between the winner and loser was less than 10% (Sareen, 2018).

4.3. Post Elections Era

The party leadership declared that they struggled to fulfill their promises due to encountering a more severe economic crisis than they had initially expected, which hindered their plans for change. The nation faced significant economic challenges, including rising gasoline and electricity prices, a depreciating currency, and increasing inflation rates.

PTI laid out the utilization of social media in the politics of Pakistani, giving a stage for youthful voices to be heard and addressed in the political field. During the elections, major political parties are involved in debates about their stances and policies on various local, global, and societal issues. They likewise made their party pronouncements accessible on various social media stages. A critical number of respondents revealed finding out about the statements of PML-N (37%), PPP (42%), and PTI (40%). Punjabi political parties frequently utilize appealing anthems and mottos to draw in supporters and voters.

Candidates often utilize social media to share their electoral ideas and assure their supporters. PPP candidates (58%) were particularly active in interrelating with their followers on social media compared to PML-N (48%) and PTI (36%) candidates. Overall, the findings underscored the dependence of major political parties on social media for their election campaigns, highlighting its significant impact in current social and political spheres (Muhammad Umair Choudhry, 2021).

4.4. Electoral Reforms By PTI

In 2020, the PTI government planned more than fifty amendments to the Election Act 2017 (EA-2017), despite facing opposition from the Pakistani Election Commission (ECP). These amendments were designed to address various issues, including voting rights for Pakistanis living overseas, the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs),

adjustments to electorate boundaries, correction of the electoral roll, simplification of party registration processes, and certifying representation for women and marginalized groups. Despite objections raised by the opposition, the PTI government remained persistent in its commitment to implementing these proposed changes without any concessions. However, the introduction of I-Voting and EVMs in the general elections sparked debate and drew complaints from the opposition. However, the PTI government remained resolute in its decision to implement these proposals.

FAFEN expresses concern that the difference between PTI and other political parties could damage democratic norms. They claim against the Election Act 2021, which includes certain amendments, being transferred to the ECP through ambiguous legislation, as it might undermine the reliability of future elections. Moreover, they criticize the PTI government's forceful promotion of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and overseas voting without proper legislation, leading to complex matters. According to the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), the politics surrounding I-voting are unfair by who stands to benefit the most from it. PILDAT also highlights the importance of political consent for implementing changes (Dr Sadaf Bashir Hamida Bibi).

In Pakistan, the military holds an important power behind the scenes, affecting how democracy functions and shaping government decisions. The involvement of the military in elections, particularly in 2018, has stunted the growth of political parties and fair competition. The PTI government depends on its orders, leading to a lack of decentralization and a concentration of power at the top. Despite these challenges, there was a successful transfer of power after the 2018 elections, marking an innovation for democracy. However, the military's expanded role in handling national crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic, has further boosted its influence. This dynamic has contributed to increased political tensions and centralization of authority, leaving local governance immature (Political Transformation).

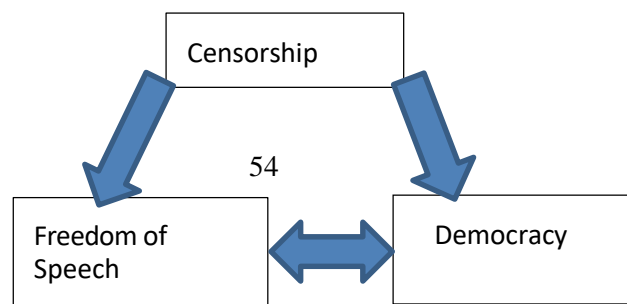
4.5. Freedom of Expression During the PTI Era

In the heart of any democracy lies the spirit of freedom of expression. The very core of democracy suggests that governments should not smother the richness of opinions and the range of thoughts, nor should they attempt to silence the voices of critics. However, democracies around the world face a significant challenge in keeping this fundamental right. Many democratic governments contend with the complex issue of freedom of expression. While they struggle to protect individuals from hate speech directed at any belief system,

religious faith, government institution, or specific community, finding the right balance is a challenging task (Fozia Bibi, 2018).

In 2021, Pakistan was ranked 145th out of 180 countries in terms of press freedom. Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, expressed concern about the boundaries imposed on media channels and civil society in Pakistan. He emphasized that such boundaries on freedom of speech not only tarnish the country's reputation but also delay its potential for progress. Interestingly, despite being ruled by the Taliban, Afghanistan is currently ranked higher than Pakistan in terms of freedom of the press. It is important that Pakistan's press freedom score dropped by twelve points within a single year, representing a concerning trend (DAWN, 2022).

The role of the media is decisive for the effective functioning of democracy and the overall quality of power within a country. Media plays a dynamic role in shaping the opinions and perceptions of the public. It serves as an educational tool, providing valuable information and perceptions to people. Moreover, media platforms offer a space for political and social discourse, empowering citizens to engage in meaningful discussions about critical issues. Furthermore, free and independent media fosters a sense of confidence among the public, encouraging them to participate actively in the democratic process. Countries with unrestricted media have seen significant involvement of the public in political affairs, contributing to the development of democratic principles (Muller, 2014).



The above diagram shows that freedom of speech and democracy are interlinked, and censorship control free speech which is a cause of the weakening of democratic societies.

During the 2018 elections in Pakistan, there was an obvious increase in the interference of the military establishment. Under Imran Khan's government, censorship has become more persistent than ever before. Talat Hussain, a famous Pakistani journalist known for his current affairs program on GEO TV, found himself in a difficult position. He was bound to avoid

discussing topics that criticized the government and the military. He expressed his frustration, stating "My programs were constantly censored. I was instructed not to mention any accusations of electoral fraud in the 2018 elections or suggest any involvement of the army in governing along with Imran Khan" (Ellis-Petersen& Shah Meer Baloch, 2019).

Ali Haider Habib, an ex-senior editor at Herald, a famous investigative news magazine that stopped operations during the tenure of the PTI government, expressed serious concerns about the state of journalism in Pakistan. He said, "I believe journalism in Pakistan is facing extraordinary threats." During the three and a half years of Imran Khan Niazi's government (from August 2018 to April 2022), media owners experienced frequent interference. Incidents such as the attack on Asad Ali Toor, the attack on Absar Alam, and the arrest of Matiullah Jan were stark examples of undemocratic actions against journalists. Many journalists lost their jobs due to censorship, as highlighted by Hamid Mir, who stated, "The Geo management informed me that I would no longer be presenting the show. They stated they were facing significant pressure, but did not reveal its source" (Hashim, n.d.).

The state of freedom of expression in Pakistan is extremely concerning the country has constantly failed to uphold freedom of expression. Unfortunately, at least eight media employees have lost their lives, and thirty-six others have been subjected to various attacks while carrying out their duties. Moreover, authorities arrested at least ten media employees in 2020 alone, as reported by RSF (2021). Both national and international media channels have shed light on the continuing threats faced by journalists and their families. Moreover, in 2020, Pakistan's media and internet regulatory authority executed legal and regulatory restrictions on freedom of speech and digital content. This included banning and suspending broadcasts of several private channels and limiting the services of social media platforms, highlighting the authoritarian attitude of the authorities towards the media in Pakistan (News, 2021).

On April 10, 2022, according to Article 59, an effort to pass a no-confidence vote against Imran Khan failed. It marked a significant event in Pakistan, being the first time, a prime minister was removed from office through such a vote. Following his exiling, the Pakistani media became divided into various groups. Some criticized the military institution for Khan's removal, only to face impacts later. One such example is Arsalan Khan, a journalist on social media, who was arrested from his home late at night. Journalists like Imran Riaz and Jameel Farooqi, among others, have been imprisoned for speaking out against the country's institutions. The dreadful death of famous investigative journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya has deeply affected the journalism community. Before leaving Pakistan, Sharif faced potential provocation

charges, and his TV program was expelled after he responded to the military of involvement in the removal of Mr. Khan in April 2022 (*PTI Worker Allegedly Hits Journalist Covering Long March Activities in Hangu*, 2022).

In addition to these factors, the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has executed a parallel strategy, frequently restricting the broadcast of various news channels through cable operators. This policy was commonly practiced, with famous channels like Geo News, ARY News, and Bol News often being blocked by PEMRA. Iqbal Khattak expressed in his 2018 interview, "Pakistan aims to keep control over the media through PEMRA and cyber laws." Both the government and PEMRA have faced condemnation from the public for regularly blocking the most popular news channels (Abbas, 2020).

A democracy succeeds in an environment where there is a strong and unrestricted media. When a state embodies true democratic principles and strength, its media should function without censorship. In terms of personal growth, societal participation, and the protection of cultural values, the digital age provides wide opportunities for fostering a democratic society. In a stable political system, the freedom of media, patience, and the right to freedom of speech are precious assets. Pakistan requires laws that ensure press freedom and break away from the practice of censorship. Assuring the Right to Information and holding individuals accountable fosters a broad society. Executing such laws is crucial for building a peaceful and democratic Pakistan (Balkin, 2003).

4.6. Rule of Law During PTI Era

PTI has always highlighted the importance of the rule of law in Pakistan, encouraging equal treatment for all individuals under the law. They stress that discrimination should have no place in authorized matters. PTI believes that without the rule of law, a country cannot advance socially, politically, and economically, irrespective of its available resources. Imran Khan, speaking in the National Assembly, emphasized that even a well-prepared budget would be useless without the rule of law and good governance. He pointed out the lack of importance given to both the constitution and the law lords.

Imran Khan mentioned an instance where the judiciary, in the case of Shabaz Sharif, violated articles 15, 16, and 19 of the constitution. He referenced countries like Dubai and Singapore, which have made substantial progress due to their devotion to the rule of law. The rule of law is closely tied to investment, multinational companies consider whether a country has consistent contract enforcement courts before investing. However, when they perceive that

Pakistan lacks independent and reliable courts, they hesitate to invest. Overseas Pakistanis and private investors often choose real estate or the stock exchange for investment instead of more productive projects, due to weak governance and the absence of the rule of law.

When discussing good governance, Imran Khan mentioned that business administration students should learn about this subject. They taught a simple principle: those delegated with responsibility should also have the authority to carry it out successfully. Though, in Pakistan, the Prime Minister holds the responsibility while the President holds the authority. This system, according to Imran Khan, is not beneficial to effective functioning (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2004).

4.7. PTI on the Law and Order in Pakistan

PTI addressed the concerning law and order situation in various parts of Pakistan, urging for measures to restore security. It described attention to several issues, including the following:

The Chottu gang was infamous for its criminal activities in Rajanpur. This group had become so powerful that the government had to seek support from the Army. It is confusing how this group managed to flourish despite the presence of police and intelligence agencies. On August 15, 2013, Shah Mehmood Qureshi commented on the governance of the PML(N) government in Punjab. He highlighted the presence of the Chotu gang in the Rajanpur area, operating under the defense of the local Sardar. Qureshi highlighted the need for significant action against them (*NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of PAKISTAN DEBATES OFFICIAL REPORT (6th Session) (Volume vi Contains No. 1-7), 2003*).

On June 21, 2013, Salim Rehman, a PTI representative, spoke out against the bomb blast that happened in Peshawar, resulting in the death of one of PTI's members of the Provincial Assembly. He called for the Interior Minister to visit Peshawar and provide help to the injured and the families of those who lost their lives in the blast (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2003). PTI detained upon the Model Town incident to weaken the popularity of the PML(N) government. During the Model Town operation by the Punjab police, several deaths occurred. During this operation, M a k h d o o m Javed Hashmi brought up the issue during a parliamentary session, influencing the government to stop the operation immediately instead of focusing only on budget speeches (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2003).

During its fourth year in session, the National Assembly succeeded in passing fifty- five bills, resulting in the representation of fifty-nine laws by the Parliament from August 12, 2021,

to August 11, 2022. Among these laws, fifty-four were passed while the PTI government was in power, with a further five laws passed during the coalition government's tenure. These contain amendments to acts such as the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act, the Elections Act, the National Accountability Act, the National Information Technology Board Act, and the Finance Act. During the time that the PTI was in charge, they passed fifty-four laws in assembly. Among these laws, four acts about the Higher Education Commission, Muslim Family Laws, State Bank of Pakistan, and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority were amended twice (Hussain, 2022).

4.8. PTI Role in Executive and Judicial Reforms

During its time in power, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, led by Imran Khan, focused on several reforms in both the executive and judiciary branches of government. The PTI aimed to improve governance, reduce corruption, and ensure justice for all citizens. The party's efforts were guided by a commitment to transparency, accountability, and strengthening the rule of law.

4.9. Role in Executive Reforms

In the executive branch, PTI's primary focus was on improving governance and reducing corruption. The party believed that effective governance was crucial for development and for regaining the trust of the Pakistani people in their government. To achieve this, PTI implemented several key reforms:

One of PTI's major promises was to fight corruption, which they saw as a major obstacle to Pakistan's progress. The government established special anti-corruption units and empowered institutions like the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate and prosecute corruption cases more effectively. These measures aimed to hold public officials accountable and reduce the misuse of public funds.

PTI introduced reforms to make the bureaucracy more efficient and accountable. This included efforts to reduce red tape, streamline administrative processes, and ensure that government officials were appointed based on merit rather than political connections. The goal was to create a more transparent and efficient system that could better serve the public.

This included initiatives to digitize records, introduce e-governance platforms, and improve online services for citizens. By leveraging technology, PTI aimed to make government services more transparent, reduce opportunities for corruption, and increase efficiency. PTI sought to reform the police force to make it more professional and citizen friendly. They

emphasized depoliticizing the police by removing political influences from appointments and operations. The government also introduced measures to improve training and accountability within the police force to ensure better law enforcement and protection of citizens' rights.

4.10. Role in Judicial Reforms

In the judiciary, PTI aimed to strengthen the legal system and ensure justice was accessible to all citizens. The party recognized that a fair and efficient judiciary is essential for upholding the rule of law and protecting the rights of individuals.

1. PTI emphasized the importance of an independent judiciary, free from political interference. The government supported measures to ensure that judges could make decisions based on law and justice rather than political pressures. This included advocating for fair and transparent appointment processes for judges and supporting reforms that protected judicial independence.

2. The PTI government focused on improving access to justice, especially for marginalized and vulnerable communities. They promoted initiatives to make legal aid more available to those who could not afford it and sought to reduce delays in the court system. This included efforts to clear backlogs of cases and streamline legal procedures to ensure timely delivery of justice.

3. PTI also supported reforms to increase accountability within the judiciary. This involved advocating for mechanisms that could investigate and address misconduct by judges and other legal officials. The aim was to maintain public confidence in the judiciary by ensuring that judges were held to high ethical standards.

4. To reduce the burden on courts and provide faster justice, PTI promoted the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. These included mediation and arbitration as ways to resolve disputes outside of traditional court proceedings. ADR was encouraged to provide quicker, less formal, and more cost-effective solutions to legal disputes.

4.11. Corruption in Pakistan

Since its early years of independence, Pakistan has constantly promised to combat corruption through official networks. The government's hard work to tackle corruption gained momentum after 2002, marked by the introduction of the National Anti-corruption Strategy (NACS) by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Despite these initiatives, progress has been slow. The NACS analysis points this slow progress to two main factors one is, a lack of continuing political determination and policy recommendations that lack strong

implementation plans (Prothro & Grigg, 1960).

PTI has always defended the cause of rooting out corruption in Pakistan. According to PTI, corruption lies at the core of Pakistan's challenges. It has criticized General Pervez Musharraf for hiring corrupt individuals to prominent positions. In contrast to the American philosophy of meritocracy, where challenging work leads to success, Musharraf's government in Pakistan raised a culture where alignment with the government, even if corrupt, could secure high-ranking positions. Imran Khan referenced Akhter Hameed Khan's opinion that Pakistan's primary issue is not economic but moral. General Pervez Musharraf intensified this moral crisis by consolidating power among the corrupt and rewarding them with significant roles within the government (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2004).

In January 2022, Transparency International, a global organization devoted to fighting corruption, released its annual report called the "Corruption Perceptions Index 2021." This report observes the perceptions of corruption in 180 countries, especially focusing on the public sector. Countries are rated on a scale from zero to one hundred, with low grades demonstrating an important level of corruption and high grades showing low levels of corruption. Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand attained the highest scores of eighty-eight, making them the least corrupt countries.

The index exposes two significant findings about Pakistan's situation. First, there has been a worrying rise in corruption during PTI's governance. In 2021, out of 180 countries, Pakistan ranked 140th, a weakening from 117th in 2018. The trend continued downward, reaching 124th in 2020 and falling further to 140th in 2021. This suggests a growing observation among Pakistanis that the current government is more corrupt than its predecessors.

Secondly, the PML-N has shown comparatively better performance in tackling corruption. The index shows that Pakistan's corruption perceptions enhanced during their tenure. For instance, in 2011 and 2012, Pakistan was ranked 139th, but by 2015 and 2016, it had significantly enhanced to 116th and 115th, respectively. Comparing this with the previous PPP-led government, it is obvious that the PML-N's efforts led to a positive change in observations regarding corruption. The data indicates that the PTI government has not been successful in improving Pakistan's corruption perceptions instead, its performance falls behind that of the PML-N (Chandran, 2022).

Transparency International's recent Corruption Perceptions Index report delivered a

severe blow to Imran Khan and his party's pledge to stamp out bribery in Pakistan. The report, which ranks countries based on seeming corruption levels, placed Pakistan at an unsatisfactory 140th out of 180 nations. This marks a worrying trend as the perception of corruption in Pakistan has get worse since Khan assumed office in 2018, according to Transparency International.

The Berlin-based watchdog, which has been compiling this index since 1995, gathers data from thirteen diverse sources, counting inputs from experts and business figures. These sources range from institutions like the World Bank and the World Economic Forum to private risk and consulting companies.

The CPI 2021 emphasized the alarming rise in corruption in Pakistan, attributing it to factors such as weakening the rule of law and state capture. Interestingly, before his tenure, Khan frequently referenced Transparency International's index to criticize his political opponent, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (Welle,2022).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the historical background of Pakistan's democracy exposes a complex tapestry of challenges, achievements, and constant dynamics. From its inception as a nation-state to the present day, Pakistan has contended with the particulars of democratic governance among shifting political landscapes, socio-economic disparities, and institutional complexities. While significant steps have been made in promoting democratic principles such as electoral participation, constitutional evolution, and civil liberties, insistent challenges such as civil-military tensions, institutional fragility, and governance deficits continue to shape Pakistan's democratic path. Moving forward, fostering democratic consolidation will require intensive efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, improve political accountability, and promote comprehensive civic engagement. By accepting the diverse perspectives, historical shades, and international comparisons characteristic of Pakistan's democratic journey, stakeholders can chart a path towards more strong, inclusive, and participatory democracy that reflects the aspirations of its citizens and upholds the values of pluralism, justice, and democratic governance.

In examining the role of PML-N in democratic consolidation, it becomes apparent that the party's historical path and electoral strategies have played a significant role in shaping Pakistan's political landscape. Rooted in the legacy of the All-India Muslim League and the struggle for independence, PML-N represents a continuousness of political thought and governance, although with its share of challenges and controversies. The party's emergence from a period of political disturbance to becoming a dominant force in Pakistani politics highlights its flexibility and adaptability. However, criticisms regarding its leadership structure, lack of coherent ideology, and reliance on charismatic personalities raise questions about the depth of democratic consolidation within the party. The 2013 elections marked a revolution in Pakistan's democratic journey, yet they also revealed persistent challenges such as political violence, decentralization, and institutional biases. While PML-N's electoral policies have been instrumental in mobilizing support and achieving electoral success, the party's approach to civil-military relations and parliamentary oversight remains unclear. As Pakistan steers its democratic future, the role of parties like PML-N will continue to be crucial in shaping the country's political evolution and consolidating democratic norms.

The examination of PML-N's role in several aspects of governance, including the rule of law, legislative initiatives, and freedom of speech and media freedom, presents a complex

picture of its influence on Pakistan's political landscape from 2013 to 2018. The party's efforts to pass significant legislation and address key issues such as terrorism, violence against women, and transgender rights determine a pledge to governance and social reform. However, challenges such as dynastic politics, limitations on freedom of expression, and concerns about media censorship highlight areas where democratic ideals may not have been fully appreciated. Despite its electoral successes and efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, PML-N's tenure was marked by arguments and criticisms, raising questions about the depth of democratic consolidation achieved during its rule. As Pakistan continues its democratic journey, the legacy of PML-N's governance will certainly shape the country's political future, influencing ongoing debates about the rule of law, legislative priorities, and civil liberties.

PTI's role in Pakistan's democratic consolidation reflects the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the country's political landscape. While the party has made significant steps in promoting electoral transparency, governance reform, and citizen participation, it continues to contend with challenges related to governance effectiveness, party organization, and ideological reliability. As Pakistan's democratic journey evolves, PTI's legacy will be shaped by its ability to navigate these challenges and uphold the principles of democracy, and accountability.

The 2018 general elections in Pakistan reflect the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the country's democratic journey. While the successful transfer of power demonstrates the flexibility of democratic institutions, challenges related to electoral integrity, economic stability, and freedom of expression underscore the ongoing struggle to consolidate democratic norms. Moving forward, efforts to address these challenges, promote transparency, and safeguard democratic principles will be essential for building a more comprehensive and strong democracy in Pakistan.

The assessment of the rule of law during the PTI era in Pakistan reflects a distinct picture characterized by efforts to promote accountability, improve security, and combat corruption. While PTI has established a commitment to upholding the rule of law and addressing governance challenges, determined issues related to judicial independence, security, and corruption highlight the complexities inherent in fostering a just and unbiased.

5.1 FINDINGS

The study on "Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan: Comparative Study of PTI and PML-N Era (2013- 2022)" reveals that both administrations made significant, yet distinct contributions to democratic consolidation. During the PML-N era, efforts to strengthen democratic institutions included judicial reforms and legislative improvements aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the legal system. However, these efforts faced criticism for increased judicial activism and political controversies. In contrast, the PTI era focused on electoral reforms and anti-corruption measures, aiming to improve transparency and local governance. While these reforms were intended to enhance democratic processes, challenges such as political polarization and governance issues persisted, impacting the overall effectiveness of democratic consolidation. Both periods showed progress but also highlighted ongoing issues affecting the stability and integrity of Pakistan's democratic System.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study of Pakistan's democratic landscape and the roles of political parties such as PML-N and PTI, as well as the assessment of the rule of law during the PTI era, several recommendations can be projected to foster democratic consolidation and promote good governance in Pakistan:

- Efforts should be made to reinforce the independence, effectiveness, and transparency of democratic institutions such as the judiciary, election commission, and parliament. This includes enhancing institutional capacity, ensuring merit-based appointments, and safeguarding their autonomy from excessive political influence.
- Political parties, including PML-N and PTI, should prioritize encouraging accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct within their ranks. This involves implementing internal mechanisms for oversight and accountability, revealing sources of funding, and adhering to democratic norms.
- Civil society organizations, media channels, and other stakeholders play a vital role in promoting civic engagement and democratic participation. Efforts should be made to improve civic education, promote media freedom, and create platforms for meaningful public discourse and citizen participation in decision-making processes.
- To address governance deficits, policymakers should focus on enhancing administrative capacity, promoting decentralization, and fostering modernization in governance practices.

This includes participating in human capital, leveraging technology for public service delivery, and consolidation of local governance structures.

- Addressing corruption requires a multi-pronged approach that includes legal reforms, institutional strengthening, and public awareness movements. Political parties, government institutions, and civil society organizations should cooperate to implement anti-corruption measures, improve transparency, and hold corrupt individuals accountable.
- Efforts to maintain the rule of law should focus on strengthening judicial independence, improving access to justice, and promoting legal reforms that protect fundamental rights and self-determination. This includes safeguarding the independence of the judiciary, enhancing legal aid services, and promoting legal literacy among the public.
- Political parties, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders should work together to build agreement on key reforms related to electoral processes, constitutional amendments, and institutional consolidation. This involves engaging in beneficial dialogue, finding common ground on contentious issues, and prioritizing the national interest over biased interests.
- Pakistan can benefit from international assistance and technical assistance in strengthening its democratic institutions, promoting good governance, and contending corruption. Engaging with international partners, multilateral organizations, and donor agencies can provide valuable support in executing democratic reforms and building institutional capacity.

By implementing these recommendations, Pakistan can make significant steps towards fostering democratic consolidation, promoting good governance, and upholding the rule of law. It will require continued efforts, political will, and collaboration among various stakeholders to overcome existing challenges and build a stronger, more inclusive, and participatory democracy that reflects the goals of its citizens society. Moving forward, sustained efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks, promote transparency, and maintain constitutional principles will be essential for consolidating the rule of law and advancing democratic governance in Pakistan.

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