

Intra-Party Democracy in Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf

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Abstract

With the idea of ‘change’ in the existing social system of Pakistan mainly by eradicating corruption, Pakistani Tehrik-e-Insaf emerged in 1996, under the leadership of renowned cricket player Imran Khan. He pledged to promote justice and the establishment of a welfare state. However, the party could hardly attain electoral success until 2012 when it reached the peak of national politics. The majority of the Pakistani youth from urban areas followed the party agenda with a new zest. Unlike other political parties, PTI pledged to challenge the existing transmissible-monarchy and decided to hold an intra party election. By using different primary and secondary sources, this article tries to focus on PTI’s intra party elections in order to denounce the existing political culture of Pakistan, yet it could hardly achieve the said goals in the presence of the “old-guard” in the front lines of party leadership.

Key Words: PTI, Political culture, Democracy, Intra party Elections, Political System, Liberty, Individualism

Introduction

In the present-day scenario democratic politics, political parties and elections have an important role to enroll the people in politics, and to make easy participation in democratic Arena, through political parties. The citizen as a voter use to take part in elections to select their desired candidates. “Voting defined by universal declaration of human rights as voting is the fundamental right of eligible person within the state, which insures that well of people is preserved” (Ahmad 2014). Both developed and developing democratic states of the world have political parties helping followers to choose their representatives. In order to strengthen the democratic norms and culture both forces i.e. elections and political parties are

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essential. However, democracy within a party by avoiding hereditary monarchy actually leads to the establishment of prolonged democratic structure.

Like most of the developing countries of the Third World, Pakistan has a multi-party system; almost 296 political parties are registered in the Election Commission of Pakistan. Some are national level parties some are regional level, some are having religious support while others are with secular approach. Unfortunately, with the emergence of time dogmatic rule in the state again prevented an improvement in political culture. Some other factors including landlordism, lack of education and intolerance for other's view point created an environment not favorable for the growth of true democratic political parties in Pakistan. The political parties with a weak democratic system are one of the most important reasons for undemocratic political culture in the state. Similarly, in a majority of political parties, top leadership could hardly make any connection with the masses. Consequently, all the political parties with few exceptions of religion and urban based parties are dominated by the traditional elites that vote more on the basis of their family history and social standing than their services to the communities they claim to respect (Akhtar, 2008). In order to avoid traditional political culture, PTI adopted a slogan of "change" and successfully held the intra-party elections in more democratic way as compared to majority of others political parties. During the course of this article, many questions will be addressed. It will try to analyze why the party postponed the election many times. It will examine whether the youth have gained their objectives, whether they have brought change in the existing political culture of the party and whether they were satisfied with the conduct of the party elections.

Elections

In a democratic state, the voters use to elect their political representatives through ballot papers to run the daily and collective affairs of the country. There are two types of election methods; one is called "Secret Ballot papers"; in this method voter cast his vote in favor of his candidate by secretly. Present-day majority of the states have adopted this system of elections. While the second method is called open or show of hands method; in which voters openly support their favorite candidate, by showing of hands. However, most of the time, this method is used in parliaments or other small meetings. Yet, modern democratic states use to adopt both the methods according to the requirement or condition. As mentioned earlier, the basic purpose of the election is to choose representatives in order to run the state affairs. Legislation, as desired by the people, is the prime objective of the parliament is a direct product of the elections. In simple words, state affairs run through people by means that power of vote, as it is said, "Democracy is the government of people by the people and for the people" (Haq 2009).

The history of modern elections is traced back from the ancient Greek society which existed before 420 B.C. The Greek city states were very small in population. The citizens directly participated in affairs of the states that were called direct democracy (Badar 2007). Basically, it was an open hand show commonly known as the seed of democracy. Later the election was exercised by the Roman senate and introduced the veto power (Usmani 2009). By looking into history it is clear that most of the small states and tribes had adopted the open method. It is stated that election process was started during tribal era, when a tribal man under the command of tribal head took decision and members of that tribe accepted that decision or had differences opinions of that decision.” However, a majority of western social scientists strongly believe that terms of elections and democracy has remained alien to the Islamic history.

In point of fact, mutual consultancy, before taking a major decision, has always been in practice during the life time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him). Even after His death, the matter of *Imamate* has been resolved through *Biath*. It was kind of of vote for the desire candidate. Later on, the coming *Khalifa* also adopted that method according to the requirement of that political circumstance (Usmani 2009). However, the modern concept of elections through vote has been propounded during the Renaissance in the west. Even, during the monarchy or dictatorship the importance of vote cannot be denied, because the reason is behind is that when new king had nominated by the going king or council of Royal families, it was necessary for the new ruler to take vote of confidence or vote of trust, otherwise the chance of uprising against might be happened or the new ruler considered illegal king.

Yet the most important aspect of democracy is related to the political parties. Edmund Burke described, "Political parties as a body of man united for promoting their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principles in which they are agreed" (Mayio 2008). In simple words, it is a group of people having same political agenda and goals when a group started a political struggle under a unanimous leader for power to implement its agenda is called political party (Haq 2009). The modern state is going to become more and more complex so it is very difficult for an individual to directly participate in the state affairs. He or she will have to play his or her role through different parties with different manifestos. By this platform a person or participates in political matters by elections. In past different political or groups were taken place, whether that were properly organized or not. Most of the time, the states exercised doctorial ruled but political groups were existed. One group was supporting his favorite king and second one was supporting another king. Today most of the political structures have two main groups as prominent; one is radical and second is liberal: radical usually wants statuesque and liberal supports change in existing order (Duverger 2012). An individual is recognized from the party manifesto. Most of the modern political

scientists believe that parties are essential to democratic Governments and modern democracy unthinkable saves in them of politics (Geer 1992).

It is certain that people have different political behaviors from another in state, meaningful ways, some are liberals, and others are conservative. Political behavior is study of the way people, think, feel and act with legend to politics (Jeffery 2008). As mentioned earlier that political behavior makes political culture of state or society so, that political parties realize this manifesto according to the political behavior of society and demands. However, political culture of a nation or a state is determined by its history economy and religion etc. And political development in particular state.” Political development is a fairly object path political progress, through which society move toward further political Sophistication (Weil 1952).

Political behavior consists of the political culture, but it is not necessary that only political behavior formulates the political culture. Sometimes political culture moulds political behaviors as both are inter related to each other. There are so many factors, which are involved in a political culture, education political awareness and norms, personality, role, history, economic interest, social orientation, religion in some states have strong and maintain political culture but some it is weak. Yet the political cultural plays a major role in order to determine the political structure and regime outcomes and political structure affect each other reciprocally in a complex fashion against (Weil *ibid.*).

In developed countries, politics usually involves the institutions and system of norms and principles of power management. They are ideally designed and operated for the common goods, however, political personalities are only involved in a system of distinctive self-regularity, mechanism and structure for guiding effective cognitive and motivational process (Vitoriocapara 2004). Yet, it is believed that candidates normally concerned with conveying favorable personal image and appealing narratives that took place political voters than with staunchly promoting apolitical ideology in voters (Ahmed 2011).

Towards the Intra Party Elections

In order to promote and illustrate democratic culture and norms, the elections for the party portfolios are held within the party. This is a common practice in the developed world, however, like most of the Third World countries, here in Pakistan it is usually avoided or if conducted then in a pre-planned manner. In point of fact, political parties always take into consideration the major dominant authoritative and powerful casts groups during their whole life and especially when election is going to be held at national level and district level. (Ahmad 2014) Moreover, in routine electoral activities, the major qualification of a candidate is a level of affiliation with Beraderism. A survey report showed that influence of Beraderisim on voting behavior. Total respondent were 150 and 122 casted his vote to *Berdari* candidate while 22 respondents were against (Ahmad *ibid.*). As far as intra party

elections are concerned, history shows that it is usually taken as *topi drama* where the Chair decides the "already decided" matters. Yet, the "Intra-party competition is an importance, ingredient for parties to be responsive to the wishes of voters. This agreement is unorthodox, science most scholar think intra party competition inhibits the ability of parties to meet the demands of the electorate, intra party competition does have costs, but the benefits, we believe outweigh the cost" (Geer 1992). Basically most of the developed states exercised intra party election, there are some basic aims behind the intra party elections including to improve the political culture within party, to develop the democratic values within party and to provide new talent and fresh blood to party those have new ideas. History of Intra-party elections of PTI can be traced back in year 2002 when President Pervez Musharraf issued party code of conduct to participate in the coming elections. According to which, "Every political party shall have an elected candidate for federal, provincial and local level." In addition to this sub Article: 2 say, "The party leader and other office bearer of every political party the federal, provincial, and local level, were appreciable shall be elected periodically in accordance with party in constant through secret ballot based on a democratic and transparent system" (Chief Executive Order 2002).

Although PTI, under the leadership Imran Khan former Cricket star, was established to challenge the existing political culture of Pakistan, however, in spite of claims and expectations he could not get any tangible electoral triumph against two major traditional rivals PML (N) and PPP. PTI failed to win a single seat in the 1997 elections. Same story was repeated during 1999 and 2002 elections with slight amendment. In spite of that Imran Khan proclaimed the PTI as a third force between PPP and PML (N) but he could win a single seat in the elections of 2002. In this way the captain represented PTI in the parliament but with no team member to follow him in the parliament. Although Imran Khan supported the military regime under Pervez Musharraf but he could not move further and boycotted the elections of 2008 (Khan 2012). From 2008 to 2012 PTI mainly concerted on some basic issues in context of US attack on Afghanistan. Imran started a movement against ongoing Drone attacks on tribal areas of Pakistan. It's moving against the main stream traditional issues depicted PTI as a non-conventional political party with the slogan of "change". These ideas mainly attracted the young generation of the society and they started to see a new hope in the shape of Imran Khan and his team (Qurashy 2004). However, like many other political parties of the Third World, PTI also faced some internal challenges for its unity. At one time PTI was mainly divided into two groups; one was called as Nazriaati and second was Tsunami group. The first group represented those political workers who are with the party from initial stage by following its basic ideology. They demanded a strong hold on every aspect of PTI. After the party election this group was submitted complains to Election Commission of Pakistan about corruption and mal practice during party elections and about Tsunami group. Second group which was

called Tsunami group comprised of those political workers who have joined PTI, after power show of 31 October 2011 in Peshawar. However, charismatic leadership of Chairman Imran Khan soon controlled the situation before it could lead towards a major disaster for the party. In the meantime, Imran Khan being Chairman for the last sixteen years, decided to hold intra party election in 2012. The party leadership, at this occasion claimed that it is a step to convert the political party into a political institute (Pervaiz 2015).

Elections of 2012

The removal of the sub-clause that requires the conduction of intra party elections removed the impetus for parties to develop a new generation of leadership. However, PTI leadership decided to hold the elections despite of no legal obligations to do it. Consequently, the Intra Party Elections of the party were held in March 2012, renowned lawyer Mr. Hamid Khan performed the duties of Chief Election Commissioner. During the election process, different levels were followed; at first level, election was held at union level where the total members were selected by the voters. These voters were political workers, and had their names were in party voter's lists. After this level the party elected members who would have to cast their votes for regional, provincial and district level candidates. In this election both groups won in their respective majority areas. Once again both groups reported a number of complaints for misconduct and malpractices. In order to curb the problems, Imran Khan constituted a commission. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Tasneem Noorani, two other members Mr. Ahmid Owis and Yaqoob Izhar were constituted on 01 July 2013. (Daily Jang July 2, 2013). The first meeting of the said commission was held on 06 July 2013, in which complains and emails from across the Pakistan were processed. The total number of emails received by the commission was 941, from the Punjab 374, from KPK 290 and from others areas were 277 (PTI, 2016). After a detailed study, the commission compiled a comprehensive report pointing out the shortcomings in the election process. A brief detail about the inadequacies is as under:

- a) Although PTI introduced a new method of registration of votes by using the mobile phones but some uneducated or oblivious political workers could not register their votes.
- b) Similarly the method was physical registration proved not successful because it has been reported that some members have misused the filling cards in order to gain the power or ticket for elections.
- c) The real purpose of election, as PTI depicted, was to develop a democratic system within the party and to find out new leadership in this regard. In theory, a common political worker could contest and win the elections on merit basis, but in practice it has been observed that the candidates got votes on bradri system. For example in Balakot alone, the Tsunami group won the

elections on the basis of Baradrisim by having strong hold on the party funding. It has been a common practice that in the shape of group contesting, the prominent families use to make a group within families, got votes and won the elections. The process followed the rituals of hereditary politics and continued to district level which led to support or gain party ticket for favorite candidates for general elections. At union council level the fee for contesting the election was Rs. 600 each but many cases were reported to the commission that a candidate did not pay any fee but taking part in process.

- d) Contrary to the conventional system of physical appearance, PTI launched a new system to cast his/her vote through cell phone. The party leadership although sent some cell phones to the concern returning officers, some voters cast their votes yet they were not registered in giving list of voters. Similarly, in some polling stations the cell phones were not reached at the polling station in time and being reported of misuse after the end of polling time.
- e) Some points of criticism also describe the role of election commission. On the pattern of local politics during the intra party elections of PTI, it has been reported from various places that Bradri system is affecting the impartiality of the commission and as mentioned earlier the polling was continued after due time. Hence, the clashes and political violence were reported. Most of the time the violence erupted between new workers and the old guard.

In the light of above mentioned complaints, the commission decided suggest and direct some measures to avoid such situation in future;

- IPE should never be planned near the General Elections. IPE should be at least one year before the General Election.
- The party constitution should be suitably amended to take care of the following issues:
 - i) The eligibility criteria of becoming a party member. Having a large number of uninterested members is not necessarily a good option. Only a voting member should be eligible to context election.
 - ii) Only residents of the U.C should be eligible for contesting in that U.C.
 - iii) The issue of having to cast dozens of votes in the U.C elections should be sorted out, to bring it to manageable level, perhaps through acknowledging the reality of panels i.e. panels should be allowed for U.C level elections.
 - Rs. 500/-fees for Union Council level election should be withdrawn.
 - Voter list should be reconstructed within a reasonable time frame and be available on the web, to be challenged and corrected, as an on-going process. Confidentiality of member details has not paid off. PTI members should be known and be probed for their association with the party. Fence sitter will in any case join and leave according to their advantage.
 - Electronic voting, though attractive on paper, did not deliver as expected. It is suggested that a third party evaluation of the last experience should

be done and a critical evaluation of the shortcomings may be undertaken. Since PTI is a shareholder in the cell voting hardware, its evaluation is essential to use the asset effectively in the future. Passing all the blame on the election staff and EC, will be brushing the matter under the carpet. After third party evaluation, its performance be tested in a Pilot Project before using it again in the next IPE.

- For the reason that it was the first experience of the kind by any political party and for reasons highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs, the IPE was not perceived to be a fair exercise. There is continuing resentment and disenchantment with the elected bodies. Setting the tenures run to the full may not be recommended. Party should deliberate reelection at an appropriate time, in the not too distant a future.
- An innovative system should be introduced to improve on the current system of “winner take all” to reduce the intense grouping that is sure to develop after every IPE. One idea would be to have a Panel System and giving the losing panel share in the U.C office bearers proportionate to their votes. International experience needs to be evaluated. Human nature being similar, more developed democracies must have developed different systems to take care of the problem of intense groupings after party elections.
- Party office bearers should not be allowed to contest the General Elections. Members should decide whether they want to be part of party bureaucracy or be part of the government. This will, hopefully, throw up the enthusiastic and “nazariati” cadre of the party to run the party. (www.pti.com, 2016)

In the wake of these suggestions, the PTI leadership decided to reformulate the electoral process within the party on a long term basis. (Dawn, February 26, 2016) However, the elections 2016 were postponed by party leadership which was announced in February 26, 2016 in a press conference by the Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. ZahoorKiyani due to reason of party’s member ship being in progress (The Express May 25, 2016).

Conclusion

It is scholarly admitted that in order to run the present day state affairs, democracy is considered as an appropriate tool way, because only through this plate from the main factors could run the state and can participate. On the other side elections and political parties also plying their role, to strengthen democracy and easy enroll to the people in democracy. In democracy developed political culture delivers strong system, but it’s depend on maturity of the concerning democratic state populations to make mature political system. Now to develop the political culture, the parties decided to hold elections within party that is called intra party election. Like most

of the developing countries of the world, political system and culture in Pakistan is not mature, however, in spite of this shortcoming youth aspired for change in existing political system of the country. PTI, a political party with the slogan of 'change' attracted their attention in one way or the other. Intra party elections, in this regard, was to be an instrument to achieve the desire end. PTI hold the elections in 2012 just before the holding of general elections in 2013. Although PTI leadership pledged to elect relatively new leadership from newer milieu or so, however, contrary to the expectations, the elections could not deliver much as the political workers could not obtain desired designations.

Although the idea, projected by the PTI leadership, behind the conduction of intraparty elections was to provide a new direction to the existing political structure in Pakistan, however, unchallengeable norms of *bradivism*, unbreakable structure of political affiliations and unavoidable configuration of political compromises affected the productivity of these elections up to greater extent. In addition to this, the adoption of modern technology for the casting of votes and the use of sophisticated methods for physical registration process could not work well in comparatively undemocratic and uneducated society of Pakistan. This clumsy situation physically divided the entire party into small groups with clash of interest. Consequently, in order to probe the matters the PTI leadership constituted a commission. Although it provided valuable suggestions for the conduction of free and fair elections in future, however, the practices in intraparty election during 2017 were not much different from the past. It seems the PTI did not learn a lesson from the past as the party's establishment has successfully defended the already decided elite in one way or the other.

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