

Party's Political Strategies and Electoral Performance: (A Critical Study of ANP in KP)

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This paper illustrates a comparative analysis of ANP to identify all those factors and determinants due to which ANP faced failure in not only national but in provincial elections as well in 2013 and onwards. It is also worth mentioning that KP is known for ever changing voting behavior in each election but this narration has become false by PTI in 2013 and 2018 general elections for continuation of last three executive terms. The depressed socio-economic conditions and politics of kinship and ethno-national feelings inversely impacted the electoral politics of ANP and so voters opted for other options in elections of 2013 and 2018 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa falsifying the truth about the dynamic feature of the voting behavior of the province as ANP and struggle for Pakhtun rights. However, ANP was twice ousted from provincial legislature and PTI with the slogan of 'change' and 'Naya Pakistan' became victorious. Warm relations with Afghanistan and India and notion of peaceful co-existence on the one hand and poor role of electronic and social media on the hand badly impacted the regional politics of ANP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. ANP not only suffered a lot in elections but has lost several lives for the cause of Pakhtun nation. In short it can be justified that though voting behavior has remained static for last three general elections in favor of PTI but positive and progressive role of ANP for the province can also be not nullified.

1. Introduction

The politics in Pakistan right from day of independence on the basis ideology, diverse culture and pluralism shaped the form of multi-party system. More than 178 political parties have been registered by Election Commission of Pakistan till date. Though the natural growth and development of the party system didn't occur due to intervention of various military regimes as these were banned and elections were conducted on non - party basis, however since 1988 two parties emerged as national level parties – PPP and PML (N) but no one got the absolute majority and so formed coalition governments with other regional parties (Talbot, 2010).

Election of 2013 and its prospects were accustomed by four main factors. First, in accordance to the checkered political history of Pakistan, lingering fear of military intervention existed. The potential threat of military intervention is relevant in the context of fear and uncertainty for the elections. Although the threat did not materialize, the protest movement led by Dr. Tahirul Qadri created apprehensions as to the motivations and actors behind it, particularly the military. All of this created an uncertain electoral context which is important for purpose of this discussion. Various studies have explicitly analyzed the hegemonic role of Pakistan's army in politics (Rizvi H. A., 1986). According to Shafqat, the armed forces have “a monopoly over tactical policy matters and decision making institutes in a state. It can influence and direct the conduct of political leaders and interest groups in a preferred track. In socio-cultural logic, public also displays better confidence and assurance in military as compared to political leaders. This belief advances legitimacy to military's hegemony in politics (Shafqat, 1997).” This hegemony generates ‘alliance of the willing’ of individuals, groups and political parties converge their dogma with that of army. PML (Q), MMA and MQM were the alternatives to mainstream political parties and gave a boost to discourse politics in Pakistan under army (Siddiqua, 2007). Moreover the removal of Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Pakistan had not only shaken the foundation of political order 2002-2007 but also galvanized the protest of lawyers countrywide along with political workers of PML (N) and PPP which made General Musharrf to deal with Major political parties and to hold elections in 2007 which was delayed to February 2008 due to assassination of Benazir Bhutto (Sarwar, 2007).

Second the most terrible perception of escalated war on terror threatened the electoral campaign and election process. The threat had an uneven impact on voter turnout nationally. However, turnout in Punjab remained fairly consistent. Third the challenge presented by PTI in the shape of ‘Youth Voters’- their inspirations and active participation may break the status quo

of the established parties [PPP, PML(N)] and ANP on regional basis. Lastly the ECP by empowering it post 18th amendment with increased capabilities to play its role in democratic shift.

In an answer to the question asked by the interviewer that voting behavior in KP remained ever-change but not in 2013 and thereafter. Why? A journalist smiled while replying and stated that certainly it's true that voting behavior is ever-changing in KP but remained static in 2013 and onwards elections because of PTI's induction against two rival political parties and the spirit of youth for Imran Khan especially and expectations of general public from PTI regarding 'Naya Pakistan' and the slogan of 'change' made PTI successful consecutively two times. People were fed up of conventional ethnic-politics of ANP in KP and were hoped for drastic politico-economic advancements. Although for the first time completion of tenure was achieved yet performance of executives at all levels whether central, provincial or local level couldn't cut much ice, dilemma of bad governance, adverse relations between judiciary and executive, corruption allegations, incapability of political leaders to make consensus against terrorism which suffered the lives and capital of the general masses (Bajwa, 2010).

It was hoped that electoral process and peaceful change would consolidate democracy and credibility of political parties but it continued to be nightmarish enigma. Actually democracy can be categorized into four sections; Electoral success in a democratic system on the one hand is the primary objective for any political party which entitles the party to dominate the government or make a coalition and enacts its proposals for which it was or is committed in order to achieve its goals (Joseph LaPalombara, 1974). On the other hand, election is scale that points sentiments of masses towards any specified party, leader or ideology and resulting manifesto. An objection over the political parties is that they do not represent the general masses but social and economic classes in society as very few percent of voters belong to any national or regional party and those who are the members usually come in (middle or upper - middle income brackets) who are comparatively educated and have the view that they have at stake in the political process (Michels, 2001). Thus the study of any party performance not only gauges the sentiments of masses at any given point of time rather it also reflects the strength and weaknesses of the party and causes as well.

Pakistan possesses multi-party system having all types of national, local and religious political parties divided into two main wings (right and left). Though, it is very difficult to study different political parties from various aspects in order to identify their structures, ideology, relations with the masses, their manifestoes and role while in government. No any research article or book is there in which structure and function of political parties in Pakistan has been written which can be helpful for further research. In order to go into every detail of the politics of a local level political party especially after passage of 18th amendment, I chose ANP to be thoroughly studied by the data taking from various articles newspapers autobiographies and such other sources concerning issues to ANP and its politics in the province of KP.

Safiullah Khan Marwat, Sadia Kausar and Shafaeen Latif in their paper "Analysis of Awami National Party's Theory during its rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" elaborate that after the results of 2008 general election, ANP became a dominant party in provincial legislature and acquired a

government from 2008-2013 and though didn't become successful in all its promises however performed best in most of fields described in electoral manifesto. But it was a bitter fact that inspite of performing well ANP faced failure in 2013 elections declared that voting behavior of KP can be determined by any parameter. The scholars believe in clientilism more as compared to ethnic ideology of the voters.

Dr. Taseerullah, Dr. Habibullah and professor Dr.Gulawar khan in their article named "Voters` Behavior in Pakistan: a case study of General election 2013 in District Peshawar" while conducting random survey suggested that, in KP voters in general election voted more (50%) with respect to party loyalty or manifesto as compared to ethnicity or clientilistic feature (7.1%) and so people voted in favor of PTI as compared to other parties. But from 2013 to 2023 PTI didn't prove to its own manifesto but voters in 2018 and still had poor performance while ANP from 2008 to 2013 did too much for the uplift of this province but faced failure in 2013 and 2018 elections. It means that party performance and voter`s choice are contradictory with each other showing that this change in voting behavior (static) of KP has been manipulated by some non-political actors.

2. The Regionalization of Politics and ANP in 2013 Election

Election of 2013 has the attribute of reinforcing of the concept of regionalization or ethno-nationalization of politics in Pakistan through various ethnic parties already present in almost all provinces except that of KP, rather it would be more correct to say that 2013 election has made the put the national politics of a state more on regional base and very less on national based as the parties have become active on regional motives before 2013 election. However, the government of KP and performance of ANP in electoral politics was absolutely different as the politics of KP was acquired by PTI – a nation-wide new party as compared to ANP in KP specifically. The Punjab remained under the PML (N) while Sindh under PPP but not ANP in KP. Similarly, the troublesome province Balochistan with two major ethnic groups that are *Pakhtuns* and Baloch represented by Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and 'Baloch Nationalist' group respectively though with low turn-out in the province but had formed government of their own was the success of regionalization of politics which the provinces enjoyed by the passage of 18th amendment in 2010.

The making of provincial governments under the ethnic parties made the elections of 2013 more credible in this sense. The fragmented power centered political parties both at federal and provincial level made them all equal stakeholders of Pakistani political and electoral system. The situations after the passage of 18th amendment in which most of the powers had been transferred to provinces and has made the central government limited, though a positive approach of a federal system but had produced problems like devising coherent internal security policy and economic structural reforms- privatization which now needs the approval of all provinces. The change in constitution and devolution of all political and economic decision-making at provincial level has made the state, a real federal state in which the regional political parties and their people are now more focused on their respective resources and strongholds. The regionalization of politics in Pakistan and the preferences of political parties to their respective regional interests is a good

fortune on the one hand but on the hand has created problems of politico-economic and ethno-linguistic differences as well in certain provinces like KP in which Hazara people demanded province of their own and Siraiki people in Punjab demanded for the province of Siraikistan. This issue, need to be resolved by the federal government after the results of 2013 election. During the years, regional parties appeared to be stronger enough and made the coalition politics in Pakistan so deep rooted that main political parties now depend on regional parties for a stable government in center like ANP –PPP coalition in 2008-13. The opinion though differs that coalition of government will strengthen democracy or fragmentation would occur in policy and decision making process. The problems no matter would be there but the benefit is that coalition brings the government and people closer, however this statement didn't prove fruitful in case of ANP-PPP coalition 2008-13 for both parties in the elections of 2013.

3. Taliban in Afghanistan and its Impacts on *Pakhtun's* Region

While US attack on Afghanistan as a response to September 11, 2001, ANP under the leadership condemn this attack and appealed to *Pakhtuns* to revise their stance over the crisis in Afghanistan. For this region and for the neighboring Muslim states which have a socio-cultural ties with *Pakhtun* people so if Afghanistan not being attacked by US, Afghanistan would turn into an Arab colony as Osama Bin Ladin had 16000 well trained and equipped Arab soldiers, the number which was greater than Afghan army at that time, so a drama of world trade center was staged, excusing Al-Qaida and Osama as the characters of attack in America. mean that abolition of an Islamic Government by *Pakhtun* Taliban was the hidden aim for which the whole film was run (The News, 2006) (The Weekly Zarb-e-Momin, 2009). Therefore neither Osama nor Al-Qaida and US had any concern with the system of government rather their penetration in the region for their own vested interests (The Daily Jang, 2009). A US delegation in 1996, visited Wali Khan's *hujra* that why not he should play any role against rigid Taliban and violation of human rights in Afghanistan? He answered, that ANP leaders from the very beginning being declared as traitors by the establishment and state controlled media. Establishment and political parties of the region are pro-US, as US is indirectly involved in this game to ruin this region and inhabitants (*Pakhtuns*) of the region under their feet. So ANP's role was made limited with pre planned international politics against Afghanistan and *Pakhtuns*. The whole social structure of *Pakhtun's* region was destroyed by America by the process of generating, degenerating and regenerating of Taliban consisting of young boys of madrassas and unemployed youth of the world to fight in Afghanistan, all is the part of a 'Great Game' in the *Pakhtun's* region. Today when US is by herself captured in a hostile policy against Afghanistan, this region and *Pakhtuns*, we were remembered by US authorities to help us in getting rid of this tragic people. Till yesterday, this party (ANP), its leaders and workers were the agents of Russia and India. Now if US were helped out by the party so would be portrayed as patriotic and true friends of American. A statement that ANP had been tagged as "Pro American", Is it right? One of ANP leaders remarked the few militants had sabotage the very existence of the native million people of KP. It was ANP which stood in front of these militants and fought against terrorism by sacrificing hundreds of ANP's workers in suicide attacks. So for

the very cause of peace and tranquility of *Pakhtun* if ANP was tagged as ‘pro American’, so ANP would not deny this tag. It means that in international politics, relations are not based on humanity, sincerity and good well of all the nations of the world rather good and bad character is vested upon the services rendered in one’s interests (The Daily Aaj, 2009).

3.1 ANP Stance on Pak-Afghan Relations and its Electoral Politics

National Awami Party (NAP), the predecessor of ANP, was charged on account of anti-Pakistan’s interests and an impediment in the way of Pakistan’s foreign policy towards its neighbor Afghanistan (Pakistan Times Rawalpindi, 1972.). NAP politics was considered to be pro-Russia irrespective of US block and the party followers were deemed to be communists. The same charge was levied against Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the president of NAP. The propaganda which was propagated by the state authorities was denied by the party leadership and declared that neither the party nor its followers are pro-soviet or having communist aspirations for the state of Pakistan rather the party NAP downplayed the socialist slogan and instead of it emphasized for an independent foreign policy, restoration of democracy and provincial autonomy in a real sense (Afzal M. R., 1986).

National Awami party from the very inception had the conclusion that selfish leaders and their parties had exploited the rights and wishes of this nation either with the name of Islam or in the name of Socialism (Sayeed K. B., 1987). The party and its leadership had always concern over the foreign relations of Pakistan which would be on fraternity and friendship bases especially with its neighbors. NAP was of the view that instead of interfering in others affairs, Pakistan should join non-aligned policy in its international affairs. However, the political ground, the pro-government media and the academia of Pakistan were struggling in declaring this party (NAP), its leadership and its companions (Comrades) as Soviet-agents and anti-Pakistan elements. Not only this, before the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, British imperialists in India acted same with Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan and his movement *Khudai Khidmatgars* as the well-wishers of Soviet Union and Hindus in India so people called this party and its followers as *Sre Kafir* and *kaangresyan* by the people belonged to parties other than NAP (Shah et al., 1999). In 1970’s, NAP under Abdul Wali Khan always expressed its good motive for the neighbor Afghanistan that relations should be maintained purely on brotherhood and equality on universal basis. While PPP was ruling here in 1970’s in Pakistan, Afghan government was ruled by Sardar Dawood. During the era of both these leaders, Pak-Afghan relations were strained. Bhutto was asked by the foreign office of Pakistan that Afghanistan is going to threaten Pakistan for its territories so resultantly Pakistan’s government had tense relations with Sardar Dawood.

When Zia took over PPP’s government in 1977, foreign office convinced Zia’s government regarding Dawood’s intentions of claiming its territories Mainly KP region former (NWFP). Zia-ul-Haq sought the advice of Abdul Wali Khan President of NAP, Zia was clarified by NAP leader that Dawood had no any intentions to claim or make aggressions on Pakistani territories rather it was just a clash between the two leaders and the reason was the mud-slinging attitude of Bhutto against Sardar Dawood. Wali Khan further added that Sardar Dawood only stance about Pakhtun

and Baloch of this region was that their due constitutional rights must be rendered to these people within their areas and the respective government must make efforts for their development and welfare of these socio-politically deprived people. After normalization of relation between the two states upon justification of NAP's leader, President Zia visited Afghanistan where he was assured by Sardar Dawood about disclaiming Pakistani territories across Durand Line (Pak-Afghan Border). The presence of Wali Khan with his wife Begum Nasim Wali Khan along with Zia-ul Haq at the airport upon Sardar Dawood's arrival to Pakistan on Zia's invitation showed NAP's positive role in making Pak-Afghan relations cordial for which Zia thanked Wali Khan. Zia told Sardar Dawood about Wali's pious intentions between the two states (Khan, Bāchā Khān Awō Khudā'ī Khidmatgārī, 1987).

While the ice was going to be melt between the two states, USSR made aggression against Afghanistan in order to culminate its long term policy of making a land corridor to the Arabian Sea and Indian ocean through the passage of Afghanistan and Pakistan (Qureshi, 1981). The Soviet Union at the time pretended to safeguard the Marxist-Socialist regime in Afghanistan against the US backed Islamist forces, assassination of Sardar Dawood and installation of Noor Muhammad Taraki's government was made by USSR in 1978 which feared USA that Soviet-Socialist ideology crossed River Amu and its anxiety increased at the physical intervening of Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan which would later on be spread to rest of South Asia through Pakistan (Sharma, 1987) (Craig Baxter and Syed Razi Wasti, 1991). Pakistan being a strong ally of US block performed as 'front line state' to counter Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and to prevent its expansionist program towards warm water. Zia in order to prolong his dictatorial ruling offered his services to US sponsored Jihad¹ in Afghanistan.

US was also aware that in order to end USSR ambition in Afghanistan, a military rule coupled with religious fundamentalist could serve the US interests in Afghanistan irrespective of democratic setup (Khan, Bāchā Khān Awō Khudā'ī Khidmatgārī, 1987). NAP under the presidency of Wali Khan condemned this action of Zia and declared this so called Jihad as a proxy war between the two gigantic powers and their ideologies (Jang, 1982). Wali Khan further added that CIA's role is alarming in this war as it promotes Islamic fundamentalism to combat socialism both in neighboring Muslim countries. On the floor of the House Wali Khan proclaimed that Pakistan involvement in internal affairs of the neighboring state will ruin Pakistan by itself (National Assembly of Pakistan Debates, February 26, 1989). Wali Khan further said that it is astonishing that on side Pakistan is going to prevent Soviet communism from expansionism but on the other side has friendly relations with communist China which is funding against Jihad in Afghanistan (Ziring, 2004).

¹ *Jihād*: means the Holy War waged by Muslim volunteers in defense of the Islamic faith against the people, organizations, or countries regarded as hostile to Islam. USA picked up the *Mujāhiddīn* (Holy warriors) across the world, trained them, and put them in fight against USSR in Afghanistan. For more details, watch <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4cVVuSi2fI>

The US funded Afghan jihad at the hands of Pakistani *Mujahideen* had not only international repercussions rather on national politics of Pakistan also. General Zia had banned all political parties on the one hand but had deep relations with Jammāt-i- Islami (JI) on the other and brought both these very close to each other (Burki, 2004) (Khan Bāchā Khān Awō Khudā'ī Khidmatgārī, 1987). Zia government was accumulating funds and arms for JI while JI leaders in response were sending Pakistani militants especially *Pakhtuns* to Afghanistan (Nawa-i-Waqt, 1986) (Jang, 1985). According to S.H Harrison a prominent journalist, “fifty percent of US guns delivered to Afghan jihad were to JI” (Harrison, 2009). Abdul Wali Khan said that I am worried that these weaponries could be used in future by JI to make silent its political rivals. Moreover, thirty lacs Afghan immigrants traveled to Pakistan and were settled in *Pakhtun* dominated areas of Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. It was an extra burden on poor socio-economic conditions of the region (Ali S., 2014). Wali Khan objected that Zia government embraced these deteriorated people in the Muslim brotherhood but non-Pakhtun Muslim Punjabi, Sindhi and Balochi are not paying their due share in this great virtue of Muslim fraternity for Afghan-war refugees (Wasti, 1991).

NAP asserted that military strategy of dictatorial ruling by stationing these illiterate orthodox Islamist Afghan refugees in KP is to counter secular non-sectarian Pakhtuns of the region by these Islamist militants (Taizi, 2006). And therefore Wali Khan's companions were put on hit list of these Afghan *Mujahideen*. One of Wali Khan's friend (Arbab Sikandar Khan Khalil) was killed by Afghani migrant, upon arrest of hit man, he revealed that the person was murdered upon the instigation of JI. He exposed that a worker of JI told him that Arbab Sikandar Khan Khalil was pro-Russian. As they were opponents of Afghans, as a result, he (Afghani) exterminated Arbab Sikandar Khan) because of Russian comrade. The executioner also intended to kill Wali Khan but couldn't be successful. Pro-government academia and media tried discreetly to hail Wali Khan and his companions as pro-Moscow. (Taizi, 2006). The pro-government academia and media tried diplomatically to label Wali Khan as pro-Moscow.

Pak- Afghan relations and its impacts on ethno-national politics of ANP sought great importance due to its geo-political, socio-cultural, ethno-religious and strategic ties. On 3rd October, 2011, in a speech delivered by President Hamid Karzai, declared both these states as inseparable brothers because both of them are connected with the bonds of religion and language. This however, does not mean that they have smooth sailing relations from very inception. Differences did occur and rise and fall happened in politics of the two states such as opposing Pakistan membership in UN and accusing Pakistan for supporting rebels (religious leaders) such as Gulbadin Hikmatyar, Ahmad shah Masood and Jalal-ud Din Haqqani (Ahmad, 2009). These mujahidin though were continuously trying to oust Najib's government which was not supported later on by USSR due to its dissolution in December 1991 and mujahidin were backed by Pakistan and else-where but these mujahidin were at threats from one another and so failed to give peace to

Afghanistan, the ultimate result of which is the emergence of Taliban in the state (Gleis, 2004). After occupation of most of provinces by Taliban in Afghanistan managed to establish Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1996 and had close ties with Pakistani government but these relations were strained when Taliban government refused 'Durand Line' as a frontier between the two with comments that there should be no border among the Muslim states (Hansel, 2017) .

The nine-eleven attack (an act of terrorism) deteriorated Pak-Afghan relations once again when Pakistan decided to be an ally of US led forces against terrorists (AL-Qaida) who fled to Afghanistan for taking shelter. An aggression was made by US, took over Taliban government and installed Hamid Karzai as the president of New Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The new administration differ the view of Karrzai in accepting 'Durand Line' as it is the line of hatred between the two brothers (Harrison, 2009). While the war on terror continued for years by NATO forces to combat and eliminate extremism and fundamentalism tendencies in the region, a new terrifying development for Pakistan was protection of its western borders through which these terrorists elements get into Pakistan to sabotage its internal security by bombing and suicide attacks on political leaders and civil society because of the front line role played by Pakistan against Taliban in Afghanistan (Cheema, 2009). Peshawar in KP was made as the center for US secret agencies like CIA, Black Water, FBI and others which started training 1.7 million mujahidin for Afghan jihad, the result of which is rise of militancy in *Pakhtun* region (Gilani, 2008).

Round about 30 attacks were made in 2011-12 killing 250 security personnel of Pakistan and hundreds of civilian as well. Letters were issued to different leaders of political parties most notably ANP in KP to be on hit list of Taliban. Besides this, Pakistan was of the intention to repatriate Afghan refugees to their homeland as it was a critical issue but despite the fact more and more refugees approached Pakistan to take refuge so an extra burden was levied on poor economic conditions of Pakistan. On the other side in 2014, Afghan government regularly admitted that Afghan government lacks the capacity of accommodating the Afghan refugees from Pakistan (Ali, 2014). Whatever may be the cause of the escalation of insurgency in FATA and KP; the US strategic interests; the failures of Islamabad to integrate the *Pakhtuns* into the national life by providing social, economic and political opportunities or the propaganda against the *Pakhtuns*, the war on terror and the resultant Talibanization have added fuel to the fire by deteriorating the socio-economic conditions of the already unsatisfied *Pakhtuns* (Lindholm, 1986.).

The socio-economic depressions include radicalization; bigotry towards other sectarian groups and minorities; suicide bombing and the resultant fear and irritation in the masses; target killing of professionals (considered to be un-Islamic), the *Pakhtun* elders, and members of political parties (ANP, PPP, MQM); the destruction of educational institutions and other government facilities; and damage to the *Pakhtun* culture. (Zaidi M. , 2011) The violence of talibanization intensified when it encompassed lower class of the society shopkeepers in bazars declaring them and their activities as un-Islamic. Pro-government and *Pakhtun* elders especially approximately

1200 elders been killed by terrorist attacks. ANP claimed that the party has sacrificed some 2700 workers to these extremists. Taliban considering the educational institutions and its curriculum as un-Islamic so most of the school buildings (700 schools demolished) were hit by Taliban and so many kids became victims of this insurgency (Education, 2010). Keeping the name anonymous, one of jaish-e-Muhammad jihadi instructor who joined Maulana Fazalullah commented that, ‘As Pakistan was in an alliance with US war on terror so what-ever came in hand or being destroyed is *maal e ghaneemat* for us’. Not only this, the working women (teachers, LHWs, LHV, doctors, journalists etc) were even killed and university professors and vice chancellors were either kidnapped and released later on or (Dr. Farooq, VC of Swat University) was assassinated (Hashmi A. S., 2006).

Among all the social-economical costs Pakistan received, the damage received to *Pakhtun* culture by war on terror is notable one. Shrines as symbols of *Pakhtun* culture are highly respectable, became the prime targets of religious militants since 2007. (Rehman Z. U., 2010) This damage is due to the result of *Wahabi*² ideology augmented by Islamabad policy to promote Wahabism as a counter part of taliban radicalism. Socio-economic dents caused by the war on terror to the *Pakhtuns* of KP and FATA will take a long time to be compensated. It is true that most of the insurgency was in *Pakhtun* belt but these militants and their ideology did not represent even the minority of *Pakhtuns*. On the contrary, these militants used *Pakhtun* culture and its codes to their advantage which not only damaged the image of the *Pakhtuns* but also created a sense of aggravation in the *Pakhtun* society to the religious organizations (Saddiqa, 2011). In order to evaluate the view of ANP regarding the relations between the two neighboring Muslim states in existing circumstances after NATO drawdown and withdrawal of US forces, both states are engaged in their internal conflicts. It would also be enquired that what strategy has been adopted by ANP if any problem lies between the two. For this, secondary data has been collected about ANP’s policy in foreign affairs of Pakistan and interviews were conducted so that to fill the gap in information gathered. Questions put were as such

1. What is ANP’s position on Pak-Afghan relations and where does Afghanistan stand in the party’s policy?
2. How do you see the future between the two states after the withdrawal of NATO and US forces?
3. What impediments and opportunities are there in Pak-Afghan relations and how has the party planned to use its policy to improve bilateral relations?
4. How does ANP look at the various issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan?
Just as Cross-border infiltration and militancy and Pak-Afghan joint security issues and repatriation of Afghan refugees?
- 5 How can trade (both formal and informal) between the two countries be improved?

² Wahabi: a sect in Islam with a belief to act purely on Quraan and Hadith

Answering to questions mentioned above, ANP believes that neighbors can't be changed so ANP has always kept cordial relations not only with Afghanistan but all neighbors surrounding it. The party held that No state should interfere in another affairs and the role played by Pakistan against terrorism has increased problems for itself in the shape of extremism and fundamentalism which has deteriorated the socio-economic status of the KP region specifically and the rest of state in general (Rashid A. , 2013). Indeed, countering terrorism is imperative to both sates but instead of slinging mud on each other, each one should take strict actions against militants. ANP prefers peace efforts but if peace dialogues failed due to certain reasons, military option for combating terrorism must not be ignored. ANP argued that without assurance of peace from both sides, bilateral trade can't be promoted and developmental strives will only be successful. ANP wants promotion of trade with Afghanistan and cooperation in all commercial, educational and cultural aspects between the two and despite of two links roads of Torkhum and Spin Boldak, ten more link roads and railway lines be spread for boosting mutual economies (Rashid A. , 2013).

According to ANP, complete withdrawal of NATO forces from till Afghanistan self-security forces may not fully equipped and trained to maintain peace and a mutual agreement be achieved between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The absence of such a policy between the two would lead to a more bloodshed among the warring parties and revivalism of Afghan Taliban in their own state. ANP held that failure of any such policy will benefit Taliban who are waiting so US must complete its promise of prevailing stability in Afghanistan. The Taliban's ascendancy will put the country's security and sovereignty in jeopardy (Hashmi A. S., 2006). Moreover, ANP suggested that all stakeholders, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the US should formulate a comprehensive plan to deal with the situation after the withdrawal of NATO forces. ANP also agreed that the regional bloc needs to be strengthened and that can only be done through political, military and economic collaboration. following the more pragmatic approach of regional cooperation with neighboring states irrespective of religion to help make the bloc stronger (Rana, 2013)

4. General Election 2013 and Security Threats to ANP

The politics of ANP have been crippled by range of factors. One of them is that ANP has always been dominated by land owners (Khans) from KP all around. This tradition allows party to rely on support from those khans but on the other side ANP leaders and workers suffered when faced with unrestricted socially revolutionary message from Taliban. As Taliban could only appeal to Pakhtun nationalist's aspirations against the disgust US presence in Afghanistan. So the nationalistic ambitions of ANP's rhetoric became a fiction by favoring US strikes against Taliban in Afghanistan. Most of ANP supporters and activists criticized the US aggression and illegitimate presence in Afghanistan but ANP hindered Taliban confrontation against US forces which seemed a start of civil war between Pakhtun nationalists and Pakhtun Taliban on the clue of American government. one of the ANP workers remarked as,

“One main reason for sympathy for Taliban on the part of Pakhtun nationalists is that that every Pakhtun from the cradle has been taught to resist foreign domination, is part of what is to do Pukhto (Khan F. , 2011),”

Means to follow Pakhtun way of social values of life. This feature of Pakhtunwali is portrayed in warlike poetry of Ajmal khattak,

*If I die and lie not bathed in martyr's blood,
None should this (Pakhtun) tongue pollute,
Offering prayers for me,
Oh mother, why should you mourn for me,
If I am not torn to pieces by British guns (Dani, 2002)?*

However, ANP's problem in combating Taliban and helping US military though indirectly went against Bacha Khan's philosophy of non-violence (which is now run by his predecessors) against British colonialism and Pakhtun nationalism. Irrespective of cold war era, when Pakistani state and army were allies of US, ANP took on anti-US cast. But this time mutual hostility between the two greatly diminished and US welcomed the party to the Afghan Hamid Karzai administration. However, Karzai was look down by many Pakhtun ANP's activists and voters due to electoral campaign is an prearranged movement that provokes general attentiveness in elections and excites citizens to vote (Ranney, 1993). Polling campaign professionals recommend diverse features that are vital for scheming electoral crusades such as political ideology, program, party leadership, political workers and campaign staff to gain popular support (Trent, 2008).

A skillful on electoral politics climaxes that right of center and Islamist political band is at odds and are anticipated to challenge one another in approaching general elections, which embrace conventional political parties in Pakistan. This can assist parties from center to left on political spectrum, who are allied partners in present government, i.e. PPP, MQM, ANP, and PML-Q, a right of center party (Askari, 2012). Past elections in Pakistan, the sources of violence have largely been the contesting parties. In the 2013 elections, non-state actors have been the primary perpetrators of the violence that plagued the electoral process. In pre-election period (2013), the ability of candidates and political parties like ANP, PPP and MQM to engage voters freely was sharply undermined in certain areas of the state because of the great level of violence and threats of violence (Suthisarnwinichai Rd., 2013). Violence and threats were targeted primarily at three parties: the ANP, MQM, and PPP. ANP faced maximum number of terrorist attacks between January 1 and May 15, 2013.

Pakistan's Taliban claimed responsibility for lots of rounds against election administrators, candidates, campaign staff, and their supporters. On April 28, the situation escalated when the group announced its intention to windup the electoral process and democratic system altogether and started targeting additional parties. Local observers and media recorded that total 300 incidents took place in which thousands of people were died as a result of election violence in the year 2013

(Aljazeera, 2013). Dozens of people were killed on day of election. The most hit areas were Khybar Pakhtunkhwa, FATA, Balochistan and Kareachi in which highest number of incidents were recorded. According to news reports election in three national and six provincial assembly constituencies including NA 38 (FATA) were suspended due to killing of registered candidates (NDI, 2014).

4.1 ANP Stance on Pak-India Relations and its Electoral Politics

When British imperialists were handling over Indian sub-continent, a threat perception lied there about the future of one of princely states (Jammu and Kashmir), a physical manifestation in the form of dispute, the root of the soured relations between India and Pakistan (Siddiqua, 2004). Since then both these neighbors have fought three wars to settle territorial dispute but all in vain. In very initial years, the ruler of Kashmir acceded this area with unwillingness of popular support to India which became a cause of war between India and Pakistan and resultantly India approached to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to sort out the matter. UNSC passed resolution giving the right to self-determination to inhabitants of Kashmir. Both states were asked to have plebiscite in disputed area, the result of which would be acceptable to both but the matter was not resolved accordingly and so in 1965 another was fought between the two (Bhutto, 2014). In 1971, third war was waged between the two with creating intrigues in Eastern Wing of Pakistan and making Mukti Bahni guerrilla force to fight against Pak army. At the end of war Pakistan lost its eastern wing creating Bangladesh and future security dilemma for Pakistan. The years, in which no war was fought by both, the two states had hostile attitudes towards each other with minor border clashes from time to time (Rizv, 2011). The year 1998 witnessed nuclearization of South Asian region. Next year 1999 the Kargil crisis kept the regional environment on nuclear flashpoint. The militants' attacks in India made dents in mutual relations of neighboring states.

In the year 2001 after terrorist attack on Lok Sabha, Indian forces were deployed on Pakistani border; that tension was however relieved later on in 2004 at the Aagra summit between President Musharraf and PM Bihari Vajpai by announcing ceasefire on borderline. In 2008, when militants attacks were made on Mombay, India started pointing elements in Pakistan and threatened surgical strikes disturbing peace and stability in the region (Rehman M. S., 2014). Hence from day one, both states spend huge budget on defense equipping respective forces with high conventional and nuclear weapons along with missiles technology (Hashim, 2014). But this however does not mean that bilateral relations have remained ever tense rather attempts have also been made for normalizing relations that is Simla Agreement signed between Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Bhutto for the release of war prisoners and evacuation of western Pakistan territories. Same was the case in 1999, Indian PM and Nawaz Sharif entered into Lahore Declaration to soften the bilateral relations and so water issue and Kashmir problem was discussed. Besides these, both states have taken initiatives regarding military and non-military confidence building measures. The military CBMs include PM-to- PM hotline, military-to-military hotline, declarations on non-use of force, ballistic missile flight-test pre notification, military exercises, no intrusion of air

space, and several other measures while the non-military CBMs include high level negotiations, relaxation in visas, cricket diplomacy and bus service etc (Pandit, 2008).

Trust deficit and decrease in trade and business between the two states were due to poor infrastructure, expensive transportation, restricted visa system and non-tariff barriers hampered the potentiality in economic relations. India has got the reward of Most Favorite Nation (MFN) in 1996 while Pakistan is still to do so (Kiani, 2013). The relations became more stressed in 2014 when Bharti Janata Party came to power after ten years. On cross border clash, Modi expressed his views that now this is not a time for empty boly (just talks) rather Goli (bullet) by our *Jawans* (soldiers). It means achieving political objectives by threatening war against Pakistan (Express, 2014.). Statements like these raise fears so that ideological extremism may rise again and political forces in Pakistan played their active role in deciding relations with India. ANP one of the political forces while devising policy depending upon its manifesto, news reports and interview conducted from party representatives to counter challenges and to normalize relations between the two states ("Elections Manifesto 2013.", 2013). The survey explored answers of the following questions.

What is ANP's view on Pak- India relations, and where does India exists in the policy of party politics? What limitations and chances be present in Pak-India relations, and how does the ANP plan to use these opportunities for better and enhanced relations? How does the party look at the various security issues between Pakistan and India? Which include: CBMs between Pakistan and India Strategic stability Pakistan's internal security What is ANP stance on Kashmir issue and the resolution of the persistent problem? What should be Pakistan's foreign policy priorities that best summarize the country' regional security approach towards India? How can trade ties between India and Pakistan be improved? What is the party's stance on the following? Formal trade across borders, Informal trade (smuggling, drug trafficking), Most Favored Nation status.

ANP remained a part of the PPP-led coalition government from 2008 to 2013. The party program emphasizes the importance of Pakistan's geostrategic location; sharing its limitations with China, India, Afghanistan and Iran is a "mixed blessing." While such location can be valuable to Pakistan, the fellow states are also exploiting Pakistan for its vested interests. The party doesn't observe India to be a menace to the Pakistan's "independence and freedom of action." One of the key components of foreign policy, ANP policy reads, pivots around the belief of "Establishing friendly and peaceful relations with all states Pre-dominantly with our neighbors" (Khan, 2015) The party steadfastly considers that India and Pakistan can live in peaceful surroundings in the greater interest of their people. The people of India and Pakistan, ANP says, share a lot of harmonies, in culture, civilization, history, traditions, linguistics, and other areas of life. There is not much difference between a common Indian and a common Pakistani and this gives us hope to resolve our disputes. The party argues that the "deep-rooted antagonism" of India has held back efforts towards normalization of relationship, agreeing that similar feelings are found on other side of the border. This situation, the party says, is quite inexcusable. As a way out, the two states should increase non-military CBMs, like social contacts, cultural exchanges, sports visits, industrial and trade cooperation, etc. `

On the question of maintaining strategic stability, the ANP's spokesperson repeated party's stance, that the party supports regional and international moves for disarmament or less armament and eradication of nuclear weapons, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. The party affirms its support to the legitimate struggle of Kashmiri people against the illegal occupation of India (Aziz A. G., 2015). At the same time, the party supports establishment of peaceful, cooperative and better relations with India in all fields. All stupendous issues including J&K dispute, the party said, should be resolved in a peaceful manner and only through meaningful negotiations and open dialogue. ANP sees terrorism as a major challenge in achieving regional peace. The "non-state actors" are posing threats to not only Pakistan but also Afghanistan, Iran and India. These violent actors, he said, should be dealt with iron hands. According to the party's spokesperson, ANP has a long endeavor against militants, which are still being supported by other states, as proxies. Support to non-state actors has, in the party's view, deteriorated Pakistan's relations with its immediate neighbors. Therefore, the party puts, it is not in the interest of states to make impediments in the internal politics of other states. The party spokesperson also stated that drawing trade relationship with India will not only benefit the people, but also give peace a chance to exist in the society. Trade cooperation, besides strengthening Pakistan's economy, will "reduce trade deficit to a sustainable level and make special efforts to enhance the country's exports and remittances" (Shah, 2012).

4.2 PTM and ANP's Policy Shift in Election 2013

The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), a powerful civil and human rights association, has overexcited Pakistan's political and military establishment by illustration of massive crowds. The fusion of the provinces of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) can be seen as a major achievement for the Movement (PTM and Pashtun politics, 2018). The Army had opposed the merger for decades as it was keen to retain control over FATA. The unexpected shift in the government's position to implement the merger to do so can be credited in part to pressure of the PTM. National and Provincial Assembly elections were conducting soon in the country, political parties and the Army are fashioning their strategies keeping the PTM in mind. So if the movement survives, it could revive sleeping nationalist movements in Pakistan. The probability of the PTM stimulating similar movements in Pakistan's neighborhood, Pakistan occupied Kashmir, Sistan-Baluchistan in Iran and Afghanistan cannot be ruled out.

The movement aims to compensate Pashtun's moans and is therefore targeting Pakistan's army. On the other side Pakistan army is delegitimizing the movement by every hook and crook. However, Manzoor Pashteen – the leader of PTM has confused the politics and the political parties especially ANP as the movement of non-violence is attributed to its predecessor KK since century old. While PTM is also claiming that its appearance is the outcome of decades old protests against state atrocities towards Pakhtuns and especially those who are inhabited in FATA areas of KP. The Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement got momentum when students of Gomal University were driven

into active demonstration against the violation of Pakistan ethnic Pakhtuns in 2014³. Hundreds of FATA civil people were caught, tortured and disappeared through Zarb-e-Azb which ultimately emerged Mahsud Tahaffuz Movement predecessor of PTM as this tribe was highly suffered during Zarb-e-Azb operation. The movement sparked and spread to major cities of Pakistan at the unknown killing of Naqibullah Mahsud in Karachi.

Manzoor Pashteen was of the view that the unrest and terrorism going on in FATA by military operation under Pakistan army be made responsible under Pakistan's constitution. While army on the hand was continuously blaming the PTM activists as agents of foreign powers who possess have ever hostile ambitions against Pakistan (Today, 2018). So PTM is a threat to Pakistan internal Security. Electronic and social media was instructed to ignore reporting PTM rallies (Yusufzai, 2018). Mohsin dawat was banned for inciting people against state (Dawn, 2018). Army however has arranged *Jirgas* with the PTM leaders but all in vain (Sayid, 2018). One of the demands of the PTM met with the achievement that it became successful in decoding FCR and merging FATA into mainstream political and administrative landscape as it is hoped by other nationalist parties of the region (Nation, 2018). Other demands like removal of checkpoints, landmines, extra judicial killings, information of missing persons and non-imposition of curfew in FATA region were in addition which are in progress (Dawn, Over 150 PTM activists booked for sedition, terrorism, 2018). PTM significance is that it has achieved its objectives without creating any violence or disturbance in Pakistan and due to this salience PTM got fame countrywide.

In order to give strength to the social movement (PTM), an idea was encircling by some of PTM leaders to contest elections and put up the demands of the aggrieved people through national parliament but no any clear stance or preferring to join any party or contest election independently has been shown. However other political parties were closely watching PTM's impact on voters (Times, 2018). It was however argued that PTM's inculcations of Pashtun consciousness would benefit Pashtun nationalist parties (ANP, PkMAP) of the region because of shared ideology and natural affinity with one another (PTM and Pashtun politics, 2018).

Indeed both ANP and PTM are the signatories of Pakhtun nationalism and their rights so would become an ally in future and ANP supported PTM initially but later ANP stance has been changed and warned its workers not to participate and support the cause of PTM. Many of its workers like Afrasiyab Khattak, Sitara Ayaz, Mohsin Dawar and Sana Ijaz had issued show cause notices and were later on cancelled their membership from ANP due to violation of Party rules. Aimal Wali Khan said, "We have made it clear, anyone who participates, sits on the stage or

³The FATA Interim Governance Regulation, 2018 is a set of interim rules that apply to the FATA until the merger which is expected to be complete in two years. Once the President signs the 31st Constitution Amendment Bill, 2018, the control of FATA Interim Governance Regulation, 2018 would be handed over to the KP government.

anywhere else with PTM, must seek prior permission, otherwise action will be taken against all those found guilty for violating party discipline," this shift in ANP's stance towards the narrative of PTM was nothing but a tactic to secure their vote bank as PTM is likely to start parliamentary politics very soon. One of the ANP leaders said, "There is a group of electable who strongly believe in electoral politics. The group is based on purely political workers who believe in constituency politics like Bilours of Peshawar, Hotis of Mardan, etc. The other group is of ideologues that do not have any constituency and largely works for the Pashtun cause. This group is led by Afrasiab Khattak, Bushra Gohar, Zahid Khan and others (Pakistan Today, 2018)," It was seen that the only protector of safeguarding Pakhtun's rights was the shallow advocacy by ANP as these rights were very smoothly championed by PTM due to which ANP tried to edge out PTM leadership from Pakhtun nationalism (Raghavan, 2018). ANP though did not oppose PTM openly as nationalist consciousness would surely benefit ANP by winning seats from KP and FATA.

This perception of ANP didn't become true in the election of 2013 and 2018 as the people had not forgotten the deteriorated law and order situation especially in FATA and charges of corruption during five years of governance in KP. It means that despite of Pakhtun's Nationalism projected by PTM, ANP and other nationalist parties didn't get acquainted due to their socio-political shortcomings which affected electoral politics of the parties concerned (Taj, 2018). "In the past, ANP was the only choice for Pashtun nationalists. However, space is being taken away by PTM, causing discomfort for Asfandiyar Wali Khan who is already worried at the party's dwindling popularity (Pakistan Today, 2018)." Bushra Gohar on membership suspension reacted harshly, accusing Asfandiyar Wali of deviating from the teachings of Bacha Khan, insisting that she was following the party manifesto and teachings of Bacha Khan (Pakistan today, 2018). Unlike ANP, the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) is standing on strong footings with the PTM and has even arranged rallies with the expectations that it will bring electoral success in KP and Balochistan inhabited Pakhtun but its chances of doing well in KP was however very less.

5. Conclusion

The politico-electoral times gone by ANP is ironic and chockfull of developments. The leadership of all regional political parties is of low profile and parochial in national politics of Pakistan. Such regional political parties like ANP suffered a lot during different elections because of motives of regionalism, factionalism and lack of national vision. ANP depending upon mostly on KP people has also been influenced by the family elders or tribal chief in favoring ANP ideology and electoral objectives based on manifesto but in 21st century, using social media by the youngsters and the political socialization of the new parties like PTI, the voting behavior has now been altered. ANP, therefore, was shocked at election results of past elections and so called its think tanks' meeting to express displeasure and dissatisfaction with poll results and to evaluate post -election situation and upcoming strategy in fruitful manner.

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