

## ELECTORAL MANDATE OF PML-N: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF 1997 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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## Original Article

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**Abstract**

*The present research article aims to shed light on the electoral mandate of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party in the general elections of 1997. The article also attempts to discuss the crucial post-election relationship of security establishment with PML-N. The political history of PML-N started after 1988 when it has been a component of Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI). But in 1993 it was divided into two factions: one was called PML-J and other was termed as PML-N. The general elections of 1997 occupy an important position in the sense that PML-N won with a thumping majority. For the first time in the electoral history of Pakistan's National and Provincial Assemblies' elections were held on same day. This article is an attempt to highlight the contemporary politics of religio-political slogans. However, victory of PML-N was not supplemented by religious slogans rather it was attained solely on the basis of previous performance of its leadership in power in the IJI government from 1990-1993. Research methodology of content analysis is used with some primary and secondary source. It is argued that not a single slogan based on religious emotions or feelings was raised to capture the vote bank of religious groups. Instead previous developmental projects brought the party into the realm of power after 1997 election.*

**Keywords:** Election, Manifesto, Slogan, Democracy, PML-N

**Introduction**

The general elections of 1997 were the fourth in row after the elections of 1885. It happened first time in the entire electoral history of Pakistan that polling for Provincial and National Assemblies were conducted on the same day (Rizvi, 2000). The election results had produced a novel outcome in Pakistan's political culture. According to the definitions developed in the science of electoral politics, the 1997 elections can be categorized as a "Critical Election". Critical Elections are defined as elections which signify a shift in popularity of one party to another. This created a shift in the loyalties of numerous social classes, and a

change in the dominant political culture. It appeared that there have been two critical elections i.e. 1970 and 1997, in the political history of Pakistan. The former shaped the loyalties of heterogeneous social structure while the later brought a qualitative transformation. It is scholarly accepted truth that the shift made by 1970 elections encapsulated the forthcoming politics of Pakistan. As would be true of any dynamic situation, a change remained in the process of creation throughout this period; the pace of that change was enhanced in the nineties, but the final shift arisen in 1997, when a new Critical Election brought PML-N on political horizon with a heavy mandate (Gallop, 1997).

It is imperative to examine as to what were the essential elements of the 1970 elections and to see whether there was a change brought about by the 1997 elections. The 1970 elections signified the birth of Pakistan People Party (PPP); and, the 1997 elections put an end to PPP's slogans of Islamic socialism. Thus, the 1970 elections were much more than just the electoral victory of a political party and the defeat of certain others. Similarly, the 1997 elections are much more than just the defeat of PPP and the victory of the PML-N (Lieven, 2017).

### Pre- Election Scenario

There was a series of dissolutions of assemblies and dismissals of four elected governments by the President since 1985. (Aziz, 2009). PPP's (Benazir Bhutto) governments of 1990 and 1996 developed political differences with the security establishment and opposition parties which provided reasons for the removal of her government from power. As clashes with her brother Murtaza Bhutto on the issue of chairmanship of PPP; confrontation with judiciary; faced opposition at three levels vis-a-vis the parliamentary opposition of PML-N which started the Karwan-e-Nijat (March of Deliverance) and called for a nationwide strike, the Muttahida Quomi Movement (MQM) started agitation in the streets of Karachi and opposition of religious parties.

President Farooq Leghari felt that he had been downgraded to a secondary role and his disagreement with the Benazir's government over numerous matters, e.g., appointment of judges, his close contact with the opposition and the armed forces had created strained situation. The stories of corruption in the government were widespread and appeared in the media and outside of the country. The most scandalous was the alleged purchase of a mansion in Surrey (United Kingdom) by Benazir and her husband Asif Zardari. The climax was the death of Benazir's brother, Murtaza Bhutto on 20 September 1996 in a police encounter in Karachi; Ghinwa Bhutto, Murtaza wife and many others accused Asif Zardari of involvement in this murder (Waseem, 2000).

President Leghari dismissed Benazir's government and dissolved the National Assembly on November 6, 1996 with the covert support of Army Chief General Jehangir Karamat. All government installations and offices were taken over by the Army troops. The Prime Minister House was cordoned-off by the Army troops and Benazir Bhutto could not contact anyone for some hours. Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari was arrested by the army from the Governor House in Lahore and handed over to police.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, all the Provincial Assemblies were simultaneously dissolved by the Governors in order to hold new elections. President Leghari announced that elections would be held on 3 February 1997 (Rizvi, 2000).

### Caretaker Government

Malik Meraj Khalid, PPP's former Speaker of the National Assembly and former Chief Minister of the Punjab, became caretaker Prime Minister. He was once alienated from the PPP but at this critical stage of holding elections became Prime Minister. Caretaker Chief Ministers were also appointed in the provinces. Unlike the caretaker government of Prime Minister Moen Qureshi in 1993, Malik Meraj Khalid was perceived as weak, ineffective, and controversial. Despite a much trumpeted accountability process, the caretaker government failed to frame a single corruption case against Benazir Bhutto, her husband and other member of her government (Wilder, 1999).

Although, the care taker Prime Minister Malik Meraj Khalid categorically denied that a national Security Council was being formed, yet the cabinet headed by him rubber stamped the new and clumsily named Council for Defense and National Security (CDNS). The very next day, a ten member Committee for Defense and National Security (CDNS) was instituted by the President under his own chairmanship. The other members included the Prime Minister and the ministers of finance, defense, foreign relations, and interior. It also included the three armed service chiefs and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. The formation of this committee generated public opposition. It was alleged that the

President wanted to re-establish military rule (Talbot, 1999). In Lahore, dozens of non-governmental organization joined the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in condemning the CDNS.

Most political parties accused President Leghari of acting unconstitutionally by usurping more powers for himself and giving the military its formal political role since the death of military dictator General Zia ul Haq in 1988. However, the army denied this. Qazi Hussain Ahmed, leader of JI, claimed that President Leghari had no right to form the CDNS in the absence of Parliament and without the consent of the people. He claimed the establishment of CDNS strengthened the "Washington Plan". (Rashid, 1997). Benazir Bhutto asserted that the council is totally unconstitutional. She said that formation of CDNS is an attempt to drag the Armed Forces back into politics. Bhutto, however carefully declined to condemn the Army and pinned all the blame on the President Leghari.

Interestingly, the only major party to welcome the Council was Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Sharif stayed mum, he did not want to alienate the military leadership which was generally understood to be real architect of the CDNS. According to senior PML-N leaders, Nawaz had "done deal" with President Leghari. Sharif would win the election and return to the President's line on major policy issues. But Nawaz did not to be saddled with the CDNS, with the army playing such a central role in decision making. Imran Khan (Chairman of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf, PTI) accused the President of taking sides with establishment in an address to a rally in Islamabad. He said that the President has partisan interest. He is not neutral. He accused that the President was working to bring Nawaz in power in return for his acceptance of the CDNS that gives the military a political role in governing the country. The CDNS is a non-democratic and non-parliamentary institution.

### **New Political Parties**

As soon as the 1997 election's program was announced, some 80 political parties applied for election symbols but only 54 political

parties managed to remain in the field. Most of them only existed on paper or were even one-man organization and could not play any significant role in electoral politics. However, only two parties dominated the politics of Pakistan since 1988. These were the PPP and the PML-N. Benazir Bhutto had shared the office of chairperson of the PPP with her mother Nusrat Bhutto assuming the title of Co-chairperson since the death of her husband Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The central executive committee of the PPP elected Benazir Bhutto as the party's chairperson on 5 December 1993. Her brother Murtaza Bhutto ended his self-exile and returned to Pakistan. He announced the formation of his own party, the PPP (Shaheed Bhutto) on 15 March 1995, which was also supported by his mother, Nusrat Bhutto. He was however killed during the police encounter in Karachi on 20 September 1996. But the PPP (Shaheed Bhutto), headed by Murtaza Bhutto's widow, Ghinwa Bhutto, took part in 1997 general elections. The MQM led by Altaf Hussain continued to contest the elections as the Haq Parast Group (HPG) while its breakaway faction participated as the MQM (Haqiqi). Elections of 1997 were also different in other significant ways as well because for the first time perhaps in Pakistani politics, some of the religious parties either out of the electoral race or likely to be completely sidelined. The Jamat-i Islami (JI) under Qazi Hussain Ahmed boycotted the polls urging the voters to stay home on 3<sup>rd</sup> February (Perspective, 1997).

The JI party demanded accountability of political parties before fresh elections were to be held. Qazi demanded that the candidates should pass through the controversial articles 62 and 63 of the constitution (News, 1997). Maulana Noorani's Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) along with the couple of other smaller groups also abstained from participation in the elections. Although a handful of Islamists should make it to the National Assembly, yet some were contesting as PML-N allies. Some religious parties were hard pressed to find effective leadership in the next parliament. (Former Cricketer turned politician Imran Khan founded the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on 25 April 1996. This party campaigned against corruption.

**1997 Election's Manifesto of PML (N)**

PML-N President Nawaz Sharif announced at Lahore on 31 December 1996 the election manifesto of his party. He pledged to adopt a policy of self-reliance, merit and economic reforms that would improve living condition of the common man. Following were the main points of manifesto:

- In the economic sector, PML-N promised to launch an industrial revolution through the establishment of a modern industrial base and to accelerate the annual growth rate of this sector to at least ten percent per annum. In the economic package, PML-N will start self-employment policy, and for this purpose yellow cab transport scheme will be started again and loan will be provided to those educated persons who have no jobs for starting small industrial work. PML-N will not impose the mini budget and it is promised that the percentage of the general sales tax will be realistic.
- In the agriculture sector, the PML-N will initiate the following programs: (i) Increase agriculture productivity by guaranteeing provision of basic inputs like good quality of seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, diesel and credit to farmers at their doorstep at reasonable prices. Special attention will be paid to increase the productivity of small farmers. (ii) Double the investment in the water sector over the next five years following the historic Water Accord of 1991, to improve the existing irrigation system, expand the network of canals and ensure more efficient use of the country's water resources. (iii) Loan will be provided for the agricultural improvement to the Kissan (farmers).
- In the education sector, PML-N will chalk out a program through which every child 12 years will go to school. The party will provide free land in villages for opening the schools and educational syllabus will accord the industry and trade of the country. Book-bank

will start in every street by which poor students will take books.

- PML-N will start a national policy of providing houses throughout the country to low paid employees, poor and homeless people both in the cities and villages.
- On political level, the manifesto promised supremacy of parliament. The manifesto promised to ban floor crossing and to eliminate horse-trading. The number of seats of both national and provincial assemblies would be increased to provide representation to different sections of society.
- In the realm of foreign policy, PML-N will accord highest priority to the reinforcement of defense capability to defend the territorial integrity and to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the region. No unilateral or discriminatory clubs on the development of the country's nuclear program will be entertained and an idea of nuclear war free South Asia will be advocated. Relation with major powers of the world such as China and European States will be strengthened. Attempt to improve relations with India will be made, but not at the cost of Kashmir (PML-N-Manifesto, 1997).

**Manifestos of other political parties**

PML-N and PPP were the main contestant in the 1997 election, although for a while Imran Khan, with his newly established party, Tehreek-e-Insaf tried to give the impression of an emerging political force (Mahmood, 2000). The PPP manifesto focused more on the "achievements" of Benazir's ousted government, especially in the field of foreign policy. It highlighted its efforts to project the Kashmir issue at the international level and maintain cordial relations with the US, China and the Muslim Countries. On the domestic level, it focused on its commitment to improve the status of women in the country, and put ban on the overseas medical treatment for parliamentarians

and government servants from public money. The party offered grass root changes in bank and financial institution. It had planned to establish infrastructure development bank and export development bank and privatization of all banks except National Bank of Pakistan. The PPP also pledged social security in its economic agenda. In this regard, it promised poverty alleviation and claimed that resources of Zakat, Usher, Baitulmal, old age benefits scheme and other welfare oriented sources would be extended. The part of this program was to provide to 60 sq-m area plots to poor. PPP made clear commitments regarding budgetary support in education and health sector, increasing from 3.0 % GDP in education by 2000 to 4.5 % GDP by 2005 and in health 3.5% of GDP by 2002 (Babar, 1997).

Many other small parties also issued manifestos although they did have a less role in power politics. Their statements about the conduct of affairs at the national scale could only be read with big reservations. They generally adopted the issue structure contained in the manifesto of the major parties and addressed it to resolve those issues.

PPP-SB and MQM-HPG wanted political consensus on those laws which disrupt the democracy process. They wanted to see the balance of power between President and Parliament. Towards economy the MQM-HPG wanted stream line tax collection system. It promised to abolish contract system in commercial and industrial sector. The PTI and MQM-HPG demanded for agriculture tax and encourage small scale industries. The PPP-SB promised to support the private sector in all spheres of investment and production (Dawn, 1996). The PTI proposed the system of land reforms, to promote substitution for key products like palm oil, and it also pledged to take measures to control inflation, establish a growth rate of 10% per year. It had programmed local bodies according to which district magistrate system will be replaced by elected representatives. Both PTI and MQM-HPG shared idea of strong independent accountability commission to deal with corruption and suppress VIP culture. In education field, the PTI pledged

enforcement of education emergency and quality of educational opportunities, while the MQM-HPG promised to remove disparities between Urdu and English medium (Perspective, 1997).

The manifesto of religious parties was less attractive and no one pained to outline comprehensive manifesto of its own, because JI boycotted the election, whereas small regional parties mostly confined to regional issues, as Awami National Party (ANP) promised to change the name of NWFP to Pakhtunkhwa and building the dam of Basha instead of Kalabagh (Frontier, 1997).

### **Election Schedule of 1997**

For the first time in electoral history of Pakistan, elections of 1997 for both the National and Provincial Assemblies were held on the same day. The election schedule was announced on 16 December 1996 for both NA and provincial assemblies. According to this schedule the parties submitted nomination paper for the National Assembly and for the provincial Assembly on 21 December 1996. After scrutiny the nominations were finalized by returning officers on 28 December 1996. Last date for withdrawal of candidature was 8 January 1997. And finally the polls were held on 3 February 1997 for both National assembly and provincial assemblies (Mahdi, 1997).

### **The Election Campaign of PML-N**

The February 3 election bound to go down as the quietest election in Pakistan's history. With less than two weeks to go before polling, none of the color and activity that usually accompanies a general election could be seen on the streets. The election evening was the duller in Pakistan's history. Uncertainty as to whether the polls would go ahead, the election commission's restriction on posters, party flags and loudspeakers, the influenza epidemic in Punjab, and the polls coinciding with Ramadan all contributed to general lethargy.

The PML-N soon emerged as the front-runner in the election campaign, partly by hard work and partly by default. It selected its candidates carefully and made adjustments on seats with the ANP, MQM and others in various regions (Khan, 1997).

Nawaz Sharif started his election campaign from Punjab on 1 January 1997. He focused on its performance during his tenure as a Chief Minister (1990-93), and denounced the Benazir government's repressive policies, corruption and disappointing performance. He criticized on Benazir Bhutto's policies that created inflation in the country. Secondly he promised to bring peace, economic development after getting elected. The PML-N seemed to be in a better position for the election. There were no major desertions from its rank. The JI boycott decision seemed likely to benefit the PML-N. Both the major parties PML-N and PPP were not ready to give any compensation to the other. They alleged corruption charges against each other. The PPP started campaigning rather late; it was waiting for the Supreme Court to decide the case filed by Benazir against the dissolution of her government. It also toyed with the idea of boycotting the elections for some time. It focused on the injustice done by President Farooq Leghari who was named as "Farooq-ul-Haq". But this kind of campaigning could not change the general atmosphere against the party and its leader.

The PML-N considered the previous rule of Benazir as the darkest in the history of Pakistan during which she stored billions of rupees in her account. Benazir adopted two points of strategy: one was to keep the anti-president and the other was anti-caretaker setup. Focusing her campaign mostly on the injustice done to her by the president, and was to project herself as a martyr to many causes-national and regional. Benazir Bhutto began her rigorous campaign in Sindh, attempting to capitalize on the so called conspiracy surrounding the murder of her brother with the slogan of "Kill a Bhutto to get a Bhutto". She claimed that the PPP was an ideological party. It always struggle against the dictatorship. Benazir claimed that if she was again voted to power she would re-negotiate the agreements with multilateral agencies and would try to bargain soften term for the people. She encounter her performance that during her government welfare projects were started that provided thousands of job, employed youth due to her personal efforts,

raised salaries by 35%. She recounted the developmental work undertaken by her government like supplying drinking water, Sui gas, electricity, communication network and various other projects. She promised to focus attention on the efforts for the prosperity of population, peace effort will be done in Karachi, to advocate Kashmir issue at world form, established women police stations, banks and provided the job facilities to women, and to repeal Hadood Ordinance (News, 1997).

PTI started its first election campaign from Lahore on 4 January 1997. Imran Khan focused his campaign at multiple levels as he criticized on the PML-N, PPP, president and caretaker government. He accused the caretaker accountability as not undertaken in accordance with the people's wishes. He charged the President as partisan and entered a deal with Nawaz Sharif. He leveled serious corruption charges against Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. He also alleged that Benazir and Nawaz Sharif destroyed the economy of the country by their failed and wrong policies. He urged people to elect new leadership for the country out of the prevailing crises. He promised to introduce a new system based on social justice, free from corruption and ensured the sovereignty of the people (Mujtaba, 1997).

Ghinwa Bhutto of PPP-SB had fought against PPP campaign. She was greeted by such slogans as "Ai Ai Ghinwa, gai gai Benazir" (Ghinwa come, Benazir went) when she visited the cities of Thatta, Badin and Hala for her election campaign. She accused Benazir Bhutto of pushing the country into deep economic crises. She focused her campaign to fulfil the mission of her husband and her father-in-law. JI had boycotted the election. The party planned its accountability sit in campaign. Qazi Hussain said we have boycotted election not to sit indoors and watch things as on lookers. JI demanded the accountability movement and not election movement. The Ameer of JI urged his workers not to cast their votes in election. Now it was their turn to be with the looters of the national wealth. He declared that election without the JI would be only farce. He blasted at both Nawaz and Benazir with the same gun, same stink of

corruption. Another reason behind the JI boycott of elections was that it had a concept that "Democracy was destroyed" by those people chosen through vote who in return looted the nation wealth. Since 1985 elections same type

of people elected. JI demanded the accountability of those people before the election.

**Table.1**

| Following is the party wise break-up of number of candidates: |     |          |   |          |   |        |   |
|---|-----|----------|---|----------|---|--------|---|
| PML-N   | 176 | PKMAP    | 8 | PMI      | 3 | AT     | 1 |
| PPP   | 160 | PPP(ZAB) | 8 | PML(Q)   | 4 | JIP    | 1 |
| PTI   | 134 | JWP      | 7 | PSL      | 3 | JML(J) | 1 |
| PPP(SB)   | 65  | UNA      | 7 | SI       | 3 | JMP    | 1 |
| HPG   | 51  | BNP      | 6 | SNP      | 3 | JQM    | 1 |
| JUI(F)  | 34  | AQP      | 6 | WP       | 3 | JUI    | 1 |
| ANP   | 19  | NPP      | 5 | MKP(KBG) | 2 | MJA-HP | 1 |
| PML(J)(CHATTHA)   | 19  | KT       | 5 | NPP(WG)  | 2 | MWM    | 1 |
| PDP   | 15  | JUI(S)   | 8 | TI       | 2 | PJKQP  | 1 |
| PML(J)  | 13  | KJP      | 4 | TIP      | 2 | PML(F) | 1 |
| MQM(H)  | 11  | JUP      | 3 | AI       | 1 | PNP    | 1 |
| BNM   | 8   | MIP      | 3 | AIMP     | 1 | ST     | 1 |

Sources: figures calculated from Tahir Mehdi, the Pakistan Election Compendium Volume 2, 1988, 1990,1993,1997, (Church World Service, Karachi, 2012), p. 622

### Analysis of Election Result

In election of 3 February 1997, nearly twenty million people went to the polls to elect their representatives. This was the lowest turnout in the history of Pakistan's elections.<sup>35</sup> The major reasons behind it was that the people of Pakistan were fed up with the same faces of leaders and same parties dominating the electoral scene. A new political party PTI brought changes with new faces. But it could not win a single seat in the National and Provincial Assemblies because of traditional political elites of the country and also the candidates of PTI

were not well experienced to contest the election.

Total voting strength of 3 February 1997 General Election stood at 56, 615, 687 out of which 55, 068, 624 were Muslim registered voters while 1, 547, 643 were non-Muslim registered voters. In respect of 204 Muslim Constituencies of National Assembly, the total number of vote cast was 19, 506, 855, of which only 36.99% of registered voters casted their votes (Din, 1997).

**Table.2. The 1997 Election Results: National Assembly of Pakistan**

| S. No           | Parties      | Federal capital | Punjab | Sindh | NWFP | Baluchistan | FATA | Total |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------|-------|------|-------------|------|-------|
| 1               | PML-N        | 1               | 107    | 9     | 15   | 3           | 0    | 135   |
| 2               | PPP          | 0               | 0      | 18    | 0    | 0           | 0    | 18    |
| 3               | MQM(A)       | 0               | 0      | 12    | 0    | 0           | 0    | 12    |
| 4               | ANP          | 0               | 0      | 0     | 9    | 0           | 0    | 9     |
| 5               | BNP          | 0               | 0      | 0     | 0    | 3           | 0    | 3     |
| 6               | JWP          | 0               | 0      | 0     | 0    | 2           | 0    | 2     |
| 7               | JUI (F)      | 0               | 0      | 0     | 0    | 2           | 0    | 2     |
| 8               | PPP(SB)      | 0               | 0      | 1     | 0    | 0           | 0    | 1     |
| 9               | NPP          | 0               | 0      | 1     | 1    | 0           | 0    | 1     |
| 10              | Independents | 0               | 6      | 5     | 0    | 1           | 8    | 21    |
| Result Declared |              | 1               | 113    | 46    | 25   | 11          | 8    | 204   |
| Total           |              | 1               | 115    | 46    | 26   | 11          | 8    | 207   |

Source: Report election commission of Pakistan, 1997, General election report, Vol.II (Islamabad Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press, 1997).

**Table.3 Parties position in National Assembly 1997**

| S. No | Party Name   | Number of votes | % of votes polls by parties to total valid votes | Seats (204) |
|-------|--------------|-----------------|--|-------------|
| 1     | PML (N)      | 8721730         | 44.26%   | 135         |
| 2     | PPP          | 4129891         | 21.12%   | 18          |
| 3     | MQM (A)      | 771168          | 3.94%  | 12          |
| 4     | ANP          | 353762          | 1.80%  | 9           |
| 5     | BNP          | 125440          | 0.64%  | 3           |
| 6     | JWP          | 66128           | 0.33%  | 2           |
| 7     | JUI (F)      | 326570          | 1.67%  | 2           |
| 8     | PPP (SB)     | 379913          | 1.94%  | 1           |
| 9     | NPP          | 85131           | 0.43%  | 1           |
| 10    | PTI          | 311119          | 13.87%   | -           |
| 11    | Independence | 271160          | 1.59%  | 21          |

Sources: Zafeer-ud-Din: Pakistan General Election 3 February 1997 (Islamabad: Human Rights Council of Pakistan, 1997), p.40.

Table and Table 3 show the real story of the 1997 election in the National Assembly. The PML-N won 45% per cent of the vote nationwide, 135 out of the 204 seats contested in the general elections. PML-N was able to form a strong government resulting with two-third majority at the National level. PPP won only 18 seats with 22% percent of the total votes.

The first reason behind was the PPP showed poor performance during its government (1993-1996). The second reason was it started too late the election campaign. It was in the situation of misunderstanding that Supreme Court might restore its previous government like it restored the 1993 government of PML-N. On the other hand, PML-N got the thumping majority because it had first contacted with the people of Pakistan through its *dharnasit-in* and *Karvan-e-Nijat* program against the government of PPP. Second it started the election campaign very

early since the dismissal of the PPP government.

The PTI who had contested with 132 candidates all over the Pakistan could not win a single seat in the National Assembly. While the PTI female were slightly better than the male, they got the 9.1% votes in the National Assembly and the male got only 8.1% votes. Table 3 showed that ANP was able to win 9 seats in NWFP. The ANP was able with this position to defeat the JUI-F in the NWFP, although it was era of JUI-F in NWFP from the result of previous elections. The MQM won 3.94% and the PPP-SB remained at 1.94% of the total votes. According to the result of 1997 elections only nine parties were able to get representatives through their winning candidates in National Assembly. Only 21 independents got representation in the National Assembly.

**Table.4. Election Result for the year 1997 and the position of political parties in provincial Assemblies of Pakistan.**

| Party       | Punjab-238 | Sindh-97 | NWFP-76 | Baluchistan- 38 |
|-------------|------------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| PML-N       | 211        | 15       | 31      | 4               |
| PPP         | 2          | 34       | 1       | 1               |
| ANP         | 0          | 0        | 27      | 0               |
| MQM-A       | 1          | 26       | 0       | 0               |
| BNP         | 0          | 0        | 0       | 9               |
| JWP         | 0          | 0        | 0       | 6               |
| JUI-F       | 0          | 0        | 1       | 5               |
| PTI         | 0          | 0        | 0       | 0               |
| NPP         | 0          | 3        | 0       | 0               |
| BNP         | 0          | 0        | 0       | 2               |
| PPP-SB      | 0          | 2        | 0       | 0               |
| PML-J       | 2          | 0        | 2       | 1               |
| PKMAP       | 0          | 0        | 0       | 2               |
| MQM-H       | 0          | 1        | 0       | 0               |
| PDP         | 1          | 0        | 0       | 0               |
| Others      | 0          | 2        | 0       | 0               |
| Independent | 22         | 14       | 8       | 8               |

Table 4 shows the position of winning votes and lost votes in the provinces. The PML-N won 211 of 238 seats with 89%. The PPP lost number of votes. It wins only 2 seats, PML-J won 2 seats. It is clearly showed that PPP and PML-J together ruled the Punjab from 1993-1996, but now both parties lost their position in the Punjab in 1997 election. Punjab clearly trusted the leadership of the PML-N. No any other political party can claim the strong representative position in the Punjab. However in Sindh three parties' showed representative position as MQM won 26, PPP won 34 and PML-N won 15 seats. Here PML-N entered in the coalition government with the MQM and 14 independents. Previously, MQM had coalition with PPP during (1988-89). But in 1997 MQM was going to shake hands with PML-N. Now two anti-PPP elements PML-N and MQM joined hands in Sindh. In NWFP two parties entered as PML-N won 31 seats and ANP 27 won seats. PML-N became successful to form a coalition government with ANP.

According to the Table the result of Baluchistan Provincial Assembly was totally different because not a single or two parties won the elections as in the case of Punjab, NWFP and Sindh. In Baluchistan different groups won seats as BNP won 9 seats, JWP 6 seats, JUI-F 5 seats, BNP 2 seats, PKMAP 2 seats and PML-N won 4 seats, 8 independent candidates won seats. In Baluchistan, PML-N formed government with four political parties and 8 independents.

Thus, the landslide victory of the PML-N in the National Assembly and in the Punjab helped to form governments at the Centre and in the Punjab. The PML-N also formed coalition governments with ethnic parties in the NWFP with ANP, in the Sindh with MQM and in Baluchistan with different ethnic parties and independent candidates.

In the 1997 general elections emerged a new party, i.e., Tehreek-e-Insaf by the former ricketer Imran Khan. His basic motive for formation of this party was to develop clean, efficient and good government. He leveled serious charges of corruption against the leaders

of the leading political parties of Pakistan. But PTI failed to create the concept of "third force" in electoral politics of Pakistan during the 1997 elections. It failed to win a single seat in the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies despite contesting from 88 constituencies in the Punjab. It was able to win the 5,000 votes in only seven constituencies in the entire province of Punjab. It is clear that the voters did not want to waste their votes on party that was unlikely to win, and preferred candidates who would be in position to deliver patronage.

The remarkable change in the 1997 was the religious parties showed a very bad performance in the election. JI boycotted the election but failed to influence the electoral process in any meaningful way. The religious parties failed in the NWFP as JUI, JUI-F, JUI-S failed to win a single seat in National Assembly from the NWFP, although this province was considered as a support base of JUI-F. The JUI-F only won seats from Baluchistan (Gallop, 1997).

## Conclusion

The 1997 elections were continuous series of mid-term election since 1985. The elections hold a distinct position in the entire political history of Pakistan because these were fought and won by PML-N without alliance with religious parties and dissemination of religio-political slogans. The election results showed some remarkable changes in the electoral history of Pakistan. Firstly, PML-N won the elections with governments at the National level and in all the four provinces of Pakistan for the first time since 1970 elections. Secondly, new parties like PTI and PPP-SB emerged in the elections which were able to get the attention of the national media. Thirdly, religious parties were defeated despite the apprehensions that Islamic parties had vast popular base in the country and present a real threat to parliamentary democracy. There was very low turnout in the previous electoral history of Pakistan. The reason behind was that voters were fed up to face the traditional leaders with their political parties since 1985. But the new

political parties could not affect the voters because they had no effective programs. A good thing was that the political leaders accepted the result of 1997 election after giving some criticism by PTI, MQM and PPP-SB. Another peculiarity of this election was that regional parties won elections in their respective constituencies as in Punjab PML-N got victory, in Sindh MQM got victory, in NWFP ANP was in winning position and in Baluchistan regional parties won in shape of groups and independents. It is concluded that PML (N) had attained victory without socio-political slogans solely on the basis of its previous developmental projects.

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