

The Election Years 2017-18 and the Regional Circumstances: Prediction, Reality, Constitutional Constraints and Challenges for New Upcoming Governance

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Abstract

The Governments of nations mostly rely on the democratic system and the system is devised through electoral process. In a way, the election system determines the destiny of the nations. From January 2017 to December 2018 172 states around the globe would have been passed through elections. As a result regional circumstance throughout the world is likely to be changed with these elections. This research forecasts reality that if the new parties are succeeded in making governments, then the situation of South Asia region might be altered and shaped differently. Thus, the study predictably highlights new challenges for upcoming government in Pakistan specifically, though contextualized within broader challenges to governance affecting South Asia.

Keywords: Election, Regional Circumstance, South Asia Region, Prediction and Reality.

Introduction

An election is considered as a formal process to elect individuals to hold the public office. The years 2017-18 are the election years. In 2017 eighty five nations across the world have been passed through the elections while in 2018 till December 87 states across all the regions would have been passed through the elections. In this way 172 states across the world have been held the elections from January 2017 to December 2018.

In 2017 and by the first half of 2018; Indian presidential elections in July 2017, Iranian presidential elections in May 2017, general election of Japan in October 2017, Russian presidential elections in March 2018 and Bhutanese National Council election in April 2018 have already been held. While the upcoming general elections in the latter half of 2018 are: general elections of Pakistan in July 2018, Afghan parliamentary elections in October 2018, Bangladeshi general elections between 31 October to 31 December 2018 and Bhutanese National Assembly elections in November 2018.

However the study focuses on only those countries' elections that may impact the South Asian region.

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Election in 2017-18 in the world- Continent Wise

Election Year	No. of States from Africa	No. of States from Asia	No. of States from Middle East	No. of States from Europe	No. of States from North America	No. of States from South America	No. of States from Caribbean/Oceania	Total
2017	13	12	01	36	06	06	11	85
2018	19	18	05	27	10	05	03	87
Grand Total								172

Problem Statement

This huge electoral politics across the world may change the circumstances of the different regions of the world, especially the most focused South Asian and Middle Eastern regions. The governments formed in the result of these elections may bring the drastic changes and transactional variations in respective regions that would cast spillover effect on South Asia, specifically Pakistan-the center of connectivity under flagship project of China's OBOR.

The South Asia region includes; Nepal, Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Afghanistan. South Asia is located south to Indian Ocean and connects West Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Further, this region is linked with the world from Eastern and Western sides. The recent significance of this region is that China is developing the strategically important project of One Belt One Road (OBOR). This is exceptionally significance for Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and Europe. Pakistan is very much important state in-terms of recent slogan of the connectivity of the world because it lies at the mid of that South Asia region where it can access all sides and can link the countries with Middle East region.

In Asia, China has been recognized as an economic power. It is extending its market using different routes to trade with Middle East. For this, the elections in Pakistan, India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia and China would impact the economy, security, and relationships among countries in south Asia. Where, Pakistan for the two reasons would be impacted more than other regional countries. The first reason is Pak-US alliance to combat terrorism in lieu of Paki-Afghan unstable relations and increased Indian involvement. The second is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Literature Review

Moricz in *The Causal Effect of Local Elections on Economic Growth-Using a Natural Experiment in Indonesia* highlights that elections not only in the neighboring countries impact the regional political and economic indicators but change of government in great powers also impact the countries of other regions. It is because of change in policies which ultimately bring changes in world economic system.¹

Pepinsky and Wihardja argue that neighborhood popular governments, largely impact the systems of regional countries, because foreign policy and economic preferences have been changed.²

Bormann in *Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946–2011* explains that elections give the essential intends to guarantee that administrations stay responsive and responsible to their subjects.³

Guo & Liu (2012) found that the relationship among the three fundamental outside systems bolsters the curvilinear impact for social affair raising money commitments for the election. In today's world, the social media plays a vital role in creating awareness regarding politics. In the current years, the web entrance, online networking generation and utilization have expanded significantly everywhere throughout the world.⁴ This expansion has influenced the governmental issues in many parts of the world from various perspectives. Online networking turned into an apparatus for government officials to do their political battles and for activists to make mindfulness on political issues and prepare dissents. Today nearly in every single social development in the nations with high rate of web get to, the part of web-based social networking is being talked about. Social media has turned into a costless and to a great degree powerful instrument in contacting mass groups of onlookers with political purposes. The youthful era is to a great degree inspired by joining on the web informal communities. These interpersonal organizations set up associations between individuals that are connected with frail ties. These associations enable political data to stream on

¹ Moricz, S. *The Causal Effect of Local Elections on Economic Growth-Using a Natural Experiment in Indonesia*, Research Institute of Industrial Economics P.O. Box 55665 SE-102 15 Stockholm, Sweden, 2012.

² Pepinsky, T.B., & Wihardja, M. M. Decentralization and economic performance in Indonesia, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 11(03), 2011, pp. 337-371.

³ Bormann, N. C., & Golder, M. Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946–2011, *Electoral Studies*, 32(2), 2013, pp.360-369.

⁴ Guo, J., & Liu, C. H. The Perspective of Relationships: Election Strategies and Sources of Political Capital, *Management Decision*, 50(8), 2012, pp.1340-1360.

these systems virally, costless and quickly. Data can be on political news or contemplations to make political mindfulness and furthermore to assemble political challenges.⁵

Impact of Elections on Regional Circumstances: Implications for Pakistan-Prediction and Reality

i) India Election

The claim over Indian Ocean and proximity to Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal make India's position strategically strong. India, through its adjacent borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, can easily influence its neighboring countries. Therefore, it is really significant for Pakistan to be aware that who comes into power in India and what would be the policies towards the region.

In Indian democracy, the elections assume the most vital part in molding not only the fate of its population but the regional patterns of behavior and relationships.⁶

The presidential elections in India have already been held on 17th July 2017 while the Indian elections for central government are expected to be held in April-May 2019. The general elections of India for the state assemblies were held in the months of February and March 2017 with a high turnout and the results of elections shows that the BJP have won the elections with the massive majority. The Indian National Congress is in majority in Punjab, Goa and Manipur and BJP got Maximum seats in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (NDTV ELECTIONS, 2017). The massive victory in Uttar Pradesh leads BJP in high difference and will make government in India again.

The current ruling party BJP's Prime Minister Modi's regime is going to complete his tenure in 2019. Modi's government has been continuously propagating against Pakistan for the very first day of its establishment. Modi had been making effective international lobby against Pakistan that Pakistan now has been placed on grey list of FATF.

⁵ Yunus, E. The role of social media in creating political awareness and mobilizing political protests: A Focus on Turkey, *Royal Institute of Technology School of Computer Science and Communication KTH CSC SE-100 44 Stockholm, Sweden*, 2013, pp. 1-85.

⁶ Mitra, A. *What is the Importance of Elections in Democracy*, 2014). www.importantindia.com/10594.

If again this party comes into power, Pakistan would be under pressure due to border clashes, Kashmir Issue and violations of Indus Basin Treaty. Now, if we see the strong points, in Uttar Pradesh a massive victory of BJP shows a strong position in that area. Modi tried to develop close relations with Iran and Afghanistan but enigmatically enmity oriented relations and strategies towards Pakistan.

On the other hand if Congress wins the upcoming elections then Pakistan would be in a better position to sit and resolve the conflicting issues between the two states.

However another possibility is coalition government in India. it may be said that that 2019 would be a hung house for India with BJP being as largest party with around 175+ seats and leading a hotchpotch coalition government as it did in 1998 and 1999 or as Congress did in 2009 but in this way there would a great impact on not only inside India (on the policies of Modi Govt.) but also on the adjacent region.

ii) Elections in Iran

Local elections were held in Iran on 19 May 2017 to elect members of the City and Village Councils simultaneously with the twelfth presidential election. In Presidential elections Hassan Rouhani was elected the president of Iran for a second term of his office. Iran has coexisted in tense relations with the U.S., European Union and other developed economies since the trump has withdrawn from the Iranian Nuclear deal.

Now that US has pressurizing the other states including Europe to stop the oil from Iran. Iran is worried about its economy thus reviving old alliances. In this course Iran is inclined towards India more after Chahbahar Port. Further, Iran is investing in Afghanistan to develop infrastructure.

As for the Pak-Iran relations post Iranian Presidential Elections are concerned, Iran has two reservations towards Pakistan. One is incomplete Pak-Iran gas pipe line signed during PPP government and the second is Pakistan's involvement in Saudi led Anti-Terrorism Islamic Alliance. While on the other hand Pakistan as well has two reservations towards Iran. One is the Chahbahar port handed over to India and the second is Iranian soil has been used against Pakistan in the case of Kalboshan Yadev.

Now that general Bajwa has visited to Iran in November 2017 and allayed Iranian reservations. Pakistan cleared Iran that Pakistan only will defend the Saudi territory inside the borders and comprised of Holy places in Saudi Arabia. Ian then declared in response that Gawadar and Chahbahr ports

are sister ports but not the rival. Such high level meetings would revive the confidence of both countries.

Therefore, in upcoming elections of Pakistan, the ruling party must focus on bilateral relations with Iran through exchange of high level delegations.

iii) Election in Russia

The presidential elections in Russia were held in March 2018.

Vladimir Putin has been elected as president. Putin has made Russians feel glad for their history, social legacy and their guaranteed put on the planet. He has made Russia awesome once more.

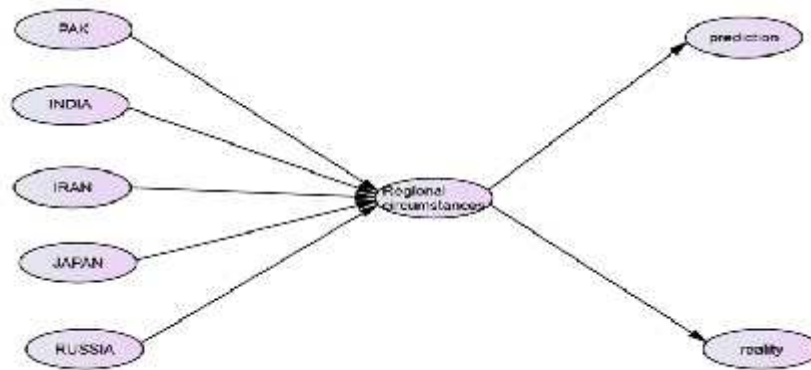
The Revival of Russia is very much relevant to Pakistan when it has again fragile relations with US.⁷ The revival of Russia under Putin is due to pragmatism that Russia has now been extended towards Pakistan after the initiation of OBOR.

As for the upcoming elections of Pakistan are concerned, Russia is important in terms of cyber warfare adventures which it has already been played during US elections. Recently on 3 July 2018 the Election Commission of Pakistan has reported that website of election commission has detected more than one thousand attacks during last few months. Unfortunately, Russia is one of the states besides India and Israel from where cyber-attacks have been made.

The below diagram represent the impact of elections in the world and the regional circumstances and the prediction and

⁷ Garrie, A. 5 Reasons Vladimir Putin will Win Russia's Next Presidential Election in 2018, 2017 February, 14, *The Duran*. Retrieved from <http://theduran.com/5-reasons-vladimir-putin-will-win-russias-next-presidential-election-2018/>.

reality



Elections are imperative for the general population of each majority ruling system. The enrollment of voters is deliberate. Around 95% of the general populations qualified for voting in India are enlisted and in Pakistan 86.1 % voters are registered out of qualified voter pool. The countries of South Asia region face many problems during election year and particularly the days of election campaign. Pakistan is most vulnerable to these issues. Given below are some of the major problems faced by South Asia region during elections:

i) Life Security of Voters and Candidates

Today in South Asia, highly active of ISIS, Pakistan Taliban, Afghanistan Taliban, and the global rise of Non-state actors pose threats to the security of voters and candidates. In Pakistan another problem is highly critical that people are emotionally attached to their political parties and many parties have their militant wing thus weapons pose challenge to the voters and candidates as well.

ii) Political Awareness

Lack of political awareness is another problem of South Asian countries. In Pakistan Bradrism contributes more to this issue. Individuals have foggieest idea about their right to vote consequently people cast vote to the parties they provide less fundamental rights to them after getting into power. It is because political parties obliged more to the bradrism and groups they supported them to get into power. Muzaffar in his study observed that

the level of political awareness among the students of secondary level is 7.17 %.⁸

iii) Leadership Crisis

Another significant issue in this region is utilization of natural resources. Due to lack of modern technologies we have not ability to convert and use 100% the natural resources in proper way. This issue is linked mainly with the conduct and policy formulation of leadership. Incompetent leadership of South Asian countries has put a question mark on the electoral process of countries of this region. Pakistan is victim of this issue since long.

iv) Electoral Rigging

In Pakistan particularly rigging in elections has continuously been witness after 1970s elections. In the General Elections of 2013, Pakistan Tehrek-e-Insaf had been continuously protesting over the rigging issue. The solution to this problem is training of voters about political process.

Pakistan General Elections 2018: Discussion and Analysis- Constitutional Constraints and Anticipated Challenges to New Government

In Pakistan general elections of 2018 have large impact on the relationship, economy and politics of South Asian region. Pakistan is strategically located in a region which has unprecedented importance in terms of economic, political and security. Pakistan has become more important after OBOR for two economic and established considerably powerful states i.e. China and the Russian Federation. Additionally, six Muslim Central Asian States are linked with Pakistan through Afghanistan. Pakistan is a bridge between Gulf countries, Central Asian, African and European states. Pakistan has a significant position as it establishes relationship in this way from Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Sea with all Muslim countries. On these bases, Pakistan's strategic position can influence the region politics and economy after 2018 general elections.

Pakistan General Elections are to be held on 25th July 2018. Pakistan needs a strong political government in 2018 in-order to tackle internal and external challenges. Anyhow, whatever it would be, there is expected to be a big impact on regional politics. It's that there are many ongoing projects

⁸ Muzaffar, M. *Educational Institutions and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Punjab*, Unpublished Thesis, International Islamic University Islamabad, 2016

including the mega project called CPEC, which is considered as game changer for Pakistan.

If the general elections of Pakistan in 2018 are held under free and fair process, then the situation of the South Asia region may automatically be impacted by the changed political government of Pakistan. The recent surveys over Pakistan elections predict that PTI will form the government with the help of independent candidates.

On constitutional front as for the Pakistan general elections are considered, the decision on Panama case by Supreme Court of Pakistan has deep impact over the 2018 elections. Supreme Court of Pakistan announced the decision of panama case which was against PM Nawaz Sharif and his two sons. The five member bench announced the 2-3 decision. The two judges decided that the PM Nawaz Sharif who is the chairmen of Political party of PML-N is not "Sadiq" and "Ameen". The remaining three decided to investigate further as the available evidence is not enough to remove after the choice and for further examination the PML-N will lose the trust and authenticity in voters. As per Gallup study in exceptional public statement (April 19,2017) found that the 57 % of individuals trusted that PML-N would be vanquished and PTI Imran Khan would lead by raising the panama debasement case and getting group of onlookers with Supreme Court. It means PTI would exceptionally advantage in next election as they are driving panama issue against PML-N. The official conclusion had arrived against Nawaz Sharif based on the JIT reports as it explored further to PM and his two sons. The PPP has been playing extremely key campaign as they requested the renunciation from PM as the two judges of incomparable court chosen to ineligibility of PM. Beside panama the history of Pakistan general election no any party won the continuously twice election. From 1958 to 2013 the people of Pakistan chose a new incumbent party in every general election. From this point of view the PPP or PTI have more chances to win as second prominent parties in Pakistan. PTI may polish their prominence as they have worked more actively in the last 4 years.

During the submission of nomination paper for the elections of 2018 the article 62 and 63 are in great deal. Candidates are confused about the rejection of nomination papers which increases uncertainty in the election process. However the announcement of NAB that no candidate will be arrested before the date of elections provided equal level play field for the candidates of PML (N). Further, the competent authority ordered the law-enforcement forces to provide security to the candidates is a good decision.

However, in post-election scenario, Pakistan has significant place around the Muslim world therefore new government of 2018 would have potential to play role in ongoing dispute between the Gulf countries, which may become the part of the Asia region in near future. The Iran and Turkey will automatically support to Qatar, It would be a test for the Pakistan government to convince Saudi Arabia on this issue. The Saudi Arabia is likely to resist the support of Turkey and Iran to Qatar. The Saudi Arabia also banned the entrance of Qatari citizen on Makah Mukaramah and this issue is also seems to be dangerous for this region as the many Muslim countries are lies in South Asia region. If PTI wins Pakistan general elections of 2018, it seems to be that the Pakistan would play the effective role between these two countries' dispute as the PTI has good relations with military and has competent leadership.

In post-election scenario relations with India would be more challenging for the new government because of Indian propaganda against CPEC, violations of borders and water accord and the issue of Kashmir. But if in 2019 Indian National Congress would succeed to make the government in India the situation of South Asia region will be entered in new progressive era and Pakistan will find an opportunity to sit with India for negotiations. It is concluded if India wants to become a great power, it needs to remedy its relationship with its western neighbor, if only because China, Shifting Geopolitics in the Greater South Asia Region, adopting the maxim that "my enemy's enemy is my friend," clearly benefits from India-Pakistan. Pointedly, however, Pakistan and India need to be in peace to get themselves developed which may be not acceptable by some elements within both countries.

As for the Iran is concerned, for the new government the completion of Iran-Pakistan gas pipe line would be at preference but in the result Saudi Arabia may resist to Pakistan. This situation poses another challenge to newly form Pakistan government after 2018.

Conclusion

The South Asia region for next decade seems depending on the Indian general election, Pakistan general election, Iran's, and Russian elections. The upcoming rulers need to focus on their countries development with the support of neighborhood and thus by establishing good relations with each other. Especially the next ruling party of Pakistan and India should make the peaceful relations with each other. This may create opportunities for other regional countries to be become developed economically. For future studies, it's recommended to conduct further detailed analysis by adding other

countries and the political powers into analysis. The Iranian elections are won by Hassan Rouhani and the strategic impact of the policies on Afghanistan and Pakistan is very much relevant. The gap of this study is lacking analysis over US senate elections and its impact on the South Asia region. Lastly, Pakistani general elections and Indian general elections may change the game of this region.