

Dharna Politics in Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis of PTI (2014) and JUI-F (2019) Dharnas

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Abstract

The protests and demonstrations are the basic platforms to talk about the fundamental rights in a democratic society. It is the only way through which people can accomplish their legitimate rights. Pakistan has experienced small or large protests and demonstrations in both civilian and military regimes since its inception. The recent political *dharnas* (sit-ins) of 2014 and 2019 are observed by the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) and PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) governments respectively. Both dharnas were launched on the same grounds of accusation of rigging in the elections. This study will focus on the causes and features of PTI (2014) and JUI-F (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal) (2019) *dharnas* in Islamabad. How these political exigencies affect the political stability in Pakistan as well as their repercussions on democracy. Moreover, the military establishment has played a key role in the political history of Pakistan. Thus, this paper will try to find out the response of the military establishment towards these political unrests.

Keywords: Pakistan, The political sit-in of 2014 and 2019, The politics of PTI and JUI-F, Political instability, Party politics, Establishment.

Introduction

Protests and Marches are essential parts of human rights in democratic societies. These enhance the power of people and become the voice of minority groups (Norman, 2017). Demonstrations and agitations are the basic parts of the political evolution in a

democratic system. After the casting of votes in elections, protest is the only power to demand their rights (Segalvo, 2015). Whenever the legal and constitutional demands of the people are not fulfilled, then they use the tool of protest in their reaction. Similarly, after the assassination of the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, the political instability of the country had begun either through the military coups or protests (Lamba, 2014). Thus, the democratic as well as military governments have faced demonstrations and agitations throughout the political history of Pakistan.

The *dharna* (sit-in) politics in Pakistan was at its peak in the recent decade. The political *dharnas* of Imran Khan (2014) and Maulana Fazalur Rehman (2019) are very prominent. After the military regime of Musharraf, the first democratic government ended its tenure and a new general election was held on 11th of May 2013, PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) formed the government at the centre as well as at Punjab assemblies. The allegations of rigging in the general elections are not a new phenomenon in the political history of Pakistan. It is a tradition of Pakistani politics, whenever the results of general elections are announced, the defeated parties do not accept the results and they accuse different blames like, rigging and military involvement in the elections. Similarly, the former cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan's political party, Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (Movement for Justice in Pakistan) did not accept the results of the general elections of 2013 and demanded the investigation of four national assembly constituencies (Rashid, 2015). However, the new government of PML-N did not accede to the demand of Imran Khan. Consequently, a petition was filed by a PTI worker in the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding the rigging in the elections, but the petitioner could not provide appropriate evidence of rigging. Therefore, the appeal was terminated by the Apex Court. Thus, Imran Khan was disillusioned by the highest judiciary of the country consequently, he announced the anti-ragging movement on April 22, 2014. In the preliminary phase of this movement, he organized the political gatherings (*Jalsas*) in different cities of Pakistan.

Besides, a clash erupted between the police and Tahir-ul-Qadri's PAT (Pakistan Awami Tehreek) supporters in which at least one hundred people were injured, and two protestants died during the PAT protest against Nawaz Sharif's government at Lahore on 10th of August 2014. From here the situation became worse and PAT leader Tahir-ul-Qadri formally announced the beginning of the Long March called the *Inqilab March* (Revolution

March). By taking this opportunity, Imran Khan, too, declared the *Azadi March* (Independent March). However, both leaders Khan and Qadri neither amalgamated with each other nor refused to support each other. Finally, PTI and PAT *Dharnas* were marched to Islamabad (capital city of Pakistan) on the same day of 14th August 2014 and both marches reached Islamabad on the next day. In the preliminary days, the PTI's demand was only to investigate the four constituencies, but after the growing fame of *Azadi March* their demands increased to the dissolution of PML-N's government, and replace it with a caretaker government, and called for new general elections (Javed, 2017). Thus, the march of PTI had lasted more than four months and it extended to other cities of Pakistan by organizing political gatherings to pressurize the government.

Another *dharna* (sit-in) was organized by JUI-F (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal) head Maulana Fazalur Rehman at the end of October 2019. As already said, “winning parties” always welcome the results of the elections whereas the defeated parties blame the winners by different accusations. In the same way, Maulana Fazalur Rehman was defeated for the first time by his own constituency in the July elections of 2018. After the fourteen months of PTI's government, Maulana gathered the opposition parties and announced the *Azadi March* in early October 2019. Maulana raised the allegations against the PTI government such as PTI came into power through a rigged election, they sold out Kashmir, had poor economic performance and put in jail the opposition leaders. Some critics including Maulana called Imran Khan as "Selected Prime Minister" because they accused that Imran Khan had been supported by the military establishment (*The Week*, 2019). Though, *Azadi March* started from Karachi on 27th October with ten thousand anti-government protesters led by Maulana Fazal and they reached Islamabad on 31st October 2019. Thus, the March did not have the support of the mainstream political parties; PPP (Pakistan People's Party) and PML-N, so the *dharna* could not sustain itself for a long time as did Imran Khan's *dharna* in 2014. When Maulana did not get anything else through sitting in the country's capital, he announced the 'Plan B and Plan C' to pressurize the PTI government by organizing the political gatherings and blocking the country's major highways respectively.

Aim of the Study

The main objective of the study is to compare both *dharnas* of 2014 and 2019 led by Imran Khan and Maulana Fazalur Rehman respectively. To highlight and examine the

politics of both political parties during these political *dharnas*. To understand the causes of the emergence of these political crises and their impact on democracy as well as economic conditions of the country. Furthermore, to analyse the role of the military establishment in these political exigencies in Pakistan.

Research Questions

The main question of this paper is to determine the causes and features of 2014 and 2019 *dharnas*.

Supplementary questions are:

- How these *dharnas* affected the political and economic stability in Pakistan?
- What were the civil-military relations during these political crises of 2014 and 2019?
- What were the repercussions of these political chaos on democracy in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

The nature of this paper is based on qualitative research methodology therefore, both primary and secondary sources have applied to understand the nature of the topic. The primary source is used from the speeches and statements of politicians as well as officialdoms. The secondary source is used from different books, journal research articles and newspapers. Moreover, the content analysis will also be used to analyse the speeches and statements of politicians and government officials.

History of Political Demonstrations in Pakistan

Political instability in Pakistan is based on two major factors: identity and legitimacy crisis. Pakistan has faced both crises since its independence, first identity crisis rose in East Pakistan after the 1965 war and resultantly East Pakistan became an independent state, Bangladesh, in 1971. This identity crisis is being observed nowadays in all provinces of Pakistan except Punjab. Whereas the legitimacy crisis has also affected the political system of Pakistan and this immature political system still using the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the British to stabilize their hegemony over the masses. Since its establishment, Pakistan has witnessed a spectrum of anti-government protests, varying in scale from minor

demonstrations to major movements. Some demonstrated agitations to break or make the governments and some invited the military to intervene in the civilian affairs. The political as well as religious parties have been used for this purpose to topple down the governments.

The first-ever agitation was started in 1949 by Majlis-e-Ahrar, a religious political party, to compel the government to declare Ahmadis (a religious sect of Qadianis) as non-Muslim. This street violence was spread throughout the country in 1953. It was suppressed by the imposition of martial law in several cities of Pakistan (Abenante, 2000). Thereafter the implementation of Pakistan's first constitution in 1956, Iskandar Mirza, the first president of Pakistan, had the power to depose the prime minister. Hence, he changed three PMs within two years (1956-58). The strife between parliament and the president started and the politicians raised their voices against Mirza. As a result, he abrogated the 1956 constitution in 1958 (Shah S., 2020) only after the two years of its implementation.

The first architect of martial law, Ayub Khan faced a huge mass protest by the National Student Federation in early October 1968 when Ayyub Khan celebrated the decade of development. Street violence was spread in major cities of Pakistan against Khan and the students (protestants) used derogatory language against him by calling him "dog" which was unbearable, especially for a military general. Besides, a clash erupted between students and police during the protest in Rawalpindi in November 1968 and police opened fire in which three students died. Then, the protest was joined by the politicians, peasants, labour, and white-collar professionals against Ayub Khan. On the other side, the Awami League of Shaikh Mujeeb Rehman demanded full provincial autonomy in East Pakistan (Eisenberg, 2013). Finally, Ayub Khan resigned from the government and handed over the power to Yahaya Khan in March 1969.

The first time the allegations of rigging in the election were raised by the coalition of nine political parties called Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto after the 1977 general elections. The PNA demanded the new fresh elections and implementation of *Nizam e Mustafa*, the system of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, Bhutto somehow agreed to these demands (Rahman, 2017), but the political chaos could not be controlled, and it created a gap for military intervention. Ultimately, the third martial law was imposed by General Zia ul Haq in July 1977.

Another non-violent mass movement started by PPP in 1981 against general Zia's regime. The movement was formed by a coalition of eleven political parties called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). The movement was chaired by Benazir Bhutto, the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan and it was initiated from Sindh in which dozens of people were killed as well as hundreds were arrested by the government of Zia. The movement strengthened in 1983 all over the country and the alliance parties did not participate in the presidential referendum of 1984 and the elections of 1985 (Zunes, 2010). It was considered the largest non-violent movement after M.K. Gandhi's. Unfortunately, the movement could not get their demands from the military dictator and resultantly it was announced to end in 1988.

Thus, Parvez Musharraf's regime also faced a huge lawyer movement in 2007. Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, the then chief justice of Pakistan, was sacked by Musharraf in March 2007 when he challenged the dual role of Musharraf as president as well as army chief of Pakistan. Then the students, labour union, women's rights activists, media groups, political activists and especially lawyers dissented from Musharraf's decision. Therefore, a nationwide movement began by the lawyers in the name of (MRJ) the Movement for Restoration of Judiciary (Phelps, 2009). The situation became worse when Musharraf imposed an emergency in November 2007 and sacked all the Supreme and High Court judges and proclaimed the Provincial Constitutional Order (PCO).

Moreover, the judges had been compelled to take a new oath on this PCO, but most of the judges refused to take the oath. Consequently, Musharraf resigned from power and a new government was formed in 2008 by PPP (Pakistan People's Party). Thereafter the restoration of democracy, the new government was not ready to restore the judiciary. Subsequently, the lawyer group launched the 'Long March' against the civilian government to restore the judiciary (Shafqat, 2009). Finally, the Long March succeeded, and the judiciary was reinstated in March 2009. Additionally, the PTI government once again faced a huge mass protest in the name of "*Mehngai Mukao March*" in March 2022 organized by PML-N. Similarly, the political dharnas of PTI 2014 and JUI-F 2019 are found in a very important place in the political history of Pakistan. Later, these demonstrations will be discussed in detail.

The Political Sit-in of 2014

PTI chairman, Imran Khan, hesitantly accepted the results of the May 2013 general elections, but he had reservations regarding the results. Initially, he demanded the investigation of four constituencies of Lahore, Sialkot and Lodhran as a demo test for the whole election results. PTI drafted a long report of 2100 pages by revealing the evidence of electoral fraud in the May elections and presented it before the government, but the government did not give any concern to this evidence. However, Imran Khan announced the commencement of the anti-rigging movement against Nawaz Sharif's government. In the earlier phase of this movement, he decided to organize the *Jalsas* (Political gatherings) in the different cities of the country. The first *Jalsa* was held in Islamabad on 11 May 2014 in which Khan claimed that Geo News, a renowned media house of Pakistan, was involved in the rigging of the 2013 elections. The second, third and last *Jalsas* were held in Faisalabad, Sialkot, and Bahawalpur respectively (Javed, 2017). In these political gatherings he gave an ultimatum to the government by giving one month to investigate the four constituencies (Rashid, 2015). Besides, he announced the '*Azadi March*' if her demands would not be fulfilled after the holy month of Ramzan. Nevertheless, the government did not give any attention to Khan's demand even after pressurizing through the huge public gatherings.

Subsequently, the claims of PTI were increased from four to ninety constituencies, they further demanded to investigate the role of Najam Sethi, the then caretaker chief minister of Punjab, and Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, former chief justice of the Supreme Court (Javed, 2017). They also claimed to investigate how Nawaz Sharif enunciated his victory before the voters had voted for him (Rashid, 2015) on the day of general elections. Notwithstanding, the PML-N government did not deem any concern about Khan's demand to constitute a tribunal or committee to investigate the demands. Then, Khan presented the ultimate demands before the government such as the resignation of PM Nawaz Sharif and his younger brother Shahbaz Sharif, the then chief minister of Punjab, the dissolution of the current government and its replacement with a caretaker government and call for free and fair elections.

When the Sharif government did not accept the PTI's demands, they launched their long march from Lahore on 14th of August 2014, the day being celebrated as independent day

of Pakistan, along with PAT's (Pakistan Awami Tahreek) *Inqilab March*. The March reached Islamabad on the next day where the prominent leaders of PTI addressed the crowd under the heavy rain (Javed, 2017). On August 17th, Khan addressed the crowd and announced the 'disobedience movement' to not pay the taxes and utility bills to pressurize the government. On the same day, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, the then federal interior minister of Pakistan, asserted in his press conference that 'the government is willing to listen to each and every constitutional demand of PTI and PAT through negotiation'. But later, the PML-N government refused to fulfil the demands. Nevertheless, it was Nisar Ali Khan who accepted that approximately 60,000-70,000 votes in each constituency could not be verified (Rashid, 2015). On the next day 18th of August, Khan announced that the March would enter the Red Zone (the very sensitive area where the parliament house, supreme court, PM office, embassies, diplomatic enclaves etc. are located) to sit-in in front of the parliament house until the demands would be met.

Hence, the workers of both Marches entered the Red Zone on 19th August by crossing the shipping containers and breaking the gates of the Pakistan Secretariat and PTV's headquarters. Thus, due to this turmoil condition the transmission of PTV went off-air. During this crisis, a clash erupted between the protesters and Islamabad police in which about 500 protesters were injured and more than 4 thousand were arrested (Javed, 2017). However, after a week of agitation in the Red Zone by protesters, the supreme court ordered Islamabad police to clear the Red Zone within 24 hours. Then on 30th August, the protesters attempted to enter the PM house and during this troubled circumstance, another clash erupted between the protesters and police. The police used tear gas to stop the protest (Rashid, 2015). Consequently, more than 500 protesters were injured, and a few numbers of people died.

As a result, Imran Khan saw that the consecutive *dharna* did not attract the government to fulfil the demands. Then he decided to extend the anti-rigging campaign in different cities of the country by having political gatherings. The PTI's *dharna* was the longest sit-in protest in the political history of Pakistan that had lasted for 126 days consecutively. The *dharna* was announced to end on the 17th of December after a brutal attack by the terrorists on the Army Public School, Peshawar on the 16th of December 2014, in which more than 150 people were killed.

Political stability is directly linked to the nation-building of developed countries, it is a serious threat to developing countries, particularly for Pakistan. The immature political leadership and corruption are threats to the democracy of Pakistan. The *March* of PTI has increased the distrust in the civilian government and has failed to convince the international organizations to assist Pakistan's unstable economy. Besides, three heads of state: China, Sri Lanka and Maldives as well as the IMF's team had deferred their visit to Pakistan due to the PTI's protest in Islamabad (Javed, 2017). Furthermore, as a result of this prolonged period of political instability, Pakistan experienced a severe economic crisis, resulting in a loss of nearly 6 billion USD.

PTI alleged that they had evidence of rigging in the elections, and a thousand numbers of extra ballots were printed by PML-N to rig the elections by distributing these extra ballots among the PML-N cadres. But they failed to provide such evidence before the Apex court. The PTI's *dharna* became the focal point of the media, not only national but also international media covering this political demonstration. About forty Pakistani news channels nonstop transmitted the Islamabad protest and even dropped the 9 P.M. news bulletin to cover Imran Khan's speech (Mulla, 2017). Thus, the government could not stop the *dharna* after utilising several tools to convince the protesters.

The political crisis became the cause of political instability, and this situation creates the space for the military to intervene in politics. It is a good example of the political chaos of 1968 against Ayyub's regime and in 1977 against ZA Bhutto. Hence, sometimes these political demonstrations are in favour of protestors and sometimes they do not achieve to fulfil their demands. Imran Khan could not dethrone the Sharif's government, however, he got immense popularity among the masses and also formulated the prospective agenda for the upcoming 2018 elections.

The Political Sit-in of 2019

Imran Khan voted in favour of Maulana Fazlur Rehman in the National Assembly in 2002 when he was selected by the MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, a right wing religious political party) for the post of the speakership. The MMA supported the 17th amendment that was proposed by Pervez Musharraf in 2003 and Khan did not do so. From here the relations between Khan and Maulana started antagonistically. During the PTI's *dharna* in 2014 Khan exposed Maulana as '*Diesel*', because he alleged that Maulana was involved in fuel licence

corruption (The Week, 2019) to smuggle the diesel to Afghanistan during his petroleum ministry from 1993 to 1996. However, JUI-F could not succeed to win a single seat in the 2018 general elections, even though Maulana himself was defeated through his both constituencies.

After the announcement of the 2018 elections results, the defeated parties along with Maulana's MMA rejected the results and started to allege Imran Khan's government (Hussain, 2018). Before announcing the *dharna* against Khan, Maulana organized the *Jalsas* in different cities by giving the deadline to the government for the resignation of Khan in August 2019. When the deadline was crossed and no response came from the government, Maulana called an all-parties conference against Khan, but no such decisive decision had been taken by JUI-F. Maulana threatened the government to fulfil their demands before the country entered the battlefield. Furthermore, he added "this war will end when the government falls" (Batool, 2019). Maulana gathered the opposition parties in early October 2019 and announced the '*Azadi March*' that would converge in Islamabad at the end of this month. Thus, the mainstream political parties like, PPP and PML-N advised Maulana to delay the *Azadi March* (Sarfranz, 2019), but Maulana did not acknowledge their advice and moved ahead. Moreover, it was supposed that Maulana had patronage from the prevailing class.

The *Azadi March* of Maulana started from Karachi on the 27th of October 2019 and moved to Islamabad via Sindh and Punjab, and finally reached its destination on the 31st of October. Before entering Islamabad, an agreement was signed between JUI-F and the government that the March would be peaceful and held away from the Red Zone. The Islamabad administration blocked the main roads of the capital by shipping containers before the march arrived country's capital. The main demands of JUI-F's *Azadi-March* were the resignation of PM Imran Khan and calls for new general elections. Maulana accuses the Khan's government that they came into power through bogus elections as well as its results, the current government does not have the competency to handle the economic crisis, further he added, Khan has backing of the establishment (Batool, 2019). Whenever such protests or agitations are organized in Pakistan, the ruling party blames the protesters that it has foreign support or an agenda to diverge from the main crisis. Hence, Khan replied to the *dharna* that "there is no question of my resignation, and I will not resign" (Times, 2019).

It was not easy to pressurize the government with only a religious party; therefore, they had need of support from mainstream political parties. The PPP had two main differences with JUI-F's *dharna*, first it was believed that PPP would not support these protests in which the religious card had been used against Khan. The second was they were not in favour of *dharna* or lockdown because due to this political turmoil the lives of the common masses would be badly disturbed. Thus, in the preliminary phase, PPP supported the *Azadi March* in Sindh because Maulana did not reveal that the March would be a rally or sit-in. As JUI-F declared the March is a political *dharna* against Khan's government after reaching Islamabad, the PPP sided with the rally, and they played the 'Cat and Mouse' game in *Azadi March* of Maulana (Chandran, 2019).

The opinions of PML-N leadership were divided regarding the JUI-F's *dharna*. Shahbaz Sharif, a younger brother of Nawaz Sharif, had reservations about Maulana's march. Hence, he did not want to criticize the military establishment therefore, he did not meet Maulana at Lahore while forwarding to Islamabad. Complementary to Shahbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif strongly supported the Maulana's March (Sarfraz, 2019). Maulana could not convince the opposition parties to pressurize the government because Maulana himself had no idea regarding the future of this political crisis because he neither had the evidence of rigging nor the proof of the involvement of establishment in the election, as proposed by Khan in 2014 *dharna*.

The *Azadi March* of Maulana was only sustained for 13 days in Islamabad because of half-hearted support from opposition parties (The Hindu, November 07, 2019) and the unclear vision of JUI-F. Subsequently, the *dharna* continued till the 12th of November 2019. During this agitation, the government constituted a team to negotiate the Rehber Committee (a negotiated committee of JUI-F) but unfortunately, they could not resolve the deadlock between the government and JUI-F. Nevertheless, the government planned the 'Plan B' to counter Maulana's March if the March would continue for a long time in Islamabad. In 'Plan B' the government planned the "*Milad March* or *Aman March*" that would be brought up by the Brelvi groups in the second week of November to counter the JUI-F's *dharna* (Ummat, November 01, 2019). But this plan was not experienced because Maulana could not continue his *dharna* in Islamabad.

Besides, Maulana announced the 'Plan B' to extend the *dharana* by blocking the country's main roads and highways to pressurize the government. While implementing the 'Plan B' the protesters blocked the Indus highway in Karachi, Sukkur, Quetta, etc. Consequently, the strength of 'Plan B' slowly weakened and the *dharana* could not attract the consideration of the government. After two weeks of 'Plan B', Maulana announced the 'Plan C' to hold the *Jalsas* throughout the country and finally, Maulana's zeal for *dharna* slowly declined.

Civil-Military Relations During These Political Sit-ins

During the unrest days of Nawaz Sharif's government, the army chief, General Raheel Sharif, had no sustainable relations with PM Sharif, because Sharif had always reservations regarding the military involvement in politics additionally, his last tenure was sacked by the military dictator Pervez Musharraf in 1999. Immediately after coming to power in 2013, Sharif allowed the judiciary to hear the treason case against Musharraf, and from here the relationship between them went hostile. Moreover, Sharif wanted to negotiate with Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but the military was in favour of deploying the forces in North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Jaffrelot, 2014). Najam Sethi, a renowned Pakistani journalist, says in his program "*Aapas Ki Baat*" that general Raheel Sharif wanted to extend his tenure as chief of army staff, and the 2014 *dharna* was used to pressurize the government to do so. Additionally, Javeed Hashmi, an ex-president of PTI, stated that Imran Khan had been given the instructions by the establishment to cooperate with the PAT *dharna* to derail the Sharif's government (Mufti, 2015). Furthermore, he adds, "the *dharna* cannot headway without the patronage by the army". Consequently, Hashmi was compelled to resign from PTI (Jaffrelot, 2014).

The role of the military establishment was passive on the side of *dharana*, but it was active towards the government during the 2014 political demonstrations. During the political chaos of 2014, the army warned the government to ensure a law-and-order situation otherwise the military would not hesitate to intervene in the crisis. Furthermore, the military played a key role to resolve the political crisis. Subsequently, army chief General Raheel Sharif met Khan and Qadri on 29th August, but the deadlock remained unsolved (Batool, 2019).

A former ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) chief general Ahmed Shuja Pasha also advised the PTI about the political sit-in. Moreover, a corps meeting was held on 31st August 2014 chaired by general Raheel Sharif in which five out of eleven participants wanted to oust the Sharif's government but the chief, Raheel Sharif, was not in favour of direct intervention in civilian affairs (Jaffrelot, 2014). Imran Khan also expressed such views in his speeches during *dharna* that, "the third empire (establishment) has promised victory". No one has known what would have happened if the Army Public School accident did not ensue. Additionally, the army was seeking a 'soft coup' by taking extensive control over the foreign and security policies of Pakistan (Kronstadt, 2014) by executing the Bangladesh Model of 2007. The Bangladesh Model of 2007 was an interim government headed by an ex-supreme court judge selected by the military establishment to control the mainstream political parties of Bangladesh (Sethi, 2020). Similarly, this model may be recalled during the political crisis of 2014 to replace Sharif's government with Imran Khan, but this conspiracy was foiled by Sharif's government.

Besides, a government aide stated that the leaders of the protest (2014) had been encouraged by the military establishment to seize over Nawaz Sharif's government. During this political crisis, an agreement was signed between the military and Sharif's government, in which Mr. Sharif gripped the authority over strategic policies like relations with the USA, India, and Afghanistan by the military establishment (Shah S., 2014). Thus, behind the PTI's sit-in it was the interest of the establishment to oust Sharif's government. Because Nawaz Sharif wanted friendly relations with Afghanistan, the international community intensified the pressure on Sharif's government to change the policies of "bad Taliban and good Taliban" that were not acceptable to the military establishment. Therefore, the establishment encouraged the *dharna* to destabilize civilian supremacy, because they wanted to derail the civilian supremacy that was resurrected after the eighteenth amendment of 2010 (Ullah, 2014). These arguments reveal that it could not be possible for any political or religious party to sustain such demonstrations for more than four months without any patronage by the establishment.

Whereas the Maulana's *dharaana* was not an organized political demonstration because at the initial point in Karachi no one had known what the future of the protest would be, whether it would be a political rally or *dharaana*, even the leaders of *dharna* did not know

this. JUI-F's protest could not be as famous as the PTI of 2014. In the 2019 *dharna*, the media was entirely controlled by the government and the media houses could not cover the *dharna* owing to hard instruction from the establishment. Even the news channels were not allowed to broadcast either the protest or conferences of opposition parties (Sevea, 2019). However, the Indian channels and print media coverage of the Maulana's *dharana*, and several news articles have been published regarding the *dharana* by the Indian media. Moreover, the Indian authors write that 'the Maulana's *dharana* was the first step to end the Imran Khan's government and Bilawal would be replaced with Khan' (Kumar, 2019).

Although in this case, the military response to the *dharana* was in favour of Khan's government. Besides, the people who came to Islamabad along with Maulana did not know for what purpose they came here. Gender discrimination was seen in Maulana's *dharana*. Women were not allowed to participate in the protest of 2019. In the 2014 *dharna*, every participant knew the object of the *dharna*, and a huge number of women participated in Khan's demonstration. (Sevea, 2019).

Conclusion

Thereafter a long negotiation between PML-N and PTI, PTI agreed to investigate the electoral fraud by the Judicial Commission appointed by the government. The Judicial Commission presented its report in which they concluded that no such significant evidence was found on which basis it could be said that the rigging happened in the 2013 general elections. The PTI had accepted the results of the Judicial Commission, but they refused to apologize to the nation for the country's democratic and economic instability. Later, Dr Arif Alvi, the then president of Pakistan, tweeted that "it is time to apologize for 35 punchers" (Yaqoob, 2015). Imran Khan was interviewed by Hamid Mir, a prominent anchor person of Geo News, in which Khan professed that the issue of 35 punchers was only my "political statement". Further he added, the information came to us indirectly by the source bypassing via different channels; due to this the misunderstanding took place. In this statement, Khan reveals that the PTI demonstration was not based on real facts and figures. PTI mobilized the young generation of the country on false facts and figures for 126 days. On the other side, Maulana mobilized the madrasa students and his followers against the Khan's government only based on political accusations.

The Pakistani people have always been manipulated either in the name of religion or political slogans since their independence. The PTI used the 'Youthia' card to exploit the young generation in the same way JUI-F used the religious card to manipulate the students of Madrassas and his followers. Moreover, through their dharna, PTI established the foundation for their forthcoming agenda and effectively secured the formation of the government in 2018. These political demonstrations were organized for their own political interests. Indeed, they did not have any concern for the prosperity of the masses. The political or religious leaders must think about the serious impacts of these protests on the lives of common people as well as on political and economic stability of the country, because to date no Pakistani Prime Minister has completed its tenure. Already, we do not have the political stability to sustain democratic rule in Pakistan for a long time. So, this political chaos creates the gap to destabilize the democratic system in Pakistan as well as our economy and foreign affairs have been badly affected through this.

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