

Importance of Slogans for Political Mobilization in Pakistan: A Study of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf

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Article Information		Abstract
Received:	December 11, 2024	Slogans manifest an important role in the political mobilization. They encapsulate party ideology, motivate supporters, and help in shaping public perceptions. This paper examines the importance of slogans for political mobilization in Pakistan, focusing on the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) during the period specifically from 2013 to 2018. PTI, under the leadership of Imran Khan, effectively utilized impactful slogans such as “ <i>Naya Pakistan</i> ” and “ <i>Tabdeeli</i> ” to bring people on road against the earlier dominant political parties. These slogans were related to the party’s core promises of providing fair justice, anti-corruption practices, and economic reforms. By analyzing PTI’s use of slogans through political speeches, media campaigns, and rallies, this research highlights how slogans helped PTI establish an emotional connection with the public. Especially the youth and middle class, who were disillusioned with traditional politics. The study further explores how these slogans contributed to the party's growth, mobilization of support, and eventual success in the 2018 general elections. Through qualitative analysis and a review of PTI’s communication strategies, this research demonstrates that slogans served not just as rhetorical tools but as powerful instruments for identity formation and political engagement. Additionally, it reveals how PTI’s slogans framed the political discourse, reinforcing narratives of hope and change. The findings underscore the significance of slogans as a mechanism for influencing public opinion, fostering national unity, and driving grassroots activism. It concludes that these Slogan were the reason that PTI that was in political struggle since long was able to get considerable seats in the 2018 elections.
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1. Introduction

It has long been understood that political slogans are crucial instruments for influencing popular sentiment for instance “*Pakistan ka matlab kia... La ila haa Ilalallah...*” (What does Pakistan mean... Nothing but Allah only) was one of the famous slogan of All India Muslim League before the creation

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of Pakistan, and this slogan reflected in its meaning the idea that the leadership was striving for the creation of a country that will provide Islamic way of life to the people of the country. After approximately twenty-four years of its creation the country was divided into two independent states, i.e. Pakistan and Bangladesh as a result of 1971 elections. Many slogans were also common in those days the most prominent among those slogan was, “*Roti Kapra aur Makan*” was the slogan used by Pakistan People Party (PPP).

The slogans function as cognitive frames that effectively convey sophisticated political views to the general public (Jamil, 2018). Slogans are especially important in Pakistan because of the country's diverse linguistic, cultural, and sociopolitical environments. Effective slogans can elicit strong feelings, establish an identity, and strengthen party allegiance (Lyon, 2019). This is best demonstrated by the PTI's catchphrases, such as “*Naya Pakistan*” and “*Tabdeeli*,” which appealed to a populace fed up with structural corruption and poor leadership by presenting a picture of change and hope.

2. Research Methodology

This paper attempts to answer that how did the slogans used by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) from 2013 to 2018 influenced political mobilization, public opinion, and voter behavior in Pakistan? Further this paper analyzes the role of PTI slogans in shaping public opinion and influencing voter behavior during 2013-2018. By going through the media campaign of PTI before the elections, in the newspapers and social media this paper attempts to examine the effectiveness of PTI's slogans in mobilizing different segments of society, particularly the youth and middle class, in Pakistan and further the way PTI slogans contributed to the party's political narrative and electoral success in the 2018 general elections. In order to pursue these research goals, this paper attempts to adopt a qualitative research design, utilizing content analysis of political slogans, campaign speeches, and party manifestos from 2013 to 2018 to examine their role in mobilizing public support for PTI. Data is drawn from media sources, official documents, and scholarly literature to ensure a comprehensive understanding.

3. Literature Review

Slogan analysis is an approach through which a critic examines and analyses political mobilization of the masses in response to the voice of the political leader. It shows some examples of political mobilization in social groups and tries to disperse awareness of these things among people. A research institute of slogan analysis notes that: it is related with the relationship between aspirations and promises in political languages (Luke, 1995). According to Fairclough (1992), slogan analysis is a set of methodologies that are used to study voices of the people and languages as social demands. Slogan analysis is based on multiple theoretical frameworks. Firstly it is based on post-structuralism assumptions. This assumption means that slogans has productive purpose. As they help to build the identity and actions of the political party in case it is elected and further it provides a gauge to see the performance of the party. Second theoretical frame work is that it is from Bourdieu's social assumption. Which states that the practice of slogans turn political party into an “Embodied Forms” of “Political Capital” with “Exchange Value”.

4. Data Analysis

According to research, youth mobilization is becoming more and more significant in modern politics. (Yousaf, 2016) This is due to dynamic communication tactics including social media campaigns and slogans. Using succinct, relevant slogans is essential for political involvement in Pakistan, since 64% of the population is under the age of thirty (Ahmed, 2014). PTI successfully promoted themes of justice, anti-corruption, and systemic change through slogans to appeal to young people's desires. This strategy helped PTI become a powerful political force by energizing young people and promoting their involvement in elections, rallies, and social media discussions.

According to academics slogans have a crucial role in creating a sense of solidarity and a collective identity among followers. (S., 2012). From 2013 to 2018, PTI's slogans served as both strategic components of their larger political campaign and more than just rhetorical tactics. PTI reaffirmed an optimistic and inevitable narrative by repeating phrases like "*Tabdeeli Aa Nahi Rahi, Tabdeeli Aa Gayi Hai*" (Change is not coming; change has arrived). The party was able to set itself apart from more established political rivals thanks to its constant rhetoric, which ultimately helped it win seats in the 2018 general elections.

Political slogans are effective communication tools because they distill complicated political concepts into catchy, memorable phrases that appeal to a wide audience. Slogans are essential for influencing public opinion, energizing voters, and promoting a sense of community in Pakistan, where a diverse population shapes political dynamics. The public can understand a political party's ideas and promises thanks to slogans, which distill them into their most basic form. Under Imran Khan's leadership, the Pakistan PTI successfully used catchphrases such "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan) and "Tabdeeli" (Change) between 2013 and 2018 to communicate its message and interact with various societal groups. The PTI's slogans addressed widespread frustration with corruption, inequality, and ineffective governance, offering a message of hope, justice, and reform. These slogans were instrumental in mobilizing youth, the middle class, and disillusioned voters who sought a political alternative. By analyzing the role of PTI's slogans in political mobilization, this study aims to understand how concise political messaging influenced public perceptions and contributed to the party's success in the 2018 general elections. The study also explores how these slogans shaped political discourse and created a narrative that fostered unity and activism across the nation.

Khan won only one seat in the elections of 2002. In the next election of 2008 the party boycotted the process. However in forth coming elections of 2013 he gathered more than 7.5 million votes. Hence his party became the second in terms of number of votes. Further his party was third in the number of seats won (Jamil, S. 2018). Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) contested its first general elections in 1997. Despite Imran Khan's popularity, the party failed to secure a single seat in the National Assembly. This initial setback highlighted the challenges PTI faced in establishing itself as a political force in Pakistan's competitive landscape. In the 2002 general elections, PTI managed to secure one seat in the National Assembly, won by party chairman Imran Khan. Although this was a modest achievement, it marked the party's entry into parliamentary politics and reflected its slow but steady growth.

PTI came to power in Pakistan after 2018 General Elections. One of the reasons behind their success in elections was the catchy slogans that they used to catch the attention of the Pakistani public. Here we are going to share with you some of the most outstanding slogans used by PTI and their supporters in the past few years.

5. Slogans of PTI

The slogan that resulted in the success of PTI was "*Tabedeli-anai rahi...*" this was the slogan that became very popular before the elections of 2013. It brought large number of youth to the political gatherings of the PTI. This was not the only slogan that had been the source of political mobilization in the history of Pakistan.

As PTI has promised to bring change and bring *tabdeeli* in the country, it demanded to conduct the intraparty elections. This step on the part of the party was supposed to reflect that it was sincere to bring change in true sense. Khan's slogan was quite relevant to the slogan of *roti, kapra aur makaan*. It was also one of the reasons that it became the rally cry of the masses. The PTI led government after taking over immediately promised to end corruption within 90 days and further he said his government will make every effort to convert it as an Islamic country.

However one of the problems for the party was that most of the individuals that were the lynch-pin of the party were members of those parties that had been ruling the country from last three decades. Those new members were not attached in true senses to the ideology and slogans of the party, neither they were answerable to the population. It will be proven only by the coming year that when Khan is in Jail in 2024 how much they will prove beneficial for the PTI.

Now we will briefly discuss few common slogans of the PTI and the consequent slogans of the other political parties.

First of all, “*Banega Naya Pakistan*”, this slogan means, new Pakistan is on the way of emergence. We need to elaborate it further in the sense that it does not mean that new country will be created instead it mean that now the country will have a different system and it will undergo a transformation. In the earlier Pakistan there was no justice for the poor but as the name of the party suggested that it planned to purpose a new more efficient judicial system. Further it embedded in itself the idea of welfare state. *Gali gali mai shor hai- Nawaz Sharif chor hai*. This was the slogan of PTI as well. It was to inculcate in the mind of the masses that Nawaz Sharif is not loyal to the nation and it was he that was responsible of the present poor condition of the masses. It gives a negative presentation of the former Prime Minister and his family. This became very famous slogan as it was very easy to say someone a thief. Although he was not convicted directly of corruption, however this was just a political slogan to gather the sympathy of the masses.

Gali gali mai shor hai- sara tabbar chor hai. This slogan was also the continuation of the above said slogan, as it also say that it common sound of the street that Nawaz Sharif alone is not the thief but all of his family members are also thief. Nawaz Sharif’s daughter and his younger brother Shahbaz Sharif are also very active in politics. Shahbaz Sharif has been the Chief Minister of the Punjab as well. The slogan was for the purpose to inculcate that he was all the family is thief and they are not trust worthy. *Modi ka jo yar hai- ghaddar hai ghaddar hai*. This was also another slogan of PTI. It means that anyone who had good terms with Nirendra Modi, the Prime Minsiter of India, he is not loyal to Pakistan. This slogan has a background in the sense that, as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has visited India back in 1998 and later on during a family function of Sharif’s he visited Pakistan. This slogan was created to inculcate the idea in the minds of the people that earlier government of Nawaz Sharif were not loyal to the country.

Na teri vaari na meri vaari- e hai Imran de vaari. This slogan was also orchesterd by PTI. Its connotation was that both Pakistan People Party and Pakistan Muslim League had taken their turn already and now it’s the turn of PTI, that indirectly means of Imran Khan. This was also indirect criticism on the establishment on the part of PTI in the sense that they are the one who decide that who will now rule the country, so it was to let them know that don’t interfere with the party it was their turn. *Aai aai – PTI*, The word *aai* literally means has come. In this slogan, it gives a connotative meaning that PTI will win the elections this time (2018). (Islam, Saiful, Muhammad Zubair, and Imraz Muhammad. 2019)

Do nahi, aik Pakistan, This slogan reflects that PTI was the supporter of a single Pakistan, as it a very common tradition in the country that anyone can be labeled traitor. So it was to avoid of being called traitor from the establishment. It is synonymous to the *Pakistan Khappy* slogan of President Asif Ali Zardari. Back in 2008 when his wife Benazir Bhutto was assassinated during General Parvez Musharraf government their existed a great resentment among the masses. At that crucial movement he reiterated the slogan of *Pakistan Khappy* in Sindhi language that mean Pakistan will exist whatever might be the circumstances.

Having discussed the slogans at the national level by the PTI, now we will discuss the regional slogan of the PTI during the election campaign of 2018 election. PTI won these elections as majority party in Khyber Paktunkhawa and Punjab.

Balay ko diyaaa kiss nnnay saaahara- Patel Paraa Patel Paara. This slogan was specific for the politics of Karachi. It includes the symbol of Bat. As Imran Khan was the former cricketer of the country so PTI was given the election symbol of Bat. Actually the party desired to have the symbol of *Trazu* however *Jamat-i-Islami* contested and was given that symbol and PTI was allotted Bat. Patel Para was a region of Karachi. Karachi has always been thought as a region where only *Mutahhida Qaumi Party* and *Jamat-i-Islami* has fought the elections. This slogan reflected that it was now PTI that was to contest with MQM in the vicinity of Karachi.

“Lalltain Taabah na d-Laltain mukammal taabah dee. This was a slogan in Pashto language that is spoken in the North Western province of Pakistan that was later renamed during the President Asif Ali Zardari government as Khyber Pakht Khawa. (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s history, 2011). As *Laltain* was the symbol of Awami National Party that was earlier the most popular party in the region. So it meant that this year it will be PTI that will destroy the earlier ruling political parties.

Aaagli bari- Sindh ke sab seee bari bemari Asif Zardari. This slogan meant that next turn is of Singh, because Sindh was the province where PTI was unable to get number of seats. This slogan reflected that it was because of the ill tactics of earlier President Asif Ali Zardari that Sindh was not a prosperous province compared to other province like Punjab and KPK.

6. Slogans of PML

In response to these slogans of the PTI the only common slogan by the Pakistan Muslim League before the election was by the PML leader Nawaz Sharif, that why his government was ousted through the judiciary.

“Mujhe Kyun nikala?” This slogan is very interesting in the sense that it is a question in itself. It ask that why my government was abrogated. Actually Nawaz Sharif was disqualified as Prime Minister by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and in various procession and political gathering he was asking this question from the public that why he was ousted. He knew it very well that it was the establishment that played a role in his ouster however he was not naming it directly so that he can keep his options open to come in government in coming years.

7. Findings

In a nutshell it can be said that it were these slogan that were very important in the political history of Pakistan. Right from its creation in 1947 till date, only those political parties have been more successful in political mobilization that had got catchy slogans. This proved true specifically for the PPP and the PTI. Although PML (N) also had few slogans as well, like earlier discussed *Mje Kyun Nikala* (Why I was ousted?), however this was not a slogan of the political mobilization, instead it was slogan that can called a more responsive slogan. Slogans are important not only in the political history of Pakistan but even globally as well. For instance Donald Trump in the current Presidential campaign used the slogan ‘Make America Great Again...’ and another slogan “America First”. These were the slogans that resulted in the success of President in the elections. These slogans reflected his election manifesto and after coming into power as President he attempted to make America great again through economic measures. This is the main difference in the developed and developing nations. Like over here in Pakistan the slogans are used to attract masses and once after coming to power no one is worried to fulfil those slogans. This becomes one of the reason of their downfall as well. As the masses raise their hope based on the slogan, but when they are unable to deliver then it became one of their cause to decline. This was that happened exactly with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, he gave nation the dream through his slogans that the basic necessities of people that are related to food, shelter and residence be given by the state. One in power from 1971 to 1977 it was impossible for him to provide the promised amenities to the people, so they got disappointed and when Martial law was imposed in the country by General Zia ul Haq on 5th July 1977, they set their hope with him. His slogan was *Nizam-i-Mustafa* (System of

the Prophet) in the country. That means that he will implement Islamic way of government in the country. Having ruled the country for long eleven years, he was also unable to materialize the slogans.

8. Conclusion

Having discussed the success of PTI in 2018 election and the context of Pakistan's electoral politics, this paper emphasized the importance of political slogans as a potent mobilizing tool, with a particular focus on the Pakistan PTI between 2013 and 2018. Using widespread dissatisfaction with the present quo, the study shows that slogans like "*Naya Pakistan*" and "*Tabdeeli*" struck a strong chord with voters. These slogans represented a larger promise of social fairness, institutional reform, and openness; they were more than just catchphrases. PTI successfully rallied a variety of voter sectors, especially the youth and urban middle class, who were fed up with poor governance, corruption, and economic stagnation, by distilling complicated political agendas into slogans that were understandable and emotionally compelling.

These catchphrases had an effect that extended beyond the campaign trail, influencing political debate and establishing standards for the PTI's leadership. The report does, however, also highlight a significant discrepancy between the implementation of policies and rhetorical promises. In 2018, PTI encountered significant difficulties in converting its ideology into efficient governance, despite the fact that slogans were successful in galvanizing supporters and winning the election. Public dissatisfaction was caused by a number of factors, including a divided political climate, unfulfilled expectations, and inexperience in managing state affairs.

This research highlights the dual nature of slogan politics: while they can be instrumental in generating mass support, they also risk fostering cynicism if not backed by substantive action. For political parties, the lesson is clear — successful political mobilization through slogans must be coupled with credible policies and effective governance. Future research should explore how slogan-driven mobilization affects voter behavior in the long term and how different socio-political contexts influence the effectiveness of such messaging. By understanding the interplay between political communication and public expectations, political parties can develop more sustainable strategies for engagement and governance, ensuring that slogans remain a means of empowerment rather than disappointment.

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