

## **The Environmental Issues in Pakistan: An Assessment of the Political Parties Manifestos for the 2018 Elections**

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### **Abstract**

This paper assessed political parties' manifestos of the 2018 election regarding their policies for addressing Pakistan's environmental issues. The area covered by forests has reduced to 24% from 50% (in the 1940s). The wastage of natural resources, especially water, has resulted in the drying of swamps and lakes (and a general reduction of freshwater resources). Soil has become less fertile; the underground water has been receding, and the country has become a desert. Textual analysis is used to clarify each party's position and examine the comparative approach of eight major political parties. The manifestos of these parties expressed commitment to solving environmental problems as the voters have been directly affected by adverse climate changes, which have affected the social, political, and economic spheres. The parties that have been in power and those not been in power but have a significant voter following are collectively shaping the governance system to address the environmental concerns of Pakistan. Unfortunately, the redressal of environmental issues has been commonly relegated to the bottom of priorities in the manifestos of the political parties. Instead of addressing the environmental concerns, the political parties prioritised it with manipulation to grab power for the sake of enjoying it.

**Keywords:** Environment, Environmental Issues, Environmental Governance, Manifesto, Party Manifesto, Election Manifesto, Pakistan's Politics, Political Parties.

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### **1. Introduction**

The environmental issues that have become a significant concern for the world include deforestation, air and noise pollution, water pollution, changes in the climate, misuse of pesticides, soil erosion, natural and man-made disasters, and desertification. The last Parliamentary multiparty elections, which took place on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013, and the elected government (2013-2018) completed its tenure, is a prominent political landmark in the democratic history of Pakistan. After several years of political derailing (suspension of the constitution, democracy and parliament) by the military, the civilian government finally reintroduced a system of political pluralism. The general elections of 2013 gave a clear victory to the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz). However, the PTI government later criticised the same election for its massive rigging (Saleem et al., 2015). Later, the prime minister, the leader of the majority party, Muslim League (Nawaz), was removed from his office due to the Panama

Leaks revelations of massive corruption by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Consequently, the second leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) succeeded and completed the government's tenure (Cheema, 2016).

Pluralism in Pakistan politics has, on the one hand, helped in the invigoration of democracy, but it has created challenges related to the management of stable development (Taj & Rehman, 2015; Kugelman & Hathaway, 2011). The ignored but key challenge arises from the dependence of most of the rural population on natural resources and the environment. The massive migration of people from other countries and the internal displacement of militancy and disasters (natural and man-made) further lead to the scarcity of natural resources, thus affecting natural resources. Natural disasters like the flood in 2010 and climate changes like irregular rain and snow patterns have taxed voters' lives, especially people with low incomes. In pluralistic politics, mutual rivalry and the unprincipled struggle for power marginalise the key concerns of different constituencies. Such a system in Pakistan only allows individual parliamentarians with exceptional talent to occasionally raise concerns on the floor of the National Assembly and Senate about the negative environmental impact. The parties collectively ignore such issues typically.

In contrast to the two-party system, the multi-party setup in Pakistan's political system allows only a unanimous standpoint in the parliament. Deviation from the party line is strictly punished as such parliamentary members may even be de-seated. Therefore, it becomes a Herculean task for individual parliamentarians to raise the peculiar impacts of the environment. To do so, such parliamentarians must first convince the leadership (which is usually interested in issues that have a visible, broader appeal to a larger population and provide an opportunity to score political points), who usually ignore such issues as they conceive constituency-related environmental issues to be controversial and non-starter. Even impacts that may impact large areas are ignored. One pressing example of such controversy is the construction of dams and water reservoirs. The proposal for a reservoir may appeal to parliamentarians and people who would be getting water through stored water, but constituencies whose land may submerge normally oppose such ideas. Such controversy does not allow consensus, and division leads to ignoring viable and neutral sites for the construction of reservoirs.

The alarming aspect of such divisive politics on environmental issues is the critical stage of the depletion of diverse natural resources in Pakistan. When Pakistan achieved freedom from British rule, a large area was covered by permanently diversified flora and fauna. Now, the aggressive deforestation has reduced it to half (24%) of what it had been in 1947 (50%) (Ali et al., 2005; Chaudhry, 2017). Bogs are drying, pollution has made water reservoirs unusable for drinking and irrigation, and the exposed land area is losing the fertile top layer due to erosion. Pakistan suffers from drought-like situations in the south and southwest. This has deprived Pakistan of food and living.

The multi-party setup of the political parties has become the focus of making and implementing policies for effective decision-making in this regard. The major political parties will be the leading players in deciding policies to solve environmental problems in the new political process, leading towards a multiparty political system. As discussed earlier, the consolidation of decisions in the hands of leadership (a few personalities who take little interest in addressing environmental issues) will have a totalitarian approach that prohibits constructive debates and accommodating the valid points of other parties (JI, 2013). Therefore, the solution to

environmental issues largely depends on party manifestos and the leadership's sincerity and capacity to follow them. As environmental issues are very inclusive and broader, it is important that all policies integrate the component of mitigating the adverse effects of the environment and that all policies be coordinated to find sustainable solutions to environmental problems. The beginning points to do so would be the political manifestos, as these would sensitise, educate, motivate and mobilise the voters to judge and choose the best option. The manifestos would become a checklist for holding parties accountable and evaluating their performance (Khan, 2015; Nadeem et al., 2014). This paper first introduces the rarely explored issue of environmental management in Pakistan. Afterwards, it critically discusses and analyses the manifestos of major political parties. Finally, it concludes with key recommendations for Pakistan's policymakers.

## **2. Objectives, Research Questions, Scope and Methods**

The prime objective of this paper is to review the environmental issues within the Pakistani political debate through an analysis of the claims in the manifestos of various political parties. Environmental issues in Pakistan have often included the key problem of deforestation, air and noise pollution, water (drinking, lakes, rivers and sea) pollution, climatic changes, the excessive misuse of pesticides, soil erosion, disasters (natural and man-made) and last but not the least desertification. In particular, the paper finds the objectives (a) assessing each political party's current stance on environment-related issues; (b) creating a baseline of each party's commitment to the issue of environment in their manifesto; (c) developing recommendations for incorporation in Manifestos for upcoming general elections. This paper thus answers an umbrella question to achieve the stated objective: How and why is environmental management in Pakistan increasingly becoming politicised, and what political initiatives are needed to address this pressing national concern effectively?

To find these objectives and answer these questions, a thorough review of national, regional and international literature was conducted to study various frameworks used to analyse political party manifestos. Visits to offices of political parties were conducted to collect. This study was primarily a qualitative analysis of the manifestos and related secondary facts in publications. The categorisation of political parties was done with a focus on environment-related issues to assess the manifesto. A significant portion of this research work has been undertaken through a literature review of existing material and official manifestos of the parties. The review of available literature provided the researchers with a detailed analysis of the manifestos during the election campaign of major political parties that had actively participated in the 2013 general elections (Ahmad & Waqar, 2014). The manifestos analysed and assessed were those given by these political parties for the upcoming elections (July 2018) campaign, including that of the Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q; Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI); Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N); Awami National Party (ANP); Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary (PPPP); Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islam Fazal (JUI-F); Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

## **3. Environmental Issues and Party Manifesto: An Analysis**

This part of the paper glosses the environmental issues of Pakistan and the manifesto of major political parties regarding sensitivity towards environmental issues and natural resource management in Pakistan. The political parties' manifestos have been used as a significant

source of material for analysing their sensitivity to the issues about the environment. Manifestoes of eight of Pakistan's most influential political parties have been analysed. The content of each of the manifestos has been screened for information on environment-related issues in Pakistan. Since environment-related issues have spiked despite efforts to contain them, it has become a national imperative to mitigate them immediately. Unfortunately, environmental protection and environment-related issues are still off the radar for many political parties. Therefore, conducting an exercise that could streamline a party's orientation and efforts on environmental protection in Pakistan is seminal.

Natural resources and the environment, the cornerstone of economic protection and development, are the base for industrial development, tourism, infrastructural development, agriculture development, scientific research, and progress made by a country (Akram & Hamid, 2015; Khan et al., 2016; Vaughn et al., 2010). The Housing and Environmental Census (HEC, 2000) reports that agriculture is the major contributor to the economy of Pakistan, with a share of 41% in Gross Domestic Products. The same makes the most significant share in the pie chart of exports, with 86%, and employs more than 81% of Pakistan's workforce. Three-quarters of Pakistani agriculture depends on subsistence farming and is heavily at the mercy of a favourable environment. Understandably, the downward spiral of the Pakistani economy is due to the adverse effects of environmental changes such as scarcity of water, less rain, and more prolonged droughts. Most Pakistani farmers and villages depend heavily on the most favourable aspects of the environment, such as timely rain (and snowing) and changes in weather and seasons. The working conditions in industries and services that are dependent on the environment include agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and services (Mumtaz, 2018; Rasul & Ahmad, 2012). Extreme summer heat increases household electricity consumption, leaving little space for its use in industry and manufacturing—the Constitution of 1973 and various amendments that later introduced nationalised the management of natural resources. Thus, the parliament becomes the supreme source of legislation and the consequent policies for managing natural resources.

Dependence on agriculture makes Pakistan heavily dependent on the availability of natural resources. As the depletion of these resources has reached an alarmingly low level, it is pertinent to conserve such resources. The ineffective management of natural resources has remained a cause of human rights abuses and simmering conflicts among provinces and subnational regions over the control and access to such resources. The construction of water reservoirs such as Kalabagh Dame has become a political issue as managing such issues is always debated with a biased approach. The supporters consider the opposer's traitors, while the opposers present it as an existential threat and consider the supporter's exploiters. Political parties can solve this problem in parliament, and for them, their manifestos provide an effective tool to mobilise and educate their voters. The rights of people at the mercy of environmental degradation depend on political parties' coordination and cooperation in parliament. The environmental rights of citizens would ensure equality based on access to and sharing of natural resources such as land, water, forests and wildlife.

Therefore, it is important to pressurise parties to incorporate the protection and promotion of such rights in the constitutions, manifestos, visions, and missions of the political parties and their leadership. The criticality of this issue highlights that those parties who proactively become the spearhead of promoting environmental protection would be the ones that would be better equipped to face the challenges of governance when it forms government. The increasing

awareness among the masses indicates a future trend that environmental deterioration will be the leading issue in determining the electorate's mood. Table 1 shows the analysis of the political manifestos about tackling environmental issues.

Table-1: Comparison of Political Parties Election Manifesto on Environment

Party	Stance on Environmental Issues
Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking an emergency campaign for tree plantation, protecting the sea from waste, especially from industry. Incorporating environmental protection in planning urban projects.</li> <li>• To safely dispose of sewage and industry-produced wastes, it promises to construct combined effluent treatment plants (MQM, 2018).</li> </ul>
Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PML(N) prioritises ecosystem preservation in Pakistan and takes steps to fight water logging and salinity.</li> <li>• It promises a comprehensive strategy to address environmental concerns and form a bulwark against natural disasters such as floods, droughts and earthquakes by constructing model towns and villages (PML-N, 2018).</li> </ul>
Awami National Party (ANP)	ANP promises to emphasise environmental protection. It declares the environment a national asset and focuses on forests, rivers, and issues like pollution (ANP, 2018).
Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q)	This party claims to promote a “greener and cleaner” environment in Pakistan. It pledges to undertake projects that ensure this and make environmental protection a necessary component of all developmental projects. Tree plantations are promised to promote reforestation (PML-Q, 2018).
Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI- F)	Has used the word in the context of mitigation of damages caused by flood and disaster
Pakistan Tahrir-e-Insaf (PTI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During its government tenure (2013- 2018), the PTI launched an environmental policy for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.</li> <li>• At the national level, a comprehensive National Climate Change Policy will be launched.</li> <li>• It will start the “Green Development Agenda” that combines actual environmental costs in economic decision-making” and promises the protection of natural resources, reducing pollution and emphasises green energy projects.</li> <li>• It promises smart storage of rainwater and usage of organic fertilisers and pest control.</li> <li>• It aims for a 100% increase in forest-covered areas.</li> <li>• It aims to constitute national parks to preserve the flora and fauna of Pakistan.</li> <li>• It aims to increase awareness about environmental issues and solutions by incorporating such aspects in education at the primary and secondary levels.</li> <li>• It promises legislation through relevant ministries about “environmental rights” and makes them part of the constitution as a fundamental human right (PTI, 2018).</li> </ul>
Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has highlighted its achievement of planting more than one million mangroves in Sindh.</li> <li>• They are vital for the ecosystem of Sindh and Baluchistan as they help promote related flora and fauna and provide safety against natural disasters such as cyclones, windstorms, flooding, and soil erosion (PPPP, 2018).</li> </ul>
Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)	Environmental concerns are absent from their manifesto (JI, 2018)

### **3.1. Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)**

The MQM party was founded in 1978 by Altaf Hussain and advocates for equal rights for the working class and opportunities for all. It is considered a national library party in Pakistan. The party's core goals revolve around democratic principles: abolishing the feudal system, ending authoritarianism, promoting cultural pluralism, ensuring autonomy for the minor provinces, and devolving power to the grassroots level. About the environment, the analysis of the MQM's manifesto highlights its commitments to the party. Though environmental issues were hence not given sufficient coverage in the MQM manifesto, the following points can be gleaned from its manifesto:

- Although in its manifesto, the MQM party acknowledged and highlighted the environment as a serious issue that is causing many problems, including pollution, water, and sanitation, and also impeding economic protection, the party manifesto lacks details about providing a pragmatic strategy and policy on how and what steps would be taken to eradicate the problem.
- Not only is the environmental issue slightly touched by the party in its manifesto, but it also lacks a clear link between the environmental issues and other issues.

Due to the lack of a clear focus on environmental issues, the party must employ verbal and written advocacy tools to create awareness about the issue among its influential circles and focus more on it.

### **3.2. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N)**

The Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party was the majority party under which the Muslims of the sub-continent got an independent state, Pakistan. Later on, the party was subdivided into various factions due to differences. The PML-N is one of the offshoots of this division. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has headed the party since the 1990s. The party got almost 9.4% of the popular vote in the general elections of 2013. The party has been the centre to the right, and a conservative polity party has a leading position in Pakistani politics. An analysis of the party's manifesto for evidence of the amount of importance it allocates to issues related to the environment yields the fact that the party acknowledges environmental problems as a vital issue. From the PML-N manifesto analysis, the following points can be gleaned:

- The party acknowledges the environment as a vital issue and is firmly determined to work for the environmental problems if it comes into power.
- The manifesto shows the expected activities and policy initiatives the party will take to achieve, but it lacks a strategy for achieving the specified goals.
- The manifesto analysis of the PML-N aspires to the dire need to sensitise the political representatives of the party about environmental issues so that they can realise and work on environment-related issues.
- The party needs verbal and written advocacy tools to create awareness about the issue among influential circles so that the party can focus more on the issue.

Furthermore, the analysis of the PML-N shows that the party needs to define and focus on environment-related issues according to international standards. The party hopes to establish once it assumes office: "Environmental protection shall be promoted" (PML-N, 2018). Like

other political parties, the shortcomings in the PML-N manifesto are the lack of detailed strategy and policy on how the party would look for environmental protection and related issues once it comes into power. Also, the manifesto lacks details of proposed activities that would preclude environmental pollution from increasing, and owing to this, their target setting seems too arbitrary. To sum up, it is maintained that the environment as an independent topic has not been markedly developed in PML-N's manifesto.

### **3.3. Awami National Party (ANP)**

The Awami National Party is a nationalist (leftist) political party in Pakistan, and Senator Asfandiyar Wali Khan leads the party. The party is popular in Pakistan's majority regions of Pakistan, i.e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan. Initially, the party focused on four areas: gender equity and equality, democracy free from religious and feudalistic constraints, peace, and no terrorism. In the last legislative elections of 2013, the party won 1.0% of the popular vote but failed to secure any seats in the lower house of Parliament. A scrutiny of the ANP manifesto shows that environmental issues have not been addressed within the program/policy continuum of the party's manifesto. It is a fact that environmental issues also have a direct impact on other socioeconomic issues in Pakistan. Still, the environment as an exclusive topic in the manifesto of ANP has not been dealt with like another issue of society. From the ANP manifesto analysis, the following points can be gleaned:

- Clearly, the issues relevant to the environment have not been given within the programs/policy continuum of the party's manifesto
- Efforts need to be orchestrated to bring to the party's attention the importance of environmental issues in Pakistan
- Attempts to be made via verbal and written discourse to engage the influential leaders of ANP to change Pakistan's current environmental situation.

### **3.4. Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q)**

The Pakistan Muslim League-Q is one of the offshoots of the Pakistan Muslim League, which was once a part of PML-N. Shujaat Hussain leads the party and is currently allied with the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) in government. The core objectives of the party revolve around politics of reconciliation, accommodation, and cultural harmony, as well as working for development, devolution, defence, and democracy. According to the party manifesto, the party proposes health, education, and economic innovations. The party has no specific reference to environmental issues. PML-Q, thus, does not adequately address the issue of environmental protection in its manifesto. From the PML-Q's manifesto analysis, the following points can be gleaned:

- Issues about the environment do not feature in the activities and policy changes proposed in the manifesto
- The need to apprise the political representatives of PML-Q of Pakistan's environmental issues and situation was strongly felt.
- It is necessary that the influential representatives of the PML-Q be made aware and sensitised so that the relevance of this issue in changing the socio-economic predicament of Pakistan can be realised.

### **3.5. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal**

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F), led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman, is the rightest party and has widespread support due to its religious cause. The party indirectly uplifts society by bringing reforms to the country's social, economic, and political spheres. The analysis of the party manifesto indicates that the party lacks any commitment to solving environmental issues. The party typically avoids producing a manifesto that deviates from its conservative interpretation of society and its needs. Therefore, protecting the environment is absent from the party's vision and mission (JUI-F, 2018).

### **3.6. Pakistan Tahrik-e-Insaf (PTI)**

Pakistan Tahrik-e-Insaf (PTI), as its name indicates, is a revolutionary party that works for justice and fair play. The very aim of the party establishment was to bring drastic reforms in the existing socio-economic and political structure of the society and to make accountability. The party gained popularity very soon due to its appealing objectives. Thus, in a very short time, it became Pakistan's third-largest party in parliamentary majority.

As it has found the slogan of reform, justice, and accountability for corruption to be a leading magnet for public attraction, it has expanded these ideals into all realms where the party thinks Pakistan can develop and improve. The manifesto of PTI envisages the creation of a modern, democratic, Islamic republic country. It has always advocated the completion of political processes, religious freedom, and economic development and has unleashed hope for changing the status quo in Pakistan.

The PTI has focused on reforms in almost every sector of society. About the environment, the PTI manifesto analyses the following points can be gleaned:

- In its manifesto, it has one section entitled “Environmental issues,” which provides an elaborate plan for handling issues related to environmental protection. Thus, it started a nationwide plantation program and planted billions of trees during the Tsunami (PTI, 2018).
- The PTI launched an environmental policy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan during the PTI government tenure and thus planted a billion trees.
- At the national level, it has plans to launch a comprehensive National Climate Change Policy.
- It will start the “Green Development Agenda” that combines actual environmental costs in economic decision-making” and promises the protection of natural resources, reducing pollution and emphasises green energy projects.
- It promises smart storage of rainwater and usage of organic fertilisers and pest control.
- It aims for a 100% increase in forest-covered areas.
- It aims to constitute national parks to preserve the flora and fauna of Pakistan.
- It aims to increase awareness about environmental issues and solutions by incorporating such aspects in education at the primary and secondary levels.

The PTI is very focused on addressing environmental issues and thus promises legislation through relevant ministries regarding “Environmental rights” and making them part of the constitution as a fundamental human right (PTI, 2018).

### **3.7. Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP)**

The Pakistan People's Party was founded in 1967 with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as its first chairperson. The founding objective of the party is to remove all social evils from society, eradicate poverty and abolish inequality from society. The core objectives of the party (later re-named Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians-PPPP), as indicated in its manifesto, include equality, education, employment, education, energy, and environment. The manifesto clearly shows that the space allotted to the environment is comparatively less important than all others. The party manifesto reveals its commitment to the environment.

Its recently elected Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, a foreign graduate, has pledged that environmental issues will be among the key priorities of his party's manifesto for the upcoming general elections since protecting the planet was the long-term responsibility of the whole world. Delivering his message on World Environment Day, Bilawal stated that safeguarding the country's natural resources for the sustainable use of the nation and the future generation has been of paramount importance for his party. The PPPP Chairman said his party would take practical steps to protect the environment. It will be even ensured while carrying out economic development and industrialisation because sustainable development is the need of the hour. Declaring the country's wildlife along with the natural forests as nature's gifts to the nation, he added that urgent steps were required to check deforestation besides initiating ventures of afforestation.

The following excerpt has been borrowed from the PPPP manifesto, and the highlighted portions are indicative of its commitment to addressing Environmental issues:

- The PPPP is committed to addressing the issue of environmental protection in Pakistan, as seen by some of its proposed interventions in forest and pollution.
- The manifesto, however, shows a lack of direction, as there is no future environmental protection policy that the party expects to achieve once they assume office—without a benchmark, the impact of innovations and interventions in environmental protection would be difficult to gauge.
- In the light of the analysis, it is felt that there is a need to actively engage with the influential members of the party to discuss with them the relevance of environmental issues in Pakistan and the need for them to benchmark a target and subsequently plan activities to work for environmental protection so that the problems about this harrowing issue can be addressed.

### **3.8 Jamaat-i-Islami**

Syed Abul A'la Maududi founded Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in Lahore on August 26, 1941. The party's core objective is establishing an Islamic state governed by Shariah law. Before Siraj-ul-Haq assumed leadership, the party was led by Syed Munawar Hassan. Religious injunctions and practices bolster Jamaat-e-Islami's manifesto, and its policy actions and political plans are all interspersed with Islamic teachings. In their manifesto, there was no evidence of the Party's plan of action for addressing issues relevant to the environment. Also, the party's manifesto did not allot any space for environmental protection or issues. About the environment, from the analysis of the Jamaat-e-Islami manifesto, the following points can be summed up:

- Environmental issues have not been addressed within the program/policy continuum of the party's manifesto.
- Efforts must be orchestrated to bring to the party's attention and its leaders the importance of the environment and related issues.
- Attempts to be made via verbal and written discourse to engage the influential leaders of JI to sensitise its leaders about environment protection and other issues related to the environment prevailing in Pakistan.

#### **4. Discussion and Findings**

These manifestos indicate room for development regarding the environment in the political landscape of Pakistan. The manifesto analysis revealed that environmental issues in Pakistan were seldom recognised as significant. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan People's Party were the only political parties that had addressed this issue aptly and had provided implementable policy action plans in their manifesto. On the other hand, most of the other political parties either missed out on representing this issue or inadequately addressed this problem. Increasing environmental degradation is a harrowing problem that needs to be mitigated immediately. Given the limited space allotted to this issue in the manifestoes of the main political parties in Pakistan, it is incumbent upon public health experts, economists, policymakers, academia, and other think tanks to address the problem.

- The word environment was mentioned in the political manifestoes of 7 political parties. However, the context in which the word was mentioned varied:
- PML-N mentioned that it would work to implement the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) (MEW, 2010) and enforce the Environment Protection Act of 1997. It further mentions other measures to improve the country's environment.
- PPPP mentions the word in varying contexts ranging from climate change, protection of the environment and sustainable development to the health sector, family planning, etc.
- MQM mentions that it would undertake various initiatives to improve the environment, including introducing environment-friendly buses, efficiently using natural and energy resources and protecting wildlife and the environment.
- PML-N mentions the word environment in varying contexts ranging from protection of the environment and climate change to Inter-provincial drainage accord, speedy and inexpensive justice, economic revival and tax reforms, etc.
- PTI thoroughly understands the word environment, i.e., protection from natural disasters, clean air and potable water, green development agenda, disaster management, and other environmental and climate change-related issues.
- MQM has mentioned the word pollution once. The context describes pollution in an urban context, related to unplanned infrastructure development, protection of slums, and excessive urban pollution.
- PTI mentioned pollution thrice. The context in which the word "pollution" has been mentioned shows that the party understands climate change as a process.
- JI mentioned pollution once with climate change and the environment.

Thus, analysis of the manifestos of Pakistani political parties reflects that these parties focus on addressing environmental issues. These parties have also stated different strategies to address the issue in their manifestos and devised various measures to tackle it once they come into power.

## 5. Conclusion

The discussion of the manifestos of major political parties in Pakistan revealed that some measures need to be integrated into the manifestos and policies of all political parties in Pakistan. All parties should pledge to preserve the ecosystem, natural habitats and the environment in Pakistan, as the deterioration of the environment results in harmful and unwanted climate changes that produce natural disasters and jeopardise food security. All parties must pledge to doable promises related to the environment instead of making exaggerated and unrealistic claims. The Political Parties and Organizations Act may be updated to bind parties to develop a manifesto they want to implement after coming into power. They should be bound to provide deadlines for doing so, and failing to meet the minimum threshold would be punishable. It is the most important duty of the opposition benches in the parliament to ensure compliance with policies that protect the environment. They must ensure checks and balances on the ruling party (parties) and make them accountable for failing to do so. In a proper democratic setup, opposition parties have their shadow governments, which take alternative and competitive approaches to treasury benches and thus help form healthy approaches to environmental concerns. Political leadership especially needs a thorough understanding of the impacts of environmental degradation on people. They must also be open to constituency-specific solutions and proactively integrate local environmental concerns into broader policies and solutions.

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