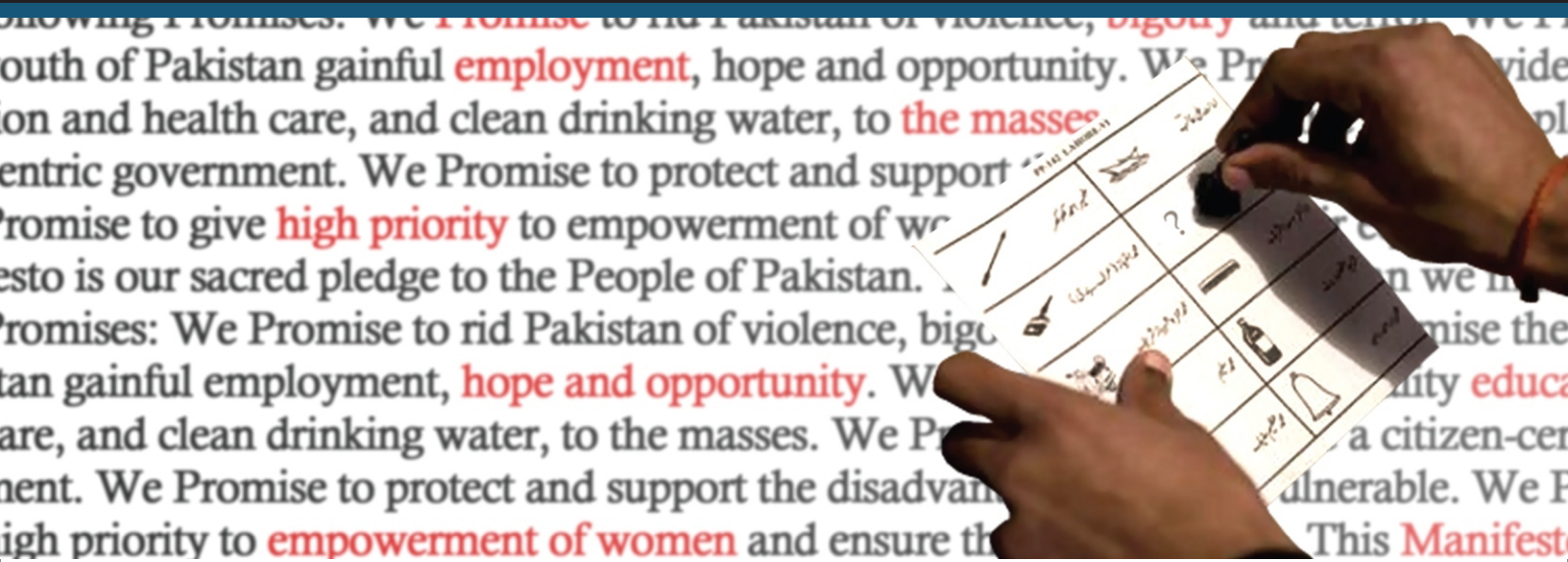


Delivering on Promises

Assessing Implementation of Political Party Manifestos



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R1212-07

This publication has been produced with the support of
Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit.

A Jinnah Institute Research Report

Delivering on Promises

Assessing Implementation of Political Party Manifestos

About Jinnah Institute

Jinnah Institute (JI) is a non-profit public policy organisation based in Pakistan. It functions as a think tank, advocacy group and public outreach organisation independent of the government. JI seeks to promote knowledge-based policy making for strengthening democratic institutions and to build public stakes in human and national security discourse. It remains committed to investing in policies that promote fundamental rights, tolerance and pluralism.

Jinnah Institute's Open Democracy Initiative

The lack of sustained democracy in Pakistan has diminished public input in governance. It has also led to a breakdown of institutions, non-responsive governance, and public services that remain dedicated to elite alignments. As such, there is a mistrust of democracy, which has created serious gaps for public participation in governance and isolated state structures even further.

Jinnah Institute's Open Democracy Initiative hopes to bridge this gap and reverse this trend by employing quality research and analytics to the study of public policy problems, creating awareness for and facilitating the implementation of informed recommendations. This programme focuses on democratic ideals such as the right to information, transparency in public contracts, the right to religious freedom, social entitlements and the provision of justice. This programme also builds awareness and capacity for better governance in Pakistan's institutions, and advocates for expanding diminished state writ in areas where parallel, colonial structures restrict access to fundamental entitlements, such as universal suffrage and equal citizenship rights.

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Preface

Jinnah Institute's Open Democracy Initiative aims to foster better linkages between citizens and policymakers by using quality research on public policy problems and facilitating the implementation of informed recommendations. In our quest to facilitate the demand for good governance, we are undertaking a series of policy research endeavours concerning political parties. The first of these initiatives is a review of the 2008 party manifestos and the extent to which they were implemented during the past five years.

Party manifestos are central to a competitive electoral process as well as the larger civic engagement process. This report will therefore aim to chart a broader view of the implementation of these documents. It would be vital to consider the context within which democracy was revived five years ago. A former military chief was still the president and democratic institutions were grappling with the legacy of nearly a decade of autocratic rule. Much of the democratic experience since has focused on correcting structural problems and fine-tuning the rules of the game for democratic functioning.

Understandably, and true to the South Asian political tradition, manifestos employ political rhetoric as well as sloganeering to attract voters. Consequently, the full implementation of manifestos becomes a tall order. There is much to be done within the political parties in terms of their policy processes and how they track the implementation of their manifestos. The purpose of this report is not to evaluate the 'performance' of the political parties but to highlight the way manifestos inform popular politics and how far they are implemented in a structured manner.

This report examines all the manifestos but focuses on a few areas that roughly correspond to popular concerns: education, unemployment, energy, minority and women's rights, counterterrorism and youth affairs. The findings of this study show that much headway was made by all political parties in vital areas such as education, constitutional reform, legislation concerning women and minorities. On counterterrorism and the youth – two important spheres of contemporary Pakistan – the manifestos' implementation was, at best, tenuous. However, the reasons for partial implementation are complex, manifold and beyond the scope of this study.

The study also proposes a few recommendations which largely concern internal reform within the political parties. It is vital that parties evolve an internal policymaking capacity which balances long-term national interests with short-term electoral interests. In the long term, political parties will have to focus more on policy issues and providing alternatives to the public. In time, this will become a key plank of 'electability' in the build-up to elections.

Now that Pakistan is moving towards another general election, political parties are announcing their new manifestos to attract the electorate, with promises made on all fronts, from national security to social development and the economy. We hope that this study will provide a baseline for future research on the topic. More importantly, past experience of implementing manifestos and the recommendations herein can hopefully inform debates within the country, especially within the political parties. Democratisation in Pakistan is a long term project which requires informed deliberations and building a critical mass of policy research to support key stakeholders and the public at large. We hope that this report helps in achieving this goal.

Executive Summary

In 2008, Pakistan successfully transitioned to democratic rule following almost a decade of military rule under Pervez Musharraf. The struggles and turmoil of 2007 are well-documented and representative of the volatile condition of Pakistan's political landscape. In this climate, the single-most pressing concern facing Pakistan's political parties was reviving the democratic process and strengthening democratic institutions – a concern that was reflected in the election manifestos of these parties. This report is a comparative analysis and review of the manifesto pledges of political parties in the run-up to the 2008 general election and documents their current implementation status.

With a general election due in May, an understanding of political manifestos and their legislative and administrative implementation, at the federal and provincial levels, is of the essence. This will allow observers, commentators and stakeholders to arrive at strong conclusions on how the manifesto, as a document, may be developed and advanced for the betterment of the political landscape.

While election manifestos may be approached in a number of ways, this report will focus on the presence of, and the importance given to, the following issues in these documents: education, economy, minorities, women, counter-terrorism and youth. The findings of this report present answers to four critical questions: First, how effective is the election manifesto in terms of informing and shaping the political opinions of the electorate? Second, which issues take precedence over others in terms of manifesto content, and to what extent do political parties deliver on their manifesto pledges? And third, how often do political parties conduct internal reviews of their previous government tenures with the manifesto as a reference for evaluating which pledges were or weren't successfully delivered?

This report proposes to develop an understanding of the aforementioned questions through a comprehensive study of the political manifestos, focusing on the following areas: education, energy, unemployment, women, minorities, counter-terrorism and youth. Deploying a qualitative approach, this research will examine the pledges and commitments made in political party

manifestos according to the abovementioned scope and assess their status of implementation. The political parties in question are the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F). A performance analysis of these parties will be undertaken by evaluating the given party's legislative activity, as well as its administration functioning, if the party under consideration has secured a majority in the federal or provincial legislature and formed a government at the respective tier.

This research project has made extensive use of political party manifestos – available in print and through online resources – in conjunction with other critical and secondary material, such as media reports and commentaries on election manifestos. In addition to this, a Jinnah Institute interactive focus group discussion on strengthening democratic institutions contributed significant insight into the drafting process of manifestos. Political party representatives involved in the formulation of manifestos were also individually consulted in this regard.

An initial analysis of Pakistan's political setting, along with ascribing this context to the drafting process of the 2007-08 election manifestos, will set the scene for the report. This will be followed by a comparative review of the pledges made in election manifestos, in relation to the identified areas of governance. Further, an elaborate section on the implementation of manifesto pledges will follow, which will be comparative in nature, demonstrating the areas where political parties have delivered and where they have fallen short.

Assessment and Findings

An examination of implementation of pledges with respect to education shows that all parties in question vowed to promote universal free primary education in their manifestos – which has subsequently become a fundamental right preserved in the Constitution of Pakistan with the 18th Amendment. An assessment of political parties' consideration of key issues in the education sector, such as promoting a uniform education system and madrasa reforms, is also incorporated. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which faces the greatest challenge in improving its education system, the focus on improving numbers rather than quality of education – coupled with the lingering security threat – has left much to be desired in terms of a comprehensive education game-plan.

Further, an evaluation of the pledges regarding energy and unemployment (both subsets of economy), indicates that these fields have been given sparse importance compared with the more extensive policies on education. Although some parties promised to set up employment programmes in their manifestos, none delivered on their pledges. While the government has undertaken initiatives to introduce income and loan schemes to support and empower the rural population, available evidence suggests that Pakistan's informal economy is providing more employment opportunities than the formal sector.

An analysis of counter-terrorism strategies in manifestos revealed that all parties were vague on the subject. Since 2008, thousands of civilians and security officials have been killed in terrorist attacks and the military has conducted several operations, including in Swat and South Waziristan. Even so, the counter-terrorism policies of political parties – from vigorous approaches, such as dismantling terrorist groups, to co-opting intermediaries in order to influence militants – have yet to come into full effect.

Table 1 | Importance of Issues in Manifestos¹

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Education	■■■	■■■	■■■	■■■	■■	■■
Unemployment	■■■	■■■	■	■	■	■
Energy	■■■	■■■	X	X	■	■
Minority Rights	■■	■	■	■■	■	■
Women's Rights	■■	■	■	■	■	■
Counter-Terrorism	■	■	■	■	■	■
Youth	X	■■	■■	X	X	X

Legend			
No Stance: X	General: ■	Detailed: ■■	Extensive: ■■■

Key Recommendations

Jinnah Institute urges political parties, particularly party members and representatives tasked with drafting their party's electoral manifesto, to be cognisant of the following key recommendations.

Mainstream the Digitising of Manifestos

- It is critical that all party manifestos be made available online for more effective and broader circulation. The PPP is the only party that has made all its manifestos from 1970 onwards available on the internet. However, other parties – including the PML-N, MQM, PML-Q and PTI – have made their more recent manifestos available online.

Developing Intra-Party Performance Evaluation Systems

- Political parties should develop an internal evaluation system, such that they themselves are able to measure successes and failures in terms of what was proposed in their manifesto, which will also aid in devising appropriate policies.
- The PPP conducted an internal assessment of its previous two governments under Benazir Bhutto. However, this analysis does not compare the performance of the government with the proposals made in their manifestos. The PML-N's 2007 manifesto included a cursory note on the party's performance in their previous tenures; this also fell short of a comprehensive performance evaluation. Furthermore, the MQM and ANP have also developed internal review processes, though their findings have not been revealed.

Promoting Internal Policymaking

- It is vital that parties develop and cultivate an internal policymaking capacity, which balances long-term national interests with short-term electoral interests. Going ahead, political parties will have to focus more on policy matters. In time, this will become the principal 'electability' factor in the build-up to national polls.

Underlining Human Rights Issues

- Given the rise of violence in Pakistan, political party manifestos should streamline discussions on violence and human rights. A focus on human rights will also factor into combating extremism, and it is therefore imperative that all parties must elaborately and concretely address this in their manifestos.

In addition, a study of party positions on minorities, women and youth in election manifestos reflected a desire to improve the status of these groups in society. Despite parties stating in their manifestos their wish to set up an independent commission to deal with matters concerning minorities, no such body has been set up.

In terms of tackling the treatment of women as second-class citizens of Pakistan, all parties made a variety of legislative promises, such as schemes to ensure the financial independence of women, ratifying laws dealing with violence against women, and repealing laws discriminating against women. While this has been met with some success, with the passage of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act in 2010, and the National Commission on the Status of Women Bill in 2012, the question of changing the on-ground reality remains. Finally, as far as the youth of Pakistan are concerned, the importance given to devising a 'youth policy' by political parties in their manifestos has been thin at best. Despite the unparalleled youth bulge Pakistan is currently experiencing, policymaking at the national level hardly reflects or considers the attitudes and expectations of Pakistan's youth.

The findings contained in this report become particularly important when considering the upcoming election, and the current political party manifestos. Facilitating the progression of the manifesto as a political document that circulates critical information concerning a party's position on key issues is an imperative initiative for Pakistan.

Table 1 and its associated legend provide an overview of the positions of political parties on the key areas of governance analysed in this report. More importantly, the table highlights how much qualitative importance each issue has been given in terms of manifesto focus and content.

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1. PILDAT. (2007). "Election 2008 – A Comparative Analysis of Election 2008 Manifestoes of Major Political Parties", p. 9. Retrieved from <http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/cmr/ComparativeAnalysisofElectionManifestoes-CMR.pdf>

Introduction

Political parties are basic structures that are essential for the smooth functioning of the democratic political process. A party's election campaign is strengthened and supported by a written platform, a political manifesto, which outlines its vision for the country and lists policies that it will seek to implement if voted into power. The manifesto is an all-important document that allows the electorate to make an informed decision about their vote.

In developed democracies, the manifesto of a political party is a benchmark for evaluating pre-election appeal as well as post-election performance. In Pakistan, however, manifestos remain largely ignored both in public discourse as well as in academic circles, whether for the purpose of determining the 'electability' of party candidates, or for evaluating a party's legislative or administrative performance. With a general election expected in May, it is imperative to develop a rigorous understanding of political parties' manifestos, and what they stand for in the ever-fluctuating circumstances of Pakistani politics.

The election manifesto – a political party's pre-defined basis for seeking a mandate from the people – remains on the fringes of Pakistani political life. In addition to reviewing manifesto pledges and tracking their implementation, this report also seeks to advocate the importance of popularising political manifestos – making these documents available through different channels – such that their content is able to percolate into the national consciousness and empower the electorate. Upon examining the 2007-08 manifestos and identifying policies outlined within the aforementioned categories of governance, the body of this report will carry out a performance analysis of the major political parties.

Specifically, this report aims to:

- Assess the content of political parties' manifestos as published ahead of the 2008 general elections in Pakistan;
- Evaluate legislative and administrative performance, wherever information is readily available, of major political parties in terms of the vision outlined, and the promises made in the 2007-08 manifestos;

- Examine the history of the process of drafting political parties' manifestos in Pakistan, as well as any trajectory to implementing the policies outlined in the manifestos; and
- Develop an understanding of the positions of each major political party on matters of national and public importance, in addition to differentiating between the stances of major political parties on these issues.

Methodology

This report sets out to assess manifesto pledges made in seven specific sectors of governance, and its findings in terms of implementation status will be limited to the prescribed scope. The identified areas of governance – education, energy, unemployment, women, minorities, counter-terrorism and youth – have been selected to provide a preliminary insight into political parties' stances and promises on key socioeconomic issues, as well as on the major problems faced by Pakistan in 2007. It should be noted that this report does not assess pledges made with regard to law enforcement, for the purposes of conducting a thorough analysis of promises made to marginalised and sidelined groups, such as women, minorities, and the youth. Indeed, while a consummate study of political manifestos would have shed light on a broader range of subtopics, various methodological constraints led to the development of a report trajectory geared toward illuminating the implementation status of pledges made in reference to the seven fundamental facets of societal governance, which have been identified as the scope of this evaluative study.

A holistic and more comprehensive analysis of performance in terms of manifesto pledges, which covers all aspects of national and sub-national governance as well as all promises made in the manifesto document(s), may be successfully undertaken for a single political party. Indeed, it is hoped that political parties themselves will conduct thorough internal performance reviews using the manifesto document as a baseline for such assessments.

Historical Background

The democratic process of Pakistan has suffered from instability since the creation of the country. For over half of its existence, Pakistan has been under military rule and experienced prolonged periods without democratic civilian leadership at the helm. The promulgation of the 1973 Constitution did not alter the unstable course of the country's politics. During extended periods of military rule, various steps were taken to enervate political parties, including proscribing these institutions altogether, and damage their reputation.

Pakistan's 'Decade of Democracy' (1988-1999) was primarily marred by interference from the unelected arms of the state through a constitutional provision – Article 58 – 2(b), removed by the 18th Amendment – that allowed the president to dismiss an elected government. In addition, alleged corruption, economic mismanagement and a culture of nepotism on the part of elected governments caused further disenchantment within the electorate. It is pertinent to note that in spite of a significant degree of maturity witnessed in the political class, some of these trends largely persist and prevail in the current political landscape of Pakistan.

Grassroots politics in Pakistan has also been detrimentally impacted by military rule. All military dictators since 1958 have held non-party elections at local levels as a tactic to weaken political parties, as well as to reinforce clan politics, and crucially, divert attention from the absolute power centralised in the hands of the military. General Zia ul Haq held three non-party elections to strengthen his rule, and General Pervez Musharraf reintroduced this practice, especially at the local level of governance, as a means to further depoliticise Pakistani society. As a result, the current democratic regime neglects or entirely abandons local bodies which were elected on a non-party basis. Following the promulgation of the 18th Amendment, many administrative and legislative powers have been devolved to the provinces – including the authority to develop local government systems – but the local government system is yet to be revived in Pakistan.

Towards Democracy: 2002 Election Manifestos

While 70 parties contested the general elections in 2002, only five secured a significant number of seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies. These were the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), the Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N), the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an electoral alliance of religious parties.

Smaller parties like the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), the Pakistan Awami Tehreek, the Jamhoori Watan Party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Zia ul Haq Shaheed), the Pakistan Democratic Party, the Balochistan National Party, and the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party secured one seat each in the National Assembly.

The PPP developed a detailed manifesto document for a “just, equitable and egalitarian Pakistan” and promised that a vote for the party was a vote for “peace, freedom and economic opportunity”. The PTI launched a 31-page manifesto titled “An Agenda for Resurgence”, which illustrated the party's promises for institutional reforms, human development, economic revival and national security.

The PML-Q, the PPP and the MMA emerged as the leading parties in the election. The PML-Q formed the federal government with the MMA's support, while the PPP and the PML-N sat in the opposition. The MQM, with 17 seats, became a partner in the federal and Sindh governments. After 2004, the MMA also became part of the opposition.

Power Transitioning: Contextualising the Manifestos

Arguably one of the most turbulent years in Pakistan's history, 2007 began with uncertainty over then President Pervez Musharraf negotiating political alliances for securing a second term in office, and ended with the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. After having entered into a decisive confrontation with Pakistan's Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in March, Musharraf declared emergency rule in November on the pretext that the country was facing a severe crisis because of increased militant violence and an uncompromising judiciary that had left the government paralysed.

The PPP and the PML-N had begun mapping out strategies to challenge the Musharraf regime as early as 2006, when they signed the 'Charter of Democracy', signalling an alliance between the two most prominent political parties of the country. Subsequently, the PPP and PML-N manifestos made frequent references to the damage done to the democratic process by recurring military interventions, and promised to rectify the balance of civil-military relations in Pakistan.

The PPP manifesto listed 36 points from the 'Charter of Democracy' under the 'Good Governance' section of its manifesto, while the PML-N manifesto made frequent references to ending military rule and the restoration of democracy. The PML-N dedicated an entire chapter to the party's promises to correct the civil-military imbalance in Pakistan.

Similarly, the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) and the All Pakistan Democratic Movement (APDM), which were led by Bhutto and Sharif respectively, held joint meetings in the early days of December to reach consensus on a 15-point charter of demands. However, these meetings were ultimately unsuccessful as the two bodies could not agree on the issue of judges sacked by Musharraf. The ADPM advocated reinstatement, while the ARD did not. The inability to strike a political compromise in this regard was an indication that a long-term alliance between the two main political parties was unlikely.

President Musharraf's incumbent regime, including the PML-Q and the MQM, was suffering from his unpopularity in the build-up to the elections. Parties which had been involved in implementing November's emergency rule, and had also spearheaded a crackdown on opposition parties themselves, became the target of public anger which had been simmering for months after the Lal Masjid operation in June and the May 12 riots in Karachi.

The most pressing concern that emerged during 2007 was restoring the democratic process and ridding the country of military dictatorship. This is reflected in the manifestos of opposition parties such as the PPP and the PML-N, who were focused on re-democratising the country and curbing the power of the military. The PML-N also focused its manifesto on the restoration of the deposed judges.

References

- 1 The Pakistan Muslim League (Q) is registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under the acronym PML, however, the party is referred as the PML-Q throughout this report for the purpose of clarity.
- 2 The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) was an electoral wing of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and was formed in 2002 for the purpose for complying with election rules. For the 2008 Elections, the PPP registered under the acronym PPPP with the ECP, however, they are referred to as the PPP elsewhere in this report.
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Party-Wise Commitments in the 2007-08 Manifestos

Following a year of turmoil and chaos, the 2007-08 manifestos reflected a desire to strengthen Pakistan's punctured democratic process. This section draws directly from the manifesto documents of political parties and provides a comparative review and analysis of the commitments made by parties. Assessments are made in the following categories of governance: education, economy (with energy and unemployment as subsets of the economy), minority rights, women's rights, counter-terrorism and youth.

Education

The PPP included education as the first item in the 'Meeting Basic Needs' chapter of its manifesto. The party targeted the universal enrolment of all children between the ages of five and ten by 2015. In addition, the party manifesto focused on higher education, specifically in terms of quality improvement and increased funding. The PPP also stated that it will put in place programmes which offer vocational education and technical training to the youth. The party manifesto called for madrasa (seminary) reform, and provided for a system where there is a free boarding school for "socially or economically disadvantaged children."¹ It also stated that it will give a stipend to every child in government-run primary schools, and also provide computers to secondary schools and government colleges. The manifesto also stated that the party will lift the ban on student unions, but will not permit arms on campus.

The PML-N manifesto, in its section on the education sector, stated that "education must become number one national priority."² The party called for free education in public sector institutions up to the higher secondary level. The manifesto offered an elaborate focus on higher education and made commitments to fund and establish more institutions. The PML-N also set goals for enrolment and promised places to high achievers in public sector institutions. It mentioned the National Education Policy and vowed to implement it in order to "break the monopoly of [the] elitist education system."³ The party manifesto also stated that national curricula will be standardised at all levels of instruction to eliminate a "multi-class system

based education” in the country.⁴ The manifesto also suggested that teaching positions be made more attractive through pay rises.

The PML-Q manifesto also echoed the mantra of education being a 'top priority' and sought to establish free and universal primary education. The party manifesto made a commitment for mass literacy in the country “within the next ten years,” which would include teacher training and salary increases.⁵ The PML-Q manifesto also discussed the importance of improving madrasa education through better financing and modernisation. In addition, the party also sought to promote scholarships in foreign universities for deserving students and making the Higher Education Commission autonomous.

The MQM manifesto called for the elimination of the “present dual system of education” by bringing Urdu-medium public institutions at par with English-medium institutions, while increasing access to education throughout the country.⁶ The party also pledged to set up institutions in cities, towns and villages with over 5,000 inhabitants. The party document targeted increasing investments in the education sector and cited the objective of making education free of cost. In addition to calling for an increase in teacher salaries, the manifesto proposed government regulation of private educational institutions.

According to the ANP manifesto, it is the state's obligation to provide free education up to the primary level, and higher education thereafter at an affordable rate. The party set a target of allocating six percent of GDP to education. The manifesto called for curriculum reform, and it promised to eliminate the “dual system of education.”⁷ It proposed a single system that “meets international standards.”⁸ The party manifesto also stated that elementary-level education would be provided to the student in his or her mother tongue.

The JUI-F manifesto stated that attempts would be made to impart free education to all, based on a uniform curriculum developed according to Islamic traditions. The manifesto said that the party will give special importance to Islamic Studies, Islamic History, Pakistan Studies and English, in addition to a course on ethics. It also stated that technical education and computer studies would be introduced at the school level. The party vowed to make efforts to extend the provision of education in villages and rural areas.

Table 1 | Party Pledges on Education

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Universal Free Primary Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enrolment Targets		✓				
Expenditure Targets		✓		✓	✓	
Higher Education	✓	✓				
Vocational/Technical Education				✓		
Curricula Reform/Standardisation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Madrasa Reform	✓			✓		
Teacher Salaries		✓	✓	✓		

Energy

The PPP manifesto promised the elimination of energy shortages through energy sector reform. Having stated that Pakistan requires 8,000 MW of additional electricity by 2010 to meet its needs, the PPP manifesto proposed that this requirement be met by utilising coal, solar, wind and hydroelectric power. The manifesto put forth that the party is “committed to establishing a comprehensive and credible programme that ensures Energy Security and Adequacy of Supply.”⁹ It further stated that the party will accelerate work on the Thar coal project and revive the Keti Bunder project.

In the section titled “Industrial Development,” the PML-N promised to meet the energy needs of an expanding industrial sector.¹⁰ It called for maximum exploitation of indigenous resources, reduction of dependence on foreign sources of energy, and both conservation and efficient use of the existing energy capacity in the country.

The PML-Q manifesto did not propose any policies related to the energy sector, nor did it provide statistics on the energy situation of Pakistan at the time.

The MQM manifesto, in its sections on industry and labour, proposed that the party will address the problem of load-shedding. The manifesto also briefly touched on the role of energy in reducing pollution from the environment.

The ANP manifesto did not specifically address energy. However, it did state that the party will strive to make power a provincial subject. The document also suggested that the party will work for power distribution to be vested in the provinces, given that the Water and Power Development Authority, a federal body, sells power at a higher price than the cost of power generation in then-NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). It also encouraged investments in hydroelectricity.

In the JUI-F manifesto, nuclear power and solar power are accorded special importance by the party. Further, the party said it would strive to increase oil production and reduce oil, gas and electricity prices. The party vowed that it will eradicate load-shedding, as well as control power theft and energy wastage.

Table 2 | Party Pledges on Energy

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Load-shedding	✓	✓		✓		✓
Utilising Indigenous Energy Resources	✓	✓				✓
Less Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources	✓	✓				
Energy Conservation	✓	✓				✓
Private Sector Investment	✓				✓	
Alternative Energy						✓
Price Controls	✓					✓

Unemployment

In its section on the state of the nation, the PPP manifesto affirmed that Pakistan's unemployment and inflation levels are extremely high and that the party intended to tackle this 'twin menace' by instituting viable programmes to create jobs in the public and private sectors. These included programmes for public works, literacy and health, vocational training and microfinance for targeted poverty alleviation. The Microfinance and Targeted Poverty Programme, as designed in the PPP manifesto, set a target of five million beneficiaries for commercial and microfinance banks and NGOs.

The PML-N manifesto, in its section on employment, suggested creating economic opportunities as a means to better utilise the country's human capital. The party promised over three million new jobs in the public and private sectors and proposed to develop a National Manpower Plan to match the demand and supply of labour. The party manifesto recommended undertaking "a program of vigorous industrialisation" in urban and rural enterprises for the purposes of generating employment.¹¹ It also planned to offer self-employment loans to youth who complete a training/apprenticeship created through its proposed Youth Training Programme. Additionally, it focused on job creation for doctors, and absorption of skilled manpower.

Although the PML-Q manifesto did not seem to consider unemployment a major topic, it briefly discussed the issue in the 'Development' section. The party pledged to promote policies encouraging self-reliant entrepreneurship. The PML-Q also sought to set up promotional trusts that will generate small loans for individuals who desire to utilise their skills for the purposes of generating income through sustainable sources of livelihood. The manifesto included a section on diversity in which it underscored the importance of obtaining technology-related skills in order to boost employment credentials. Further, the party asserted the right of minorities to seek employment with the state.

The MQM manifesto vowed to encourage industrialisation, establish vocational institutes, and provide incentives for "agro-based industries" in rural areas to curb unemployment.¹² The document expressed that the party will support the redistribution of land for the benefit of the peasant class, such that their standard of living is improved.

The ANP manifesto promised to address the unemployment problem by creating job opportunities and providing yearly employment targets. Under the employment section of its manifesto, the ANP expressed the desire to introduce skill development and vocational training "at an early stage" of schooling.¹³ The party would pay special attention to "the problem of the educated unemployed" by providing facilities like internships, placement bureaus and advisory organisations.¹⁴

The JUI-F manifesto stated that the party was committed to tackling unemployment by creating jobs and encouraging self-sufficiency. Similar to the MQM manifesto, the JUI-F manifesto also vowed to incentivise the agriculture sector.

Table 3 | Party Pledges on Unemployment

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Public Works Programme	✓					
Encouraging Industrialisation		✓		✓		✓
Support to SMEs and Cottage Industries		✓		✓		
Employment Scheme(s)	✓	✓			✓	
Vocational Education	✓	✓		✓		✓
Technical Training		✓	✓		✓	
Rural Employment		✓		✓		✓
Supporting Self-Employment Projects		✓	✓		✓	

Minority Rights

The PPP manifesto stated that a job quota will be set for minorities in state institutions like the army, the police, intelligence agencies, the judiciary and the foreign office. The party called for the establishment of an independent, permanent National Commission for Religious Minorities, which would have tribunal powers to listen to complaints and provide redress and relief on an immediate basis. The PPP manifesto promised to review statutes that discriminate against religious minorities.

The PML-N manifesto vowed to guard minorities' interests and ensure the absolute and fundamental rights of citizens belonging to minority groups in Pakistan. According to the manifesto, the party will set up a commission to "look into complaints of religious discrimination".¹⁵ The party also promised to provide higher education scholarships to talented minority students from low income families. The manifesto stated that minorities will be "integrated in the mainstream of national development" by promoting their active participation.¹⁶

The PML-Q stands for upholding Islamic and moral values, as stated in the party manifesto, which includes upholding minority rights. The party considers members of religious minorities as equal citizens of the country, having the same rights as Muslims. The PML-Q also appreciated the role played by missionary institutions in imparting quality education to students in different parts of the country, and its manifesto stated that holidays celebrated by religious minorities will be commemorated nationally.

As stated in the MQM party manifesto, all discriminatory laws against religious minorities will be repealed as a step toward equal treatment of minorities by the state. The manifesto also promised greater representation to minorities in legislative bodies, with a quota of at least five percent reserved seats. The party promised to launch a rigorous programme to exterminate religious extremism.

The ANP manifesto maintained that there will be no discrimination of any kind based on race, creed or gender – implying that the party will work for repealing all discriminatory laws – and that every citizen shall have the right to hold any public office.

Similarly, the JUI-F manifesto promised that constitutional rights of minority groups shall be guaranteed. Religious minorities groups will be given protection as well as opportunities in education, employment, and other arenas of national life, according to the JUI-F manifesto.

Table 4 | Party Pledges on Minority Rights

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Protection of Constitutional Rights	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Repealing Discriminatory Laws	✓				✓	
Job Quotas	✓		✓			✓
Establishment of National Commission	✓	✓				
Affirmative Action	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Integration into National Mainstream		✓		✓		
Freedom of Worship	✓		✓	✓		✓
Security of Life and Places of Worship				✓	✓	✓

Women's Rights

The PPP manifesto stated that the party will allocate a 20 percent affirmative action job quota for women in public service, doubling the previous 10 percent allocation. The party would also undertake institutional initiatives to prevent crimes against women, such as honour-killings and forced marriages. The party promised to implement right of maintenance and child custody according to law. In its manifesto, the party said that it will reconstitute the Women Police Stations programme so that women are encouraged to report crimes of domestic abuse to these stations.

The PML-N manifesto devoted an entire chapter to women, although mentions of female empowerment are also referenced elsewhere in the document. It stated that the PML-N shall ensure “respect, dignity, and protection granted by Islam to women”.¹⁷ The PML-N vowed to ensure effective representation of women in all key policy-making and decision-making bodies. In addition, the party manifesto stated that special legislation will be enacted on violence against women. The PML-N promised to substantially expand microcredit for women.

The PML-Q promised the vigorous pursuit of female empowerment in its manifesto’s section on diversity. In an earlier portion of the manifesto, the party promised to promote and upgrade girls’ and women’s educational institutions, particularly in rural areas. The party pledged to guarantee

fundamental human rights and dignity to women, and purported to bring perpetrators of violence and honour-killings to justice.

The MQM manifesto vowed to repeal all discriminatory laws against women, and listed in detail the “social ailments” suffered by women in Pakistan, such as gender discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence and rape.¹⁸ The manifesto stated that these issues will have to be dealt with through public awareness campaigns, community participation and stringent legislative measures. The party promised to address the discouragement of female education and ensure their full participation in society as equal citizens through “persistent teaching, public awareness and appropriate administrative and legislative measures”.¹⁹

Women's rights and female empowerment were important elements in the ANP manifesto. The party offered an elaborate list of problems faced by women. The manifesto stated that the party is committed to gender equality and will work towards this objective by raising awareness through education and the media. According to the manifesto, the ANP would repeal all discriminatory laws and policies that infringe on the equal rights of women and their participation in decision-making within the family, community and society. The party pledged to promulgate legislation on domestic violence, honour-killings, trafficking of women, sexual harassment and assault. The manifesto also called for a review and revision in “identification policies to ensure that citizens are identified by parentage and not spouses so that their national identity cards do not change with a change in marital status”.²⁰

The JUI-F manifesto stated that women's property and ownership rights will be 'granted' and their education will be promoted – gender-segregated universities for women will be established in each province. The party promised that un-Islamic practices like *wani*, honour-killing and marriage to the Quran will be addressed. As per the manifesto, the JUI-F would promote professional and technical information for women. The party would also ensure a quota for women in assemblies, without identifying legislative bodies or specifying this quota.

Table 5 | Party Pledges on Women's Rights

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Protection of Constitutional Rights	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Job Quotas	✓	✓				
Quotas in Legislative Bodies					✓	✓
Financial Empowerment	✓	✓			✓	
Affirmative Action	✓				✓	
Prevention of Crimes Against Women	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring Participation in Policymaking	✓	✓			✓	
Raising Awareness about Gender Equality				✓	✓	

Counter-terrorism

The PPP manifesto promised to rid Pakistan of violence, bigotry and terror through free and fair elections. Under the "Police Reforms" section, the party acknowledged that a strong police force is required to combat internal terrorism. This issue is discussed at greater length in various parts of the manifesto's foreign policy section, titled "Pakistan and the World." Terrorism is discussed in the section devoted to relations with Afghanistan, in which the party promised that Pakistan's territory will not be used for cross-border terrorism. The party also pledged to dismantle militant groups which "seek to take hostage the foreign policy of the country and impose their writ through force on the tribal areas of Pakistan and elsewhere". The party manifesto stated that no distinctions will be made between terrorist groups.

The PML-N manifesto held the Musharraf regime responsible for "fighting America's proxy war" and the subsequent backlash of terrorism and suicide bombings. The party is committed to a dual track approach, with minimum use of force and an emphasis on political engagement. The manifesto stated that the party will take steps to eradicate terrorism and extremism by strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies. In the section on 'National Security and Foreign Policy', the PML-N established that it supports all global initiatives for curbing terrorism, and if voted into power will "seek to promote a just and fair international political and economic order".

The manifesto of the PML-Q stated that "terrorism has no religion since terrorism is a common enemy of all humanity." The party said that democratisation and development are the biggest antidotes to the terrorism and extremism that pervades FATA. In this regard, the manifesto also articulated that the party would "prepare a strategy to combat all kinds of extremism in society" – this strategy will involve the use of force as a last resort, while prioritising education and persuasion as a cure for extremism. The party sought to constitute a National Task Force to combat extremism, which would prepare this strategy and present its report and recommendations within 100 days of its establishment.

In Section 10 of the MQM manifesto, the party vowed to launch a rigorous public awareness campaign in collaboration with civil society, religious scholars and the general public "to exterminate religious extremism, hatred, fanaticism and terrorism from the country". In the 'Foreign Affairs' chapter of the manifesto, the party states its belief in the policy of "live and let live" which implies that all disputes and conflicts should be resolved through dialogue and peaceful means.

The ANP manifesto asserted that the party is dedicated to combating extremism in all its forms. The party perceived unemployment as a root cause of extremism and radicalisation. Without explicitly dedicating a chapter to terrorism and/or extremism, the ANP outlined its short-term policy of dialogue and civic engagement with tribal groups, as well as with Afghanistan. The party's long-term policy is to ascertain and address the root causes of extremism.

The JUI-F manifesto presented a concise counter-terrorism policy, which is to halt all military operations in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and spearhead a radical change in current security policies. The party manifesto stated that the problem of terrorism can only be solved through dialogue and negotiation. The JUI-F manifesto stated that "all Muslims (who are of age and eligible) should be trained in jihad."

Table 6 | Party Pledges on Counter-Terrorism

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Identifying Root Cause(s)	✓		✓		✓	
Dismantling Terror Groups	✓					
Minimum Use of Force		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dialogue and Negotiations		✓		✓	✓	✓
Winning 'Hearts and Minds'		✓	✓			
Strengthening Law Enforcement		✓				
Promoting Religious Pluralism		✓		✓	✓	
Political and Social Development of FATA		✓	✓			
Cross-Border Terrorism	✓	✓				

Youth

The PPP manifesto did not contain a specific chapter on the youth, however, the document outlined a 'youth policy' in its initial chapters, as well as in the chapter on unemployment, pledging "gainful employment, hope and opportunity" to the youth of the country. The manifesto also stated that income opportunities for the poor as well as for the youth will be devised. The Literacy and Health Corps were to be established in order to provide short-term employment to educated youth. As such, they would be able to assist with the government's social policy goals and become an element of the party's programme for the expansion of social services.

The PML-N promised to set-up a National Employment Fund to assist qualified and skilled young people in setting up their own business or professional practice. The party manifesto stated that 100,000 apprenticeships in trade and industry will be created under a 'Youth Training Programme' in collaboration with the private sector. The party also promised to organise inter-provincial visits for the youth and provide special sports facilities in all educational institutions.

In the section on development, the PML-Q manifesto promised to establish a 'Skills Promotion Trust' to generate easily available small loans for unemployed youth who seek self-employment. The party also promised to launch special inter-provincial campaigns to provide opportunities for the youth of different provinces to work together and enhance inter-provincial harmony. In its section on education, the party laid special emphasis on teaching communication skills, computer studies and information technology, so that the youth of Pakistan can find employment opportunities at home and abroad.

Although the MQM manifesto did not dedicate a specific chapter to the youth, in its section on sports and culture, it stated that the party is a proponent of institutionalising arts and sports in the "over all youth development program". The same section of the manifesto stated that the MQM will encourage the youth of the country towards arts and sports through the development of sports facilities and parks and by backing private initiatives such as arts academies.

The ANP and JUI-F manifestos did not make any direct references to the youth.

Table 7 | Party Pledges on Youth

Issue	PPP	PML-N	PML-Q	MQM	ANP	JUI-F
Youth Development Programme				✓		
Employment Opportunities	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Vocational Training	✓					
Supporting Youth Self Employment		✓	✓			
Deterring Drug Abuse		✓				
Promoting Inter-Provincial Harmony		✓	✓			
Ensuring Focus on a National Youth Policy			✓			

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Implementation Status of the 2007-08 Manifestos

This section will outline the current status of the implementation of commitments made in the 2007-08 manifestos within the selected categories of governance, as well as evaluate the legislative and administrative performance of major political parties in federal and provincial governments.

General elections, originally scheduled for January 2008, were delayed because of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007. They were ultimately held on February 18, 2008 and the PPP won the highest number of seats – 124 – in the National Assembly. A coalition government was formed by the PPP, the PML-N and the ANP at the federal level, and was later joined by the MQM. Yousaf Raza Gilani was elected prime minister. However, the PML-N left the coalition in a few months due to differences with the PPP.

The PPP and PML-N also formed a coalition in the Punjab province. The PML-N won the highest number of seats, 171, while the PML-Q secured 84 seats and accepted the role of the opposition. Although both the PPP and the PML-N vowed to fulfil promises made in the Charter of Democracy, the provincial coalition dissolved as a result of similar developments at the federal centre. In the erstwhile NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), the PPP and ANP formed a coalition government. The PPP, having won 93 seats, formed a broad coalition in the Sindh province with the MQM, the PML-F and the NPP, which won 51, 8 and 3 seats respectively. In Balochistan, the PML-Q won the most number of seats, 18, followed closely by the PPP and the JUI-F, which secured 12 and 10 seats respectively. Despite the PML-Q majority in the 65-member house, the PPP was able to form a coalition government in the province.

This section seeks to map and evaluate the current implementation status of pledges made in the manifestos of political parties that are members of coalition governments at the federal and provincial levels.

Education

Despite variations in policies and targets, the PPP, PML-N, PML-Q, MQM and ANP all vowed to promote universal free primary education in their manifestos. This has become a fundamental

right enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan with the 18th Amendment.¹ Under Article 25-A, the state is obliged to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of five and sixteen years (in such manner as may be determined by law). While this right has been guaranteed for Pakistan's future generations, its implementation requires accompanying legislation at the provincial level – so far, only the Sindh Government has enacted the requisite legislation. Moreover, the objective of this important addition to the Constitution will only be realised once the quality of education, specifically curricula standard, is improved.

The MQM and ANP particularly promised to work towards a uniform curriculum, or towards the elimination of dual/multiple education systems in the country. Progress towards this objective is not visible at the federal or the provincial level, with three systems of education – English-medium, Urdu-medium and madrassa – still in operation. Both parties also set targets for increased government expenditure on education: the MQM manifesto called for increasing the present allocation to five percent of GDP, while the ANP called the same to be increased to six percent of GDP. Even so, according to the World Bank, public spending on education was 2.7 percent of GDP and 11.2 percent of total government expenditure in 2009.² Spending on education was 1.8 percent in 2012, based on an estimate from the federal and provincial budgets.³

The PPP and MQM manifestos called for madrassa reform. The government attempted to implement such reforms, but this was met with stiff opposition from religious groups. The National Education Policy 2009 stated: “Deeni Madaris shall be mainstreamed by introducing contemporary studies alongside the curricula of Deeni Madaris to enhance the prospects of their students to pursue higher studies, research and excellence and to ensure employment, recognition and equivalence.”⁴

According to an agreement between the Interior Ministry and the Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Pakistan, the latter's leadership has agreed to include compulsory contemporary subjects in the curriculum. Interior Minister Rehman Malik also told the National Assembly that a regulatory body will be established to “ensure standard of education, uniformity of curricula and standard of examination” in madrassas.⁵

The ANP-led government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also made efforts for the reconstruction of schools that have been destroyed by militant groups, and has claimed a rise in the literacy rate in the province.⁶ Even so, the trade-off between quantity and quality has been a significant contributor in the region's school system, and several recent surveys have painted a grim picture of the state of education facilities.

Challenges to the Education Sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

“There are two distinct areas that need attention in order to improve Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's educational system. The first is a purely academic and administrative problem. The ANP has made some impressive claims regarding its improvement of the education sector; these include raising the provincial literacy rate by seven percent to an overall 56 percent, as well as recruiting teachers, building more colleges and universities and raising enrolment rates. Yet while there have been improvements in the province's educational infrastructure, the administration of schools leaves much to be desired. Hence[,] perhaps the focus should be on quality rather than numbers. The second issue is that of security. While the government builds and rebuilds schools, militants keep destroying them. It is simply not possible to protect every school by posting security men outside them. Besides, there's little a watchman or police officer can do when a group of militants show up and decide to blow up a school. The issue is a much larger one — that of improving security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata by uprooting militancy. That is something the administration and security apparatus need to handle. Unless the environment is secure, the students of the province and Fata will be unable to realise their full potential.”

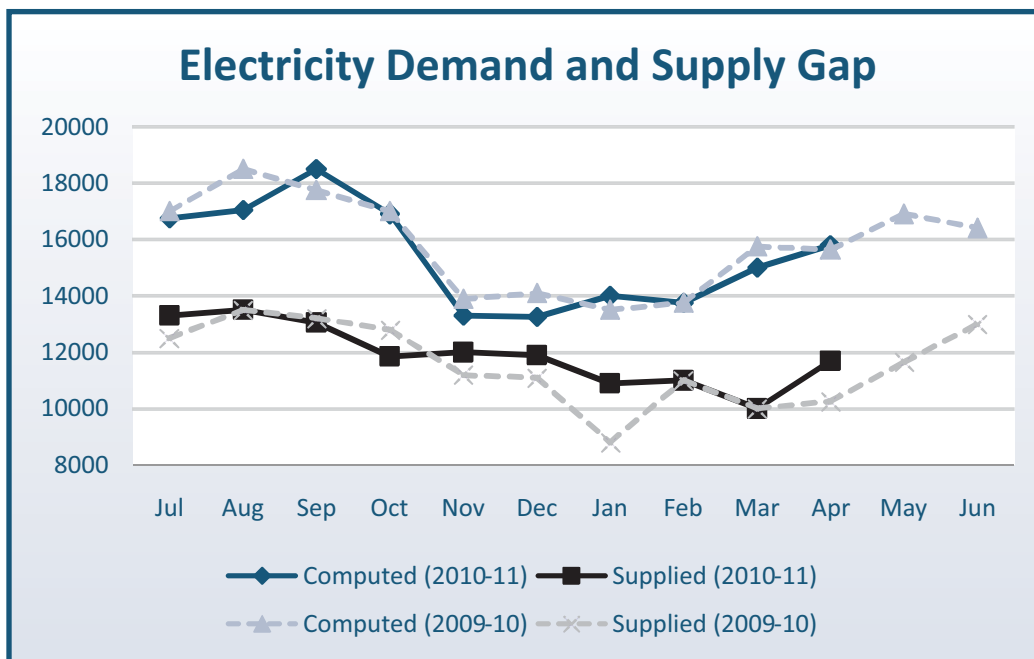
*DAWN News Editorial, 2012.*⁷

Energy

After the passage of the 18th Amendment, the concurrent legislative list has been abolished, and electricity/power is an issue that is vested in the Council of Common Interests. While this is a leap forward in the devolution of powers to the provinces, electricity/power generation has not become a provincial subject, as the ANP demanded in its manifesto. Only the MQM and JUI-F manifestos refer to eliminating power outages; the former promises to rid the industrial sector from electricity outages, while the latter speaks of load-shedding in general. The PPP manifesto mentioned the need to add 8,000 MW to the national grid, but according to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2011-12, only 3,400 MW had been added from 2008 until 2011 – the 4,500 MW-capacity Diamer Bhasha Dam project had just been inaugurated at the time of the survey, as was the fourth extension to the Tarbela dam, with 1,400 MW capacity.⁸

The PPP and PML-N manifestos promised conservation of energy: line losses were reduced from 20.4 percent in fiscal year 2010 to 19.6 percent in fiscal year 2011, and load management conservation measures saved only 1,000 MW.⁹ Projects and policies for improving private investment in the energy sector as well as for the diversification of the country's energy mix have been put in place at the federal level. As of April 2008, the federal government's mission is to introduce alternative/renewable energy at an “accelerated rate to achieve 5-10% share of renewable energy in the energy mix of the country”.¹⁰

Nevertheless, shortfalls in electricity provision to both domestic and industrial consumers have increased from 2008 onwards. The following graph shows the energy crisis faced by the country in terms of the supply-demand gap between 2009 and 2011:



Source: PEPCO. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/Ultrspectra00/energy-sector-pakistan>

Unemployment

The energy crisis – which manifested itself in the form of a liquidity crisis (circular debt) in the energy sector and shortfalls in the supply of electricity and natural gas – severely impacted the economy with many industrial units rendered dysfunctional. However, there is no accurate data available to verify this.

The following table shows the steady rise of unemployment in Pakistan, as documented by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in the Pakistan Employment Trends 2011 report.¹¹

Unemployment Rate (%)	2003-04	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Both Sexes	7.4	6.1	5.1	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.7
Male	6.2	5.2	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.8
Female	12.9	9.6	8.6	8.7	9.0	9.2	9.0

Actual figures of unemployment for these years are expected to be much higher. None of the employment programmes or policies spelled out in the party manifestos – from the PPP's 'Public Works Programme' and 'Literacy and Health Corps' scheme, to the PML-N's 'National Educational Corps' or 'National Employment Fund' or 'National Manpower Plan' – have seen the light of day. While the government sees a vast, untapped labour potential in the country, it acknowledges that "women and youth do not have equal chances to participate in the labour market".¹²

"Other initiatives by the government include the President's Rozgar Scheme (which provides a maximum Rs. 100,000 loan to start up a business), micro credit facilities at Khushhali Bank, the establishment of the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission[,] and a National Internship Programme."¹³ The Waseela-e-Rozgar Scheme, under the Benazir Income Support Programme, also provides vocational and technical training to women.

Growing Stake in Pakistan's 'Informal' Economy

“According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), Pakistan's growing informal economy has provided higher level of employment compared to previous years. The key sectors for jobs are wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, community/social and personal service, construction and transport.”

*DAWN News, 2012.*¹⁴

Minority Rights

While the PPP manifesto stated that administrative control of minorities' places of worship will be vested in the minority communities themselves, such control is retained by the Evacuee Trust Property Board, which is headed by the PPP's Syed Asif Hashmi (the PPP also promised to make a member of the minority communities head of the ETPB). In a May 2012 meeting, the National Commission for Minorities sent a summary to the prime minister reiterating this call.¹⁵

The PPP and PML-N manifestos both called for the creation of a national commission (the former for religious minorities, the latter for looking into religious discrimination): a National Commission for Minorities was already in place according to legislation passed in January 2002.¹⁶ After the passage of the 18th Amendment, the subject of minorities was devolved to the provinces. A ministry for 'religious harmony', headed by PML-Q's Akram Masih Gill, has been set up in lieu of an independent commission.

All party manifestos speak of providing security and an equal status to religious minorities – including the JUI-F document – but between 2008 and 2012, minorities have faced targeted attacks as well as discrimination. There have been attacks on places of worship, armed riots in Gojra against the Christian community, blasphemy cases registered on the basis of little evidence or investigation, including against minors, and widespread discrimination against non-Muslims.

The party manifestos of the PPP, ANP and MQM state that laws discriminating against minorities will be reviewed or repealed, but progress in this regard has been slow and has suffered major setbacks. “While human rights activists say [that] the laws about Ahmadis and blasphemy offences are discriminatory, political parties have not moved to amend them. The Council of Islamic Ideology reviewed and suggested amendments in the blasphemy laws... Religious-political parties have actively campaigned to prevent any amendment in the blasphemy laws. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has repeatedly declared that the government will not amend the laws.”¹⁷ The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly also passed a resolution asking the federal government not to amend or repeal the blasphemy laws.

However, one key development on this subject is employment opportunities for minorities – as promised by the PPP and the MQM. Minorities were allocated five percent of all federal jobs in 2009 and the measure is being implemented by the federal government as well as the provincial governments. However, in Sindh, the jobs available under this quota are often low-

paying sanitary worker positions.¹⁸ On December 12, 2012, the federal cabinet approved a measure to increase the number of seats reserved in the National Assembly for minorities from 10 to 14. Additionally, it proposed an increase in the number of seats for minorities in the provincial assemblies: “Balochistan from existing three to four; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from three to four; Punjab from eight to ten and Sindh Assembly from existing nine to 12 seats.”¹⁹

Women's Rights

The PPP and the ANP both promised women's empowerment through greater employment opportunities, the latter promising to ensure a minimum 33 percent quota for women in key policy-making and decision-making bodies. “On March 8, 2010, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani announced the establishment of the office of Women's Ombudsman and a ten percent quota for women in the Central Superior Services.”²⁰

Major political parties made a variety of legislative promises to the women of Pakistan: the PPP promised laws that ensure financial independence of women – which it has aimed to tackle through the Benazir Income Support Programme – while the ANP called for ratifying other international agreements that deal with trafficking of women and violence against women.²¹ Both the PPP and ANP, along with the PML-N and the MQM, vowed to repeal laws that discriminate against women, or enact legislation to curb violence against women. This has met with some success, as the National Assembly passed the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act on March 9, 2010, the Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Act on December 30, 2011 and the National Commission on the Status of Women Bill on March 8, 2012.

Counter-terrorism

The counter-terrorism strategies outlined in political party manifestos were vague; they did not account for the security situation, nor did they look at the underlying reasons for militancy and extremism. Thousands of civilians and security officials have been killed in terrorist attacks since 2008, and the military has conducted several operations to deal with the threat of militant groups. Terrorism and extremism continue to fester in Pakistan, with religious groups rallying supporters on issues like blasphemy at the local and international level. The government also sanctioned a day to mark 'Love for the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him)', which led to rioting, arson and rallies by banned extremist organisations, particularly in Islamabad.

Two high-level government officials, Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer and Federal Minorities Affairs Minister Shahbaz Bhatti, were assassinated in the first few months of 2011 for their opposition to the discriminatory use of blasphemy laws against religious minorities. Terrorist attacks – or the imminent threat thereof – are a persistent menace to internal security in Pakistan. The country remains in search of viable national policies and regional solutions to the existential threat posed by terrorism.

Youth

The PML-N and PML-Q manifestos made clear pledges to the youth of Pakistan, while the PPP and MQM manifestos discussed promises to the youth in passing (the former focused on youth employment, while the latter concentrated on encouraging the youth towards culture and the arts). The ANP and JUI-F made no specific pledges to the youth.

The PPP claimed that it had engaged 30,000 young people every year in the National Internship Programme (mentioned in the Economy section), which carried a monthly stipend of Rs. 10,000.²²

The PML-N government in Punjab organised a number of programmes for the youth, including an internship scheme that aims to benefit 50,000 graduates, scholarships, and a widely publicised 'laptop scheme' that seeks to give 100,000 laptops to high performing students, including 4,000 laptops to seminary students.²³

The Youth Parliament initiative (mentioned only in the PML-Q manifesto) continued in 2008-09 and 2009-10, and received patronage from the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Faisal Karim Kundi (of the PPP). After a brief interlude, it has continued in 2012.

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