

PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR SOCIOECONOMIC UPLIFT OF PAKISTANIS: A STUDY OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT:

In 2018, a new political party –Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) – came to power at the national and provincial level in Pakistan. Traditionally two political parties explicitly Pakistan’s Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N) have dominated the political system of the country. PTI coming to power was indeed a new phenomenon into the murky politics of Pakistan. To some it appeared a fresh wave, to some it appeared a traditional political party. Throughout its turbulent career as politician, Imran Khan has promised to fight corruption, eradicate poverty, and promote public welfare and prosperity policies. Prime Minister Khan and its PTI party renewed these principles of public welfare prior to the 2018 general elections. PTI has completed half of its five years term, it is appropriate time to evaluate PTI government performance. Existing empirical research on PTI government policies primarily regarding public perception and satisfaction has remained understudied, so an attempt is underway to examine the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Government Policies for Socioeconomic Uplift of Pakistanis. In addition, we also examine the Public Perception and Satisfaction regarding PTI government policies. Public perception and happiness are secured by the administering a questionnaire.

Key Words: Public Perception, PTI, Ehsaas Programme, Poverty, and Jobs

Introduction:

Imran Khan launched PTI which translates as "justice movement," in 1996. After a 22-year struggle, Khan took the oath of the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2018. As captain of the Pakistan cricket team, he was considered as one of the finest all-rounders and prominent leaders in the cricketing fraternity. Under his leadership Pakistan cricket team won the World Cup in 1992. After retirement from sports, he entered Pakistan's murky politics. His politics remained dormant through his formative years, he was originally uninterested in politics and wanted to talk about cricket instead. His lack of seriousness is also evident in his politics: Khan failed to gain a single seat in the 1997 elections, it only managed to gain a seat from his hometown of Mianwali in the 2002 elections. PTI boycotted 2007 elections, as a result, its early success was limited. It did not establish itself as a strong challenger until after 2010. After then things began to move towards PTI favor. For example, in 2011 Khan put on a great power show at Lahore's historic Minar-e-Pakistan, shocking politicians and the media alike.

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Figure 1: PTI 2011 Lahore Jalsa (Political Gathering)

<https://www.dawn.com/news/670296/massive-show-of-the-masses>

Some pundits even equated him with the former popular leader and founder of PPP Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (Yusuf, *Conspiracy Fever: the US, Pakistan and its Media*, 2011). Achieving such a feat was not less than a miracle. Ihsan Yilmaz and Kainat Shakil argue, “PTI in its early years struggled to gain a mass following. With no experience in politics, surviving in a country like Pakistan was difficult. Most mainstream parties’ have dynastic, feudalistic, and baradari (caste-based) voter banks and roots” (Yilmaz, *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf: Pakistan’s Iconic Populist Movement*, 2021). In the 2013 general elections, PTI emerged as the third-largest political force in the country’s political system. It bagged almost 7 million votes, making it the second most popular party in terms of votes. The elections, on the other hand, were met by PTI dharana (sit-ins) and charges of major rigging. Imran Khan mobilized Pakistanis from all around the country on a range of topics, including electoral fraud and engineering. Essentially Khan suggested unconstitutional steps to the people of Pakistan to disobey government which also worked in his favor to gain popularity. Ihsan Yilmaz and Kainat Shakil argue, “Through modest civil disobedience, it has graduated to the status of a formidable opposition party (Yilmaz, *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf: Pakistan’s Iconic Populist Movement*, 2021)”

Based on public support, PTI gained a majority of seats in Parliament in 2018, allowing it to establish a government in both the center and the KPK. Though the opposition parties alleged irregularities and vote rigging; some even threatened street demonstration against the election results (Ahsan, 2018). Nevertheless, PTI created a coalition government in Baluchistan with the aid of minor parties. Despite failing to alter Sindh’s government, it made considerable inroads into the MQM and PPP’s bastion (Yusuf, *Explaining the rise of Imran Khan*, 2011). His slogan of making a *Naya Pakistan* (New Pakistan) also attracted people’s attention. It essentially means old Pakistan under the previous political parties was corrupting poor and underdeveloped, while New Pakistan under PTI will be honest, economically viable, and poverty free. Ihsan Yilmaz & Kainat Shakil, “...by 2013, the people were tired of the PPP government and the passive opposition of the PML-N.

The presence of PTI as a party with a “non-corrupt” leader greatly appealed to the people; during this period, PTI increased its presence on social media and attended many marches and gatherings called Jalsas before the 2013 elections. PTI was becoming an immensely

popular personality party, a fact that was evident in October 2011, when masses of people flooded the PTI Jalsa in Lahore's Minto Park" (Studies, 2021). In his discussion and debates he referred to traditional political parties as "Others." Khan contended that traditional political parties were bent on looting national treasure, acquiring real estate properties, and amassing large bank balances in tax havens nations.



Figure 2: Imran Khan's Naya Pakistan gesture

Similarly, some other perspective inducing foreign policy issues, and an emphasis on justice appealed to the people of Pakistan. Ihsan Yilmaz & Kainat Shakil argues, "The anti-US rhetoric and a narrative of change, anti-corruption, and peace, coupled with the jalsas and the chairman's past charity, all buoyed PTI before the 2013 general elections. The hopes for a Naya Pakistan (New Pakistan) through tabdeli (change) embedded in justice led to a boost in support for PTI. This tsunami would bring change to society" (Yilmaz, 2021 Yilmaz and Shakil - The Silence of the Khans, 2021) While cricket is not the only reason for his celebrity status. Besides, his philanthropic efforts, including the establishment of Pakistan's first cancer hospital and educational institutions such as NUML, have earned him widespread acclaim. People saw him as one of them, a common man who grew up playing cricket but rose to fame by learning people's problems and caring about the people of Pakistan.

The PTI's goal is to transform Pakistan into an Islamic State (Riyasat-e-Madinah, a welfare state's Islamic version) that creates an equal society based on Madinah's Islamic State. It claims to eliminate corruption, put an end to dynastic policies, and focus on the economy. These objectives have not yet been met. Its policy opponents and experts criticize PTI for failing to address a number of monetary and policy issues, as well as to address economic weakness. Furthermore, the PTI has been accused of resisting and attempting to limit media and freedom of expression (Husain, 2019). According to Tehreek-e-Insaf 2018, Pakistan is planning for, equity and equality will not exist and no place for discrimination. PTI argues that it believes in the rule of law and that it places people above happiness. PTI plans to develop poverty reduction programmes, promote diverse livelihood options, improve the healthcare system, and improve educational system reforms. It believes that infrastructure development projects will strengthen the most vulnerable and deprived groups. People will be at the heart of each plan and policy. In 2018 they tried their best to include people representation in party leadership without any discrimination and encourage women participation to empower a prosperous society.

Research Inquiry

The main purpose of conducting this research is to study the PTI government performance, policies, and satisfaction of Pakistani masses. The study raises questions regarding the government's performance or the promises it made before it came to power. It raises questions such as How satisfied are people with government policies on health, education, poverty reduction, women, and gender equality? Based on the various dynamics and previous discussion, this study would seek to emphasize the following central questions, what social welfare programs have been launched by the PTI government? Are people satisfied with the government-launched schemes? How and why these schemes have maximized happiness and pleasure among the people of Pakistan?

Proposition

H1. With the launch of public welfare programmes, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government is providing maximum happiness and pleasure to the people of Pakistan.

Ho. With the launch of public welfare programmes, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government is not providing maximum happiness and pleasure to the people of Pakistan

H2. Pakistani are pleased with the current federal government's efforts to improve public welfare.

Ho. Pakistani are not pleased with the current federal government's efforts to improve public welfare.

Literature Review

The PTI government has received little scholarly attention, despite its significance as a new phenomenon in Pakistan's political system. Despite the fact that some studies have been conducted to investigate PTI leader rhetoric, substance, and newspaper representation, its performance has not been examined. As a result, the current study has been designed to fill this lacuna. A study by Safdar Hussain et'al analysis the speeches of PM Imran Khan which he delivered from May 2018 to July 2019 to see whether the domestic politics or international politics is the focus of Imran Khan (Hussain, 2020). Aqsa Noreen conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan's First Public Address in a study. Noreen traces the relationship between communication tools, the mind, and the body in order to influence masses and individuals for effective communication. (Noreen, 2018). Numerous studies have been conducted on Imran Khan's politics and populism (Hassan, 2020), politeness in speeches (Hussain, Anwar, & Mian, 2021), inaugural speeches (Noreen), and, more recently, Khan's handling of Covid-19 in his speeches (Yasin, & Thalhoo 2021), (Iqbal, Aslam, Ashraf, & Nasir 2020).

There are also some findings that compare the persuasion techniques of former and current leaders; one such study compares former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif with current Prime Minister Imran Khan. Specifically, this study looks into strategies for leaders to influence the public through speeches that are based on persuasiveness and theoretical foundations. (Ashraf, 2019). The link between power and language is strong. Humaira Sarvat is the promoter of this theme. The construction and deconstruction of power and language, according to Sarvat, helps to reshape people's ideologies and minds. (Sarvat, 2015). Lawrence Kuznar examines Imran Khan's discourse from 2008 to 2018 to determine whether a shift in Imran Khan's worldview and political views occurred. (Kuznar, 2018) While Khalil's research sought to discover how political leaders use language and communication skills to outperform the ruling party. (Khalil, 2013) Based on the preceding discussion, it is

clear that the aspect discussed in the current study is missing; thus, this study is a novel idea that contributes significantly to existing knowledge.

Research Methodology

The current study seeks to evaluate PTI government public policies in order to determine how happy Pakistanis are with the efforts that have been implemented. In this regard, 200 respondents from two universities in South Punjab, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, and the Institute of Southern Punjab (ISP) were selected. We conducted 200 questionnaires, 100 from each university. The questionnaire was explained beforehand to the respondents. The respondents were instructed on following:

1. Following sampling/quota decided properly
2. Ethical code of conduct during interviewers
3. Following skipping directions and other interview related instructions on the questionnaire
4. Keeping neutrality in asking Question

PTI government social program for the welfare of people

As previously stated, the PTI came to power in 2018. Over a period of almost three years, it introduced policies aimed at improving the life and standard of the people of Pakistan. Some of the policies and programs, and legislation introduced are discussed succinctly.

Medical Treatment

The federal government will issue medical treatment cards to 6 million families who will be able to use medical services at up to 0.7 million rupees anywhere in Pakistan.

Interest Free Loan

The government will support small and medium-sized businesses as part of the Ehsaas loans. According to the proposal, Rs. 200 billion has been set aside for the Ehsaas program to help the most vulnerable members of society.

Kafaalat Programme

The Imran Khan administration has announced the establishment of bank accounts for women in order to improve women's well-being. Based on this, this action would aid in the protection of their money, the prevention of theft, and the purchase of necessities from Utility Stores outlets. In addition, the government has issued "Kafaalat Cards" to eligible women in order to alleviate poverty. The Kafaalat initiative will provide a monthly payment of Rs 2000 to women who have been deprived of the essentials of life. The Kafaalat initiative has so far been implemented in seventy districts across the country, with the other districts being added in phases.

Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)

Since the PPP government, BISP has offered financial assistance to the poor. The PML(N) government, like the PTI government, kept it going without any setbacks. The Prime Minister has stated that the government has added the "Ehsaas Program" to assist four million Benazir Income Support Program families. To alleviate their poverty, the government would give cash assistance. The Prime Minister stated during the inauguration ceremony of the Shelter House for the Deserving and Homeless of Pakistan at the Lahore Railway Station that the government is giving full attention to community welfare projects and that the state would soon emerge as a model of public welfare in Pakistan. (APP, 2018)

Findings and Results

The aggregate picture

In the first case, we provide an aggregate picture of the results. Overall, the public appears satisfied and happy with the performance of government policies, legislation and program. The table above clearly shows that a large majority of people believe that current government policies are beneficial to the public. For example, 41% and 31% (SA and A) can be considered in a favorable parenthesis respectively. While (DA, SDA) is collectively 22%.

Q. No. 01. Do you think that government's current policies are favorable for general public?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
41%	31%	6%	13%	9%	3.97

Q. No. 02. Do you think that government is performing well in spite of different challenges?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
8%	13%	19%	36%	24%	3.51

Q. No. 03. Do you think that the performance of government is satisfactory up till now?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
51%	22%	8%	10%	9%	3.58

Q. No. 04. Do you think that the poverty alleviation steps taken by the government are sufficient?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
61%	19%	2%	11%	7%	3.78

Q. No. 05. Do you think that government is successful in providing constitutional rights for minorities?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
39%	26%	1%	18%	16%	3.55

Q. No. 06. Do you think that government playing its role in Promoting gender parity?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
21%	29%	4%	25%	29%	3.68

Q. No. 07. Do you think that government will be able to provide 10 million jobs to strengthen the labor market?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
38%	24%	7%	17%	14%	3.96

Q. No. 08. Do you think that government is Implementing policy framework to build five million houses properly?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
64%	21%	2%	7%	6%	3.74

Q. No. 09. Do you think that government is settling down the issues of education and health sectors?

SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
29%	24%	11%	20%	16%	3.37

A similar pattern can also be seen in other policies and programs except for gender equality where people disagree (25 and 29%) that the government promotes gender quality. The most favorable people pattern is found in two important areas of government: poverty reduction and housing schemes. As the table indicates a good majority, (61% 19% and 64%, 21%) approve government policies in these two sectors respectively. Another noteworthy result here is that over 77% (combining both A and SA) are satisfied with government policies. One thing that needs to be mentioned is the second question that evokes very disappointing results if we were both combining DA, SDA, so 60% believe that the government is not doing well in the midst of various challenges. It essentially means that the challenges have taken so much on the government that it is not up to its full potential. Overall, there is a consistency in the results. Finally, the respondents have largely been either agreeing or disagreeing side, only marginally have been neutral which is also good omen for the government.

Statistical Analysis of questionnaire

Current Government policies favorable for public

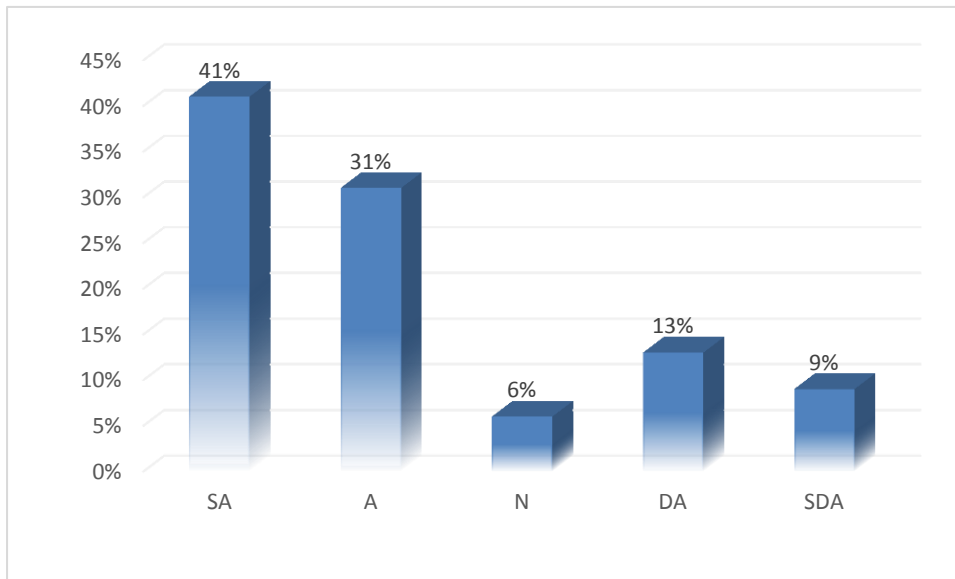


Figure 1: Current Government policies favorable for public

It is clear from the figure that 41% of respondents agree that the current policies of the government are in favor of the general population while only 9% oppose the view. Of these 6% do not agree with or disagree with the declaration. So, government policies are approved by majority.

People’s Reactions on Government performance

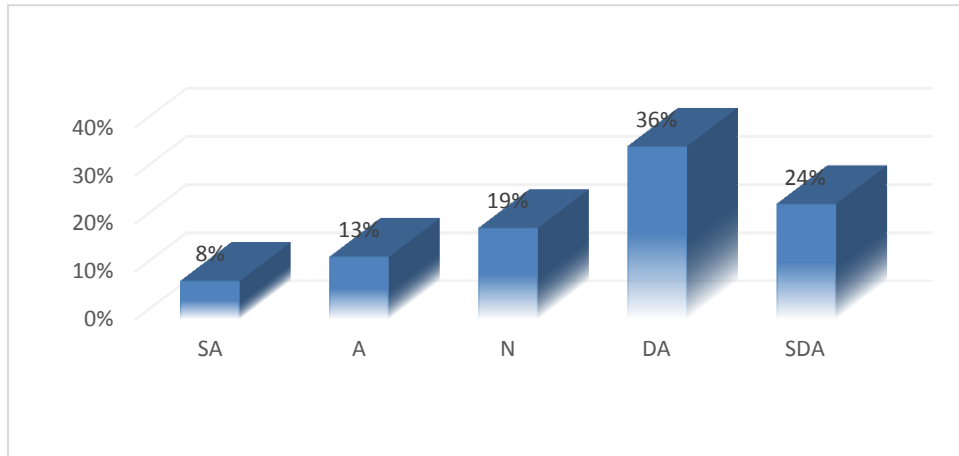


Figure 2: Government performance despite different challenges

Figure 2 shows that many answers to government performance are negative rather than several challenges. Figure 2 shows Only 8% strongly agree with the performance of the existing government and 36% disagree with the performance of the total responses. 60% of the answers were unfavorable to government, whereas 21% favored the government even with different challenges for its performance. Interestingly 19 percent are still neutral in this topic. These findings are also no surprise. Different polls indicate that PTI results are mixed. For example, the people of Pakistan have been very appreciative on the foreign policy front, like an adequate response to the Indian aggression in Balakot, but in the domestic sphere people believe the government should better deal with responsibilities, price control and failure to implement structural reforms which are very important to progress and to develop the state and society. (Editorial, 2020)

Government performance up till now

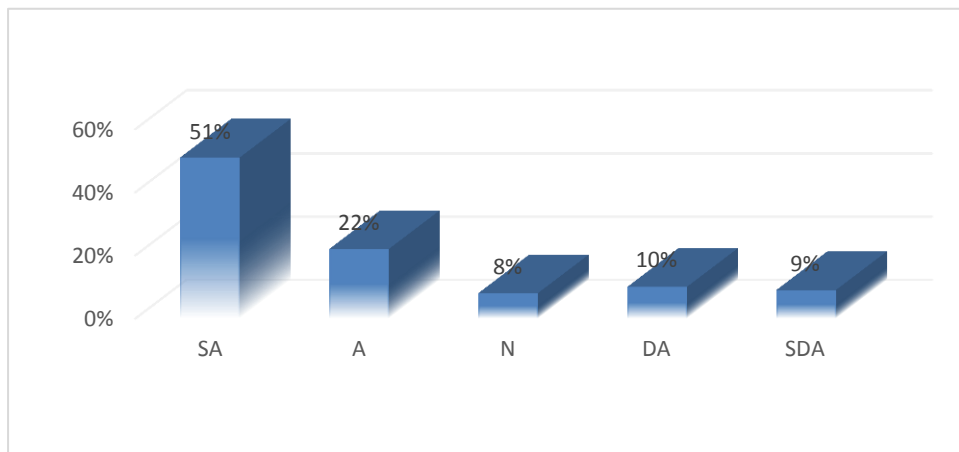


Figure 3: Performance of Government up till now

Figure 3 shows that the first bar exceeds other options. More importantly, over 50% of respondents support government policies and only a handful (19%) oppose them. There is a clear difference. The neutrals are relatively small at the opposite end of the spectrum.

Poverty alleviation and PTI government policies.

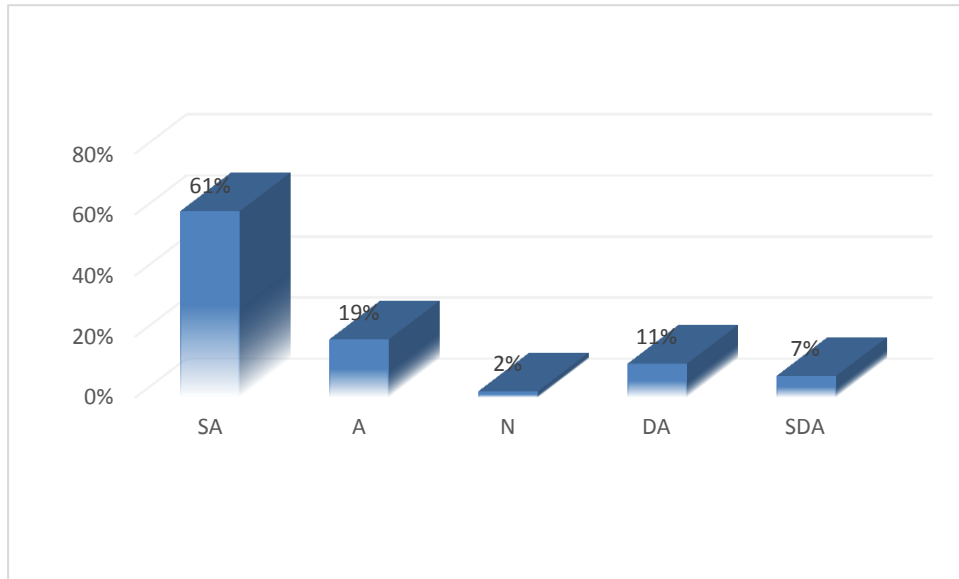


Figure 4: Poverty alleviation and results.

The responses to poverty alleviation are also telling. A large proportion of respondents strongly agree (61%) or agree (19%) that the government is taking appropriate steps to alleviate poverty. On the contrary, 7% of respondents strongly disagree and 11% disagree with the steps being taken to eradicate poverty in the country. Indeed, the government is very clear about this issue. Imran Khan made the following remark, “Our struggle for reduction of poverty is going to complete 25 years and if we manage to do so, it will be the real success of my five-year government” (Syed Irfan Raza, 2021). Yet again he stated that “When I go to the masses after a five-year term of my government, my success would be as to how many people have been steered out of poverty, not how many have become richer” (Syed Irfan Raza, 2021).

Provisions of Constitutional rights for minorities

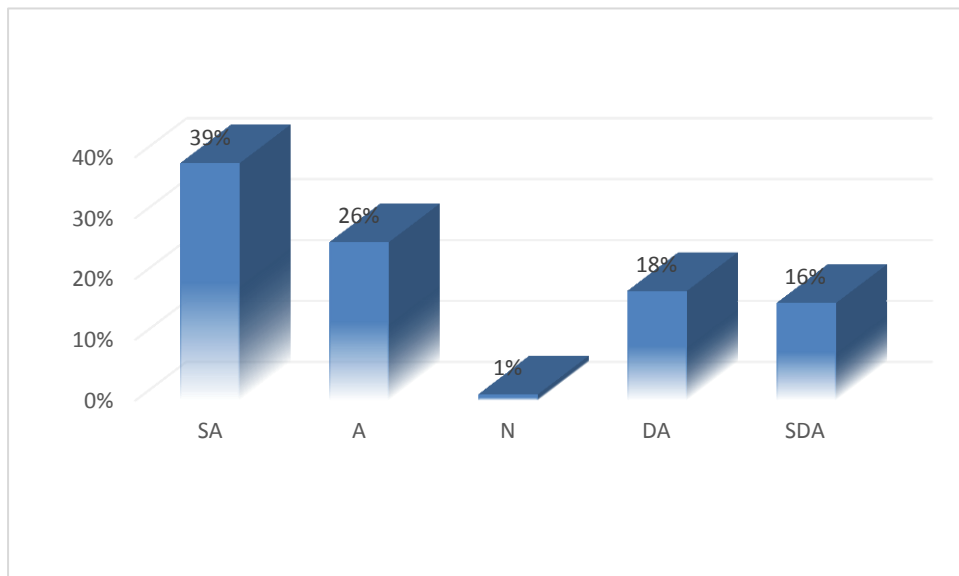


Figure 5: Government success in providing constitutional rights to minorities.

Despite 1 percent neutrality, a massive 65 percent of responses indicated that the government had successfully protected minority groups' constitutional rights. To be sure, this demonstrates that the government has paid attention to a problem that has recently harmed society's fabric. It is no less notable that 34% of the responses were negative to the statement. In numerous of his tweets and interviews since taking office as Prime Minister, Imran Khan has asserted that minorities in Pakistan are equal citizens who are protected by the state. Imran Khan announced "I want to warn our people that anyone in Pakistan targeting our non-Muslim citizens or their places of worship will be dealt with strictly. Our minorities are equal citizens of this country,". (Jaffer A. Mirza, 2020) Though there have been some encouraging advances, such as the case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman accused of blasphemy who was permitted to migrate to Canada, significant and hard efforts are still needed on this front.

Promoting gender equality

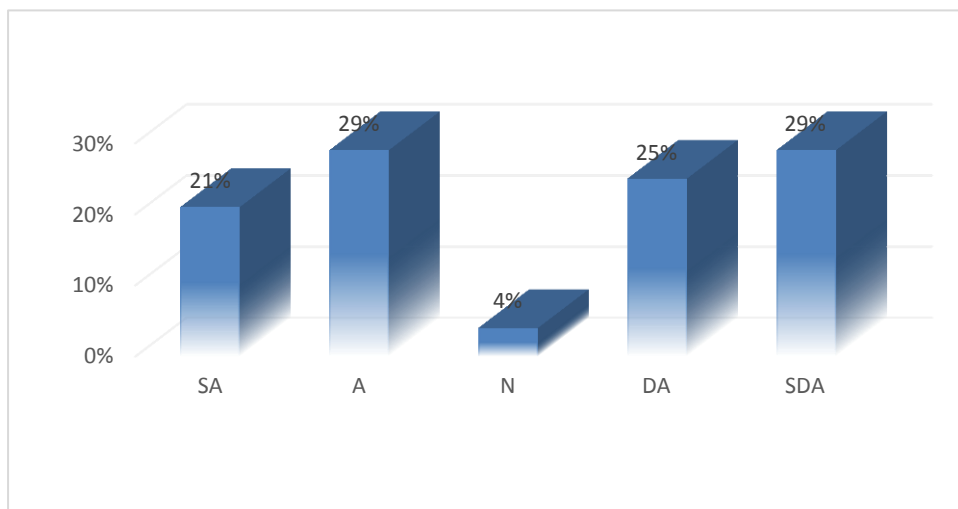


Figure 6: Government role in Promoting gender parity.

Figure 6 is important as it addresses a sensitive and critical aspect of gender equality. The results are very illuminating in this case. Despite the fact that 21 percent and 29 percent approve of government policies that promote gender equality, 25 and 29 percent disapprove of government policies. Most people appear to want to see more policies like this one, which aim to ensure that all sexes in society receive equal treatment in the eyes of the government. Nonetheless, only 4% are unaffected and appear unconcerned about the issue. It essentially means that Pakistan continues to lag behind in terms of encouraging gender equality and providing women with equal opportunities as men. Economic opportunities for women in Pakistan are limited. These findings are consistent with the World Economic Forum (WEF) report titled 'Global Gender Gap Index 2018', which stated in 2018 that Pakistan is the world's second worst country in terms of gender parity, ranking 148th out of 149 countries.(Amin Ahmad, 2018)

Creation of Jobs

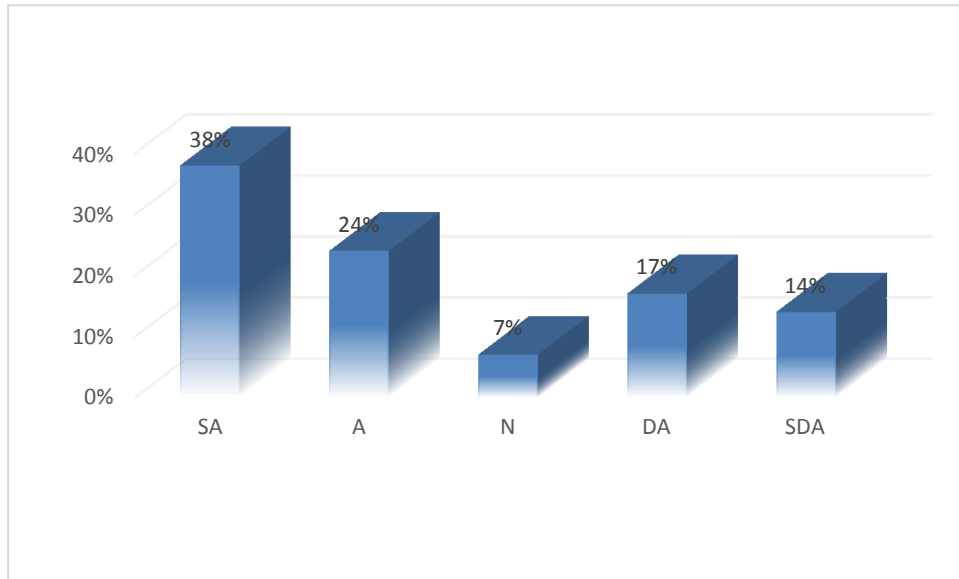


Figure 8: Provide 10 million jobs to strengthen the labor market.

In Figure 8, 38% of the replies agree fully and 24% agree that, in accordance with their manifesto, a 10 million job creation can be provided by the government. In contrast, 17% disagree and 14% strongly disagree with the claim in full. In fact, those who are in agreement with the administration are more comparable than those who disagree, but the results are certainly not insignificant. Overall, 31 per cent think that the government has failed to provide new graduates and young job seekers with jobs. Pakistan has one of the strong and growing middle classes that need employment, and essentially the need for employment in Pakistani society. Government will have to work very hard and more to strengthen the socioeconomic situation of the Pakistani people.

Policy for building houses

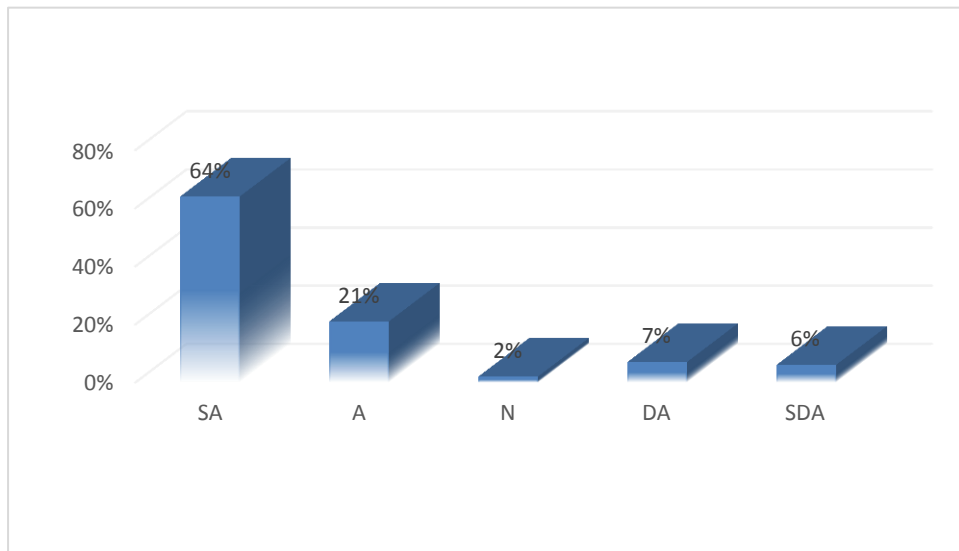


Figure 9: Implementing policy framework to build five million houses properly.

The question regarding building houses has a higher rating than any other. The vast majority of replies (64%) were positive. The government recently announced the construction of

houses mainly for the poor strata of the society, which was warmly received by the public, and this programme was accepted. While 7% disagree and 6% strongly disagree with the statement, this is the smallest percentage of negative comments. Only 2% are unconcerned about the assessment. The highest response indicates the importance of housing in Pakistani society, owing to the fact that many households are unable to afford decent housing, so government policy for socioeconomic uplift through housing has been well received.

Education and health issues

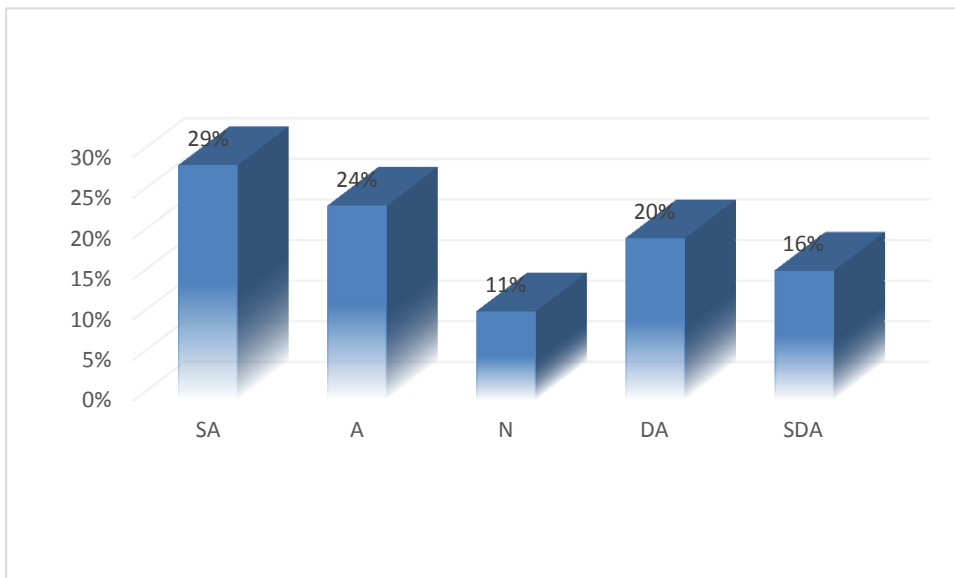


Figure 10: settlement of issues regarding education and health sectors

Looking at Figure 10, it is obvious that the responses to the government's performance in fixing health and education challenges have been positive. While 29 percent strongly agree, 24 percent strongly disagree with the present government's performance. It is also evident that 20 percent of total replies disagree, and 16 percent strongly disagree, with 11 percent neutral. People appeared to be satisfied in general. However, because these two areas are so important in any civilized society, it is advised that more be done in this area.

Key findings:

PTI government has completed half of the tenure. It is tries to dig out that government policies are in favor of general public or not? And what is people opinion about level of satisfaction. During empirical research and literature review about government policies and public welfare programs more response was received.

According to respondents, PTI initiated good projects for public welfare, but there has been no effective implementation at the grass-roots level. People believe that, despite PTI's claim in its manifesto that it will overcome the country's challenges, the government has failed to do so, particularly in the areas of poverty, health, and education. According to respondents, government should implement public welfare programmes such as Ahsaas, BISP, Kafaalat, clean and green Pakistan, and ensure inclusion.

Respondents discussed the 10 million jobs pledged by PTI during election campaigns critically. Respondents suggested that government work on institutional reforms in particular to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for industry and agriculture.

There is no need to change people freely on the education and sanitary sector. People are satisfied with the PM housing scheme.

The government was attempting to implement public welfare projects, but its transparency and the functioning of bureaucracy remained in order to complete the project effectively and efficiently.

It is noted that the government has attempted to introduce public welfare projects, but its transparency and bureaucratic role have remained in effective and effective project completion. The PTI government tackled Covid 19 better and the public welfare systems put in place for people under the poverty line appeared satisfactory.

Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to investigate the PTI government's socioeconomic reforms and programmes aimed at benefiting the people of Pakistan. According to the findings of this study, people are satisfied with government policies but not with government projects. During the empirical study, a mixed opinion was expressed by applauding government initiatives while also criticizing government policies. After three years in power, the government is still failing to meet its own goals. The federal government sees bureaucracy and provincial autonomy as impediments to PTI government progress. The government claims that household income resource data is not completely available, which is the fundamental reason why the government is having difficulty developing pro-poor policies. The government should invest in running projects and design more projects to address basic humanitarian needs.

In order for the current PTI government to be effective and transparent, the role of bureaucracy must be investigated. To promote national integration, it is also necessary to investigate how social welfare programmes can be integrated at the federal and provincial levels. To minimize project failures, it is necessary to research one's own standard operating procedure in order to develop a project and implementation plans. There is a need to conduct research on the barriers to a functional local government system, as well as solutions to these barriers.

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