

Evaluation Of Tehreek-E-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) In The Context Of Elitism

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Abstract

This article explores the intricate relationship between Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and the concept of elitism. Historically, Muslim societies had powerful religious elite. The rise of religious political parties in the subcontinent followed the first political mobilization of Indian Muslims by the religious leadership during World War One. The Ulema got involved in politics when they started agitation against the British who governed the Muslim world and subcontinent. The religious elites have a tremendous role in the political history of Pakistan particularly on Khatm-e-Nabuwat and the Blasphemy issues. The cleric, Khadim Hussain Rizvi founded TLP on the basis of these two aspects and mobilized Barelvis. Ultimately, a new and aggressive religious political party performed exceptionally well in the general election of 2018. The traits of elitism created a significant impact in the formation of TLP and the role of religious elite made this party so potent that it received 2.2 million votes or 4.22 percent for the National Assembly. TLP secured 43% of the religious votes which made it the fifth largest party in the country. For instance, TLP moved up to become the third largest party in Punjab behind the PTI and PML-N after receiving 1.8 million votes or around 5.7%, and 70% of all votes cast for religious parties. It was successful by garnering 0.4 million votes or 37% of the votes cast for religious parties in Sindh. However, it only managed to obtain two seats in the Sindh provincial assembly and none in the National assembly. The performance of TLP in KP and Balochistan was not so impressive. The evaluation of TLP in the perspective of elitism would help to understand the role of religious elites in the politics of Pakistan.

Keywords: Elitism, Religious Elite, Ulema, Khatm-e-Nabuwat, Blasphemy, Traits, Evaluation, Perspective.

Introduction

Elite is the oldest idea and it was not developed until the Renaissance and Reformation when the societal concept of progress was transformed. Who rules is still a persistent issue today in the global political arena. Elites were discussed by social scientists in relation to the ruling body, leadership, and politicians who played

structurally functional roles in politics. When most of the social scientists refer to elites, they usually mean certain key actors who perform structural, understandable roles in a country's governance process as well as in other institutional contexts, such as the religious, military, academic, industrial, communication, and so forth (Kuper, 1987).

The ideals, values, and practices of

religion have strong influence in Pakistani culture. The socio-economic growth of a country is significantly influenced by the political economy of religious elites and the impact of religion on public policy. The Ulema started their politics with their hostility to the British. The Muslim world and subcontinent were governed by the colonial outsiders. Anjuman-i-Khudam-e-Kaaba was established in 1913, and afterwards the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and Khilafat movements debuted on the political scene of the subcontinent. They passionately opposed the British government and their allies' policies toward Muslim countries (Ansari and Moten, 2003).

The decline of the Mughal Empire caused a loss of the Muslim authority ever since the early 18th century. The 1857 War of Independence's defeat shocked the Ulema, or religious intellectuals because they considered the Islamic faith as the consequence of a moral revolution among the Muslims and they deemed it necessary to be restored. Religious leaders preferred the real and pure form of Islam to reignite faith. In the subcontinent, initiatives to revitalize or reform religion gave rise to movements like Ahl-e-Hadith and Deoband. Sufism slowly faced scathing criticism as colonialism expanded. The strident opponents of Sufism were influenced by the "Enlightenment" or "The age of reason". Modernists saw Sufism as going against reason; while reformists thought Sufism was not a true form of Islam. The "Barelvi" Sunni sect came into being in the 19th century. In order to save Sufism, Syed Ahmad Raza Khan, who formed this sect, led the Barelvi movement. He was a Qadriya Sufi who advocated for Sufism as a fundamental aspect of Islam. He addressed various questions posed by the opponents about Sufism (Nekokara, 2021).

Shrines focus on the religious elites associated with them since they are seen as

the cultural outposts of religious dominance. Shrines are unofficial groups that provide food, treat the sick, and mediate disputes. Leaders of shrines have followers' obedience because of their illustrious ancestry and position of religious authority. They serve as mediators between the rulers and the ruled due to their sway on politics and the economy.

The emergence of TLP in 2015 thrust Barelvis to the fore of Pakistan's religious politics. Salman Taseer, the governor of Punjab was assassinated by Mumtaz Qadri in 2011. Demonstrations erupted when Qadri was put to death. TLP was able to increase its support by elevating Qadri to a hero, and eventually, it became the only religious political party in Pakistan that was larger than both Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal ur Rehman (JUI-F) and Jamat-e-Islami (JI) (Faiz, 2018).

Elite theory discusses the role of elites in national and international politics. According to renowned school of political science, a certain group of people, that is called elite, can eventually be used to explain social and political processes. Politics is centered on political leaders, and party principles have a strict policy regarding them. Numerous scholars indicated that elites are among the most crucial components of a society's governance (Heper and Sayari, 2002).

Those who have the ability to shape political results are seen as elites. Elite can also refer to leadership, and the two concepts are commonly used interchangeably but there are certain distinctions between them. A leader according to the fundamental and most important definition is, "The one who leads or conducts; one who occupies a chief or prominent place to arouse, incite, and direct them for achievement". As a result, the term "leader" refers to someone with the power to persuade others to cooperate in achieving a common goal. High ranking members of

society or organizations are considered an elite group. Elites therefore hold greater places in a hierarchy. They might be in charge of or have access to sources that are political, military, or economic. The majority of specialists, however, have backed leadership over elitism over the past three decades. Leaders impose their authority on followers. The relationship between the leader and the followers is dynamic, and both of them may interact while doing action as a group. Elite and non-elite interactions, however, are highly unusual. A leader of an elite group may have an advantage over others due to his position of authority. It frequently happens that all elites do not have the positions of leadership (Fukai and Fukui, 1992).

Pakistani society is fundamentally based on religion which obviously has an impact on voting. Religious political parties exploit religion as a winning strategy. Voting for religious parties is primarily motivated by the desire to make Pakistan an Islamic state. Religion has an impact on people's behavior both individually and collectively. However, religious convictions have less of an impact on people's political opinions in a society with linguistic, cultural, and ethnic variety. Instead, evidence appears that ethnicity has a greater influence on voting behavior than religion. Khadim Hussain Rizvi played a vital role in terms of transforming masses into a well-organized religious political party. The development of the TLP's street strength into a political party was influenced by a variety of circumstances. As per diagnostic framing, the TLP leadership identified the problem and pushed elites and other parties toward the cause. The initial event behind the formation of TLP was the murder of the alleged blasphemer, Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer and it viewed Mumtaz Qadri as a deserving "Hero". Its leaders affirm that it is preferable to die rather bearing the

blasphemy of the beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Keeping in view the prognostic framing, TLP offered a solution for the problem with a self-interested perspective. After condemning the then government of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and its institutions, the TLP leadership provided a solution. Khadim Hussain Rizvi said that the government was a tool of the West and he described his future plans by saying that, "once we are in power, we will treat them (West) with an iron fist". For instance, the fiery Khadim Hussain Rizvi vowed to assault the United States (US) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with missiles if they insisted Pakistan to repay its loans, cursing "Lo ji fer Aaya Je Ghauri" which translates to "Here comes the Ghauri missile to hit you" (Zahid et al., 2022).

Through motivational factors, religious elites of TLP used the explicit religious content and self-legitimizing discourse to ostensibly identify the problem and offer answers. By representing themselves as the custodians of the Khatm-e-Nabuwat and Hurmat-e-Rasool, they fostered in the followers an intellectual need to sacrifice all for the sake of the Prophet's (PBUH) honor. To compare the identity of the dictatorship, for instance, they imported the notorious Islamic character Yazid. In response, this adequacy positions them as protectors of Islam, as Imam Hussain and the esteemed Sahaba of that time did. Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world and has a notable social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. 63 percent of Pakistan's population is under twenty-five. The message was disseminated by TLP's supporters through social media template platforms (Kamray, 2021).

Power and Dominance

Power is the ability to exert influence over something. It is described as an individual or a group's ability to follow through its goals, decisions, and ideas in sociology. Social relationships are a part of power. It suggests the possibility of exercising one's own will to influence another person's behavior. Those in positions of power impose their will on others; this practice plays a role in social interactions and promotes inequality. A society has a limited quantity of power; therefore certain people have access to it while others do not.

Max Weber defined power as the ability of a person within a social connection to carry out his own desires despite opposition from others. This explanation is comprehensive and it covers a wide variety of power kinds. He offers the dominion as an alternative or a more clearly defined notion to make this description more helpful in the study of history and society. According to Weber, dominance is the likelihood that a given group of people would accept all or some demands. Obedience, interest, belief, and regularity are traits connected to dominance. Political parties, social classes, and levels of status are all viewed by Weber as symbols to control and the pursuit of one's goals in the face of opposition from others. According to Weber, status of honor is a noteworthy aspect of group social behavior than class or a group's connection to the market. This can be done by status groups in a variety of ways. First, preserving status might aid a privileged group in preserving its position in society. Second, those with little influence could create a status group to exert more influence over resources such as money and relationships (Weber, 1958).

The leadership of TLP utilized the factors of traits which are connected to dominance. The factors of obedience, interest, belief, and regularity in shaping the significance of TLP in the political arena of

Pakistan not only increase its worth but it gained power and dominance over other mainstream and religious political parties. The status of honour of Khadim Hussain Rizvi being the religious elite prevailed during the general election of 2018 because the Barelvīs and other voters cast vote in the favor of party for its dominance.

Elite Theory

Elitism divides the societies into majority and minority groups; with the minority ruling over the majority is the essence of this research which is applied in the case of TLP. Elite studies have been one of the most important fields of study in the social sciences, particularly in sociology and political science. The unquestionable effects and roles of the elites in both developed and emerging countries are debatable. Surprisingly, the majority of these studies hardly ever discuss the work of the elite theory pioneers. In addition to introducing elites, elite theory also presented new notable conceptions of power and oligarchical tendencies in democracies. More research has been done on the political ideologies of elitists than on their viewpoints on social concerns. Although the elite concept is the oldest, its application did not begin until the Renaissance and Reformation. In the modern world, the question of who rules remains a recurrent and important political topic. Social scientists' analyses of elites center on political figures, governing bodies, and other institutions with crucial structural roles in society (Kuper, 1987).

The study briefly discussed the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and Machiavelli. Plato views that the greatest way to govern the community is by the intellectual elite (a Philosopher King). He said in Republic that their rulers should be the wisest thinkers and the bravest soldiers (Girvetz, 1967).

Aristotle classified political systems into three groups: monarchy, aristocracy, and polity and these are usual and desirable ones. Tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy are the worst types. Aristocracies are governed by a small group of people, monarchies and dictatorships by one person, and democracies by a large number of people. However, in his book, *Prince*, Machiavelli offered guidance on how to rule (Kuper, 1987). Almost all philosophers contributed their thoughts on the ruling and governing classes, and they made their own beliefs about this topic more widely accepted (Laporte, 1975).

Karl Marx later spoke about the conflict between the two social classes and suggested a classless society. The term “ruling class” describes how Marxists view the state. This argument claims that a small, unrepresentative clique controls society and enforces its will. The “means of production” refers to the basic economic structure of society; industry and commerce are the sources of power of a class. These two social classes are referred by him as the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie, accordingly. He continued to discuss the nature of human existence and how it is related to economic activity. Marx's study of political leaders closely corresponds with theory and practical fact than his evaluation of social class. Political leaders prioritize the interests of the social strata that own private property, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Marxists contest the universal validity of this “law of elites and masses” and contend that it is within the freedom of man to imagine and create new social systems. Because of this, the phrase “circulation of elites” has come to refer to their perspectives on the class conflict (Bottomore, 1964).

In the 17th century, the word “Elite” was first used to describe goods of extraordinary quality. Later, the term was

used to describe affluent social groups like military regiments or the highest tiers of nobility. Oxford English Dictionary used this phrase as social groups in the 18th century and this word was not commonly incorporated in social and political writing in the 19th century until the latter half of the century in Europe or the 1930s in Britain and America (Parry, 1977).

Classical Elite Theorists and their viewpoint

Numerous classical elite theorists have presented their elitism-related beliefs. A few of these are discussed below.

Vilfredo Pareto

Pareto, the most well-known of the Italian political sociologists founded the elitist school of study in contemporary cultures. Pareto argues that neither intellectual nor ethical nor physical equality exists among people. Either, in the society as a whole or any one of its particular strata and groups, there are certain people who are more talented than others. The most gifted individuals within any particular group are the elites. According to him, the elite are a group of people that uphold the greatest standards in their respective fields (Pareto, 1935).

He claims that; the grades which are given in school examinations on different topics are similar as each person is given an index in every sphere of human effort as a gauge of their ability (Bottomore, 1964).

The idea of elites has been closely related to Mosca and Pareto's concept of the “circulation of elites” throughout the history of sociological theory. Elitist studies the ways in which certain people gain access to positions of power as a result of political processes. The initial formulation of Pareto's well-known idea of the circulation of elites

can be found in his statement “The Rise and fall of the Elites”.

Circulation of Elites

The phrase “circulation of elites” was made famous by Pareto to describe the ongoing cycle of renewal and elite substitution in which one kind of political elite is replaced by another. According to Pareto, elites that possess a certain psychological orientation, like lions, frequently alternate with resourceful but unreliable foxes. Pareto believed that more democratic forms of government could not take the place of elite power. According to Pareto, all men are not created equal; they differ among themselves in terms of their skills and aptitudes. Elite refers to a class of superior individuals who are present in all facets of social interaction. The “circulation of elites” is a phenomenon which describes that one elite is replaced by another and causes particular social change. Elites have a propensity to deteriorate with time. They lose their vigor and degrade in quality as a result of complacency. They can become sticky and ineffective or too rigid and set in their ways to adapt to the times with the benefits of a good life and the perks of authority. Every kind of elite is deficient in the traits needed to hold onto power for an extended period of time. The elite of lions must absorb foxes from the common populace to make up for their lack of originality and cunning, which are vital to preserve their rule. Foxes change the composition of the elite to eventually consume it. However, foxes lack the ability to make the kind of decisions that are periodically necessary to keep things under control. They are overthrown by a well-organized lion minority that is determined to reassert strong domination over the fox aristocracy. According to Pareto, history is a never-ending circle of aristocrats. He said that nothing has changed and the past still

exists as “a graveyard of aristocracies” (Pareto, 1935).

Gaetano Mosca

He was the first to systematically divide “elites and masses” and he also paid more attention to how the elite were formed. According to him, there are two types of people in any civilization, either evolved or not:

- i. A class that governs
- ii. A class that is governed

The first class, which is consistently the smallest in size, consistently holds the majority of political power and benefits from this position. The first class dominates the second, which controls and governs in a way that is more or less arbitrary, brutal, and legitimate (Bottomore, 1964).

Robert Michels

Michels referred to his views as being governed by the law of oligarchy and discussed the right of the minority to rule. He concentrated on studying the socialist movements in Europe and came to the conclusion that any group of people, even an egalitarian party, would eventually form an inner circle that would usurp control. He shared Pareto's perspective but added the qualification that elite movement was a continuous process of interaction. The new law of interaction, which is the tendency towards social immobility in which inferiors go towards superiors in a free society, draws the old elements to it, maintains them, even integrates them, and blends them with it (Bottomore, 1964).

C. Wright Mills

Mills published “The Power Elite” in 1956 in which he provided a sociological perspective on the political institutions of countries. He identified three power groups; political, economic, and military which constituted an

observable and powerful entity in the United States. In accordance with Mills, this group was established as an outcome of the process of rationalization that is prevalent to all advanced industrial societies, in which the structures of power were strengthened and eventually, it was centralized in the hands of a small, somewhat corrupt group. This demonstrated how politics had changed from being a place for dialogue to a more formal level of discourse. This macro-scale analysis sought to illustrate the collapse of democracy in sophisticated cultures as well as the fact that authority frequently resided outside the jurisdiction of elected leaders. "Behemoth: The Structure and Practise of National Socialism", 1933–1944 by Franz Leopold Neumann was a major source of inspiration for the study which elaborated, how Nazism came to power in the German democratic state. It provided the tools for structural political system analysis and served as a warning about the potential pitfalls of modern capitalist democracy (Bottomore, 1964).

Analyzing Elitism in Pakistan

Asaf Hussain affirms that a specific elite group has historically played a special role in Pakistan. The political system came under pressure when it developed along ethnic lines. The political forces in the then North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan on one hand while in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh on the other hand were ethicized by the dominant landowner elite group (Hussain, 1980).

Hussain divided elites into three groups: traditional, colonial, and emerging. Traditional elites were those who participated in politics during the time of Muslim rule, colonial elites during the time of British rule (1857–1947), and emergent elites appeared after 1947. Each wealthy elite group was constantly striving to alter the state in order

to further its own objectives. In light of these changes, each dictatorship attempted to legitimate its systems by highlighting one or more ideologies. In spite of the fact that political beliefs might differ from state to state, the study focused on two concepts that are true for all civilizations. The first class is the ruling or controlling class while the second class is conceived of as the controlled masses. Every political system in a society distributes political power in a different way. The political elites are the ones who control the political system. People who are remarkably more powerful or prominent than the general population (the masses) are frequently referred to as political elites. Those in power and those who hold influential positions in politics are the ruling elites. The political arena where the ruling elites dominate and where the vast majority of high level decision-making takes place is the Central Cabinet of the Pakistani government (Hussain, 1980).

Saeed Shafqat lists five sorts of elites, including the religious elite, bureaucratic elite, industrial-merchant elite, political elite, and military elite. Of them, the military, bureaucracy, and industrial-merchant factions have an excessive effect on Pakistan's political system. The political elites in command of the nationalist movement were very mobilizable, but the political structures they inherited were weak or nonexistent. When there were no political structures, they relied on bureaucracy. On the other hand, the Muslim merchant classes that immigrated to Pakistan and funded the Pakistan movement with its first money were revealed as a crucial coalitional component. He continued by stating that once the military intervened to put an end to the situation in 1958, a new ruling alliance was formed. Elected Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) changed the role of political elite and led to the creation of new farmers and

commercial-industrial class. During this period of military and bureaucratic elite power, the religious character and role were emphasized as an ideological component during the 1970 elections. In such circumstances, Z.A. Bhutto (1971–1977) had to form a coalition government and revived the core components of Pakistan's political system.

PPP was an umbrella group that represented the interests of several groups, including labor, the middle class, intellectuals, and students. Both the military and the executive branch of government supported it. However, the political elites who controlled decision-making were socially supported by the feudal and urban middle classes. Bhutto pursued a reformist program and a policy of selective co-option in order to recruit political elites and legitimize its authority. The regime's principal objectives were to strengthen the power of the political elites and restore the political institutions (Shafqat, 1989).

Charismatic Leadership and Traditional Elites

Max Weber's Theory of Charismatic Leadership is one of the foundational theories guiding the development of a specific type of political leadership and power in a society. According to Max Weber, there are three basic sorts of power: charismatic, traditional, and bureaucratic (Toteff, 2005). Religious leadership and charismatic leadership are commonly associated with one another. He claims that the idea is related to soldier and religious authority. He labels politicians as charismatic if they have certain traits, such as the capacity to influence people's opinions and feelings (Tucker, 1968).

A powerful and dominant person or group's traditional privileges are acknowledged, or at least they are not challenged. These include like (i) traditions

associated with religion, the holy, or the afterlife; (ii) enduring customs; and (iii) tribal, familial, or clan structures. A clergyman, clan leader, family head, or other patriarch is an example of powerful individual or dominant elite. Traditional authority is generally supported by cultural elements like mythology or a relationship to the divine, symbols like the cross or flag, and institutions and structures that uphold this traditional authority.

Before January 4, 2011, no one had heard about Khadim Hussain Rizvi, despite the fact that he subsequently rose to fame for his ferocious oratory. He was born in Pindi Gheb, Punjab, on June 22, 1966. A Hafiz-e-Quran and Sheikh-ul-Hadith, Rizvi worked for the Punjab Auqaf Department and used to speak on Fridays in the Pir Makki Masjid in Lahore, near to Daata Darbar. Many people assume that he was a Shia because of his last name, but he was an ardent follower of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi, who founded the Barelvi sect in the 19th century.

The preacher Khadim Hussain Rizvi established the political front named Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYR). The hard stances of TLP on the issues of Khatm-e-Nabuwat and anti-blasphemy legislation were intended to resurrect Barelvi politics. TLP, which has grown to be the largest religious political party in Pakistan, added a new, aggressive element to the political structure of the country. The party is well recognized and familiar due to its protests, especially those against any modification to Pakistan's blasphemy laws. Through political and legal means, the party's primary goal is to impose Sharia law in Pakistan. Rizvi provided a hope to his supporters and the Barelvi community. He struggled to uphold the honor of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He opposed any modifications in blasphemy laws and to remove all hurdles in implementation of

Nizam-e-Mustafa. Rizvi, a lower middle class from Punjab developed a reputation among his followers as a charismatic leader.

He was able to engage the crowd with his ability to speak. He connected with his followers promptly and led them to agitations and protests. Rizvi gained attention for his frequent usage of Punjabi slang and colloquialism and he assembled the middle-class and lower middle-class support base in Punjab and Sindh. Supporters of Rizvi identify with him because of his social background and accessibility. Both his admirers and his students refer to him as Ustad Ji. The success of 2017 Faizabad sit-in provided chance to Rizvi to change political views of Barelvis. He debunked the stereotype that members of the Barelvi community were only “shrine goers” and “halwa eaters”, with little to no aptitude for making it in the mainstream of politics. After the sit-in in Faizabad in 2017, Rizvi released a statement in which he stated that Barelvis had been oppressed for more than a century. He claimed that the opposite of this phenomenon is beginning now. Though it can take some time, eventually the voice of the majority will prevail.

Rizvi transformed his support base into a unified Barelvi vote bank by creating a compelling political narrative. This set him apart from his contemporaries, such as Riaz Hussain Shah of Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat (JAS), Anas Noorani of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan Noorani, and Sahibzada Hamid Raza of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC). In contrast to them, Rizvi delivered a narrative to the Barelvis that resonated them, touched them on an emotional level, and provided them with a meaningful political platform.

Incorporation of Elitism with TLP

The three types of the religious elite; local Molvis, Pirs and Ulema-o-Mashaikhs share a traditional viewpoint. They preach the

masses and commit with them to utilize their political influence in the fullest sense. Over time, they have developed into political parties that are stronger and more organized than those in the West, but oddly, despite having a strong religious ethos, they have not been successful in gaining an exceptional level of political participation in elected authorities. The Barelvi school of thought and Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband India might be considered to identify the theological roots of religious leaders (Farooqi, 1963).

The two pillars that supported all of Barelvi politics were Shrines and Pirs, who made up the elite; Ulema and politicians were not always tied to one or the other shrine. According to an academic author Anatol Lieven, every attempt to establish such gatherings over the years has failed due to the intense rivalries and conflicts between the great Pir families as well as the fact that, unlike modern Islamic radicals, Shrines and Pirs have lacked political ideology, beyond adherence to their own traditions. The Barelvis were unable to create notable political parties of their own Like Deobandis or Jamat-e-Islami (Lieven, 2012).

Khadim Hussain Rizvi was able to proletarianize Barelvi politics by replacing the myth of the Sufi shrine leaders, a historical class whose politics was fungible depending on their specific interests. Several traditional Barelvi leaders felt compelled to speak with Rizvi and his TLYR in order to convince them to support their attempts to push for Nizam-e-Mustafa because of the tectonic shift in the balance of power.

Elite theory conceptualizes that the ruling class, or minority, reigns over the majority in numerous ways. Due to influence from particular societal, religious, hereditary, or personal qualities or talents, the minority gains authority. This minority is referred regarded as the “governing elite” or “political class” because of their inclination to shape

political and governmental decisions. TLP leadership persuaded the general public to support the party by social activism, theological understanding, and personal qualifications. Elite is an objective phrase that is described as, “anyone who ranks well on indices of social values, influence, or knowledge”. Khadim Hussain Rizvi demonstrated his ability to sway the general public through all of these qualities. The core tenet of the elite theory is that there will always be a small group of individuals in every society who govern the majority and make key choices.

The development of TLP in Pakistan's electoral history meets the criteria for Elite Theory's characteristics as its founder had the skills of dynamic leadership that made an impact on the populace to acquire support and perform well in elections. The power dynamics of the modern era are intended to be explained by this hypothesis. Interactions between elites and the general populace usually shed light on debates between disadvantaged groups and the country. Khadim Hussain Rizvi's main goal was the creation of the government and to establish it on the principles of Islamic law. The primary objectives of TLP were to address the blasphemy laws and the finality of Prophethood (PBUH), which helped it become well-liked by the general public. The leadership's policies and manifestos that influenced the general public fall under the category of elitism.

In Pakistan's election history, the religious elites have always been crucial in setting the pace. The concept of charismatic leadership is the cornerstone of the global expansion of new religious movements. Political scientists and sociologists have drawn links in the modern era. Eileen Barker asserts that charismatic leaders with considerable power and influence as well as specialized expertise and abilities are

typically found in new religious organizations. The following of charismatic leaders are obedient and unrestrained in their loyalty. By grabbing the public's attention during the 2018 general election, TLP leadership performed exceptionally well. In his analysis of charisma, Max Weber emphasizes the traits of invention and revolution. He contends that the charismatic leader urges change by criticizing the prevalent social institutions, which include politics, religion, and other factors (Weber, 1958).

This concept appears to be pertinent to the emergence of religious fundamentalism, such as TLP, as well as the development of religious political parties and individuals in Pakistani politics. The rise of religious political parties in the country may have been influenced by the charismatic religious leadership of Maulana Maududi and Mufti Mahmood during the democratic era of the 1970s; a similar pattern was seen when Khadim Hussain Rizvi competed in general elections of 2018. It received 2.2 million votes in the 2018 elections. Due to their inexperience and lack of political knowledge, they were unable to convert these votes into parliamentary seats, and could only secure two members from Karachi (ECP, 2018).

Though it was unable to gain any seats in the National Assembly but the party damaged the support of other parties, particularly the PML-N and PTI in Punjab and the PPP and MQM in Sindh, and signaled the start of a new era of religious politics (Ramachandran, 2021).

Conclusion

The study delves into the concept of the elite within the context of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). It examines how the religious elite within TLP played a pivotal role in mobilizing and influencing the masses to establish a political presence through the

electoral process. This aligns with elite theory, which posits that a minority can exert control over the majority, as was observed in the case of TLP. Khadim Hussain Rizvi's personal traits, skills, knowledge and abilities played an instrumental role in converting an unorganized and huge faction of Barelvi school of thought into a cohesive and well organized political party. He created a great impact on the masses through the practical use of elite traits. TLP's exceptional result in the general election of 2018 in terms of obtaining votes has given it a thriving status in the country's political climate. The use of religious terminology and elements was crucial in the development of TLP. Before the conduction of 2018 general elections, the role of Khadim Hussain Rizvi as the religious elite could not be disregarded because he was effective in the provision of a forum to the supporters of Barelvi school of thought. He utilized the dynamic social media in his election campaign to establish new trends. A change in voting patterns during the 2018 general elections was observed when TLP appeared on screen, placing third in Punjab at the province level and fifth at the national level. This shocked the stakeholders of state, especially the religious political parties.

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