

The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad in the 1988 Elections: Formation, Internal Dynamics, and Limits of Coalition Politics in Pakistan

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Abstract

This article analyzes the formation, internal dynamics, electoral strategy, and political performance of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) in Pakistan's 1988 general elections. Established primarily to counter the electoral strength of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the IJI was a heterogeneous coalition comprising factions of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), National People's Party (NPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-D), and several smaller groups. Using qualitative analysis of party documents, election manifestos, press reports, and secondary sources, the study argues that the alliance was weakened by ideological incompatibility, organizational fragility, and intense leadership rivalries. The research highlights that the IJI lacked a clear and binding manifesto, as disagreements persisted over Islamization, the Afghan issue, and governance priorities. Contentious seat-sharing arrangements and candidate selection processes generated widespread dissatisfaction among coalition partners, resulting in defections, independent candidacies, and fragmentation of the anti-PPP vote across provinces. These problems were particularly visible in Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, and Balochistan, where intra-alliance conflicts overshadowed coordinated electoral campaigning. Despite these limitations, the IJI succeeded in emerging as the main opposition bloc and formed the provincial government in Punjab under Nawaz Sharif. This success, however, owed more to the organizational strength of the PML and Sharif's personal political influence than to coalition unity. The article concludes that the IJI represented an opportunistic electoral arrangement rather than a principled alliance, illustrating the structural weaknesses of coalition politics in Pakistan's transitional democratic phase and the difficulty of sustaining cohesion in alliances formed primarily in opposition to a dominant political rival.

Keywords: Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), General Elections 1988, Party Fragmentation, Democratic Transition in Pakistan

Formation and Political Dynamics of the IJI (1988)

The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) emerged as an electoral coalition primarily aimed at countering the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the 1988 general elections. However, from its inception, the coalition suffered from internal contradictions, lack of consensus, and weak strategic planning. Many observers argued that the foremost responsibility of the coalition should have been to resolve internal conflicts before engaging other political parties. Instead, divergent interests among its constituent groups—including factions of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Tehreek-e-Istiqlal (TI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), and smaller parties—undermined cohesion.

Key political actors, such as Pir Pagaro, openly criticized the coalition, arguing that alliances should be formed only among groups sharing a common understanding of national problems. He questioned the ideological compatibility of the coalition, citing JI's historical opposition to the concept of an autonomous Muslim state and the alleged disregard for the rule of law by certain partners. Many parties joined the IJI with the sole objective of defeating the PPP, yet failed to devise a unified strategy to mobilize voters. As a result, several candidates contested elections independently, weakening collective discipline.

The coalition was widely criticized for lacking a clear manifesto or binding policy framework. No formal agreement existed on governance priorities in the event of electoral success, reinforcing perceptions that the IJI was an opportunistic electoral arrangement rather than a principled alliance. Analysts contended that the coalition was formed mainly to enhance electoral competitiveness, as individual parties doubted their ability to challenge the PPP independently. Jamaat-e-Islami, in particular, was seen to have lost more politically than it gained, as its traditional electoral performance did not significantly improve, while internal disputes damaged its public image.

The marginalization of Mohammad Khan Junejo within the coalition further weakened the PML's position. His exclusion from a central leadership role was viewed as a major setback, given his ability to unite party factions. Meanwhile, TI leader Air Marshal (Retd.) Asghar Khan strongly criticized the IJI, labeling it neither Islamic nor democratic and accusing its members of corruption and opportunism. Several political theorists

compared the IJI to the earlier Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), arguing that it lacked a coherent political program beyond opposition to the PPP.

The political environment of 1988 was shaped by major developments, including the separation of National and Provincial Assembly elections and the death of President Zia-ul-Haq in a plane crash, which created a power vacuum. The Supreme Court's decision to allow party-based elections enabled full political participation, altering earlier expectations of non-party polls or martial law. Fragmentation within alliances such as the MRD further reshaped electoral alignments, ultimately leaving IJI and PAI as the main contenders. With the eventual disintegration of PAI, the IJI emerged as the principal opposition bloc in the 1988 elections, despite its fragile structure and contested legitimacy.

IJI in the Elections of 1988

IJI has become a recently established bipartisan coalition. The fundamental goal of this alliance's creation was to prevail over the PPP. To accomplish this aim IJI tried to prepare well for which various strategies were used in the planning and election campaigns. (Mazari, 2000, p. 537)

Election Manifesto of IJI

On 8 November 1988 IJI made public its seven-point plan. It championed Dominance of Islamic Law, ensuring equal prosperity, a cost-effective and non-discriminatory justice system, safeguarding women's rights (with four religious groups as members of the IJI), complete support for Afghan Jihad (Holy War), and advocating nuclear power for peaceful purposes and Kashmir's independence. There were serious accusations against IJI that drawing masses didn't have a robust system. The IJI software focused largely on the topic of Islamization and Afghanistan but it felt too sketchy and unsuccessful to draw people. The other trouble with IJI was that its member parties did not agree with each other on its manifesto as IJI leaders found Afghanistan to issue the alliance's basic cause while others such as PML did not agree with this point of view. IJI rejected the Geneva Accord while PML (J) found the signature of this agreement to be a Junejo accomplishment as PM. Alliance members also had conflicts of opinion regarding the country's fundamental concepts of Islamization. (Murtaza, 1988, p. 5)

Political parties were more interested in naming good winning candidates in the polls, rather than designing detailed and ambitious manifestos for attracting voters. In general it looked like a personality dispute rather than a rivalry various philosophies or policies and nearly all attempts were made to shape legislation rather than gain support with the party in general public elections. It was a daunting challenge for IJI to arrive at a seat change model for the coalition partner parties. IJI comprising of eight independent political parties and manifesto encountered severe problems in finding a seat share arrangement as each party wished to get more seats than its support amount. In reality, IJI's member party leadership couldn't see about helping its respective parties. This approach generated seat sharing issues and unrepresentative candidates obtained the coalition ticket at some constituencies. The issue was further heightened by political conflicts and ideology differences between members of the IJI parties. There was a lot of friction among the participants of the two alliances over distribution of party tickets. The central leaders of IJI and JMP Secretary General, Pir Fazale Haq (Pir Fazal), declared that all parties of the alliance would appoint joint candidates in the polls. In such a situation allocation of party tickets was a hard task as there had been many factors like; the alliance needed to pick the best candidates possible for the polls. Around the same time, it had to bear in mind that it was not only one party, but a coalition of eight parties, so each party had to be given ample room to keep the coalition together. (Rajput, 2005, p. 29)

There was a number of scandals related selecting the candidates both at the party level and at the coalition level. Any of the individuals' questions and concerns has expanded the alliance's problems about candidate selection for the upcoming elections. Deciding the candidates for the coalition was a difficult challenge but even on October 18, 1988 Professor Ghafoor declared that IJI parties in all four provinces had agreed on their candidates for NA. He also announced that IJI had agreed to allocate tickets on merit rather than on any other fixed pattern. A single PML, which was a major component of the IJI, was allocated approximately 65 per cent of NA seats. Two other primary IJI components; NPP and JI Tickets for the NA constituencies were approximately 15 percent and the remaining 5 percent were split among 193-193. (Waseem, 1994, p. 9)

Other alliance members such as JAH (Lakhvi), JUI (D) and IPG; The majority of the Ex-MNAs obtained PML platform alliance tickets which belonged to both PML (F) and PML (F) PML (J) IJI declared its contestants for the PAs on 22 October 1988. But this was just an initial decision as new candidates were nominated from time to time and the decisions for those constituencies were modified which caused difficulties for the leadership of the

coalition to preserve harmony among the IJI member parties. Jatoi proposed convening a conference of the heads of the IJI member groups to overcome the conflict. Junejo, president of the PML, had two concerns about the meeting of the heads of the IJI; first, he was not informed long before time of the meeting of the heads of the parties to the alliance and second, He was too busy with his constituency's election campaign to attend any coalition session.

According to Junejo, the attitude of carelessness towards him could not be tolerated. The proposal of conducting the meeting of the heads of IJI member parties did not materialise because of Junejo's harsh attitude. Initial seat-distribution decisions were as follows: (Ahmad, 1988, p. 29)

Islamabad: Islamabad's Muhammad Nawaz Khokar joined PML (Fida Group) yet was awaiting a vote on the ticket allotment for the upcoming election. From IJI, two representatives were good candidates for the only NA constituency, Dr. Sarfraz Mir of the NPP and Gul Andaz Abbasi of the JI.

Sindh: In Sindh NA PML each obtained 11, NPP and JI 5, JUI got 2 and JMP got 1 seat to the polls. Few IJI member-parties candidates contested elections as PML endorsed independent candidates such as Umeed Ali Shah (NPP), Shahbauddin Shah and Mir Innayat. At first IJI nominated 62 Sindh PA candidates for 100 seats. The 62 seats were divided among IJI member parties as; PML issued 32 tickets, NPP 20, JI 6, JUI (D) 3 and JMP 1. Of these 62, four seats were allocated for NMG, which broke the coalition right before the 1988 elections, and these seats were allocated as 1 to PML, 2 to JI, and 1 to IPG. JI had to fight for 8 NA seats in Karachi. The remaining seats had to be determined by IJI Chief Jatoi, PML Junejo manager, and Pir Pagara. Distributing party tickets primarily between PML and NPP about 25 seats in Sindh has had problems. A conference of Junejo, Jatoi and Pir Pagara was held on October 21, 1988 to work out the issue but nothing could come out of it. Separate discussions of various party leaders conducted to overcome the conflict which did not aid seeking any solution to the issue. (Bhardwaj, 1996, p. 155)

JI decided to contest seven of Karachi's 13 constituencies and faced tough competition from candidates from MQM. Amir of Karachi JI, Muhammad Azam Farooqi suggested discontent with the allocation of tickets to NA and PA constituencies in Karachi. He clearly named Abdus Sattar Afghani, ex-major of Karachi, as a possible nominee who was refused the ticket to the alliance. He was also unhappy with two Karachi provincial seats.⁶⁰ PML (J) was strategically well balanced in Sindh, as it retained its position

against the growing surge of nationalism. Junejo claimed that it was after PML unification need to check coalition candidates nominations but Jatoi assigned tickets on the very own. Junejo alleged that NPP candidates contested elections against PML candidates in Tharparker because of mishandling of responsibility, but he later refuted all the charges when his candidates, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Muhammad Bashir Khan and Ch. Muhammad Aslam Gill had been elected for NA-174 Mirpur Khas and PS-54 Digri as IJI candidates. There was a divergence of opinion on the election of Shanghar candidates and Districts Tharparker. (Election Commission of Pakistan, 1988, pp. 43–47)

On 25 October 1988, an IJI leadership conference was held to address the problem in both districts, but nothing came out of it. Pir Pagara tended to condemn the allocation of coalition tickets from time to time in the view that much of the decisions were not unbiased and also dismissed the validity. Balochistan: The NA IJI awarded 9 tickets to PML candidates for eleven seats. JI earned 1 NA seat ticket to contest elections in Balochistan and 1 for PA. JI had predicted tickets for the elections in Panjgoor, Loralai, and Quetta, but PML resisted giving JI any chance to win elections in several constituencies. For 40 PA seats, 444 representatives contested the elections, including two women. IJI and Jamiat-i-Ulema-i Islam (JUI-F) nominated the largest number of candidates. PML granted party tickets to prominent Sardars (Tribal Heads) and notables but Junejo and his supporters considered much of the decisions unreasonable. The NPP was not happy with its Balochistan portion. It also had issues with the decision to appoint Sardars and regional notables as alliance applicants. These concerns have prompted NPP to remove its candidates from the coalition and elections were fought as individual candidates which went against IJI. The fundamental cause for such disagreements was that the coalition leadership was not adequately following the resolutions of the legislative boards of the alliance's member parties.

Punjab: The PML was assigned roughly 65 per cent of tickets for NA. Many of the chosen ones

In the previous elections electors have been elected members of assemblies. Nearly 84 well established candidates were taken in in this manner to improve the likelihood of winning in the elections. From the Punjab the NPP got 4 NA tickets for its candidates; JUI (D) got 2, JAH (Lakhvi) got 1 ticket for Maulana Moeenuddin from Kasur. JI obtained 12 tickets for NA constituencies from Punjab, including 8 for Lahore. Three IPG candidates were chosen to contest the elections under the IJI flag.

For Punjab PA IJI filed 225 candidates. Until 18 October 1988 the allocation of seats to IJI member parties was as follows: PML received 84 tickets, JI 15, JUI 2, JAH 1 and IPG party 4 tickets for the Punjab PA.⁷⁴ For 12 RWP seats, PML received 10 tickets.⁶ tickets were issued to PML (F) and 3 to JI for 3 NA and 6 PA seats at Lahore. For NPP and PML (J) the decision was not appropriate so both produced IJI issues. A NPP rebel party contested from various Lahore constituencies. Likewise, PML (J) declared its candidates as independents in various constituencies of Punjab. The parties' leaders could not deter their respective party representatives from sending their nomination paper which made it more complicated for IJI. This attitude of the political representatives generated negative effect on IJI's reputation and popularity which ultimately resulted in PPP election results. In Punjab, PPP and IJI made the choice of candidates on almost identical grounds. It was all from the old political families. Uncertain of the results, the large political families shielded themselves by presenting candidates to all main parties. The parties did not bother with this mentality and approved the candidates that certain political families supported. There was barely anybody bothered with the philosophy of the party or moral views. Politicians were on the move as candidates were being picked. Only exception was PML (F) which chose pro-Zia citizens as its candidates. It named a parliamentary board to allocate party tickets because it obtained more than one request for NA and PAs for each constituency. A significant number of merchants and entrepreneurs took part in the IJI ticket elections hoping their vote would pose a serious challenge to PPP in urban areas. (SAARC-NGO Observers, 1995; Ahmad, n.d., p. 61)

IJI had a powerful role in the province of Punjab. Nawaz Sharif had a complete grip on the campaign. One drawback that was of concern to the IJI was that it lacked a powerful social and political base in rural Punjab. It was predicted that IJI could gain any of the seats because of its candidates in rural Punjab rather than the manifesto or the alliance's own popularity. Late decisions about the candidates of the Coalition adversely affected the coalition's results. At the last moments, some members were given party tickets via helicopters and some members could not get the party symbol. In fact PML (J) group joined the IJI recently so many NPP and JI citizens were refused the party tickets offered earlier. Likewise, many of the PML (J) members were refused the party tickets offered as a member of PAI. At the merger, Junejo did not know that IJI had already reserved seats, leaving just a few for the Junejo Group. Since most PML (J) representatives were late in entering, they were unable to get IJI tickets to contest the elections, and only got 20 percent seats. From Gujjar Khan, Raja Nadir Pervaiz and Sargodha Muhammad Aslam

Katcheela were refused alliance tickets that were senior politicians and Junejo's close associates. (Khuhro, 1972, p. 214)

The attitude towards Junejo's close associates led to indifference PML (J) mindset towards the election campaign of the other coalition members. In response to rejection of coalition tickets, these and other influential figures agreed to contest elections as independent candidates.

The Rawalpindi PML (F) member Nisar Ahmad Nisar submitted his documents. The NPP's Muhammad Rafi Butt, Mir Abdur Rashid Jillani and Ali Ahmad Shah decided to contest the same constituency elections. Sheik Rasheed Ahmad launched his campaign before the decision of the party on these constituency. Any members of the PML has openly opposed the leadership's actions on the alliance ticket delivery. PML Youth Wing's Sheik Khalid Masud called alliance ticket delivery a clear demonstration of inequality. Basharat Raja of PML claimed that alliance ticket distribution was against various IJI members. He said the evolving decisions on PP-3 and PP-4 were not appropriate to the public's members. Jatoti alleged the leadership of the coalition was not upholding its promises to the NPP. He said the issue had to be addressed in the alliance's top-leadership conference. He said all those members of the NPP were refused party tickets that had a difference of opinion with PML in Punjab. According to him, Faisal Abad, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Lahore, Sadiqabad and Liaquatpur NPP nominees were victims. He also pointed to the mismanagement of ticket allocation in some constituencies to more than one candidate. He was of the view that the party tickets were refused to nearly eighteen successful NPP candidates. NPP faced virtually the same situation as in other provinces. It had not enjoyed much NWFP support. Nisarullah Khattak joined Khar party after his dismissal as NPP provincial chief. Asif Qayyum's provincial secretary also resigned because he was unable to recognise NPP's coalition with PML (F) and quit PPP. JUI (D) with concerns about the allocation of party tickets as well. PML had a hostile nature according to it, which could not adequately tolerate minor groups. His leadership declared that Maulana Muhammad Ajmal Qadri, Malik Shah Ahmad Khan and Maulana Muhammad Ahmad were his candidates in reaction to PML's actions and that they would not withdraw.

Until October 20, 1988 IJI could not finalise all of its members for Punjab PA. Many of the influential members could not get the ticket and opted to contest elections as individual candidates that affected the IJI as the election campaign of these members generated a bad image of the coalition and the coalition votes were broken up. Because of

the delay some influential lawmakers were unable to send letters of authority to the election commission and they were unable to get the election symbol "rocket" from the coalition. These included Islamabad federal interior minister Naseem Ahmad Aheer, Islamabad's Haji Nawaz Khokhar and Jehlum's Raja Muhammad Afsar. Various newspapers provided various numbers of candidates from IJI member parties who earned tickets for the 1988 elections, though Ghafoor, JI's Liaquat Balouch, PML's Javed Hashmi and Siddiqui Farooq are unable to say the exact number of candidates from IJI member parties. Problems and scandals in the allocation of seats at the Central and Regional level were similarly crucial. Some of the problems concerning seat sharing are talked over below. (Askari, 1990, p. 9)

NWFP: The division of seats was a matter of considerable uncertainty for the IJI allies in NWFP. Many PML (J) members and those of other IJI affiliate groups were unable to be accommodated. IJI announced a list of 74 candidates for NWFP PA before 21 October 1988. Six remaining candidates had to be announced within a day or two. 14 NWFP PA tickets were issued to JI. IJI registered 19 candidates for 26 NA constituencies. 4 NA seats were allocated to JI in NWFP. The late decision by two PML factions to participate in the elections created a great deal of uncertainty between the voters and the representatives of those factions.

Junejo party, as a member of another PAI alliance, had agreed on their candidates for the elections and it proved difficult to agree to remove the chosen candidates. As the last date for the submission of nomination papers approached, party leadership allowed its members to submit their papers with the expectation that nomination papers of extra candidates would be removed after drawing a conclusion. Many of the members of these parties submitted their nomination papers on their own and began the election campaign in their constituencies. Any of the participants also changed their membership in the party. (Shahid, 1988, pp. 33–34)

Numerous Muslim Leaguers in the NWFP have changed their loyalties to PPP or ANP. Unification of PML created problems for Junejo as some of his ardent supporters were refused the election alliance tickets including senior vice president of PML (J) at NWFP Mian Muhammad Iqbal and PML (J) chief organiser Syed Munir Shah. A conflict has emerged between Gen. Retd. As the latter, Fazle Haq (Haq) and Arbab Jahangir felt that Haq was attempting to ruin the portrayal of PML in the NWFP. He was worried about giving out party tickets in the province. He claimed that PML in the province enjoyed overwhelming support, and that it would win the elections. Arbab Jahangir began

a campaign against Haq in a dispute scenario where in any case he was not in favour of PML or IJI in the province and was going to add absolute problems to the IJI. Haq wanted to vote from 5 PA seats which were later reduced to three. He had disagreements with Jahangir with whom he decided to hold Jahangir out of the electoral race. In reaction to this Jahangir declared he would condemn any IJI candidate in the NWFP. He told newsmen he only had one aim and that was to keep Haq away from NWFP politics. The desertion of Jahangir from the coalition reduced IJI's chances of becoming a major political power in the province. There were chances of PML's victory but IJI was in a crucial role for any provincial success. Provincial Chief Organizer of PML in NWFP declared that if he was not presented with an alliance ticket, he would contest the elections independently of NA-19 and PF 60. Muzamil Shah was awarded an alliance ticket for NA-14 but was awarded the ticket to former Federal Minister Syed Qasim Shah after PML merger. Another PML member, Mian Muhammad Iqbal, returned the IJI ticket and agreed to contest the elections as an independent candidate but, following Junejo's recommendation, withdrawn his papers. PML Provincial Secretary Aman Ullah Kahn Jadoon returned the party ticket as he earned the ticket for the PA seat contest but he was not happy thinking he deserved a NA constituency ticket. This created a particular negative impact on Hazara District politics and reduced overall chances of IJI victory in the NWFP. A former provincial minister Mehtab Ahmad Abbasi contested PA seat elections as an independent candidate because he was unable to get the IJI ticket. PML leadership warned party members to withdraw their nomination papers as independent candidates otherwise the party had to take punitive action against them, which had never been done before. Another point of contention was that IJI had declared its support for Haji Ghulam Ahmad Bilor, who had been a prominent Bacha Khan follower. None of the PML members could get the Peshawar district IJI ticket which was not appropriate to its members as Peshawar was still considered to be PML's greatest area of control. Owing to the last minute shift in the names of IJI candidates for PA elections the issue further escalated. (Gardezi, 1988, p. 40)

PML (J) members were largely unhappy with the ticket allocation at the Punjab and the NWFP. The General Secretary of PML (F) was reported to have altered the appointments because of which the names of one ex-provincial minister and another PML (J) member were withdrawn from the list. This caused significant friction and many of the PML (J) members declared their support for PPP and ANP in the province. During the distribution of party tickets, IJI faced splits. Minor parties of the IJI including JUI (D) were

dissatisfied with the leadership of the coalition over the question of party ticket distribution. JUI-D threatened to withdraw from the coalition on the issue of ticket allocation in the 1988 elections. Ghafoor found the late decision of Junejo to join the IJI as the last day for the withdrawal of the nomination papers was a major reason for the mess generated in the party relations. Thus the difficulties had to emerge, particularly as the Junejo party was accommodated at the detriment of the alliance's smaller parties. It can be argued that if the decisions were made cautiously, or at least things were decided once, the situation could vary. Changes in nominations were expected from time to time, so if the decisions were made after the final vote, it might eliminate much of the problems that had been part of IJI when it nominated its candidates for the elections.

Controversies within the Alliance

The coalition consisted of eight political parties and not every member could be pleased with the ticket allocation. This resulted in coalition representatives deserting from the allied forces. Contesting votes as individual candidates were challenged by independents that could not get party tickets. This caused discord in the alliance's voting bank. Some of the member party leaders, also unhappy with the alliance's actions, wished to keep it together until November 16, 1990 to win over a popular foe; the PPP. A conference of the heads of the IJI member parties was scheduled to deal with the question of sharing the tickets and complaints of member parties, as many of the parties had the feeling that they were not given the tickets' agreed quota or that they were unable to receive due share of the tickets from the coalition. It was also determined that all party members, opposed to the coalition official candidates in the upcoming elections, would be excluded from their respective parties if they did not resign until 31 October 1988. (Sehbai, 1988, p. 25)

The last withdrawal deadline was extended twice on a three-day notice each time and was declared as the final opportunity for the second time. It was found that a vast number of violators were from the Muslim League Junejo division, who were given party tickets before the PML (J) and PML (F) merger. But the representatives' expulsion decision was postponed in reconsidering party tickets in some constituencies due to the IJI contestants' poor position. Such setbacks and reconsiderations undermined IJI's reputation, and leadership decisions were not taken seriously by the rebel participants. IJI leadership has struggled to bring its representatives to obey the policies of the government. Members of IJI parties have fought elections in several districts against the IJI candidates. In five out of nine NA constituencies in Lahore, IJI candidates have been challenged by other

candidates from the alliance member parties. Few examples of such activity are given below:

Constituency Official Candidate Opposing Candidate

NA-92, Karachi Akram Nadeem

Maulana Ehtramul Haq

Thanvi (PML)

NA-186, Karachi Ghafoor Ahmad (JI) Athar Siddiqui (NPP)

NA-7, Mardan Maulana Ghaur Rehman Dr. Misal Khan (PML)

Muree-Kahuta Raja Zafarul Haq (PML) Shahid Abbasi (PML)

Khushab Khuda Baksh Tiwana Nasim Aheer

In NA-52, Nasim Ahmad Aheer and Malik Khuda Bakhsh Tiwana were reluctant to withdraw. (Raja, 1996, pp. 275–279) 134 NPP's Mian Umer Hayat agreed to leave the party and run in the elections as an independent candidate in Lahore, NA-94, after losing hope of getting the ticket to the alliance. PML Secretary General Iqbal Ahmad Khan had initially received the party ticket in this constituency. Subsequently, under pressure from chosen candidates for provincial seats from this district, Iqbal withdrew and Hayat was picked as the nominee for the alliance. In NA-96, JI's Hafiz Suleman Butt faced JUI's Azhar Saeed Butt (F) and JUI's Ajmal Qadri (D). PPP had a firm grip in this district and further fracturing of the anti-PPP votes made it difficult for IJI to draw voters. JUI (D) was a member of the IJI but its chief, Sami, gave tickets to his faction members for whom IJI votes were split into some constituencies, while he was only able to gain one seat in NA and no seats were won by him in the provincial assemblies. The NPP and HJ provincial leaders claimed the allocation of seats was unjustified and they found PML and JI to be responsible for this unjust exercise. The leaders were of the view that staff of the alliance's member states, with the exception of those two groups, was unhappy with the ticket delivery. The alliance's Secretary General was considered the primary person for the disruption who gave his party more significance than the alliance. In NA-98 Mian Asif felt robbed of the alliance ticket as a senior PML (J) member. He claimed he was the most eligible party ticket nominee in this constituency. IJI chose Mian Usman as its coalition for this constituency. Candidate resulting in the separation of votes for the IJI. Some politicians made matters worse for the IJI leadership contesting polls on an IJI district ticket and from some other electorate as an individual candidate. Taking into account the IJI tensions; it seems that all those issues occurred because the coalition was

not an expected political move. Problems that could have been resolved before being active in a traditional political practise have not been discussed. The PML (F) and NPP formed the Alliance. It was later enlarged to nine groups, but before the 1988 elections, the Nizam-e Mustafa Coalition abandoned it and stayed the eight-party alliance after agreeing on principle matters such as the agenda, the quantity of representation and the principal policies. Before joining the coalition, competing problems were not settled by shared consent or negotiations between the participating parties. There were no rules designed to address the contradictory problems. The individual parties of various orientations and conflicting intentions were unable to unite with the coalition that has been influential during IJI life.

Election campaign is an orchestrated, structured and concentrated attempt in support of a political party or candidate to manipulate or frame the popular opinion. Typically it is structured in a coordinated manner to impress the electorate with the political agenda of the political parties, but in countries with flimsy electoral structures and populism dependent on identity, elections are more focused on the political rivals' opposition. It can not be claimed that political opponents are not attacked in the developing countries but the critique is usually focused on the truth, manifestos and blunt reality of the political opposition. In countries like Pakistan, like most political parties, these parties are unorganised and usually focus their election campaign on the opposition, particularly negative rhetoric and personal attacks on the rival groups and parties without any clear political agenda. IJI, PPP, and other political groups running in 1988 was no different. The thesis focuses on IJI so the next segment of this chapter reflects on the IJI's political campaign for the 1988 elections.

Prominent features of the election campaign of major political parties such as the IJI and the PPP in the 1988 elections were negative propaganda, the lack of any comprehensive programme and reliance on the legacies of previous leaders such as Bhutto (PPP) and Zia (IJI). One of the main factors behind such an presidential cycle was the slight gaps in the major parties' electoral programme. They didn't have that much to give the citizens and there were a good amount of turncoats and opportunists, politics appeared insignificant under those circumstances and arguments over ideologies could cause them humiliation. (Amir, 1990, p. 6)

IJI was a two-party coalition of diverse ideological stance and electoral affiliation. At the same time, disputes within the member parties surrounding the allocation of tickets were not a mystery. In spite of the fact that people were aware of the IJI's internal issues, it was

agreed to demonstrate the people solidarity. Thus the presidents and influential leaders of all IJI member parties agreed to attend crucial public meetings. It was told by Pir Fazal (IJI Media Secretary and JMP Chairman) that Jatoi, Nawaz Sharif, Haq, himself and other influential alliance leaders would engage in the countrywide election campaign. A conference of IJI party leaders held at Jatoi house on October 28, 1988, in which decisions were made on the election campaign. JI was entrusted with the task of working for the alliance's publicity. In the Punjab, the election campaign was primarily based on the capacity of Nawaz Sharif to cater to voters on the basis of his personal results. Nawaz Sharif continued to emphasise his services to the Punjab people, such as providing homes and land distribution to landless farmers. He promised that the same policies would proceed if the IJI won the elections. His role as caretaker chief minister was another factor.¹⁶⁶ PML used government channels to organise public meetings in Lahore that were attacked by PPP and other political parties. During the election campaign various coalition leaders such as Nawaz Sharif, Junejo, Ch. During the Junejo period Shujaat Hussain, Akhtar Ali G. Qazi and others started to highlight government services.

This was an effort to convince the people that the PML was committed to addressing their problems. Jamali warned the people not to be fooled by the gripping speeches of numerous party leaders. He said evaluating the political parties' past success was easier, and assessing them on merit. He claimed that PML worked for national stability and to preserve Pakistan's and its people's sovereignty. When presenting this statement his implicit message was about the history of PPP, which was considered responsible for Pakistan's 1971 break-up.

Two simultaneous election drives by major PML groups in Punjab is one of IJI's controversial political moves. PML (F) kicked off with a public meeting at Mochi Gate Lahore and PML (J) did so separately at Liaquat Bagh Rawalpindi. Nawaz Sharif displayed his allegiance to the late president Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization programme at the Public Meeting at Mochi Street, Lahore. He said his party had a holistic agenda to address the poor's problems and provide them with basic life amenities which to make the nation a welfare state. He vowed to provide street people with residential plots, dowry for the poor girls and free education for everyone. He also vowed to provide social justice. In Lahore, IJI did not build a really good image since the two main parties, PML and JI, could not cooperate for the election campaign. The PML (F) and PML (J) scandals have created a negative influence on IJI's election campaign in Lahore. Qazi organised a procession in Rawalpindi. This procession did not draw as many people as planned, but

there were many Suzuki Vans and cars bearing the flags and placards of Jamaat. In his message, Qazi shared his hopes of establishing an Islamic government. At a public meeting, Junejo assured the people that his party would never be able to bow to the un-Islamic forces. At a public meeting, Mir Taj Muhammad Jamali tried to persuade the people to favour IJI as the votes questioned for it would be a blessing for Islamize the rules. At a public conference, Akhtar Rasool (PML) said that those who opposed the IJI were anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan and sought to sow confusion in it. During the election campaign, Qazi and Pir Fazal illustrated Islamic teachings about a woman's leadership in an Islamic country as prohibited. But this part of the movement could not get much recognition and acceptability, as Miss Fatima Jinnah was endorsed as a presidential candidate in the elections of 1965 religious political parties like JI. (Lodhi, 1990, p. 8)

On 14 November 1988 the IJI ended its election campaign. It held its last public meeting in Lahore, and a rally. The rally was presided over by Nawaz Sharif. Even the meeting was discussed by Qazi, Poya and Maulana Ajmal Qadri. A further meeting was held at Rawalpindi on the final day of the drive, addressed by Ejaz, Sheikh Rashid, Raja Basharat and Dr. Afzal Ejaz. In this meeting IJI leaders said the dawn of November 16, 1988 would be IJI's morning and the end of the PPP's political career. To put dawn into IJI's political career, it was agreed to keep the leaders present at public meetings to give an appearance of harmony and solidarity among the member parties¹⁹⁶ in which it was very successful with few instances showing internal divisions of IJI's leadership. IJI's election campaign relied more on slogan mongering than of an issue-based political campaign but it was very effective in catching the popular people's interest.

IJI has a one-on-one voting policy but this method could only be implemented in six constituencies. It was done in two directions. One Nawaz Sharif has made every attempt to build alliance with smaller parties. He sent his ministers to the representatives of other political parties in the country to warn them that Benazir's victory would be disastrous for Pakistan's future. The caretaker cabinet of Nawaz Sharif became more militaristic and proceeded to encourage the army to come forward to handle the situation.

His critics have opposed some of IJI's actions because of its election campaign expenses. It was reported that over one hundred thousand alliance flags were lifted in Rawalpindi city by Lahore's team of staff. The construction schemes and posters and banners used by the IJI candidates were a source of appeal for the common people but at the same time attracted criticism as such arrangements could not be made in the approved sum of the ECP for the election campaign expenditure. It is widely accepted that it is an ECP

deficiency which does not meet its duty to receive vouchers of the representatives' spending before announcing the results of the elections.

The politics of coalition was an important facet of the 1988 elections. The big 'IJI' coalition stayed busy settling member-party disputes. IJI also encountered difficulty in debating its platform at a public forum, when the participating parties settled on just a few issues and left the rest unchanged. To mask this deficiency IJI concentrated on derogatory rhetoric against the PPP and past PML governments accomplishments. (Ahmad, 1988, p. 99)

IJI concentrated not merely on the first governing era of the PPP under Z's premiership. In public forums, Bhutto and numerous comments from the PPP leadership but also personal lives of Bhutto Family were addressed in detail. Some of the militant activities were also related to the PPP and illustrated with great significance. IJI has the privilege of having the right to provide evidence of those accusations as well.

Making big and high-sounding promises in the election campaign is a common thing to draw and impress the electorate but being the caretaker government Nawaz Sharif and his colleagues had started some of the projects and some facilities were also provided to government officials, particularly those who might help the IJI before and during the elections. Nawaz Sharif made several announcements at the election and which has called for condemnation. Through the provincial governments he made commitments to change economic conditions. It may be said that such commitments are part of the election campaigns but these commitments change their meaning after execution of those projects starts during the transitional period and people typically realise that the schemes and facilities declared by a caretaker government are not normally finished by the succeeding administration. People have to pick those representatives who should take charge of those tasks and get the already begun tasks finished. That was why Nawaz Sharif, as the Punjab CM, announced the grant of nine million rupees to District Jehlum local authorities, five million of which were allotted to Jehlum District Council 2.5 to the Jehlum Municipal Committee, and one million to the Sohawa Committee. It has given five hundred thousand to the Pind Dadan Khan Town Committees. He also declared that he would upgrade Jehlum Inter College to graduate level, and two high schools to high school level as high schools and middle schools. He also announced Khewra town water supply scheme. Nawaz Sharif promised shelterless houses, and inaugurated none of the most new Punjab Cardiology Institute consisting of 270 beds. Jamali, Balochistan's Interim CM, inaugurated the Nasir Abad District agricultural farm. Such steps and announcements

were considered political bribe to the citizens of these districts as people assign priority to their immediate needs and these planned proposals gave them hope and some of them were quickly introduced, which in turn broadened the IJI voter base.

Performance of IJI Parties in Elections 1988

For some of the political parties the election results is shocking. Not only did it rout out religious parties like JI, but it also meant impressive defeat for Junejo and his followers as Junejo himself was unable to gain a single seat. Partisan heavyweights of numerous IJI parties lost presidency. Junejo, Jatoi, Hamid Nasir Chattha (former NA speaker), Ghafoor (JI vice-president and IJI secretary general), Naseem Aaheer (interim chief of the PML and interior minister), Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi, Liaquat Baloch, Raja Zafarul Haq and Aslam Khattak were prominent people who lost the elections. In spite of this defeat, Nawaz Sharif and his colleagues not only won in the Punjab and NWFP but also formed IJI government in the Punjab, the country's largest province. Nawaz Sharif was instrumental in creating a united front against the PPP. It was widely agreed that if PML had contested elections on its own side, it would have suffered a defeat of at least twenty to twenty-five seats. IJI consisted of eight political parties, and their results were distinct. Information on some of the IJI parties' success is given below.

Performance of PML:

Though split into several divisions, PML performed well. There were two major factors behind the PML success; one was the personal involvement of Nawaz Sharif, who had long been the province's CM and wanted to retain his position intact. The second explanation was the tactful allocation of party tickets as they were granted to those prominent people who had long gained good reputation and popularity in their constituencies. Nearly 90 per cent of the seats won by IJI in the NA and PAs were retained. In the 1988 elections, PML won 22 out of 29 IJI seats in NWFP PA. At the same time, 15 independents have belonged to PML. Most of the winning IJI candidates in NA belonged to PML.

Internal Differences of IJI

Following a few days of the 1988 elections, IJI's internal disagreements became conspicuous. Little cooperation among the member parties existed. Prominent groups such as PML and JI decided to remain in the limelight. They tried to get the best out of their place in the NA and in the PAs. The coalition leadership has scarcely interacted with

the member parties when making crucial decisions. Not only did this approach build divide among the allies but it also created leadership issues. There was a lot of difficulty that could be met quickly and the IJI had to make agreements with other groups. Although making deals with the parties outside the IJI, on several occasions it had to abandon its principal stance. The IJI's coalition with MQM in Sindh and ANP in the NWFP are examples of this. Both of these parties had opposing views on several issues but, in order to fight the PPP's influence, IJI made a coalition with them in the parliamentary opposition. In the work of the IJI it was also clear that the allies' conflicts and rifts were based on personal preferences and ego differences along with the social and administrative concerns. The coalition has usually not been granted priority by Member Parties. For them, its respective parties' prominence was more important than the alliance's progress. Ignoring other allies, PML nominated its nominee for president. Explaining this approach, PML chairman said he was responsible for maintaining his party's reputation intact when serving as a member of a larger coalition. While Ghulam Ishaq Khan was nominated as a compromise nominee, PML's non-consultative behaviour triggered discomfort among the allies. Chairman Senate selection also created split within the coalition. PML decided to select its Senate nominee, so there was a majority vote. He claimed that there was no IJI in Senate elections so it was PML's right to recommend his nominee for Chairman Senate office. IJI did not support or endorse this approach however, in order to prevent any rifts within the decision of the PML alliance, it was agreed and Wasim Sajjad was elected as Chairman of the Senate as PML candidate. PML was aware of the quantity of its presence in the assemblies for which it tried to build its grip on the decisions of the alliance and made it difficult for the smaller alliance parties. Internal issues with PML also deterred the smooth running of IJI. Junejo was PML president and, at his discretion, he decided to take all the party decisions. Nawaz Sharif was IJI president, and PML Punjab president. He was also a candidate for the PML president's office because he decided to run things according to his plans to become more prominent in the party. He used to overshadow all of Junejo 's decisions when exercising his power as President of the IJI. Junejo decided to see him serve as a junior associate, as president of a PML regional branch. Petty problems have acquired ample prominence to impede the smooth running of IJI.

Once Junejo was not called to an IJI-COP meeting and then he stopped attending the meetings that disrupted the work of the IJI-COP. Junejo was chairman of the IJI 's largest member group and his absence created problems in the decision-making process that

created a clear divide between the two leaders i.e. Nawaz and Junejo Sharif. As PML president, Junejo concentrated on enhancing the success of his faction, for which he intended to reorganise the faction and popularise it at grassroots level. Also got negative reaction to this decision. Haq has been suspended from the PML president's office in NWFP and new party leadership election has been declared. Majority of PML leaders such as Fida, Youssuf Khattak, Hamid Nasir Chattha backed this decision, but Nawaz Sharif had issues with this decision. Nawaz Sharif decided to reinstate Haq in the office. Junejo denied reconsideration of the vote arguing that the vote had been reached in the Party's best interests. This progress culminated in the splitting of NWFP PML into two groups; Junejo party headed by Salim Saifullah Khan and the other by Haq. The appointment of next PML president was also discussed in the reorganisation phase issue. Nawaz Sharif's supporters decided to make him PML president but Junejo's supporters claimed Nawaz Sharif wasn't an old Leaguer of influential party facilities. He would not be able to give PML proper time while becoming IJI chief. They also had problems with the relationship between Nawaz Sharif and JI, claiming that most of his decisions were affected by JI, which generated negative effects on the popular people's political reputation of PML. Junejo had problems with Nawaz Sharif's decision to quit the NA and take oath as CM Punjab. Several PML members proposed leaving IJI. In truth they were dismissive of JI's impact on IJI's policies. There were doubts that Nawaz Sharif supported JI rather than any other party which opposed the interests of major political parties such as PML. There have been counter-arguments about those reservations. It was hypothesised that if JI controlled the decisions of the coalition, it could order the appointment of its CM in Punjab or at least gets its members to key positions in the cabinet. PML members also had issues with JI's prediction. They wanted more ads for PML, as it was the largest party in parliaments. Similar concerns often persisted in a separate manner. JI members felt it didn't matter the number of members of a single faction in the assemblies. According to them, PML could win in several constituencies only because of the support of JI 300. The voice was not that of PML in the assemblies but of IJI. They claimed that all of the alliance's member parties had equal value and deserved equal treatment over the IJI's decision-making process. JI leadership approach even attracted critique on several occasions. Being a large coalition, IJI faced difficulties in making political agreement with the groups, outside the coalition. IJI and Nawaz Sharif in particular wanted MQM cooperation in Sindh but JI opposed it because it claimed that

ties with an ethnic, linguistic group would misrepresent the IJI picture. (Hussain, 1988, p. 16)

JI had MQM issues as long as all sides had the same region of control. Any of the people expected JI leaders could not attend the Sindh Public Meeting due to the involvement of MQM leadership. NPP has had trouble expanding collaboration with MQM. Similarly, the partnership with ANP encountered scepticism that has been addressed in this chapter earlier. When the coalition was made, hopes were raised that it would develop as a party to fight the PPP's political influence but this did not happen due to attempts to safeguard the integrity of IJI member parties. The alliance's progress had barely been focussed. This mindset did not encourage the IJI member parties to cooperate together with each other and their internal disagreements created difficulties in the merger or fruitful cooperation. Following the failure of a motion of no confidence against Benazir the problems among the members of the COP increased. IJI has experienced a two-way deterioration; one of IJI's internal issues, and the other of IJI's problems with other Police officials. Some parties were disappointed with Nawaz Sharif's focus on restoring his country, while others were frustrated with Centreprovince concerns that only escalated common people's difficulties and posed a constant challenge to the development of democracy. A parliamentary coordinating committee was set up to resolve the issues, but due to the difficulties and doubts of the members of the coalition, the committee was forced to fix them. He has not concentrated on building IJI Central and Regional Offices. Ghao for clarified that Nawaz Sharif had no confidence in alliance-run consultations.

Conclusion

The political experience of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) during the 1988 general elections illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of coalition politics in Pakistan's evolving democratic framework. Although the alliance was successful in uniting diverse political forces against the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and emerged as a significant opposition bloc, its internal structure remained fragile. The absence of a shared ideological vision, combined with conflicting priorities among member parties, limited the alliance's ability to function as a coherent political entity.

Persistent disputes over seat distribution, candidate selection, and leadership roles undermined unity and weakened electoral discipline across provinces. These internal

conflicts not only fragmented the anti-PPP vote in several constituencies but also damaged the public credibility of the alliance. While the IJI achieved notable success in Punjab, particularly under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, this outcome was largely driven by the organizational strength of the Pakistan Muslim League rather than collective coalition effort.

In the post-election period, unresolved tensions and unequal decision-making further eroded trust among alliance partners, accelerating internal fragmentation. Ultimately, the IJI operated more as a tactical electoral arrangement than a durable political coalition. The case of the IJI underscores that alliances formed primarily for short-term electoral objectives, without institutional mechanisms for consensus-building and power-sharing, are unlikely to sustain unity or contribute effectively to long-term democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

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