

**A STUDY OF ETHNIC FACTOR IN ELECTORAL
POLITICS OF AFGHANISTAN, 2004-2014**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ALKA



**CENTRE FOR INNER ASIAN STUDIES
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “A Study of Ethnic Factor in Electoral Politics of Afghanistan, 2004 - 2014” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This Thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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Dedicated

to

My Parents and Loving Brothers

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ANA	Afghanistan National Army
ANDS	Afghanistan Government's National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghanistan National Police
ANSF	Afghanistan National Security Forces
AOG	Armed Opposition Groups
ATA	Afghanistan Transitional Authority
AV	Alternative Vote
AWCC	Afghanistan Wireless Communications Company
BSA	Bilateral Security <i>Agreement</i>
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CL J	Constitutional Loya Jirga
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DI	Democratic Institute
EC	European Commission
ECC	Electoral Complaints Commission
EL J	Emergency Loya Jirga
ELECT II	Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow II
ERC	Electoral Reform Coalition
EST	Election Support Team
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas

FEFA	<i>Free & Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan</i>
FEFA	Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan
FPTP	First past the post system
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IECC	Independent Electoral Complaint Commission
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence (of Pakistan)
JECO	Joint Electoral Coordination Office
JEMB	Joint Electoral Management Body
LV-PR	Limited Vote-Proportional Representation Electoral System
MIP	Multiannual Indicative Programmes
MP	Members of parliament
NA	North Antarctic Treaty Organization
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Antarctic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non- governmental Organization
NPP	National Priority Programmes
NSP	National Solidarity Program
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PR	Proportional Representation
SMP	Single Member Plurality

SNTV	Single Non- Transferable Vote Electoral System
STV	Single Transferable Vote
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations Human Right Commission
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Map of Afghanistan



MAP Source: http://democracyinternational.com/media/DI%20Afghanistan%202010%20EOM%20Final%20Report_web.pdf

PREFACE

This thesis examines the relationship between ethnic identity and electoral politics in Afghanistan. It explores how ethnicity has influenced post-Taliban state building, the electoral system, recent presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. In order to better analyse the problem of ethnic politics in Afghanistan, the thesis has described the historical background of the country which includes its unique experience of formation of state with a strong ethnic base. The ethnic groups and sub-groups within an ethnic group have been part and parcel of state formation and development in Afghanistan. This comes across in various chapters that detail the power struggle between groups and sub groups. The ethnic factor has been the most adaptive factor in the country's politics as it has remained relevant till date by changing the ways it functions in politics. The country has moved on from days of Ahmed Shah Abdali but ethnic factor has not got eliminated from its modern day politics. The aim, however, is not to present Afghanistan as frozen in time frame that has refused to change. Rather, the country has proved itself dynamic by allowing ethnic factor to present new challenges whose solutions lie in today's times-problems like electoral corruption, subtle use of ethnic linkages to sideline political rivals and garner votes. A lot therefore hinges on how politics of development has been shaped by ethnic factor in present times. The focus accordingly is on post-2004 till 2014 development period.

There are two hypotheses that have been found validated by the data here. The first is that the perpetuity of ethnic factor in Afghanistan's electoral politics has questioned the neutrality of Head of the state and the Afghan Independent Elections Commission. Second hypothesis states that the Pashtuns commanding the majority are also helped by their cross border linkages for a greater degree of political mobilization compared to non-Pashtun groups. For subjecting the two hypotheses to scrutiny, the thesis is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter titled 'Introduction' presents a research design of the thesis. It reviews the available literature on ethnicity, Afghanistan's history, political developments, culture to analyse how ethnic factor has played its role in various facets of the country. On the ethnic question, the literature presents history of ethnic groups, state formation, empire building, and their power struggle. In nearly all the

literature, ethnicity emerges as a very essential factor while studying Afghanistan's politics. However, there are gaps which this thesis has sought to fill by analyzing the role of ethnic groups in causing new problems which are unique to countries that are struggling to set up a stable political system.

The second chapter titled 'The Electoral Systems and Political Choice of Afghanistan' discusses that choice of an electoral system is a very important decision for any country and more so for a fledgling democracy. This choice is influenced not just by deliberations but by many other factors like experience of having lived under colonial rule. It has presented how electoral systems are chosen, invented and adapted to suit different conditions. It presents several worldwide tests of this choice since the nineteenth century. The chapter has also discussed merits and demerits of some systems. Afghanistan's Proportional and Semi-proportional systems are discussed in this context.

The third chapter titled 'Evolution of Electoral Politics in Afghanistan' carries forward the theme of choice of electoral system. These analyses how the electoral politics of Afghanistan has evolved. The evolutionary process in Afghanistan has been influenced by its unique political and economic circumstances of war and ethnicity. In this process, there have been many achievements as well as failures. The chapter has shown that transition process in the country has not been easy.

Chapter 4 titled 'Role of Elites in the Ethno-Politics of Afghanistan with reference to the Pashtuns' is key to understand many problems the country is beset with in present times. The problems have arisen from operation of modern electoral systems in the context of power distribution among different ethnic groups. In Afghanistan, the Pashtuns are dominant numerically, socially and politically. The chapter has discussed the role of Pashtun elites in the political development, particularly the electoral system of the country.

Chapter 5 titled 'The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Afghanistan: An Analyses' gives an account of country's experiences in conducting Presidential and Parliamentary elections from 2004 onwards. The experiences validate the argument given in the two hypotheses. The neutrality of Independent Election Commission has been thrown into doubt mainly because the ethnic factor in politics has torpedoed its

impartial role. Amidst ethnic loyalty and old tribal ties, the IEC cannot remain neutral. Corruption motivated by ethnic interests has been fuelled by the role of elites in the conduct of elections and so far Pashtuns have dominated the politics in the electoral landscape.

Finally, Chapter 6 called 'Conclusion' presents how the data given from Chapter 2 to Chapter 5 seem to support the hypothesis. The validation of hypotheses also shows that role of ethnicity is key to understanding and solving many present political problems in Afghanistan. Presently, Afghanistan is beset with problems of corruption in electoral practices, continuance of old ethnic divisions and cross border ethnic loyalty posing problems to the stabilization of the country.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1 Background

The present study titled “A Study of Ethnic Factor in Electoral Politics of Afghanistan, 2004-2014” aims to examine the role of ethnicity in electoral politics of Afghanistan after the Taliban regime. The research focuses on how thirty years of war has affected the electoral democracy in Afghanistan and ethnicity, ethnic balance among various ethnic groups and their power relations. The war has significantly changed the balance of social and political forces in Afghanistan. While reviewing the ethnic factor, the study analyses the current efforts to reconstruct Afghanistan after Taliban regime. It takes into account how the ethnic rivalries and interests of regional, territorial fragmentation and of great powers have influenced the internal conflict. The study also focuses on political situation after the withdrawal of the United States (US) forces, especially the role of ethnic groups in the Afghan politics. The ethno-politics is a major issue in electoral politics in peace and nation-building in Afghanistan. The electoral system is not a recent experience in Afghanistan. It had performed exercise nine times between 1923 and 2014.

In post 2001 Afghanistan Hamid Karzai’s victory was an important boost to the country that was fragile and was taking small steps towards democracy. However, one cannot ignore the ethnic factor in the electoral system of Afghanistan. The country has already experienced civil war, of which the underlying factors are largely ethnic. The ethnic factor seems to have gained prominence even in a modern political democratic set up which involves elections where people vote and directly elect their president. Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, which is the largest ethnic group, completed two terms. It has always been expected that despite old ethnic rivalries and relations, Afghanistan would finally see the dilution of ethnic factors in a system that brings power the people. However, so far, the old ethnic lines have not just survived but rather flourished. This is evident from the 2014 election results which reflected the electoral importance of dominant ethnic groups (primarily Pashtun) in gaining an edge in attracting votes. In this context, the question arises about the role of ethnicity in a diverse country that is attempting to build a united Afghan nation. Since the ethnic factors have spill-over effects on neighbourhood areas, especially linking the Tajiks,

Uzbeks, Hazaras having cultural affinities with the neighbouring countries. The issue of ethnic factors in politics of Afghanistan is not purely a domestic problem but one needing a comprehensive study on the ethnic dimension of country's politics and its regional repercussions.

This can be done with an understanding of the kind of multi-ethnicity that Afghanistan has been experiencing. It is not only a multi-ethnic country but a country with a predominance of Pashtuns. The majority ethnic group, the Pashtuns (42%), had since 2013, contentious relationship with the other ethnic groups such as Tajik (27%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (9%), Turkmen (3%), Aimaq (4%), Balouch (2%) and Nuristani population (Riphenburg 2007). With such a composition, the electoral politics becomes an important medium to assert power and control. History of Afghanistan produced two different types of resistance movements against the state which affected the capacity of the Afghan state building. The dividing lines were drawn between the modernists and the Islamists since 1920s. The Afghan society is ethnically very complex with regional and tribal differences. In Afghanistan, Islam and ethnicity has often led to civil conflict and local rebellions in the past. The Pashtuns had top positions in the government and approximately all the kings, except for a brief period in 1929 were Pashtuns.

The ethnic conflict could be seen when the Pashtun King Abdul Rahman had resettled Pashtun tribes in the non-Pashtun areas of the north and begun an intense campaign to govern the central mountainous region which led to war with Hazara ethnic group. The nation and peace-building process started by Abdul Rahman and his successors yielded no results until the 1950s. Modernisation received impetus during the period of Daoud during 1953-1963. The modernization was accelerated in 1970s, mainly in terms of government, and this favoured urban classes and reduced the tribal political power. But murder of Daoud led to a period of Soviet supported regime, which brought Pashtuns to further greater prominence. Modernization was a part of this regime as well. But this came to a halt once the communist backed regime collapsed. This was followed by the Taliban period which decelerated the pace of modernization.

In 2001, Taliban regime was removed with the support of international coalition of forces, endorsed by the United Nations (UN). Since October 2001, the western

countries have taken the responsibility of the task of nation and state-building in a tribal, Islamic society. The post-Taliban political arrangements were seen as to have given more rights for ethnic minority groups in political participation. With the new constitution and elections, the political system of the country is becoming more representative. As per the Bonn Agreement (2001), negotiated by the United Nations the Interim Administration set up was to govern for only six months. President Karzai had to face the tedious job of forming a cabinet of proper ethnic mix. He won election with 55% of the vote (The Guardian 2009). Karzai had to act himself according to the requirements of Afghanistan's new constitution which made it mandatory for cabinet ministers to have higher education and only Afghan citizenship and not dual one. Karzai made significant changes by appointing Abdul Rahim Wardak, former deputy to the Defence Minister Muhammed Fahim, as a new minister. Fahim was a Tajik warlord who had headed Northern Alliance that was crucial to USA's war against Taliban in 2001. Since 2009, attitudes have been changing. Even the several ethnically homogenous parties do not project themselves as ethnic parties as it goes against Article 35 of the Afghan Constitution which does not allow ethnicity or religious sect as the basis of any political party. One hundred and ten parties were established from the year of fall of Taliban until the year 2009 and by 2011, around 38 parties were successful in completing their registration process. Twenty one parties represented in the lower house of Parliament. The registration process was made easier in 2012 by requiring parties to have offices in at least 20 provinces in order to register" (Katzman 2012: 4). Several mujahedin *Hizb-e-Islami* and *Afghan Millat* got themselves registered. However, other ethnic group parties mainly by Tajik groups and even pan-ethnic parties like Rights and Justice Party (formed by ex-Interior minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar) too were formed. There has been inter-party cooperation too. One *Coalition for Reform and Development*, was also formed in early 2012 to ensure fairness in Presidential elections. However, Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system entails each voter casting a ballot for only one candidate favours candidates running as independents rather than as members of parties. So, small, idea based parties have remained weak. The capacity and transparency of governance in Afghanistan is very crucial to its stability after Afghan leadership was handed over the responsibility of national security by the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces at the end of 2014. Though the size and ability of the Afghan governing structure could get strengthened following the fall of

Taliban regime in late 2001, it was extensively documented that it remains weak and rampant with corruption. The two elections, one for held president in 2009 and the other for parliament in 2010, were reportedly fraudulent. The social and political power is important for the vast and autonomous periphery of the state. The mullahs (clerics), tribal chiefs and landlords have huge power to influence the society than the state. Blood ties, kinship, tribal ties have the economic power and it is distributed among the societal elite. Class differences, the process of socialization of leaders, and the lack of democracy, pluralistic political culture are the reasons for confrontations among various ideological groups. Therefore, ethnic factor has emerged as a very important factor in Afghan politics. Its capacity to evolve with the modern electoral reforms and acquire new forms to adopt modern Afghanistan needs is to be explored to see the ethnic dimension of Afghan politics.

1.2 Review of Literature

A review of available literature in the area of study helps the researcher arrive at a proper frame of study, set the scope of research, and formulate research questions for the present study. Here, the review is classified into the following three major sets of information.

1.2.1 Ethnicity and Politics

The literature on ethnicity has come to be seen as highly diverse and eclectic. This owes to the fact that ethnicity as a field of research has been studied by scholars of various hues and disciplines. The diversity has given this field a unique feature of methodological diversity. This means that the various questions on and around ethnicity have been analyzed, and understood with the help of a variety of research methods. If there is methodological domination of long periods of field study among anthropologists, then there is also literature that has been a result of theoretical and critical understanding. The latter is found more in political critical literature in the post-cold war period. Similarly, the field has also attracted more quantitative literature especially on questions pertaining to electoral politics.

The term 'ethnicity' has originated from the Greek word *ethnos* or *ethnikos*, which was initially used to refer to pagans, that is non-Hellenic people. However, at a later

stage, the term referred also to non-Jewish (Gentile) and non-Christian peoples as second-class ones. As a sociological term it was coined by D. Riesman in 1953 and it gained wider use only during the 1960s and 1970s (Glazer and Moynihan 1975). Moreover, the decline of the colonial empires in the second half of the twentieth century has introduced much ambiguity over the issues of 'race', culture and ethnicity. The fact is that 'ethnicity' contains a multiplicity of meanings. However, "institutionalized and bureaucratized definitions of the concept, such as imposing the idea that a particular individual legally belongs to an 'ethnic minority' or to one 'ethnic group', could be not only the strongest possible source of reification of (always dynamic) group and individual relations, but also becomes a form of oppression by caging individuals into involuntary associations" (Malesevic 2004). Marx found the answer in class struggle and capitalist development, Durkheim in the transition "from mechanical to organic solidarity", Simmel in the nature of 'sociation' and "social differentiation", and Weber in changing "status hierarchies and political mobilization" (Malesevic 2004).

A closer reading of Marx indicates that he did have a relatively coherent idea on ethnicity. The core of this concept can be found in his writings on the Jewish question (Marx 1844). In Durkheim's words: "as we advance in evolution, we see the ideals men pursue breaking free of the local or ethnic conditions obtaining in a certain region of the world or a certain human group, and rising above all that is particular and so approaching the universal" (Durkheim 1986: 202). Weber defines ethnic groups as "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (Weber 1968).

Though contemporary functionalists have developed more complex theoretical models, they are even more strictly grounded in preserving the legacy of Durkheim than neo-Marxism is with Marx. 'Neo-functionalism, functionalist approaches to ethnicity, is stubbornly attached to their conviction that the process of modernization will eliminate the existence of ethnicity. In this respect the structural-functionalist perception of ethnicity as a specific form of de-differentiation, and the pluralist's search for mechanisms of integration for 'ethnic units' remain, in explanatory and

normative terms, chained by the logic of classical functionalism' (Malesevic 2004). While examining ethnicity role in society, structural-functionalists resonate the three dominant topics of Durkheim's theory of ethnicity: the focus on ethnic group solidarity, the function of an ethnic group as a moral compass for individual behaviour, and the view that modernization is a process that sweeps away ethnic identities. All three of these themes are examined in Parsons' system theory (Ibid). While discussing ethnic relations, Talcott Parsons mostly focuses on the examination of 'shared value systems'. Parsons perceives "individual actors as normative creatures whose behaviour is largely determined by deeply internalized normative expectations, which are coincident with the process of socialization'. Social actors are guided by cultural tradition, i.e. "shared symbolic systems which function in interaction" (Parsons 1951).

The Ethno-symbolist theory of Smith offers fresh and enlightening insights into pre-modern forms of collective cultural identity of nations and nationalism. Its contribution is "located between stark modernist theories defending the recent, invented and constructed nature of nations and nationalism" (Gellner 1983). The ethnic is explained as "named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity" (Smith 1986). The nation is a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs (Smith 2002). Smith explores the relevance of ethnic status as "the precursor of nations" and locates "the origins of nations and national identity and finds them in ethnic identity as a pre-modern form of collective cultural identity". For Smith, "Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture" (Smith 1991).

Ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic conflict are understood as in a common term. The term ethnicity came into use since late 1960s. "Ethnicity and nationalism have grown in political importance in the world particularly since the World War II" (Eriksen 1993). The word *ethnicis* "derived from the Greek 'Ethnos' which originally meant

heathen or pagan” (Williams 1989). The word then began referring to racial characteristics. Generally, the word ‘ethnicity’ is applied in ‘minority issues and race relations’. However, in social anthropology, it refers to ‘aspects of relationships between groups’ and is considered by other disciplines as ‘being culturally distinctive’. Though, it is understood that “the discourse concerning Ethnicity tends to concern itself with sub national units or minorities of some kind or another” (Chapman 1989). The meaning of ethnic group “allows us to assume that boundary maintenance is unproblematic and follows from the isolation which the itemized characteristics imply: racial difference, cultural difference, social separation and language barriers, spontaneous and organized enmity” (Barth 1956). Since ethnicity emerges in a situation of social upheaval and transformation together with rigorous cultural erosion, it also led to the departure of many customs. The question arises as how the identity is to be maintained for future generation (Epstein 1978). Theoretically, ethnicity concerns with self-identification and a linguistic interest. The identification by others is an important feature in the establishment of self identification. The taxonomic space in which self identification occurs is of overriding importance. The effect of foreign classification, scientific and lay, is far from neutral in the establishment of such a space

According to Gellner in the modern era, Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist (Gellner 1983). In social anthropology, “the term ‘nation’ was used in an inaccurate way to designate large categories of people or societies with more or less uniform culture” (Eriksen 1993). It clear that there is “distinguishing between ‘tribes’, ‘Ethnic group’ and ‘nation’, since the difference appears to be one of size, not of structural composition or functioning” (Lewis 1985). The nationalism is a feeling of fulfilment synonymous with an ethnic group or “in brief nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones” (Gellner 1983). It holds the link between ethnicity and the state. In another important theoretical study of nationalism, the nation is explained as “an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 1990).

With the kind of diversity described above, the area gets an advantage in terms of availability of wide range of sources and methods. However, it can be problematic

when it comes to delineating a sub-area of ethnicity because the existing literature has already revealed multiple dimensions of ethnicity. If one talks about ethno-politics, then one will find that this sub-field itself is as vast as an ocean. This is because of several factors. Firstly, the term ethno-politics comprises of two terms that can be subject to multiple understanding. “What is ethnicity”, is a question that can have several answers. Similarly, even centuries of works have been unable to arrive at a consensual understanding of politics. The implication, therefore, is that even the very meaning of the sub-field cannot be delineated easily. Secondly, ethno-politics as a phenomenon can be studied at various levels – at a micro level of individual and identity or at a macro level of collective group (for example, parties, militia, etc.). Thirdly, ethno-politics also operates in a very subtle manner in lives of the people, giving rise to sometimes very dangerous and diabolical situations like the extermination of Jews in Germany in 20th century. Therefore, ethno-politics is bound to be a complex area of study.

But the area of ethno-politics has been defined by various scholars through the various roots to reveal its complexities which have been discussed above. It has been understood as a result of categorization on the bases of shared culture, history, language and ancestry that results in grouping, political orientation and safeguarding one’s interest (Horowitz 1985). If understood in this way, the definition here talks about and ethno-politics that is more parochial and based on group orientation. On the other hand, Rothschild and Karklins have subscribed to a broader definition of ethno-politics that can be cooperative as well as vulnerable to conflict. Ethno-politics involves aspirations that can lead to the creation of the nation state. In terms of electoral politics, the area of ethno-politics has also been understood through the medium of political parties. For instance, Ishiyama and Breuning (1998) find ethno-politics as a play of ethno political parties that usually begin as pressure group pursuing goals of cultural preservation or linguistic autonomy. Similarly, Givanni Satori’s description also gives precedence to party politics (Horowitz 1985).

Ethno-politics has also been understood in terms of political change. Political change could be in terms of political development and radical social change. Even war and long periods of conflict also bring about political and social changes. In this context, ethno-politics in terms of modernization brought about by particular elite groups

which resulted in creation and transformation of ethnic communities (Brass 1991). Another understanding which has considered ethno-politics in terms of political change is Samuel Huntington's thesis on 'Clash of Civilizations' which describes the political change of conflict with ethnicity as a base. In a way, Huntington sees a very big ethno-politics among countries that are grouped, aligned and divided along ethnic lines. On the basis of this, he finds the ethno-politics of this type as a potential cause of global conflict.

1.2.2 Ethno-Geopolitics: State, Space and Power

Afghanistan occupies a central position at the junction of three strategic regions: Central Asia, South Asia, and Southwest Asia. Being landlocked, the country has remained relatively isolated from the regional and international systems. It was the colonial expansion of Czarist Russia and British India from opposite directions in the middle of the nineteenth century that brought Afghanistan to its strategic situation. The British in India were too fearful of the Russian expansionism beyond Central Asia. They thought leaving Afghanistan alone would push it under the Russian influence. The British were very concerned about the Russian intention toward their colonial possessions in the Indian subcontinent. To checkmate the Russian advance, they adopted what is known as forward deployment policy in the northwest of India. The British had established a strong defence infrastructure in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier region, which makes now part of Pakistan.

The most popular theme that runs in the works of political scientists working in this area is the conceptualization and operation of power. Power has several manifestations which come alive in ethno-politics from time to time. The most common manifestation has been the ethnic conflict. The reason for this could be attributed to the visibility that comes from the destruction caused by ethnic conflict. The visibility of various ethnic conflicts, be it the conflict in Iraq or Bosnia or Afghanistan, resulting from a dark imagination of ethnic hegemony and homogenization. Therefore, power in this sense is the manifestation of ideational uniformity (Jauan and Deniz et al. 2010). However, the concept here has an implicit assumption of a state like authority resorting to policies that create uniformity. A slightly different understanding has been offered by Ross who sees ethnic conflict as not just a breakdown of peace but also as a necessary part of development leading to

better understanding (Ross 2007). In this context, the author has brought up the role of peace-building and post-conflict development in a multi-ethnic state. This brings here the important role of state in ethno-politics both as a negative and positive participant.

State has been commonly understood as an entity having population, territory, government and sovereignty. There is no mention of ethnicity here in this kind of understanding. This implies that state has been commonly understood as a fence-sitter. However, the literature on ethno-politics does not subscribe to this notion. In fact, in ethno-politics, state is not only an active participant but has also got ethnic identity. Empirically, several events make it obvious that state is not outside ethno-politics. There have been several examples where state acted as an active agent in ethnic cleansing like in Rwanda in 1990s. Even Peoples Republic of China's identity has come to be associated with the Han ethnic group. In case of Srilanka, the state has been a party to the ethnic conflict, with a presumption that the state there is associated with the Sinhala ethnic group. It has been found that in cases where violent and long period ethnic conflict took place, the state was playing a negative role. However, things are not always in black and white. The state might be playing an ambiguous role in ethno-politics. Ambiguous here refers to the kind of role that cannot be categorized as negative or positive.

Gellner has assumed that armed conflicts are primarily quarrels over control of space. This space derives from the ethno scapes, and from the endeavour of the nation-state to achieve unity of the nation and its territory (Schetter 2004). There is also agreement that belief in a common origin is the strongest bond, holding together the members of an ethnic group. This aspect is also recognized by Max Weber in the 1920s (Weber 1921). The faith in a common origin is the precondition to defining a group as an ethnic one, while cultural patterns such as religion, language are important to determining the boundaries between ethnic categories (Jenkins 1994). Appadurai introduced the term of ethno scape which gave the way of understanding of linkage between ethnic perceptions and space (Appadurai 1996). When Appadurai considers "ethnoscape as the globalised spatial diffusion of ethnic communities", Anthony D. Smith, in contrast to him, defines ethno scape as "the territorialisation of ethnic memory", i.e. "the belief shared by ethnic groups in a common spatial frame of origin. "Ethnic groups create geography and construct space to legitimize their existence in

space and time. However, like the temporal dimension of ethnic origin, ethnoscapas are social constructions which can be and are modified in keeping with given endeavours and interests” (Schetter 2004).

The development of the Afghan state was accompanied by the political space. The last century saw the emergence of different ethno scapes which comprise the political claims raised by ethnic groups. Since Afghanistan became a modern state at the end of the nineteenth century the national territory has been perceived as the main framework for their political activities up until the onset of war in 1979 (Ibid). Until the end of the nineteenth century, these societies were preceded by extreme statelessness. “Power was limited to social microcosms as villages, valley communities, clans, tribes and religious groups made up the most important frames of political reference for identity and action on which power was based. This marked segmentation of society was an obstacle to the implementation of institutionalized power” (Ibid). Thus, the limitations of Afghan state are obvious and visible.

1.2.3 Ethno-Politics and State in Afghanistan

A recent research by Mobasher finds that democratization has carried with it the promise of stabilization and solidarity for diverse ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Indeed, elections were expected to pave the way for conflicting groups to renegotiate power in a non-violent manner. In the context of Afghanistan, however, these processes are consistently complicated by ethnic tensions. As recently as in the 2014 presidential elections, ethnic voting has continued to affect election outcomes. When voters are swayed by ethnicity, the extent to which one elected individual can adequately represent the whole nation is debatable. The elections in Afghanistan have shown a complex set of competing democratic, non-democratic and anti-democratic values. As such, Afghanistan is more of a hybrid state than a true democratic state. Ethnic tensions rise to their peak during Afghan elections. While candidates and elites tend to mobilize ethnic groups during the elections, ethnic groups tend to vote collectively, and, most significantly, on the basis of ethnicity. Mobasher’s work provides important background material and an understanding of the persistence of ethnic voting and mobilization in Afghan elections (Mobasher 2015). This information should be valuable to the current scholarship about elections and ethnic heterogeneity.

Afghanistan has almost become synonymous with conflict. It has a complex ethnic combination and despite its establishment as a political entity, it has had periods of stability and violence. This has resulted in a proliferation of literature that sees the present conflict in Afghanistan as a symptom of underlying ethnic conflict. Prominent among the contributors to this line of thought are Rieck (1997) and Rashid (2000) (Schetter 2003) and Mountstuart Elphinstone views Afghan politics as having unstable and fluctuating civil institutions. He has observed subsistence of this system as just an unfolding of old rivalries at various points of time (Saikal 2004). Elphinstone reflection on Afghan system does not give primacy to the change as changes, even when they take place in Afghanistan, are seen as part of ossified system. Everything looks stationary in this kind of framework. This is where too much emphasis on ethnic rivalry creates problem in analysis because there are important changes that every state undergoes vis-a-vis its ethnic mix. Afghanistan too is not fixed in the past. It has undergone state building and has faced challenges because of its ethnic and tribal power equation. Afghanistan has a history of struggle with state-building because of ethnic and tribal practices of power. They cited the period of Soviet domination during which a secular regime replaced the Afghan tribal regime. They said, in 1980s, the tribal based regime was also promoting the Marxist ideology, but intended to create a civic nation with greater loyalty to the state. However, the opposition to it came from both the tribal and ethnic group on the one hand as well as the urban middle classes on the other. For all of them Islamic identity became a unifying factor among antagonistic ethnic groups (Banuazizi and Weiner 1987).

Also, Afghanistan conflict has many other factors. According to (Abraham 2013) the ethnic groups have aspirations of having one's own nation state. Common ancestry, culture, history and homeland are the factors that define them. Ethnicity affects an individual's perceptions, behaviour, interactions and identity of a nation. As opposed to this, tribes are based on kinship and locality, with evolving cultures and a well structured genealogy. Tribal society is also segmented on the basis of descent from a common ancestor. It is also a non-state form of politically organised social formation. Pashtuns form the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and their tribal identities have affected their politics. Examples of Pashtun tribes include the Muhammadzay and Orakzais (Abraham 2013). In Afghanistan, the informal system based on tradition has

an important place. Substantial fraction (around 80%) of cases related to local property, family, personal status and local disputes are decided through informal mechanisms (like shuras and jirgas) (Katzman 2015). In these, the pashtun code of conduct called Pashtunwali prevails over all other laws. Traditional forms of apology like *nanawati* and *shaman* are part of this (Ibid). This mechanism is a product of centuries of Pashtun domination through various empires. There is even a predominant perception that state has been an instrument of only Pashtun domination and not a mechanism through which citizens participate in self government. Such is the strength of tribal identity that supra identity of Afghan has coexisted with tribal identities. In this, ethnic groups have expressed their respective ideas of state. Pashtuns have dominated this process and have always been inclined towards strong Pashtun run central state. On the other hand Tajiks have talked about power sharing and Uzbeks and Hazaras have wanted recognition of their identities (Rubin 2012). The problem with the case of Afghanistan is that Ethno-politics in current literature has been understood largely through the medium of conflict in which there are even International actors. There is a need to understand ethnic politics in a different way. The emergence of nation states founded on secular ideologies once seemed to be the route which societies must necessarily take if they were to undergo modernization, rejecting tribalism as a form of primitivism and confining religion to the inner world of the individual.

The Afghan state was established in the eighteenth century, when a tribal confederation developed into a dynastic state. In 1747 Ahmad Shah, of the *saddozay* clan of the *popolzay* tribe, led an Abdali confederation, now known as the Durrani, in the conquest of the area between Persia and the river Indus. The *saddozay* dynasty was to be followed in 1818 by another Durrani dynasty, the *Muhammadzay* clan of the *Barakzay* tribe, which held power until 1978. The confederation was held together by the consensus of pillaging the neighbouring areas to extract tribute. The political and military forms of this period were characteristic of tribal warfare; war was a short-lived affair deciding the status of council and its members, the clan chiefs. The great Jirga was ‘the founding myth of the Afghan state’ and was to be re-enacted in periods of crisis as, for instance, the enthronement of Nadir Khan in 1929. There was no spirit of patriotism, but a profound sense of cultural identity. One’s allegiance was to the restricted group and the tribal code, and not to the Pashtun community or to

the state. Joining the enemy in order to affirm the tribal values was not seen as constituting treachery (Roy 1985: 13). In Afghanistan, where the concept of the nation has developed but recently, where the state is seen as external to society and where people's allegiance is directed primarily towards local community, the only things which all have in common is Islam (Roy 1990).

The tribe or ethnic group exercises its legal jurisdiction on the basis of personality, and therefore corresponds to the first of these alternative polities. Here, one finds that tribal and ethnic boundaries are mostly drawn on the basis of groups or persons of different value orientations, standards of morality, and excellence of performance, rather than being on the ground. Belonging is judged by those standards relevant to that identity. Unlike the territorial boundary of the state and the 'ethnic' or personal boundary of the tribe, which can be determined by relatively fixed and determinable rules, the ideological boundary of the able remains an elusive jurisdiction for the empire (Tapper 1983).

The turbulent history of Afghanistan, Saikal has put the main research concern which is the root cause of Afghanistan's vulnerability to domestic instability, ideological extremism and foreign intervention. In this he puts forward a gamut of factors- the mosaic nature of Afghan society, landlocked location of the country, extensive cross border ethnic ties with neighbours and interaction between these factors. In this, he hints that there may be something beyond these factors that have eluded most analysts of Afghanistan. He gives due significant works which calls as rich in content and reflective in approaches (Saikal 2004). While mentioning Louis Dupree's volume on *Afghanistan*, Vartan Gregorian's *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* and Poullada's *Reform and Rebelliion in Afghanistan* and others; he reviews them as selective in their individual coverage and approach (Ibid). According to him, some of the earlier scholars have been selective for various reasons (convenience, lack of sufficient resources to study, or lack of access to inside view of the country). Whatever be the reason, the resulting picture of their analyses has put greater emphasis on visible sociological and geostrategic factors and has bypassed the interactive relationships between elite behaviour and outside power rivalry. In reality, it is these interactive relationships which are part of insiders of Afghan politics and society that are critical to understanding the social and political complexities of

Afghanistan (Ibid). In these interrelationships, there three main variables, *royal polygamy*, *foreign interference* and *ideological extremism*. Without engaging in reductionism, a close look at the relationships between these variables clearly demonstrates that, along with such other factors as social divisions, cultural mores and geographical location, they have been instrumental in determining the course of Afghan history and in laying the foundations for preventing the Afghans from developing the necessary attributes of a strong state with a lasting stable political order (Saikal 2004). The polygamic rivalries within royal families from end of eighteenth to Soviet coup of 1978 interacted with foreign intervention to prevent the country from developing solid foundation of statehood and stability. In this he also faults the recurring failure of rulers to incorporate moderate Islam as the cause that interacted to ensure failure of a strong foundation (Ibid).

Historically viewing, state-building remained always a problem in Afghanistan and this continued even now. Ahmad Shah Abdali, the founder of the independent Afghan state, came very close to the Weberian ideal of “patrimonial rule, in that his power was fundamentally personal and independent of any objectively rational goal, (Saikal 2004). He continues: “This was also true of his immediate successors. Politics in Afghanistan was characterised by direct bargaining amongst clans, tribes, regional populations and other elementary solidarity groups. Rulers of the Sadozai (1747-1818) and Barakzai (1826-1929) dynasties were first and foremost leaders of the Durrani Pashtun tribal confederation, whose authority in the eyes of other communities in Afghanistan was tenuous at best” (Ibid). Sometimes the Durrani were able to exercise prescriptive and regulative functions in the Afghan polity, accumulating and distributing resources, and mediating between different contenders. But, quite often, they simply struggled to survive in contention. At no point in time could they develop new common legal and political frameworks to transcend the traditional boundaries of various local units. Kinship, marriage and personal loyalty remained the only morphological elements of competing elite factions. Even these traditional instruments of political exchange could not be successfully employed by Afghan monarchs until the 1930s to establish a stable dynastic rule – the necessary (but not sufficient) condition for an efficient centralised government (Ibid).

With the rule of Shah Zaman (1793-1799) individual, rival members of the ruling elite increasingly sought foreign support to overpower one another and their Durrani clansmen, and bring the rest of the population under control. This suited rival powers, as they wanted to manipulate such elements in pursuit of their conflicting regional interests. As long as a Pashtun prince depended on assistance from Persia, Bukhara, the Sikh State or any other traditional regional power, he could not have a decisive advantage over his opponents because their resources were limited and their alliances tended to be short-lived due to inherent instability in those countries. However, the advent of European actors in the Age of Imperialism changed the situation dramatically. From the reign of Dost Mohammad Khan (1826-1838, 1842-1863) onwards, the favourable disposition of Britain – and, to a lesser extent, Russia – became the overriding factor in the domestic struggle (Saikal 2004).

Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901) decided to rise to the status of Afghan sovereign and to become a genuine monarch from his position of a “feudal leader of independent tribes using military hardware and financial help from across the British border. Having sacrificed Afghanistan’s independence, he built a centralised state where the ruling elite consisted of his immediate family, close relations and clients from other Durrani clans. The forcible imposition of Durrani supremacy (or more specifically that of the Mohammedzai clan) ended the possibilities of coexistence of differing micro-societies in Afghanistan. Most successive regimes followed the pattern mapped out by Abdur Rahman Khan: a highly repressive administration operated by an exclusive elite upholding patrimonial codes and denying major groups and strata autonomous access to the sources of power” (Ibid).

The patronage of a foreign power (or powers) proved akin to drug addiction. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no central government in Afghanistan could survive and maintain high levels of political and social control without support from abroad. The state’s increasing economic and military dependence on external sources was complemented by the two-pronged threat posed by exogenous influences. First, a marginalised group in the Afghan polity could always appeal to an international sympathiser. Thus, after 1992, the Hazaras enjoyed a cordial relationship with Iran, whereas Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan built a good rapport with the leadership of Uzbekistan; similarly, the Pashtun Taliban exercised

power, from 1996 to 2001, very much at the behest of Pakistan. Second, the dominant elites in Afghanistan have seldom been completely cohesive themselves. Members of ruling solidarity groups have often tried to promote their interests by securing foreign patronage. During the reign of Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), his brother, Nasrullah Khan, actively cooperated with the Germans, in contrast with the overall pro-British orientation of the state. Mohammad Daoud, during his premiership, from 1953 to 1963, leaned towards greater cooperation with the Soviet Union, whereas his rival cousin and brother-in-law, King Zahir Shah, generally pursued a pro-American line (Saikal 2004).

Foreign powers and alliances used their advantage over communities, groups and individuals in Afghanistan to pursue their regional and international agendas. The early patrimonial and non-representative nature of regional and Afghan rulers had made such altercations and interference possible in the first place, but eventually it was exogenous and constant influences that facilitated, helped and perpetuated new and neo-patrimonialism in a country like Afghanistan.

The attractiveness and plus point of Afghanistan for alien and foreign powers has been variously and continuously attributed to its vast and rich mineral resources its infrastructure and basic development potential and its ability to house military and economic bases and interests. All these arguments, debates were contributed to disguise the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a case of colonial and global imperial territorial expansion strategy. But it was proved as a failed one. Though, the country's crucial strategic location in Central Asia has made Afghanistan and its geography highly relevant, in the eyes of foreign policymakers. At the same time, it is not imperial strategic interest which dominates strategic and development interests, but the local border position. The imperial connotation and dimensions confuses understanding and analysis of the matter and falsifies the prediction. Afghanistan played a pivotal role as a buffer state: first between the British empires and the Russians, then the USSR and British India until 1992 and finally between the Western Blocs and Soviet. As an academic discourse and debate, a scholar, Richard Newell has identified laconic yet comprehensive characterisation of the Afghans position and geographic location in all those years: Afghanistan is relevant – because of its

strategic location and try to get influenced influenced, but it is not valuable enough to risk dominating.

Literature on the political developments during Zaher Shah's reign, the country was relatively calm for several decades. The ruling family got confused and strangled a short era of liberalization in the late 1940s and in 1953, Prince Daud Khan, became prime minister. Daud Khan was a strong proponent of Pashtun nationalism and wanted to expand Afghanistan. This has contributed to highly tense relations between the two sides and later led to the ousting of Daud in 1963 (Suleman 2013).

Suleman in his occasional paper continues: The constitution of 1964 allowed freedom of the press, and political parties were established. The pro-Soviet communist party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), was dominantly of Pashtuns, but split into the Parcham branch of urban intellectuals with a tendency toward ethnic accommodation and the rural, authoritarian, and nationalist Khalq branch. The major Maoist party, Shula-e Jawid, arose in 1967 from divisions in PDPA. Faced with a variety of parties seeking to place ethnic discrimination squarely on the political agenda, the king responded by unofficially ensuring that minorities were represented in the cabinet, but the basic attitude toward ethnic differences was that economic modernization would lead to their gradual erosion (Suleman 2013).

As Suleman rightly narrates, Former Prime Minister Daud Khan regained power in 1973. He established an authoritarian rule that was overturned in a PDPA coup in 1978. PDPA immediately announced a Soviet-style nationality policy that addressed four areas: government participation, education, newspapers, and culture. PDPA's credibility was severely undermined by Pashtun dominance of the party and its attempts to foster Pashtun support by launching ethnic appeals (ibid).

He continues: With the 1978 coup and the Soviet invasion of 1979, Afghani resistance parties were established in Pakistan and Iran. Pashtuns with the exception of Jamat-i Islami, dominated the Pakistan-based parties, and all had some form of Sunni Islamic orientation. Iran became the major backer of the groups, active among the Hazaras. The he states: The resistance based its legitimacy on various forms of politicized Islam, and ethnicity was low on the political agenda of the exiled parties in the early 1980s. Nonetheless, the fact that the resistance leadership was overwhelmingly

Pashtun was problematic from the perspective of the non-Pashtun population. Resistance-based shadow cabinets were notoriously weak and fragmented, mainly because the resistance leaders could not accommodate Afghanistan's ethnic variety (Ibid).

Once in power, as Suleman argues, The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) went on to announce a Soviet-style nationality policy. In practice, the will to implement such reforms was limited, and PDPA's credibility was severely undermined by its Pashtun dominance. When President Najib took power in 1986, there was a change of approach. First, Najib's government was designed as a massive project in political accommodation. Second, the government realized that Soviet military presence in Afghanistan was on the wane, and ethnic and tribal loyalties were exploited to establish local militias to fill the gap. The so-called Uzbek militia of General Dostum and the Ismaili militia of Sayyed Mansoor developed into major military units. Ethnicity, for many, became an avenue to privileges. Military groups of different origins opposed or supported one another, as when Uzbek militias were used to reinforce the defence of threatened government garrisons in the Pashtun south (Suleman 2013).

Only when the resistance captured power in Kabul in April 1992, the ethnic dimension was brought to the limelight. Jamat-i Islami and its key commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, were a major force, but different groups in the resistance soon split Kabul into separate sections, and the ethnic definition of the conflict gained in prominence. Alliances between resistance groups and sections of the old government army that shared ethnic identity emerged as key forces in the battle for controlling the capital. Alliances rapidly shifted; political and military leaders used ethnic arguments to build support, and common people had little alternative but to seek protection with their own group (Suleman 2013).

In the past conflict with the Soviet Union, factors typical of the tribe empire structure of relations might have been important. Because the Soviet Union clearly has significant military advantage over the tribes, the tribal strategy must be two-fold: first to make it prohibitively expensive for the empire to maintain the level of force required to rule the tribes and second to seek alliance with other groups within the empire (Tapper 1983). Afghan as an important geographically dominated part of

Soviet replaced a secular, but at the same time politically weak and uncontrolled tribal based war and regime was forced to promote a Marxist political ideology as a means of developing and creating loyalty to the state. Opposition to the Soviet and Afghan regimes have come from the tribes and ethnic groups as well as the urban middle class, for whom an Islamic identity is supreme and wish to ruled by the same Shariat law (Banuazizi and Weiner 1988).

The Afghan war led to major changes in the way space was perceived. The state and its functions were eroded in the course of the war (Wimmer and Schetter 2003). The power became de-territorialised and since 1990s Afghanistan collapsed into hundreds of little empires. They were ruled by a countless number of warlords and local rulers (Schetter 2002). The new emerging national identity was confused and accompanied by a de-Pashtunisation of the Afghans national ideology and ideas, as the majority of the non-Pashtun population now also identified and recognised itself with Afghanistan as a nation or country. But this Afghan's combined identity could hardly be anchored and contributed to any common values, virtues, traditions and practices since any definition of national values inevitably failed against the cultural and the whole including heterogeneity of Afghanistan and the varying models of ethnic origin in existence. With the end of the fanaticism based Taliban regime in 2001, the de-territorialisation of power and other elements of Afghan society has disintegrated into the separate spheres of interest including multitude of warlords, autonomous leaders and potentates, whose rule is based on traditional patronage (Schetter 2004).

Afghanistan stands and seems to be centre of four cultural, ecological, and strategic areas; they are Central Asia, the Middle East, the Far East and the Indian Sub-Continent, for the Pamir Mountains intrude into Chinese Sinkiang. Totally controlled, hijacked and devastated by constant wars and battles, it has strived for development, prosperity, peace and solidity, by re-affirming and emphasising with its history, culture, demography, geography and global power politics. Throughout history, it had been remained a diversified and multi-ethnic state, and represents multiple and multi-layered identities.

The questions of ethnic identity and group cohesion has achieved the political worth as the 28 years long war has immeasurably tainted the population landscape of the country (Rais 2008). According to Dupree, Afghanistan's ethnic diversity and its

origin has been a matter of speculation. Its national culture is not uniform (Dupree 1980). The diversity could be due to its being at the peripheries of world's great empires. Thus, one should not be surprised if one finds Afghans who look like Northern European, South Asian, East Asian, and Southern European all in the same province.

In 2001, the Hamid Karzai regime further saw rise in ethnic and tribal fragmentation. Diversified and various ethnic warlords with drugs mafia and drug trade gained foothold. Ultimately blames have been put on foreign powers and their continuous interventions that have kept the state destable by posing one against another. Gradually, Afghan has sen a long 30 years war between various tribal fragments of the society. The Bonn Agreement has actually sought and attempted to right this wrong by including whole ethnic groups in administration and power sharing. Karzai tried to bring out an ethnically balanced cabinet by reciting the spirit of the Agreement also but abuse of power by leaders and representatives has daunted the regime and led to failure.

The reconstruction studies and literature at the context of Afghan, reaffirm mostly on the philathrophical and humanitarian action and also aimed to boost infrastructure development. The re-building of political institutions and making political consensus are crystallised to embolden and boost the reconstruction process. Doing so, the state of Afghans can build a new political system based on harmonious coexistence of multi tribal identities. Establishing electoral system and an election commission are keys to peaceful, growth based and development aimed Afghan. It all would ultimately contributed for the democratization and political consolidation. The literature reviews every aspects and steps of political, economic and social sphere of Afghanistan and clarifies the political stability in Afghanistan and so also North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) role as an international actor. Within the above reviewed literature, this research seeks to cover the gaps found by examining the reactionary role of ethnic political sphere vis-à-vis the neutrality of electoral system in Afghanistan and the greater ethnic linkage of Pashtun group's influence of Afghanistan in political sphere.

1.3 Rationale and Scope of the Study

It has been found in the existing literature that questions of ethnic politics in Afghanistan have been considered important given the kind of experiences that the country had in the recent past. The civil war and the replacement of the ethnic system with a Marxist friendly set up had a strange kind of impact on the society. The suppressed ethnic voices found an outlet with the coming of Taliban and have survived till date. Struggling to build one unified nation and provide regional stability, Afghanistan's ethnic divisions are its challenges when it comes to building a democratic system and bring an all-round development. In this context, it is important to study how ethnic divisions operate in a modern political milieu and what kind of repercussions they have on the big question of regional stability that worries all its neighbours.

The ways in which ethnic politics can operate in Afghanistan are several. There are underlying ethnic factors in Afghanistan's elections that have not been explored so far. The first among such factors is that of leadership and making of leader and its role in giving powerful voice to different ethnic groups. The other factors that this research considers important are the role of rural elites in elections in Afghanistan, political organization and lobbying and different ethnic groups' role of education in increasing the electoral influence and in affecting their voting pattern. The literature therefore needs to be broadened along these lines. Due to the nature of the above mentioned problematic areas, the present study is fairly diverse and larger in scope. It will cover the ethnic factor in electoral politics of Afghanistan from the period 2004 to 2014. Ethnic questions require interdisciplinary examination. So the research deals with social, political and economic dimensions of ethnic groups that translate into political problems. Involvement of elections in this study also brings in some elements of statistics. Therefore, scope of the study is wide.

It has been found that several strands of thought and analysis centres have grown in the literature on electoral politics. In this thesis, the researcher examined the *Ethnic Factor in Electoral Politics of Afghanistan*, and explored how ethnicity has influenced post-Taliban state building, the electoral system, and recent presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan.

1.4 Research Questions

The thesis tried to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between ethnicity and electoral politics in Afghanistan?
2. How and to what extent do Ethnic Groups participate in Afghan politics?
3. Who are the Elites of different ethnic groups and what role do they play in elections?
4. How has Afghan war affected the Ethnic factor in Afghan politics?
5. To what extent national leadership is a factor in giving political space to different ethnic groups?
6. How far is the SNTV model in Afghan elections effective in giving representation to different ethnic groups?
7. What is the level of political engagement of different ethnic groups?

1.5 Research Methodology

This is a qualitative and quantitative study and it has also used statistical data and techniques to show that voter registration and variances in ballot count point to validity of complaints received by Electoral Complaints Commission. It also followed the discourses and implications from historical repetition of such situation. The discursive analysis of historical perspectives is focussed on time period. The foremost reason for grounding the study in a periodical framework is to assimilate maximum possible development facets as well as interferences coupled with broader development of ground reality. The study has focussed on outcomes of change, i.e. democratic strands, electoral mechanisms adopted and ethno-political factors in progressive state building of Afghanistan and its positive understanding.

In this research, primary sources of data consist of government documents, records, reports and viewpoints and speeches of concerned officials and authorities working in Afghanistan that provide evidential interface to this work. Apart from this, secondary sources are also used. They consist of books, articles, periodicals, website information, etc.

Telephonic interviews of some Afghan scholars with an unstructured questionnaire on the ethnicity and electoral politics in general and on Afghanistan in particular are sourced both through email correspondence and through face-to-face meetings. These interviews helped in correcting many notions that are bound to be there due to some assumptions taken for granted.

1.6 Hypotheses

The thesis has tested the following hypotheses:

1. The perpetuity of ethnic factor in Afghanistan's electoral politics has questioned the neutrality of Afghan President and Independent Election Commission.
2. Pashtuns commanding the majority are also helped by their cross-border linkages for a greater degree of political mobilization compared to the non-Pashtun groups.

1.7 Chapterisation

The study has been divided into six chapters as follows:

1. Introduction

This chapter introduced the research design of the study. It discussed the scope and rational of the proposed study and the research methods that has been used. The existing literature had been also be reviewed. The literature deals with the studies that have so far been done on the ethnic demography, history and conflicts in Afghanistan. The chapter further explains the problem areas that remain unresolved.

2. The Electoral Systems and Political Choice of Afghanistan

This chapter discusses about theoretical part of electoral system of Afghanistan. Electoral Systems in general and their Political Choice in Afghanistan in particular are discussed. The chapter also evaluates the Electoral politics and its Electoral model.

3. Evolution of Electoral Politics in Afghanistan

This chapter discusses the historical development of electoral politics and political institution building in Afghanistan. It also evaluates the electoral politics and its electoral model. It focuses on Independent Elections Commission role for conducting

free and fair election and presidential power in Afghanistan. Recent election practices that have been noticed in Afghanistan are also part of the chapter.

4. Role of Elites in Ethno-Politics in Afghanistan with Reference to the Pashtuns

This Chapter discusses the role of elites in the electoral politics of Afghanistan and how they play important role to influence the Afghan politics, especially the Pashtuns. Finally, it also discusses whether and how these elites have strengthened the old ethnic divisions.

5. The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Afghanistan: An Analysis

This chapter analyses the role of ethnic factors in the last decade in country's Presidential elections. Presidential election is analyzed with a view to see how the ethnic divisions play out in national and local context.

6. Conclusion

This chapter outlines the summary and drawn conclusion of the research work. It also discusses the findings of research and their implications. It also examines the validation of the hypotheses with which the study began. Based on the findings of research, some recommendations are suggested to promote peace, stability, and democracy in Afghanistan.

1.8 Summary

First introduced the present study titled "A Study of Ethnic Factor in Electoral Politics of Afghanistan, 2004-2014" which aimed to examine the role of ethnicity in electoral politics of Afghanistan after the Taliban regime. After a brief historical introduction on the political developments in Afghanistan, the literature review related to the research was classified into three major themes, but linked to one another. They are: 'Ethnicity and Politics'; 'Ethno-Geopolitics: State, Space and Power'; 'Ethno-Politics and State in Afghanistan'. A detailed review could find that no alien power could ever find a stable foot inside the country, issues of ethnicity dominated the Afghan affairs, especially by the Pashtuns, and efforts to form a secular state overriding ethnicity and religion failed. The research seeks to cover the gaps found while examining the reactionary role of ethnic political sphere vis-à-vis the neutrality of electoral system in Afghanistan and the greater ethnic linkage of Pashtun group's influence of Afghanistan in political sphere. Thesis has six chapters including introduction and conclusion, besides references at the end.

CHAPTER 2

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL CHOICE OF AFGHANISTAN

The Electoral Systems and Political Choice of Afghanistan

2.1 Background

The choice of an electoral system, decision for a democracy, has immense impact on the political future of the country, and then the electoral systems remain relatively continuous as political interests get stabilised slowly and steadily. However, this process of making a choice of country's electoral system is often not done after a process of deliberation. The process then becomes accidental, influenced by a medley of factors like experience under colonial rule or presence of strong influential neighbours. Making choice of electoral system after due deliberations has been only a recent trend. A new fledgling democracy often has to make this choice and may even go through periods of changes of electoral system due to change in circumstances. Political crisis can act as catalyst towards process of changing the status quo in electoral system, compelling people and political class to rethink the system they already have.

One of the following two circumstances affects decisions to change or keep in place an electoral system: One, "political actors lack basic knowledge and information so that the choices and consequences of different electoral systems are not fully recognized." Two, "political actors may utilise their knowledge of electoral systems to promote designs which are in their own partisan advantage" (The Electoral Knowledge Network 2017).

It is true that political institutions area critical task "for new democracies and also those established democracies seeking to adapt their systems to reflect new political realities. This area is important to address the concerns in political democracies, while the contexts in which emerging and established democracies make institutional choices vary extremely for their long-term purposes"(Ibid). Every kind of democracy takes the experiences of the other and then gets changed in accordance with circumstances. Institutional design is an evolving process, which learns "from the several actual examples of institutional design around the world. The global momentum towards democratic governance in the 1980s and 1990s stimulated a new urgency in the search for enduring models of appropriate representative institutions

and a fresh evaluation of electoral systems. This trend increased dramatically in the early years of this century” (The Electoral Knowledge Network 2017).

The insight here is that the selection of political establishments can have a substantial influence on the broader political structure. For instance, an electoral system can be designed to promote the principle of proportionality, strengthening national political parties and ensuring the representation of women and regional minorities. Now, electoral systems are seen as one of the most significant political institutions, having vital say on issues of governance.

The choice of system matters “on account of the consequences of the electoral system, especially on the number of political parties and the political composition of assemblies and governments.” However, electoral systems “are also a consequence of already existing political parties in assemblies and governments. They tend to prefer those institutional formulas and procedures that can consolidate and reinforce their relative strength.” While a political set-up where “a single dominant party or two balanced parties tend to produce choices in favour of rather restrictive or exclusionary electoral systems, such as those based on the majority principle, the pluralistic settings with multiple parties tend to support choices in favour of more inclusive electoral formulas, such as those using rules of proportional representation” (Colomer 2004).

2.2 A Model of Electoral System Choice

A model presents how political system and political actors choose electoral systems, “whether in situations of general change of institutional regime or in more stable frameworks” (Colomer 2004). Each electoral system contains a selection of biases different from that of every other electoral system, which means that those who decide among such systems choose ultimately one set of biases. However, it can be considered a policy choice, spoken of as the goals of the system

Political actors may face numerous situations. A group or community that has been institutionally dominant and is enjoying the powers in the status quo and is also secure winner in the existing system will be less inclined to opt for change in electoral system. This is more so if the dominant community has the wherewithal in terms of political power and influence to maintain the choice of their preference. Those

community members are likely to choose the status quo, favouring of the principles biased to the interests of that community. There can be, on the other end of the spectrum, situation which is very prone to institutional change and has a proclivity towards frequent resort to making new electoral choice. This is usually present in set of situations in which there is an absence of a dominant group or community. In these situations, every group is electorally insecure. Groups cannot remain complacent about getting a certain fraction of votes from people. So, every community group has high uncertainty regarding native strength of the different groups (Colomer 2004).

Some standard assumptions are adopted by most actors to make their choices solve the problems. These choices pertain to electoral rules and procedures. Under conditions of uncertainty or threat, political actors prefer “to choose electoral rules and voting procedures that avoid opportunities to become absolute losers. If the existing winners cannot impose their preferred rules owing to increasing demands and pressures from opposition groups, they are pessimistic about their electoral prospects. They will try to assure some partially winning positions for themselves, that is, more inclusive, electoral rules involving multiple ballots or a system approaching proportional representation”(Ibid).

The existing electoral systems have powerful mechanisms to reinforce it. Both the winners and losers in the election contribute to reinforce the existing electoral system, including the usual winners and permanent losers. They adapt these values within the existing rules of the electoral system to avoid the high expected costs and uncertainties of any institutional change (Colomer 2004).

Two types of electoral system choice can be distinguished, and they are respectively propositive and reactive. Propositive electoral system is in California and this is a referendum system. It is a measure to submit to voters for direct decisions. While, reactive electoral system is popular in Britain. This is another name for “first-past-the-post system. The propositive electoral system “should better correspond to the situations in which preferences of political actors over different rules and procedures are clearly defined. These situations may lead to straight forward decisions when certain political actors have a sufficient decision power to introduce institutional reforms” (Ibid).

In many countries, the electoral systems were used for playing in the hands of political elites. If any electoral system is not suited to present ruling elites, they change the electoral system for their petty benefits. The third world countries are famous for this. Also rulers of many European countries, which claimed to be democratic root, adopted this weapon. This is a weapon in the hands of ruling elites. For instance, in 1900s, there were two powerful parties in Sweden – Conservative Party and Socialist Party in which Conservative party had authority. Conservative government introduced the universal suffrage and Proportional Representation (PR System) in 1907 because it was under threat from the rise of the Socialists. Australia adopted same technique. Australia adopted simple plurality rule in place of majority preferential system in 1918 as a result of rise of Agrarian Party. Switzerland adopted the PR system in 1918 and South Africa adopted same system in 1994. During this period, many countries had landmark changes in their electoral systems and gave way to new electoral systems (Colomer 2004).

But the ruling groups of these countries could not impose on people their own alternative system. There were always a contradiction in the society – some particular groups were in favour of old electoral system while some other particular groups were in favour of new electoral system. The new electoral system could be implemented after many negotiations and compromises. In whole 20th century, these experiments had been going on. It is not necessary that these experiments have been done for petty benefits for ruling elites. In many cases, these experiments have been done for the political reconstruction of the country. For instance, we find a mixed majority-proportional system in Hungary in 1989 or a qualified plurality rule as in Argentina in 1994, a system that is midway between simple plurality and absolute majority (Colomer 2004).

Propositive electoral system choices are based on “negotiations between the government and the opposition”; and this choice is based on the “anticipation of risks by incumbent rulers”. This system has many favourable changes for democratic purposes. They produce “changes in favour of more inclusive electoral systems such as those involving multiple ballots, the combination of different principles of representation and higher degrees of proportionality” (Ibid). In contrast, the reactive electoral system is that which reacts against the negative features of the existing

electoral system. Reactive choices are inclined to adopt formulas opposite to those in existence. Thus, reactive electoral system may produce some other electoral systems that may create unanticipated and undesirable consequences. For example, in 1931 Spain adopted the electoral system in reaction to the previous monarchical system. The government enforced new electoral system in Colombia in 1991, which destroyed the internal consistency of its political parties. In Italy, “mixed system” (first-past-the-post system and proportional representation) was introduced in 1993, which did not reduce the number of parties but replaced centripetal competition around moderate positions with high polarization. Poland had the centralised single party political system but in post-communist era, the Polish leaders adopted new system, which after many experiments became successful. It could be concluded that political leaders and organizations can also learn from their own experience.

Reactive choices may be able to produce widely satisfactory results which become strong through further application. These choices may be produced in the country or may be imported from any other country. In Latin America, in 20th century, many countries adopted PR system in place of majority system. PR was introduced when ruling party was doubtful in coming back to power. “The adoption of PR was therefore an attempt by the ruling party to retain political power in the face of possible defeat. Majoritarian system remained in position when the ruling party was strong enough to suppose that it could gain a plurality of the votes in spite of electoral reforms” (Oetro 2009). Costa Rica adopted qualified plurality electoral system for presidential elections and this system is successfully running. In 1993, New Zealand changed their electoral political system, and it united this system and citizens into whole unit.

It may be possible to produce some mistakes in calculations and unintended consequences, when reactive choices may change “in the direction of either more inclusive or more exclusive formulas. However, since majority rules and exclusionary formulas are more likely to create dissatisfaction among political actors than the corresponding alternatives, changes in this direction are also more likely to be cancelled and revised. This strategic approach may enlighten not only the formation of choices of different actors concerning electoral systems, but also their choices change as a consequence of miscalculations under rapidly evolving relations between

forces and undesired features of the previous electoral system or unanticipated electoral results which are observed in retrospect” (Colomer 2004).

Generally, apart from restrictive electoral system it is expected for more inclusive structure of election will be helpful. This type of inclusive system will be more stable and make the solid institution equilibrium. Thus the existing electoral system made possible the participation of range of political leaders and parties even in contrast to resist each other. The large participation in electoral system will reinforce the rule and system of electoral system itself. In such mechanism which supports numerous winners, are able to encourage political plans to fulfil the goals for more stable electoral system.

Electoral rules “constitute a central factor in shaping the distribution of political power: majority formulas describe a majority of seats in the legislative assembly”. Therefore, this tends “to produce a single and absolute winner in each constituency and within a party system”. On the other hand, the PR system distributes seats proportionally, and this system based on vote percentage permits “multiple parties to gain seats in a district. This system tends to be composed of many small parties. In between majoritarian and PR rules, semi-proportional systems combine properties of both” (Orteo 2009). During the 1990s, “debate about the electoral system moved into the mainstream of the political agenda. The core debate concerns whether countries should adopt majority systems where government is effective, responsible and accountable, or proportional systems which promote the small parties and more diversity in social representation”(Norris 1997).

2.3 A Brief Study on Different Electoral Systems

The electoral system is primarily based on two systems: the majority systems and PR systems. The second one is tend to produce a single, complete conqueror system, largely based on effectiveness, accountability and investigation. Effectiveness means the executive of a single party in the single constituency. Accountability means transparency in decision-making and the investigation means stronger opposition parties and continuous parliamentary debate. Regarding the winners and the losers, this may be a more risky alternative than proportional the representation in which a theory is to create several partial winners and very few losers with multi-dimensional

rules. Proportional representation is a less risky system and a single winner and less likely to lose. PR system does not produce full winner and complete loser. This system is mainly based on consensus, plural and decentralization. Consensus is the decision-making, negotiation and agreement and on the other hand the multiplicity means multi-parliamentary party, the meaning of decentralization is going to spread judgment.

The election system that produces a single winner can remain stable for a relatively long period. The main group or party can expect to repeat the victory in the future, as well as in situations where two balanced groups or parties are expected to be highly and alternative to some extent regular frequency winners.

Choosing or maintaining this type of electoral system can be a very risky decision, especially for those groups who are not expecting a single winner in the future, whether they are minor groups in opposition. Because they are being threaten due to uncertain prospects. In the short term, there should be stability in the electoral system in which cases of political parties are well organized and voters have well established priorities. However, according to the arrangement of the elections can be changed according to the needs.

Voting processes can produce a complete victory for a individual group, such as the multi-member district block ballots by rules of multiplicity, which have been changed, along with allowing some minorities to share power with the winners. Similarly, limited ballots are accepted in multi-member districts or in single-member districts limited ballots are a voting system, with fewer votes than voters' achievements. The posts are awarded to those candidates who get the most votes completely. This is similar to a single transferable vote. Some of these processes were later encouraged to design low risk sources capable of proportional representation for different groups.

The introduction of universal voting right and processes of democratization have been main occasions for the incumbent rulers to challenge opposition groups as well as opportunities for the latter to introduce changes in the electoral system. They changed the restrictions of the existing system and this led to a high number of effective parties. In these situations, some political actors may also try to enlarge the

opportunities, such as the separation of execution from legislature, separation of the presidency from the assembly, decentralization of constitutional powers, etc. For instance, the degree of multiparty system in the assembly can be constrained by the introduction of direct presidential elections. As another example, federalism or territorial representation in large countries with diverse populations may work as a substitute for proportional representation by giving different ethnic, regionally-based groups opportunities to enter institutions (Colomer 2004).

In the twentieth century on the discussion of the mechanics of different types of electoral systems, Eckstein (1963: 249) wrote that several systems exist in different countries. Of these, single-member constituency system is popular in United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, France, Australia, etc. Mixed system is popular in Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Russia, etc. Close list system is used in Israel, South Africa, and Spain. Preferential list system is used in Austria, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands. These categories of electoral system are classified by Gallagher and Mitchell (2002). The specific analyses of electoral system choices are presented in table 2.1

Table 2.1 Categories of Electoral System

Broad category	Specific types	Country examples
Single-member constituency systems	Single-member plurality (SMP) Alternative vote (AV) Two-round system (2RS)	Australia, Canada, France, India, UK, USA
Mixed systems	Mixed compensatory	Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Russia
Closed-list systems	---	Israel, South Africa, Spain
Preferential list systems	Open list Flexible list	Austria, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands
Proportional Representation – single transferable vote (PR-STV)	---	Ireland

Source: Gallagher and Mitchell (2008: 5).

According to Gallagher and Mitchell, Single member constituency system is an electoral district that chooses one body with multiple members such as

a legislature. This is also sometimes called single-winner voting. The first category consists of those systems under which all seats are allocated within single-member constituencies. This is used in the USA as single-member districts.

The second broad category is of 'mixed' systems. The mixed system is one of the elements of two or more electoral systems. This system combines the characteristics of various systems, adjusts the goodness of such systems and removes the bad results. In this category of systems, some representatives are chosen by PR with the rule of majority (polymorphism formula). Now, this type of system is becoming popular all over the world, because in this system both systems have good qualities and represent the majority and PR formulas. The list system is based on the principles of parties which are present in the list of candidates in each multimember constituency. They are traditionally divided into two types: they use closed lists, in which voters cannot express an option for individual candidates in the list, and on the basis of primary list, where voters can like. Finally, under PR-STV (proportional representation by a single transferable vote), voters are capable of all the candidates of rank-order in each multimember constituency.

According to political scientists, electoral system is the central core of democracy because election rules not only have important effects on other elements of the political system, but also present a useful instrument to make changes in the political system. The renowned political scientist Sartori suitably characterizes electoral systems as the most specific calculating mechanism of politics (Grofman and Ljphart 2003). The most essential elements in a proper analysis of electoral laws and their political consequences include a large number of relevant areas of concerns. They are:

1. Electoral formulas (e.g. proportional representation (PR) vs. majoritarian systems);
2. Ballot structure (e.g. nominal vs. ordinal);
3. District magnitude (number of seats);
4. Size of legislature;
5. Number of candidates/ Parties; and so on.

In the analysis of the effects of electoral laws, the most important issues include the relationship between types of electoral system (e.g., simple plurality and plurality with double ballot) and the number of political parties which contest the elections. In his book *The Political Parties*, Duverger concludes that the plurality system favours two-party system, generally referred to as 'Duverger's law' (Duverger 2009). While

PR system and the double-ballot system favour multiparty system, this rule is generally referred as ‘Duverger’s hypothesis’ (Grofman and Ljphart 2003).

Some political thinkers write that PR system works comfortably in multi-party system. Sartori’s analysis about the effects of electoral system hinges upon the geographic allocation of support and upon the presence of a structured party system (Sartori: 1976). Sartori goes on to relate the electoral system and party polarization that is relevant to the nature of the system of party competition which might emerge. He concludes by referring to necessary and sufficient factors that he feels needed for two-party system, as well as two other laws about the reductive or maintaining effect of election type on party number (Ibid).

2.4 Evolution of Electoral System

There was no electoral system without political system. When political system emerged, it became a question who will gain political power and how the political powers would be selected. First of all, Greek thinkers tried to raise this question. Plato used to think that political powers would not be chosen through election. Aristotle too did not believe in democracy in its modern meaning. But he gave a little bit democracy to Greek people. Aristotle believed in direct participation in political powers. In the medieval period, theocracy dominated the whole world which did not believe in democracy. The king was living symbol of God on earth. The king had all powers and there was no method of election. The political powers chosen by electoral system is the outcome of modern era. In modern era, many political thinkers as John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, J.S. Mill, Herold Laski, etc. propounded the method of electoral system, though they had different views on methods of electoral system.

In whole political history, humanity has “witnessed continuous inventions and reinventions of electoral formulas. A somewhat evolutionary view can be traced from the historical facts of invention and choice of electoral rules and procedures that emerged in different parts of the world. “Historically, several voting procedures and formulas have been invented and reinvented, even after several centuries of previous discoveries, under the pressure of finding new and better solutions to electoral problems. Intellectual activity, which is usually fostered by requirement and

convenience, related to matters of electoral systems has been typically the work of actual or prospective losers with strong motivation to win” (Colomer 2004).

There are separate classifications for assembly and presidential elections. “Three basic categories of electoral systems for the legislative assembly are distinguished, with a few subcategories to differentiate between several formulas and procedures. From less to more inclusive, they are:

1. Majority rule which includes three subcategories: Majority 1 – multi-member districts with bloc ballot; Majority 2 – multi-member districts with limited ballots (including single non-transferable vote); and Majority 3 – single-member districts.
2. Mixed systems, including coexistence, parallel systems and allocations of multiple choices.
3. Proportional representation – It includes three sub categories: Proportional – average district magnitude lower; Proportional – average district magnitude higher; and Proportional– average district magnitude higher than open ballot” (The Electoral Knowledge Network).

Different democratic countries have different electoral systems. Some countries have single system and some countries have mixed choice system. In majority rule system, dominant groups are more powerful than others, while in proportional representation, all groups have representation on the basis of their population. In fact, the election system transforms the votes in the elections, resulting in the result of the offices / seats won by parties and candidates. The main variable is the electoral formula used (mathematical formula is used to calculate the majority / proportional, proportional, mixed system and seat allocation), ballot structure (i.e. whether the voter votes for the candidate or party Whether voters make choices of a choice or express chain preferences), and district magnitude (not how many voters live in a district) Choose how many representatives legislators in which district) (The Electoral Knowledge Network).

There are some essential links between the preferences of citizens and the policy choices. These links are made by governments and political leaders. They have

specific political consequences for the political actors, and constitute an important topic in this political process. Where the government is representative, the people do not govern themselves directly but send their political representative for political decision-making. In democratic societies these representatives are elected, and it is one of the important questions how they represent the thoughts of voters. In particular, “it is interesting to exploring variations in the methods of election, and in knowing how it makes a difference in how they are elected and the method of election is clearly a crucial link in the chain of representative democracy”(Gallagher and Mitchell 2008).

The electoral system is a set of rules in which votes are cast to elect the representatives and how these votes are then transformed into seats in that assembly. An electoral system determines the composition of the legislative assembly and electoral regulations are the wider set of rules related to elections. Electoral regulations such as the right to vote the fairness of the election administration, the transparency of the voting system, etc. have central importance in determining the significance and legitimacy of an election.

However, they should not be confused with the more narrowly defined concept of the electoral system itself. Electoral regulations do not actually matter so much with which electoral system a country adopts. Many questions may emerge then. What difference does it make if the weight of preference votes is increased or decreased? Would anyone notice if a country moves from a parallel mixed system to a compensatory one or vice versa? Subjective verification suggests that many active politicians react with indifference to what they see as minor mechanics that can be left. Ordinary citizens might surprise whether the analysis is really something they need to know. The choices may be obscure and unclear (Gallagher and Mitchell 2008).

Both FPTP and PR are popular electoral systems in the whole world. There is a great disparity between single-member constituency systems (such as ‘first-past-the-post’) and proportional representation (PR) systems. No politicians would take risk to leave chance to decide by any other person. Here, an example can be given of Great Britain.

The election system can also be discussed from another point of view that can play a bigger role in shaping party system. The nature of the government, different types of options to face voters at the time of election behaviour of parliamentary members at parliament. The structure that people of various backgrounds, democratic system and

political parties have the ability to make participation in the government. Election systems often examine the origins of those systems and study politics of the election system. The electoral system of each country potentially constitutes a political issue in its own right. Such elections support any particular type of election system and who oppose it, who benefit from it and who loses it etc. In each country the focus of the current debate is on the question of electoral reform.

2.5 Proportional and Semi-Proportional Electoral Systems

Proportional system is already discussed in short. Semi-PR system is new notion for electoral system in the democratic world. Semi-PR systems change the votes into seats. This can be considered somewhere between the proportionality of Proportional Representation (PR) systems and the majority system (The Electoral Knowledge Network 2017). Arend Lijphart has given a major contribution on this issue. According to him, “From proportionality to non-PR Methods are used for ethnic representation in many countries as Belgium, Cyprus, Lebanon, New Zealand West Germany, and Zimbabwe. These countries discuss the use of quotas for ethnically chosen election districts whose aim is to provide the proper religious or ethnic representation”(Grofman and Lijphart 2003).

These examples offer a comparative analysis of several electoral systems. He gives the advantages and disadvantages of PR versus non-PR methods, but ultimately he favours the PR method. For example, he notes that the ethnic groups permitted to special modes of representation are clearly permissible in different countries, despite the difficulty to determine ethnic identification especially in multi-cultural societies. Moreover, it is true that ethnic disputes may be controversial or even completely unacceptable for many citizens, although this problem can be mitigated by making ethnic registration voluntary, or by permitting voters a selection of states, or by using geographic concentrations of ethnically specific voters to determine districts (Ibid).

Jack F. Wright, another renowned scholar, reviews in detail the Australian Experience with Majority preferential and Quota-Preferential Systems and examines the relatively little-studied Australian use of the “single-transferable vote” (STV) and of majority-preferential voting (commonly known as the alternative vote). Quota-preferential system can be considered as the fairest electoral system. In this system, every seat is

marginal and hence parties are generally more responsive to all voters. Majority Preferential voting can be considered as “certain voting systems in which voters rank outcomes in hierarchy on the ordinal scale” (Ibid). Australia implemented the use of STV in the state of Tasmania in 1896, and the use of majority preferential voting in the state of Queensland in 1892. STV was adopted for the Australian Federal Senate in 1946. Tasmania’s experience with STV is the highest continuous example of the use of STV for legislative elections (Grofman and Lijphart 2003).

Wright is of the opinion that seats-votes method under majority-preferential voting is closer to plurality-majority methods than to PR or semi-proportional methods. Wright points out that the use of STV in Tasmania has led to strong proportional representation of voter preferences and has not led to a division of the party system. While seeking lessons from the United States’ use of STV in local nonpartisan elections, Weaver makes the point that the political consequences of any change in election laws must be understood in the context of the political system in which it is entrenched. Weaver also shows that many of the claims made about the political outcomes of STV in the United States have failed to extricate STV from other structural features which were often adopted simultaneously with it (Ghadiri 2012). It clearly appears that STV had a significant impact on the styles of personal campaigning.

In Spain’s Senate, the basic arrangement is that voters in four member districts have three votes each. Lijphart, Lopez-Pintor, and some other scholars analyse the theoretical proportionality features of the limited vote as a function of district magnitude and of the number of votes each voter is entitled to cast, and then analyse recent elections in the two countries, they find that in terms of the matchup of vote share and seat share, the limited vote is intermediary between PR and non-PR systems but leans more toward the plurality end. They also find that because a party which overestimates its strength and nominates too many candidates will be severely penalized by electoral setbacks. So far we have seen the electoral system and political choices in theoretical perspective. Now this chapter is going to discuss these issues particularly in Afghanistan.

2.6 Structure of Electoral System in Afghanistan

The structure of electoral system in Afghanistan is dealt here in three sections. First, there is a brief overview of the Afghanistan's political and party systems. Second, there is an explanation of the beginning of the current electoral system, and of why the political actors chose the same. Third section explains how the electoral system works in Afghanistan.

2.6.1 Background to the Political System in Afghanistan

Generally, “the electoral system is the method by which voters make a choice between different options. Elections are used to choose heads of the state, heads of the government, and members of the legislature. They drive the different types of elections designed to determine national executive power and national legislative power. As far as chief executives are concerned, they can be elected by direct or indirect election.” In a direct election, voters cast ballots directly to elect the candidates (Ishiyama 2009). There are some political systems that use direct elections to elect the president. This method is adopted in many countries such as France, Russia, and Argentina. Some political systems use indirect elections to elect the president as in USA. There the voters elect an Electoral College, which selects the President. Although generally the Electoral College reflects the popular vote, it is not always necessary to be so in the final result. In other countries, such as Germany and Italy, the President is elected by parliament (Ibid).

Both systems – direct and indirect system – have its own advantages and disadvantages. In direct system, the President directly represents the votes. In indirect system, the President is not directly elected by voters. So in this system there may be a gap between the will of president and aspirations of people. One of the advantages of the indirect election of the President is to help protect the power of the executive from a populist demagogue (Ibid).

The political system of Afghanistan has seen a radical change over the past few decades. In recent years the political scenario of Afghanistan has been predominated by efforts of invasion, directly or indirectly, by the United States and its NATO allies

and these countries established a stabilized government in Afghanistan (Kabul Perspective 2012). But the invasion of Afghanistan is not new; this history is very old.

Afghanistan faced the Aryan invasion around 2000 BC and it paved the way for other ethnic and linguistic communities followed by Persians, Greeks, and Mauryas of India to establish their rule in Afghanistan. The Persians got historic defeat at the hands of Alexander the Great and it led to the establishment of their rule for 300-400 years. Invasions by the Scythians, White Huns, and Göktürks also transformed the social structure of the country. The Arabs conquered Afghanistan in 642 C.E. and they established Islamic rule. It left an unprecedented mark on its history. Many dynasties were established in Islamic ruling such as Hotaki, Durrani, which have continued to exert terrible political pressure over the country (Demographics of Afghanistan 2017).

Afghanistan had suffered consecutive invasions since ancient times by the “Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Huns, Turks and Mongols. In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani unified the Pashtun tribes to create Afghanistan. During the 19th century, the British and Russian empires competed for control of this area. In 1919, Afghanistan won independence from British control” (Dewing 2007).

Afghanistan became active in the reign of King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929),

but met resistance to his secularizing reforms. He was overthrown. Following a period of disruption, Mohammad Zahir Shah ascended to the throne in 1933. In 1964, King Zahir Shah moved to democratic temper that included a partly elected legislature. During his time, many radical parties emerged. The most radical party was the Communist Party, namely People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which had close relations with the USSR. In 1973, King Zahir Shah was overthrown in a military coup led by former Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Daoud. Sadar Mohammad Daoud made many attempts for economic and social reforms but he was unsuccessful. In 1978, he was deposed by the PDPA and then murdered. PDPA came in power and it tried to initiate reforms on Marxist principles. But these too ran into opposition and an insurgency emerged from among the people. It prompted the USSR to intervene in 1979 and Babrak Karmal, a chief PDPA functionary was appointed as Prime Minister (Dewing 2007).

Babrak Karmal government was openly supported by USSR. Around 120,000 Soviet troops landed on Afghanistan in support of Babrak Karmal, but could not establish

effective control in the country, except in Kabul. A group of Afghan freedom fighters known as Mujahedeens emerged in opposition of communist regime. Mujahedeens, the freedom fighters, were supported by the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. In 1986, Karmal was replaced by Muhammad Najibullah. The USSR lost around 14,500 troops in Afghanistan and withdrew its troops in 1989. Najibullah's regime collapsed in 1992, and the Mujahedeen took over the government. The victory of the Mujahedeen led to infighting as they split on ethnic and religious lines (Dewing 2007: 1). These ethnic and religious groups began to fight each other, and it led to an unstopped civil war in Afghanistan. In this civil war, Pashtun Taliban emerged as a chief force. These Mujahedeens were educated at Islamic schools (madrassas) in Pakistan. Taliban captured the southern city of Kandahar in 1994 and seized Kabul in 1996. The Taliban disbanded the militias and brought stability to the country (Dewing 2007).

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has 34 provinces. The President is both the head of the state and government. He is supreme power in the political system of Afghanistan. "The National Assembly of Afghanistan consists of two houses: the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) and the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders). The 102 member Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders) is made up of one representative from each of the 34 provincial councils; one representative from each of the 34 local district councils; and 34 members appointed by the President. Two seats each are reserved for representatives of a community namely Kuchi nomads and for disabled. At least 17 seats are reserved for women. The legislative members are chosen by the provincial councils. The district councils serve four-year terms, while the members appointed by the president serve five-year terms" (Ibid). The Wolesi Jirga is the most powerful house. It has 249 members who are elected directly by the people through SNTV method. The members are elected on province level. There are 34 multi-member constituencies with between 2 and 33 members each. Ten seats are reserved for Kuchis, including at least three women, and 65 additional seats are reserved for women, giving a total of at least 68 women. The term of the Wolesi Jirga is five years (Ibid).

The single non-transferable vote (SNTV) method issued to elect representatives. Candidates who receive the most votes in each province win seats. If the number of

women elected is below a certain threshold, the difference is however made up with the female candidates who receive the maximum votes in each province. The president and two vice presidents are directly elected for a five-year term; if no candidate receives 50% or more of the votes in the first round of voting, a second round is held between the two candidates with the maximum votes. The president may be elected for two terms only.

2.6.2 Constitution of Afghanistan, 1964

The 1964 Constitution of Afghanistan was the third constitution of the country which came into existence on October 1, 1964. Afghanistan had become an independent state in 1919 from British rule. The constitution was decreed in 1923 by King Amanullah Khan and was elementary in character. It contained no check to control the absolute power of the king, although it did have provision for partly elected and partly appointed consultative councils (Constitution of Afghanistan 1964). This constitution was the continuation of the one enacted on October 31, 1931 at the time of Nadir Shah Regime. Two paragraphs had been added to this one (i.e. 1931) through amendments which brought religious tone to it. In this, Iranian Constitution of 1906 was a major influence. This change laid emphasis on the sacred faith of Islam and on the priority of the Islamic law (*Shariat*).

The new constitution is largely the result of the initiative and direction of the new ruler Muhammad Zahir Shah, the son of Nadir Shah. After the assassination of his father Nadir Shah in 1933 Zahir Shah became king. He was the effectual monarch and remained king of country around four decades. In March 1963, the government made a Constitution Committee for preparing the draft for new document. In March 1964, Constitution Committee prepared the draft (Johnson 2017: 1). In 1964, a Great Council (Loya Jirga) composed of 442 members, was convened to consider the draft document. This body included 176 members of the lower house of Parliament who had been elected from single constituencies to serve in the Loya Jirgah. The remainder of the membership included the upper house of Parliament, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, the Constitution Committee, the Advisory Commission on the Constitution, and thirty-one individuals. This draft gave a little bit of representation to women – four women were also appointed.

The *Jirga* (or council) has been the basic institution of the Pushtun (Pakhtun) tribes; it provides the machinery where people discuss about the policies and actions for the interest of the tribes. As an innovation, in the middle of the eighteenth century Ahmad Shah was chosen as ruler of Afghanistan by erstwhile Loya Jirga. This Loya Jirga included notables and tribal leaders from the entire country. Within the present century, Amanullah Khan, Nadir Shah, and Muhammad Zahir Shah have each summoned Loya Jirgas. Unlike the early Loya Jirgas which voted yes or no to a proposal and then adopted the majority vote as the unanimous decision, this Loya Jirga was not only empowered to accept or reject the entire draft constitution, but it was free to discuss and amend each article of the constitution.

The Loya Jirgah completed its work on September 20, 1964 and the final draft of the constitution became effective when it was signed by the ruler on October 1, 1964. The constitution makers set out to produce a document that would be more suitable in the changing times. In preparing the constitution, they had a number of specific objectives in view. These objectives included “taking members of the royal family, other than the ruler himself, out of the affairs of government; establishing an effective, independent judiciary, giving priority over the Shariat to modern legal codes; extending and clarifying the basic rights of the citizens; encouraging active local self-government; and treating certain points so as to convince the non-Pushtun elements of the population” (Afghanistan Legal Education Project 2014).

Prior to the opening session of the Loya Jirgah, its Pushtun majority had a feeling that the non-Pashtun minority could go to conservative position. It was feared that dominant Pashuns and other non-Pashuns might be in conflict. So in the constitution, some provisions were put to satisfy both communities. So, there was genuine eagerness for the draft and the debate on the many articles concentrated on clarification of language and intent. In his speech to the opening session of the Loya Jirgah, King Zahir Shah declared that the time had come to separate the royal family from the affairs of state. It is important fact that from 1931 to 1963 the Prime Minister had always been a member of the royal family and other members of the family had held Cabinet posts. Loya Jirgah accepted this proposal that royal family would be separate from political power. Not only did the Loya Jirgah accept this proposal, but it

went beyond the draft. It prohibited members of the royal family to engage in party politics, and, in another article, prohibited them from withdrawing from royal status.

Pashtun worked as an official language as before. With this, it was provided that Dari (Afghan Persian) would be on a par with Pashtun as an official language. This article was balanced off against another that provides for the development and strengthening of the national language, Pushtun. All the articles establishing an independent judiciary were accepted without amendment and without opposition from the allegedly religiously-conservative Pashtuns. Some articles are amended so that the basic rights and duties could be provided to the people. The right to form political parties is recognized. The right of individuals are provided that they are free from the pressure of government. It was made a provision that state would provide the education. The article states that the people of Afghanistan have equal rights before the law and it provides authority for universal suffrage. The draft gave equal status to women by law. The sections (titles) dealing with the Shura (Parliament), the Loya Jirgah, the Government, the Administration, and Amendment to the Constitution are far more detailed and precise than were the comparable articles in the document of 1931. While these sections require no description, it is noteworthy that the unique institution of the Loya Jirgah has been maintained, its composition newly defined, and its duties and powers broadened. It may play a vital role in a number of circumstances, such as unusual situations relative to the royal succession, the amendment of the constitution, and the extension of a state of emergency.

The section entitled state of emergency was entirely new, since there was no provision of this nature in the 1931 constitution. The closing section, transitional provisions, is related with the interim period between October 1, 1964 and October 14, 1965, when a new Parliament was inaugurated. Ruling by decree during this period, the government prepared ordinances for royal assent which gave precise legal status to numerous articles of the constitution. In addition, it must prepare draft bills on political parties for consideration by the new Parliament. This new constitution was significantly liberal, progressive, and humanistic and enlightened than its predecessor. The ruler of Afghanistan sponsored and took initiative for this constitution of 1964, where he retained the rights of king defined in the 1931 constitution.

The political situation of Afghanistan could not be stable and it had been changing continuously. New constitution was adopted in 1976, 1987 and 1990. But these constitutions could not be stable and failed due to either people' unrest or regime change. After 1990, in the constitutional history of Afghanistan, Bonn Agreement has a landmark importance. In September 2001, USA invaded Afghanistan and the new Northern Alliance threw out Mulla Umar Government. After September, this was a serious problem in Afghanistan who would rule and how would be ruled. The World powers including USA wanted that a stable and democratic government should be in Afghanistan.

Bonn Agreement paved the way for 2004 Constitution. Afghanistan officially adopted this document at Loya Jirga on January 4, 2004. It emerged out of the Afghan Constitution Commission initiated by the Bonn Agreement. The 2004 constitution provides for an executive division represented by the President for a five years term. "The president will be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and should be an Afghan national born to Afghan parents and he must not have any criminal background. The legislative powers are vested in the Parliament (Sura)" (Demographics of Afghanistan 2017).). The legislative assembly consists of two houses – "House of Representatives (Wolesi Jirga) and the House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga). The highest judicial court in Afghanistan is the Stera Mahkama and its judges are appointed for a period of 10 year. There are also some other courts – high courts, lower courts and special court." The first interim government headed by President Hamid Karzai came into force on June 2002. He remained the President for two terms (10 years) of five year search (Ibid).

2.6.3 History of Development of Political Parties in Afghanistan

The history of political parties is old in the form of democracy. For democracy, political parties are essential. Democracy and political parties are the two sides of the same coin. In the United States, constitution makers considered political parties as essential tools for democracy. But it should be noted that Thomas Jefferson and Madison have also written that political parties are not good for democracy. In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were two political groups - Tory and Whig. In the Great Britain - the Tory Group was a conservative organization and the Whig Group was a generous organization. These groups later changed into political parties - the

Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. In fact, when two groups believe that their interests are different and sometimes the opposite, they become compulsory to form a group. When these groups take formal form with constitutional frameworks, they are formed in the form of political parties.

But structure of political parties in Afghanistan is different from the type that exists in Western world. For successful performance of political parties, the society should be based on modern values as humanism, secularism, equality, liberty, fraternity. These modern values, in western sense, could not develop in Afghan society. So, political parties, in strong sense, could not develop in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, in 20th century Afghanistan witnessed emergence, split and dissolution of political parties. The history of political parties in Afghanistan, which dates back to the 20th century, has been of splits and changing alliances in Afghanistan. King Zahir Shah introduced modernisation policies in the 1940s and these policies led to the formation of several political groupings including communist parties. In 1970s, many mujahedeen organizations were formed with the shared goal of resisting Soviet rule. Though these organisations were referred to as political parties, they were not political parties in the sense of Western concept. These organizations functioned mainly as military factions and were largely divided along ethnic, tribal and religious lines. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, these factions fought one another and formed coalitions in search of getting power and to defeat opponents (National Democratic Institute 2011).

By late 2001, the Taliban government fell and the post-war reconstruction work had been initiated at the Bonn Agreement. The groups that were working as military factions, in post-Taliban era, had been associated with management and communication structures. In 2003, a Political Parties Law was accepted, and several groups filed for registration as formal political parties including former military groups. They were claiming that they were fighting for people who belonged to their ethnicity. Some of them were formed secretly under the Taliban regime or had previously existed as civil movements. Most of the new parties that formed in the post-Taliban period demanded for support across ethnic groups. In 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections, 86 political parties were formally

registered. Afghanistan's electoral system (SNTV) favours independent candidates and large organized political parties (Ibid).

At present, in Afghanistan political parties do not have much formal or systematic political role. It has weak institutions and very loose membership. In identifying shortcomings of the political parties, and situating these within the Afghan context would help them possible to overcome the shortcomings. Interestingly, most political parties in Afghanistan are illegal and influenced by ideological, linguistic, and ethnic considerations to operate underground or from abroad (or both). Their aim was to teach their ideology and impress the people so that they could bring them in their organisations. "The 1964 constitution provided for the formation of political parties. However, since the framers of the constitution decided that political parties should be permitted only after the first elections, and since the Parliament never adopted a law governing the parties' operation, all candidates for the parliamentary elections of August and September 1965 stood as independents" (National Democratic Institute 2011). Throughout the period of 1964-1973, however, the de facto existence of parties was widely recognized. Subsequently, the framers reversed their plan to allow political parties. Under the 1977 constitution, only the National Revolutionary Party (NRP), the ruler's chosen instrument, was allowed.

The 1960s was crucial for development of many groups particularly both the Islamists and Leftists. During this period, both these groups flourished in academic institutions across the country. In this period, the groups were running independently. But in 1970s it could not be continued. Mohammad Zahir Shah denied signing the law and subsequently, the political parties could not retain as a recognised organisations. In this period, many religious and political groups emerged from student movements in the academic institutions in Pakistan and Iran. These religious and political groups formed by several armed groups and people mobilised against the Soviet troops in 1979. Certainly, these groups were backed by Western powers and Pakistan (Larson 2015). No parties remerged until 2001 and the new democratic constitution.

Therefore, in this period, political parties had little political space. When in 2001, Taliban regime collapsed in the country, a space was given to the political parties for the functioning of electoral system and democracy. In 2003, they were officially recognized by the constitutional framework and they got right to organize and speak

publicly. This was the time when political parties came with new initiatives. However, members were only loosely connected to Political Parties. In election, the candidates could not contest on behalf of their parties. Therefore, candidates “had little motivation to attach with parties, just as parties had little motivation to back candidates’ campaigns with resources” (Larson 2015). It seems the choice of the SNTV electoral system by Afghan government (with the backing of international players) was an intentional one planned to exclude those political parties which had acquired a notoriety in the war years and partly to prevent opposition to the new government.

Though many attempts were made to transform the electoral system, this could not happen. Actually governments after September 2001, especially in the first decade of 21st century, were not interested for change in electoral system. In 2013, electoral reform proposals were put forward in the Parliament. The ‘Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions’ and ‘Civil Society Organizations’ had a significant role to prepare this proposal. They used to think that electoral reform is very necessary for Afghan democracy. These proposals had many provisions for a mixed electoral system. These proposals were eventually rejected by Parliament. Earlier in 2009, a new Parties Law was introduced. This Law had required all parties to re-register and was intended at decreasing their numbers. This Law “did reduce the number of officially registered parties”(Larson 2015).

The number of political parties got reduced from one hundred to sixty-three. “Rather than helping party its political activity, the law constrained it.” The government stipulated that parties register not with an independent body but instead with the Ministry of Justice. By this time, a new law was introduced in the parliament to ensure the registration in accordance with the new requirements. It can be said that official approval is perceived as a critical aspect of parties’ existence as legitimate actors (Ibid).

In the Presidential election of 2014, the political parties appear to have recognized “the value of a previously available resource, the ability of women to encourage other women to vote”. In some cases, political parties recognised the women’s skills. Consequently, some women became senior figures in the political system. Even in parties commonly associated with conservative social values, such as Hezb-e Islami

(of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar founded in 1975), the respondents mentioned the need for women observers in elections. This organisation contributed a lot for women's education. Despite patriarchal values rooted in the society, they succeeded to bring a significant number of women observers in the elections. But these steps do not reflect any substantive changes to promote women members within parties and could not sufficiently succeed for achieving political equality for women. They are instead mainly opportunistic methods to achieve credit for the undertakings of women councillors (Larson 2015).

In democracy, the political parties are the life of electoral system. Without political parties, democracy could not be run. Although it is true that some political parties have specific negative effects; but on the basis of negative effects, the importance of political parties could not be devalued. Afghanistan is country where social values are based on religion, not on science. It is true not only in Afghanistan but also in whole third world countries where political parties are not mature, but are in a developing position. In Afghanistan, all political parties are born in 20th century; even in this period political parties had been born and died. So the development of political parties is a new experience of Afghan politics (Ibid).

Because of several historical experiences many Afghans have had a negative attitude toward political parties. As a result, the rules are not generous for the establishment of a political party. These are very strict and cannot be based on ethnicity, views, area, Islamic school of language, and military objectives or paramilitary wings. In the parliamentary elections of 2005, however, the political candidates of the political party were banned from using the symbols of the party on the ballot list. Nevertheless, the importance of political parties cannot be seen in a democratic system. Political parties are institutions within the democratic system. The main work of a political party revolves around preparing and showing the interests of the people in the parliament.

The election law of 2009 is a restraining one. According to the election law, passed in 2009, every political party must have representation from at least 22 provinces among its founders and have genuine financial resources for its functioning. As such, none of the existing political parties can fulfil this legal demand. Nor can a party be established on linguistic, tribal, religious, regional, or ethnic grounds. But for the

existing political parties, language and ethnicity remain two important issues, and on the whole, they have failed to come up with strong social, political, and economic agendas for the nation (Archiwal 2015).

It is essential that that new political parties in Afghanistan have to go up from its past distressed legacy. Political Parties represent the aspirations of the people. Parties succeed if they understand what the people want and perish if they do not understand. An evaluation of Afghanistan's political parties shows that both main and small parties are in early stages of political development and often failed to be institutionalized. In other words, the political parties have mainly failed to go through fundamental internal reforms to encourage the political elite adapt to a new political environment or to a democratic life.

The main parties, despite of their adaptableness, have completely failed to develop functionally. Further, their organizational complexity and coherence are negatively affected by the dominance of individually directed politics and by the dependence of party on traditional system of values. The small parties are found inadaptible and vulnerable to influences from within and without the society. Further, the small parties have not been very successful in expanding their organizational influences out of the capital, Kabul. Consequently, both big and small parties are very badly institutionalized. The institutionalization is very necessary for smooth functioning of political organisations and political parties. Badly institutionalized political parties of Afghanistan can be considered as an illustrative variable of the country's poor political development. Since the institutionalization of other political structures such as the legislature, executive, etc. requires a highly institutionalized party system, the domination of ethnic politics in both the parliament and the government can be considered as the outcome of the failed party politics in Afghanistan (Ibrahimi 2013).

Electoral systems settle on how votes cast in an election are translated into seats in the legislature, and thus to a large extent determine who wins and who loses in the political arena. Changes in electoral systems and their consequences always deserve close examination. A striking aspect of institutional reform in the recent two decades is the increasing prevalence of the mixed member electoral systems (Huang 2011: 1-2). Despite their considerable differences in forms of government and political culture, corresponding patterns are evident across the Asian democracies, with Japan,

Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines adopting similar mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system and also heavily weighted in favour of the majoritarian element of the system while against the PR list (Reilly 2007).

2.7 Electoral Reforms in Afghanistan

The Bonn Agreement set out the framework for rebuilding the political institutions of Afghanistan, along with a timeframe for accomplishing these goals. The Constitution laid the foundation for a Head of State, an elected President and a National Assembly and two Houses, the lower House of People (Wolesi Jirga) and the House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga). However, before the adoption of the constitution, Hamid Karzai was nominated as chairman of the transitional government on June 13, 2002 by Loya Jirga. "The constitution was formally ratified by President Hamid Karzai at a ceremony in Kabul on January 26, 2004" (Larson 2012: 3). He was subsequently elected President in the Presidential election of 2004 for a five-year term. Talking about the constitution of Afghanistan the need for amendment to the constitution has been expressed by many intellectuals. The situation arising out of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) decision to declare Hamid Karzai as the President after his challenger Dr Abdullah Abdullah refused to participate in the run-off elections to decide the winner has created sufficient scope for introspection amongst members of the public and the civil society on the need to review the Constitution.

The Constitution of Afghanistan authorizes IEC to "administer and monitor all elections including public opinion polls". Article (156) of the Constitution states that IEC will be established for the administration and supervision of all kinds of elections, as well as the general opinion of the people as per the provisions of the law.

Although, Article (61) states that a run-off election can be held only between those two candidates, who have received the highest number of votes in the first round but have failed to get 50% votes. Through the President, elected, general, secret and direct ballot, voters will be elected to get more than 50% votes. Now talking about electoral system in Afghanistan, the system that was adopted in the first Presidential Election held in 2004 was based on Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system. SNTV was chosen as the electoral system for Afghanistan in 2004 due to two main reasons. First, "SNTV is a very simple method of electoral system and was best suited for

Afghanistan due to lack of exposure to elections for a long time coupled with high levels of illiteracy.” Second, as the people of Afghanistan generally have a sense of distrust for political parties SNTV is found better as it focuses more on candidates (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit 2012: 10). SNTV was need of the hour in 2004 as elections were important to establish a peaceful and democratic government in the country after three decades of conflict and widespread violence. So, it was adopted to provide a stop gap arrangement. But SNTV has acted as a hindrance in the development of political parties as it does not promote development and growth. The existing governments’ apathy towards the political parties and playing them against one another led to non-development of viable political parties which are essential in a Parliamentary system (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit 2012).

The flaws and limitation in SNTV as an electoral system could be analysed through following arguments. First, “SNTV presents a problem to parties in the nomination and fielding of candidates in the elections. If a political party fields too many candidates its votes may be fragmented and not a single candidate is elected.” Second, “in this system candidates of one party do not only compete against the candidates of rival parties but also against the candidates of his own party. As a result each candidate is concerned in winning his own election and is not much concerned for the other candidates of his party.” Third, “the system does not allow for an even playing field for all the candidates as candidates with larger financial resources have a better chance of winning the elections. In comparison, candidates with limited resources have lesser chances of winning as polls in 2005 elections in Afghanistan reveal.” Fourth, “SNTV promotes personality cult in politics as it does not necessarily elect candidates who are best qualified to be elected. As a result qualification for getting elected and the primacy of Political parties fade in the background” (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit 2012).

Some reform measures countering the flaws can be summarized. First, “any reform should be built on the current system and avoid radical change. Second, the complexity of the existing system can be reduced by having fewer MPs elected within each provincial constituency. Third, significant space needs to be created to encourage the development of political parties and the grouping alliances that are emerging within the current *Wolesi Jirga*. Political blocs will become more

formalized and the system should allow voters to consider the voting issues during elections. Fourth, at the same time, any new system also needs to protect the space for the election of popular and legitimate independent candidates. Fifth and final, it is crucial to avoid complexity within the system and to educate the voters not merely how to vote, but also how their vote will affect the government”(Ibid).

Now, it should be focused on the future prospects of the Afghan state as it is now in a chaotic phase. In any transition phase, electoral system should be reviewed and at this juncture, state needs radical electoral reforms. The Parliament should make the necessary amendments on the draft of Electoral Law, which has to be submitted by the Independent Election Commission (Kabul Perspective 2012). It should be as soon as possible and on top of working priority. Fundamental amendments should be introduced into the Electoral Law to clarify parameters of Presidential authority regarding the opening of election campaign, monitoring of polls and certification of results. It is irony that a sitting President legitimise the results of Presidential elections in Afghanistan (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit 2012). This is sheer mockery of Afghan democracy. The Electoral Law also needs further clarification on structure and administrative procedure of the Independent Election Commission.

In 2009, the Parliament adopted a law calling for approval of IEC commissioners from Parliament. It was rejected by President Karzai. The chairman of IEC and members should be nominated by parliamentary approval. If President nominates them, then this nomination should be based on consultations with legislative, political parties and civil society. Parliament should open debate on other radical electoral reforms such as party laws and an overall review of Single Non-transferable Vote (SNTV) system. The Proportionate Representation System should be adopted (Kabul Perspective 2012).

For these changes, constitutional reform is also required.

Schedule of Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections is to be amended in coordination with the challenges and limitations experienced in previous elections and with incorporation of new demographics. The last two elections particularly undermined credibility of the entire process. However, the last six elections held for Presidency, Parliament and Provincial Councils over the past

decade show that the whole political structure including the range of structural flaws, logistical limitations and demographic changes need to be updated and improved. It will take years to achieve all requirements of an improved electoral process, beginning with an electoral database. The international community bogged with other issues and priorities in Afghanistan have ignored institutionalization and strengthening of the foundations of a democratic system. Lack of an accurate census database has slowed down the entire process. Work needs to be started on development of an advanced electoral database with voter registration through biometric ID. All of it can be possible when a census is conducted and biometric IDs issued throughout the country (Kabul Perspective 2012).

The ongoing conflict and low scale war in Afghanistan created apprehensions and tensions in the minds of the general public in Afghanistan and the international community on whether the balloting would be free, fair and democratic to pave the way for a strong government to ensure law and order and lasting peace.

The inability to produce a credible voters' registry laid the foundation for frauds in all previous elections. Soon after the 2004 Presidential Election, there has been a concerted effort by the election management body and the international community to register voters, but the task has been extremely difficult owing to recurring conflicts and limited access to remote and far flung areas. For achievement of all these aspirations, security situation in the country is a great concern. It has many reasons. First, "the existing ISAF along with Afghan security forces does not seem sufficient to provide logistical security during the elections." Second, "presence of organizations from the first world countries and their interference at various stages of electoral process may vitiate the elections and indirectly influence the electoral outcomes." Third, "the resurgence of armed groups in different parts of the country may not only deter the voters to cast their votes but also succeed in getting their candidates elected." Fourth, "the logistics involved in holding an election in Afghanistan is also very challenging as around 15 million ballot papers need to be printed and distributed all over the country along with other election material." Fifth, "the situation will become more difficult in logistical terms for the IEC if a 'run-off election' is to be held as the law proposes only a 15days' time limit for holding it after the result of first elections are declared with no one getting more than 50% votes." Sixth, IEC has a tough road ahead as more than 1.5 Lakh election staff "needs to be hired and trained

by the commission and posted in around 28,000 polling stations spread across the length and breadth of the country.” Seventh, Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) along with its regional offices is not fully functional to receive complaints and challenges and settle disputes at various stages of election (Reynolds and Carey 2012).

2.8 Summary

The choice of an electoral system has profound effect on the political future of the country, and electoral systems, once chosen, often remain fairly constant. Sometimes, the choice becomes accidental, the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, a quirk of history, or influential neighbours.

This chapter has presented three different approaches to the problem of electoral system choice – logical, historical and empirical. First, it presents a ‘strategic’ model of how electoral systems are chosen. Second, it displays a historical panorama of the invention and adoption of diverse electoral rules and formulas organized around four basic principles: unanimity, lottery, majority and proportionality. Thirdly and finally, it points out the choices of electoral systems based on empirical studies of different occasions in various countries since the nineteenth century.

When there are only a few parties, they can be satisfied with majority electoral systems, but when the number new parties increases, the incumbent parties may begin to fear the risk of becoming absolute losers and try to shift to more inclusive electoral formulas. Electoral system changes now tend to move overwhelmingly in favour of inclusive, less risky formulas – from indirect to direct elections, from unanimity to majority rule, and from the majority to mixed system and to proportional representation with large assemblies, districts and quota rules.

Model choices are also discussed. Some standard assumptions are: if the existing winners cannot impose their preferred rules because of increasing demands and pressures from opposition groups, they are pessimistic about their electoral prospects. They will try to assure some partially winning positions for themselves, that is, more inclusive, electoral rules involving multiple ballots or a system approaching proportional representation.

The chapter then discussed the chance from single-winner to multiple-winner rules. Increasing numbers and proportions of electoral system choices are found now in favour of those formulas and procedures that produce multiple winners. Relative reduction of existing electoral systems can produce a single absolute winner. Obviously, some specific decisions will be controlled by the existing available electoral formulas.

The evolution of electoral system, with different dimensions of electoral systems, is also discussed. This included broad categories of single-member constituency systems, mixed systems, closed-list systems, preferential list systems, proportional representation with single transferable vote (PR-STV) with the specific types in each of them and the countries practising these systems. Proportional and Semi-proportional Systems, the structure of Afghanistan's electoral system, and the political parties in Afghanistan have also been discussed. Afghanistan's electoral system – the Single Non Transferable Vote (SNTV) – favours independent candidates and large organized political parties. Besides the origins of the current electoral system in Afghanistan, the elections of 2014 were discussed. Now, the Power Sharing Government and Special Constitutional Assembly (Loya Jirga) to amend the Constitution is expected to solve the problems with Afghanistan's Electoral System.

The Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) is supposed to develop plans for reforming the election law, the structure of both the IEC and the Independent *Election* Complaints Commission (IECC) and the overall electoral systems of Afghanistan consistent with the possible amendment to the Constitution. Some reform measures countering the flaws are also summarized such as avoiding radical change, having fewer MPs elected within each provincial constituency, leading to fewer candidates, giving significant space to encourage and facilitate the development of political parties and the groupings and alliances that are emerging within the current *Wolesi Jirga*. At the same time, any new system also needs to protect the space for the election of popular and legitimate independent candidates. Finally, it is crucial to avoid complexity within the system and to educate the electorate on not merely how to vote but how their vote will affect the new government.

CHAPTER 3

EVOLUTION OF ELECTORAL POLITICS IN AFGHANISTAN

Evolution of Electoral Politics in Afghanistan

3.1 Background

Afghan democracy has long history from its conception. Until the start of the 20th century, Afghanistan was non-democratic as the king was supreme in all matters. It is only in 20th century that the country's political evolution towards democracy can be said to have begun. This evolution has been through a very gradual adoption of democracy because in all the preceding centuries, Afghanistan had not been a democracy nor was the Afghan society based on democratic values in the modern sense. A society with no previous experience of democracy was naturally going to face a challenge in establishing a viable and sustainable democracy. Therefore, the task of establishing democracy was time-taking and was bound to go through periods of struggle and disappointments. In case like this, there is often a long political struggle in which democracy has to fight a pitched battle against the undemocratic interests and elements inside the society and state. Afghan democracy commenced from 1920s as a seed, but now it is relatively in a more mature position. In this political journey, Afghan democracy met in its path both the elements: those who cooperated with democracy and who were against it. The present chapter deals with the long history of evolution of democracy, stating how political democracy evolved in Afghanistan.

The Afghan constitution was for the first time adopted in 1922 and implemented in 1923. The Loya Jirga convened the meeting, which discussed many constitutional provisions for a government including all branches of governance. It clearly shows that democratic values and norms, although in limited form, commenced from the 1922 constitution (Kakar 1979). The Third Afghan constitution (1964) was advanced in terms of liberal rights as it guaranteed rights of free expression, of peaceful assembly and of making associations. Within the purview of these rights based framework, the executive branch could neither carry out detention procedure nor enter private homes without warrants granted by the courts.

One can say that with the 1964 Constitution democracy was born in Afghanistan. This constitution was intended to move Afghanistan to such a realm so that citizens could participate more in the democratic process and government could be people representative, rights centred and accountable. Constitutions five relevant principles including democratic provisions and principles were the role of the Islam, executive power, judiciary, and the provincial and local government. The fourth Afghan Constitution (1973) was more clearly based on the democratically principled political structure.

There was provision in “the Fifth Constitution of 1987, for a bicameral legislature in which members of the national assembly were to be elected by popular voting. Both the Parliament and the government were dominated by men, and women with no affiliation to the official party” (Kakar 1979). The word ‘democratic’ was clearly left out from it, which came later to be popularly known merely as the Republic of Afghanistan. The current constitution is a liberal Islamic constitution based on some inevitable democratic principles implemented on 4th January 2004. It is the result of anti-Soviet, inter tribal, factional, political and inter-ethnic civil wars, wars of conquest and resistance by and against radical Islamists. This constitution provides a framework for the long task of consolidating basic state structures. The constitution aimed to include and integrate all ethnically varied and diverse elements of the society (Ibid).

Since 2001, the year country embarked on new journey towards bigger democratic transition, there has been substantial progress in number of areas but the ethnic question continues to remain central even in present times and its impact on and role in electoral politics of the country are far from getting diminished. There is a general perception that ethnic undercurrents play a major role in election in Afghanistan.

In this chapter, detailed information on the historical development of electoral politics and political institution building in Afghanistan is provided. It also evaluates the electoral politics and its electoral model. The main points are the role of Independent Election Commission to conduct ‘free and fair’ election, Presidential power in Afghanistan, the recent electoral practices that have been noticed in Afghanistan, and women’s role in politics.

3.2 History of Afghanistan Government

There was never any central government in Afghanistan that could control the entire country, as different kings used to reign in different areas. Situated in “Central Asia, Afghanistan has suffered successive invasions since ancient times by the Greeks (under Alexander the Great), Arabs, Persians, Huns, Turks and Mongols. In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani unified the Pashtun tribes to create Afghanistan. During the 19th century, both the British and Russian empires competed for control of this region. In 1919, Afghanistan won independence from British Empire over its foreign affairs (Dewing 2007). However, Afghanistan was divided on religious, regional, linguistic and ethnic lines, and these divisions deepened further when the communist government collapsed in 1992. In 1996, the Taliban controlled most of the country and imposed a strict Islamic rule on Afghan people. In 2001, Taliban government was overthrown by a coalition of many parties supported by the United States. In spite of this development, Taliban remained a strong force in southern and eastern Afghanistan (Ray 2013).

However, King Amanullah (1919-1929) moved to end the country’s isolation but met with resistance to his secularizing reforms. He was overthrown, following a period of upheaval, Mohammad Zahir Shah ascended to the throne in 1933. In 1964, King Zahir Shah began an experiment in democracy that included a partly elected legislature. During this time, extremist parties emerged, including the communist party, People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which had close ties with the Soviet Union (Ray 2013). In 1973, King Zahir Shah was overthrown in a military coup led by former Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Daoud. Daoud’s attempts at economic and social reforms were unsuccessful, and in 1978, he was deposed by the PDPA and murdered. Once in power, the PDPA tried Marxist-inspired reforms, but these too ran into opposition. An insurgency sprang up, and this prompted the Soviet Union (USSR) to interfere in 1979 and make Babrak Karmal as prime minister” and he worked as puppet of USSR (Dewing 2007).

Though the Karmal rule was supported by enormous number of Soviet troops, it failed to establish effective and popular control outside Kabul. At the same time, several groups in Afghan and many freedom fighters emerged and extremely opposed Soviet colonialism. They were known as Mujahedeen and it was observed that they were

constantly getting supports from the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. All these powers coordinated against the Karmal government. In 1986, Karmal was replaced by Muhammad Najibullah. From 1979 to 1988, the Soviet Union lost around 14,500 troops in Afghanistan and it withdrew its troops in 1989, after Gorbachev came to power in USSR (Ray 2013). Najibullah regime collapsed in 1992, and the Mujahedeen took over the government. The victory of the Mujahedeen led only to a new round of fighting because they split along religious, ethnic and tribal lines. This started a civil war in the country. In this civil war, Taliban emerged as a strong force that was dominated by Pashtun tribes. Taliban refers to itself as the Islamic religious students, which area Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan.

Just after the 11 September terrorist attack on America, Taliban and Al Qaeda were linked. As a response to that, the US and the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance (NA) constantly launched a military campaign against the Taliban (Dewing 2007). Within no time, the Taliban rule was quickly overthrown and Northern Alliance took control. It is also important to observe the UN security councils initiative to approve the deployment of International Security Force in Kabul to stabilise the system. At the same time, the radical Islamists forces were on a mission to develop anti US forces across the globe (Ray 2013).

Hamid Karzai won the presidential elections held on 9 October 2004 with a great majority. "He became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan. Elections were held for the Wolesi Jirga in September 2005. Although mostly candidates contested as independent, many candidates were part of Karzai's alliance. It is estimated that Karzai's allies won between 65 and 118 seats. In the opposition was National Understanding Front, which got between 60 and 80 seats. National Understanding Front was led by Mohammad Yunis Qanuni. Many elected figures were powerful, with very strong social base. Meanwhile, fighting of resurgent Taliban continued, and NATO forces moved into the northern and western provinces (Ibid). As the security was collapsing, the NATO wing expanded its influence over the region and was providing all external assistance to the Northern Alliance of Afghanistan to de-root the radical and extremists groups in Afghan.

3.3 Bonn Accord and the New Constitution

The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government institution was signed on December 5, 2001 and this was known as Bonn Agreement. The highlights of Bonn Agreement are a framework for revolution and stability of the Afghan political system. They are as follows:

1. The Afghan system of government is supposed to be centred on the 1964 Constitution.
2. Once the delegates, as per the guidelines, chose an interim government, it would also have the responsibility to organize an emergency Loya Jirga (grand assembly).
3. After the transitional government was established, it would be liable for forming a commission to draft a new constitution and organizing a second Loya Jirga.
4. The transitional government is also more responsible for organising, conducting and managing according to the requirements of the new constitution (Thier 2007).

The constitution was an important instrument in the road map of re-establishing permanent institutions of government referred to in the Bonn Agreement. Afghanistan signed the agreement under the UN backing. The constitution provided a framework for the free and fair elections so that it could choose a fully representative government. Bonn Agreement provided a framework for changing failed state to democratic state (Rubin 2004). Some fundamental issues were discussed for setting the ideological changes in the Agreement. As per some academic analysis, the main deep three issues addressed and identified are: the role of Islam, the separation and balance of powers of the government, local and regional power sharing (Thier2007).

Despite a serious document, the 1964 Constitution could not work successfully for long time. It ultimately failed due to internal and external pressures. The 1964 Constitution attempted to limit the powers of the king and his family. It tried to ease the way towards democracy but leaving them there as a check on the developing system. The 2004 Constitution has little such potential capability so that the system is

enclosed by itself. This change at once maintains the integrity of the system while also placing immense pressure on its weakly grounded legitimacy to overcome political crises. There is still the potential to call a Loya Jirga within the constitution in times of crises, but it is unclear whether such an institutionalized Loya Jirga can have the necessary effect (Ibid).

3.4 Electoral History of Afghanistan

Elections play a central role in any democratic country. This applies also to Afghanistan. “In a democracy, the authority of the government comes from the citizens. The authority derives solely from the consent of the governed people. The main mechanism for translating this authority is through choosing the government by holding free and fair elections. In the stabilization and democratization of emerging democracies, elections have the deciding role to play. Before elections in Afghanistan there were the widespread instability and conflict. Elections in these countries are a tightrope walk between war and peace, stability and instability. The setting up of an independent and well-functioning Election Commission can be regarded as a big success in this context. The existence of an independent and effective Election Commission and an Election Complaints System will serve as strong indicators of credibility of the electoral mechanism. According to Harpviken, major democratization experiments are disguised as development which is appropriate in case of Afghanistan. Many experiments were done for democracy taking its roots in Afghanistan.

3.4.1 Significance of the 1964 Constitution

In its constitutional history the Constitution of Afghanistan that came into being on 1st October 1964 is the third such document in the history of Afghanistan. The first constitution was adopted in 1923 by King Amanullah and it was elementary in character. Nevertheless, in spite of this constitution, the king had retained absolute power. In practice, the constitution had no provision to check the absolute power of the monarch, although it provided for partly elected and partly appointed consultative councils. The major objectives behind framing the 1964 constitution were to establish an effective and independent judiciary giving priority over the Shariat to modern legal codes, extending and clarifying the basic rights of the citizens, and encouraging active

local self-government. The constitution framing committee also included the members of royal family.

The constitution had certain provisions as to convince the non-Pashtun people that they were no longer to be dominated by the Pashtuns (The Afghanistan Constitution 2004). This constitution of 1964 was clearly a democratically representative, liberal, comprehensive and definitive principles. But, the centralised powers and privileges of the king have not been reduced. In Afghan history, Loya Jirga has been an ad hoc body that brings together the nation for critical decisions in times of crisis or political transition. In this constitution, the Loya Jirga was comprised of both houses of the legislature and of the chairman of each provincial assembly (Thier 2007).

The constitution of 1964 provided the provision of independent judiciary. In the construction of judicial powers, the formation of a unified and independent judiciary was one of the most significant characters embedded in the 1964 Constitution. The judiciary was planned to be a fully independent and co-equal branch of government. In the provision of judiciary, Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority in the country. The judiciary has the exclusive power of interpretation of the constitution. The constitution also included safeguards against judicial overreaching, such as public trial provisions and a requirement that the legal rationale for a verdict must be disclosed (Ibid). The constitution had provision that Afghanistan was unitary state.

3.4.2 Ethnic Challenges and Electoral Politics in Afghanistan

Ethnic challenges are a very big internal problem of Afghan society. Afghan society is divided on ethnicity. Since 2001, when Afghanistan adopted electoral politics, ethnic factor has been playing an important role in it. Ethnic division was explicitly visible during the 2004 Presidential elections in Afghanistan. For the unity that could have come from 2001, the election results shattered any hope that the country had overcome its fractures. The winner needed to find a way to unite a country that could not be more divided. The amazing factor of Afghan society is that ninety percent population of one region will vote against the candidate of other ethnicity. However, it reflects the division of Afghan society. The electoral partition fell along ethnic lines (The Washington Post 2013).

Afghanistan is even now an ethnically dominated country with four largest ethnic groups –Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek. These four communities comprise around ninety percent of the population. The remaining ethnicities make up 10% of the population. The role of them is perhaps more crucial in Afghanistan than anywhere else in the world. Whereas most of the developing countries have a rural-urban dichotomy, Afghanistan adds a third element, the nomad, representing up to 30% of the total population while city dwellers represent only 25%. Change in space is occurring rapidly in the country, however, and over the past five years, Afghanistan has seen a 5% increase in urbanization, the fourth highest in the world (Dubow 2009).

Ethnic divisions in Afghanistan are said to be the main factor of Afghan national identity. It is said that history has bred the ethnicities of Afghanistan to distrust one another. It has led to the development of strict spatial identities and caused horror at the intrusion of those identities. The history of the Pashtuns has led to a belief that they are the rightful rulers of the country and deterred them from any power-sharing scheme. As Pashtuns form the largest community, they believed that they have right to rule on Afghanistan. If any other community would rule Afghanistan, Pashtuns would not like this. Not only Pashtuns, but also all ethnic communities feel that they are the supreme community. Every community thinks that its tribe, language, customs, traditions are the supreme. The Tajiks' role as bureaucrats and the importance of their language has given them their own claim to rule as well as a deep-seeded resentment of the conquering and, in their view, incompetent and racist Pashtuns. The Hazaras are facing constant oppression and discrimination at the hands of other dominant communities (Dubow 2009).

In 2004, even after three centuries of ethnic conflict and struggle, the Afghan people voted solely on ethnic lines. Seven provinces have shown evidence that more than 90% of their votes were going to one candidate in one constituency. However, the 2009 election showed more diverse outcome than 2004 Presidential election.

Map 3.1 Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan



Source: Ethnic Groups Map of Afghanistan (www.mapsofworld.com)

During this period, the international community again faced the challenge of dealing with a conflict that is interpreted as an ethnic one. The architects of a future Afghanistan would be well advised to work against the ethnic polarization of the country (Dubow 2009). The architects want and wish that Afghanistan could become a strong country when ethnic divisions would be very less in Afghan society. It is also true that ethnicity is neither the cause of Afghan conflict nor a natural constant of human being. Ethnic groups have been created with cultural substance mainly by Western concept. While ethnicity was not a dominant political factor in pre-war Afghanistan, it emerged as a main source of political and military mobilization especially since 1992 (Schetter 2003). Hence, if ethnic demands would be met, they may strengthen ethnic conflicts. It is well known fact that Balkans use ethnicity as an

instrument for promoting their interests, but this will not contribute towards the resolving of the Afghan conflict. Hence, the suggestion is that the international power brokers in Afghanistan should consider ethnicity merely in an informal way in power-sharing arrangements, and should not stress ethnicity as the fundamental premise of political decision-making processes (Schetter 2010).

3.5 Electoral Process in the New Constitution

The election system is used to select Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga (lower house of parliament). It radically shaped the realms of democratic stability and political legitimacy since the Parliamentary elections of 2005. Afghanistan uses the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) in all 34 provinces (Schetter 2010). All constituencies are multi-member constituencies with provision of a special affirmative action for women. The election system shaped the voting behaviour and the development of political parties. This has directed the type of campaigning conducted by candidates. The system also limits the power of the Wolesi Jirga as a decision-making house situated within the framework of the Afghan state along with the executive power of the Presidency (Reynolds and Carey 2012). After a long political crisis, Afghan politics started using the SNTV method. This happened after a series of very interesting events (Ghadiri 2010).

3.5.1 UNAMA and its Role

“United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is a political mission established by the United Nations Organization (UNO). It was set up at the request of the Government of Afghanistan and aim was to assist it (UNAMA 2013). This was the foundation mission for sustainable peace and development for the people of Afghanistan. This was set up initially on 28 March 2002 by the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1401. Supporting Bonn Agreement of 2001 was its key mandate and it was being reviewed annually. UNAMA's current mandate has prominent aims as follows:

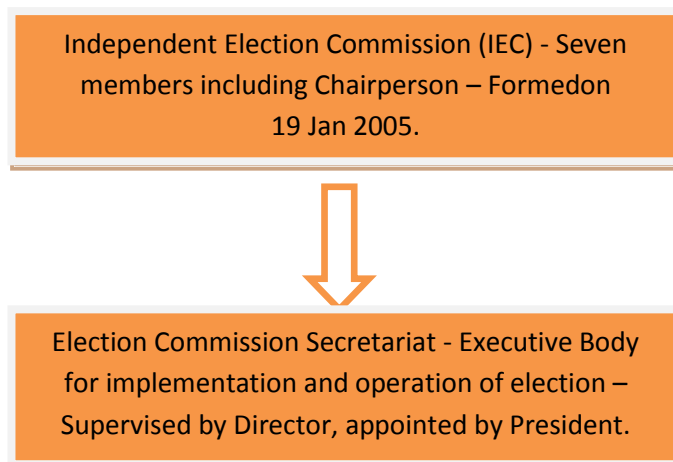
- To support the government in its efforts to improve critical areas, including security, governance and economic development, and regional cooperation,

- To support the full implementation of mutual commitments made on these issues at the London Conference in January 2010,
- Respect of subsequent Kabul Conference in July 2010 agreed in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Drugs Control Strategy (UNAMA 2013).

The UNAMA’s main works are promotion and protection of human rights and principles; and to supervise and organize all UN-led humanitarian relief, reconstruction and development activities in Afghanistan. All these activities were approved by the UNSC Resolution 1662 (UNAMA 2013). The UNAMA, adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 19 March 2013, sets out the scope and range of its activities (Resolution 2096).

3.5.2 IEC and its Significance

Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) has the main responsibility for ensuring and conducting the Afghanistan’s elections free and fair. Its role is very important to understand the democratic process of Afghanistan.” The free and fair election is the core point of democratic feature of any country. IEC has responsibility of the entire process that depends on the commission’s work. “The strategic goals of IEC include the strengthening an atmosphere of trust and building support for the electoral process. Reducing the electoral expenses through capacity building, infrastructural development and better management of resources, IEC proves itself as one of the best institutions in the country. It was conducting elections in accordance with the Law” (Independent Election Commission 2017).



The UNO has appreciated the transparency and accountability dimensions of IEC. Many major international actors involved in Afghanistan have approved the works done by as successful as the 2009 Presidential Elections and 2010 Parliamentary elections. After 2009 elections, the IEC had directed some reforms to “strengthen its effectiveness. They areas follows:

- Increasing the capacity of the IEC
- A plethora of anti-fraud measures to be introduced.
- Regular meetings with donors and stakeholders
- The External Relations Department has to oversees media events
- Observe meetings of the IEC Board of Commissioners (Independent Election Commission 2017).

3.5.3 Voter Registration Process during Elections in Afghanistan

Under 2001 Bonn Agreement, it was decided to conduct Presidential elections to give Afghanistan stability and giving the country an elected head of the state in the form of President replacing interim government. The elections were originally scheduled for June, then delayed until September and then actually conducted on 9th October 2004. Hamid Karzai won the election with 55.4% of the votes and three times more votes than any other candidate did. It is estimated that more than three-quarters of Afghanistan’s nearly 12 million registered voters cast ballots. The election was overseen by the Joint Electoral Management Body, chaired by Zakim Shah and vice-chaired by Ray Kennedy, an American working for the United Nations (Jay 2004).

The voter registration program before the 2004 Presidential elections was implemented as one of the most important steps for free and fair elections in accordance with the Bonn Agreement. The voter registration program for the presidential election was intended to support the development of a comprehensive voter registry in Afghanistan. However, the condition of the country confines the success of the voter registration program to achieve its objective to the fullest. Even then, the registration drive was successful in registering a very large number of people. A national population survey was advisable in getting estimation on the number of eligible voters in Afghanistan. However, the financial and cultural constraints made this process unfeasible before the presidential election, allowing the

voter registration program to be conceded forward as it went on. These issues have contributed to a great deal of uncertainty in the Afghan society on the sustainability and credibility of the electoral process. The lack of confidence in the voter registration process caused a part of the Afghan society to question the reliability of the entire electoral process (Asian Network for Free Elections 2004).

The voter registration for 2005 Wolesi Jirga and the Provincial Council elections were fulfilled in three phases. Phase 1 started before 2004 Presidential elections and continued further covering the major urban areas of Afghanistan. Phase 2 spread the process to the provincial areas and phase three registered people in rural areas where most of the population lives which continued until one month before elections. Around twelve million voters became eligible to vote for the 249 seats in Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of Parliament, and for the 34 provincial councils. The voter turnout was approximately 48 percent, which was well below previous Presidential elections.

The voter registration period for the 2009 Presidential elections was from 6th October 2008 to 2nd February 2009. Around 4.5 million Afghan people were registered to vote during the process. IEC released this report in March 2009. In registration, the number of men was higher than number of women, the difference being about seven lakhs. The women were around “40 percent of all registered voters. Despite the weakening of security, the IEC launched the first of four phases of voter registration in October 2008 registering one million eligible voters in fourteen provinces in north, northeast, and central Afghanistan. A month later, second phase of registration was started in ten provinces, mainly in the north. The third and fourth phases of registration started in the unstable eastern and southern provinces and were expected to end before February 2009 but this went further up to March.

The 2010 Parliamentary elections were blemished with controversy regarding fake Voter ID cards. The rumour was that thousands of fake voters ID cards were on use during election time. These rumours were dismissed by the IEC. Many efforts were done to prevent multiple voting. The quality of ineradicable ink acting as marker to prevent multiple voting also remained a concern as several complaints from polling booths came regarding multiple voting. According to the report of 2009 by Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA)“on voter registration, between 20

percent and 85 percent of observed centres issued multiple cards to single applicants during different points in the registration process”. Women’s registration was generally low throughout the country. In spite of all the efforts, “IEC staff failed to prevent widespread proxy registration by individuals.

3.5.4. Political Parties and their Positions

Article 2 of the Constitution of Afghanistan defines a political party as an organized society consisting of individuals which undertakes activities for attaining its political objectives, locally and/or nationwide, based on the provisions of this law and its own constitution (Adamec 2012). “Article 3 describes that, the political system of the State of Afghanistan is based on the principles of democracy and pluralism of political parties. The constitution also clearly describes safeguards for regulating political parties. Article 6 specifies that Political parties shall not: pursue objectives that are opposed to the principles of the holy religion Islam; use force, or threaten with, or propagate, the use of force; incite to ethnic, racial, religious or regional discrimination; create a real danger to the rights and freedom of individuals or intentionally disrupt public order and security; have military organizations or affiliations with armed forces; receive funds from foreign sources” (Ibid).

After the fall of the Taliban on 2001, the Bonn Process initiated the post-war reconstruction of Afghan political institutions. The groups, which had worked earlier as military factions, had established wide management and organizational structures and these permitted the military factions to control resources and public recognition in the post-Taliban era. “A Political Parties Law was approved in September 2003, and several groups gave application for registration as formal political parties. These included former military groups, which had clearly identified leaders and maintained a strong local authority in the regions they formerly controlled support among ethnic groups. A number of new parties were also registered, most of which were formed in secret under the Taliban regime or had formerly existed as civil movements. Most of them were smaller than the established regional and ethnic parties were, and did not have the resources to compete with the groups that had ties to the anti-Soviet struggle. Most of the new parties formed in the post-Taliban period appealed for support formal ethnic groups. In the lead up to the parliamentary and provincial council elections of

2005, 86 political parties were formally registered” (National Democratic Institute 2011).

Over the last few years, political parties have got improvements in electoral performance. “In the 2009 presidential and provincial council elections, around hundred parties were registered. For the provincial council elections around 30 parties fielded candidates. However, over 80 percent of the 3,197 candidates were registered as independents. A New Party Law was introduced in late 2009 in the parliament that changed the requirements for party registration and obliged parties to re-register. Only five parties were able to complete this process before the ballot in September 2010 parliamentary elections. Several parties mobilized candidates for the 2010 parliamentary polls and currently, 21 parties have representatives in the new *Wolesi Jirga*.” Political parties are developing slowly in Afghanistan; these are fragmented due to ethnic politics, but are starting to shed their former armed legacy” (National Democratic Institute 2011).

3.6 Third Party Assessment of Elections

At the invitation of the IEC, the United Nations Electoral Affairs Division is conducting a mission, namely NAM (Needs Assessment Mission) in Afghanistan. Afghanistan managed the Presidential election in 2014. The IEC requested that in view of the large-scale preparations required for elections it would be valuable if the United Nations Needs Assessment Mission could be undertaken as soon as possible (UNDP Report 2015). The assessment is a United Nations (UN) mechanism to consider the most appropriate forms of UN electoral assistance (Ibid). The IEC was giving preference to make voter registration as fair and free. It could be done by administering electoral reforms on time and successfully within a limit.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) reached Afghanistan in 2002 and conducted many programs to promote the role of Afghan civic groups, political parties and government bodies in the political and electoral process of the country. According to its observations, Afghanistan’s 2009 presidential and provincial council elections and 2010 parliamentary polls were flawed by widespread scam. The election results had many reliable doubts about the independence of election authorities, voter registration process, and barriers to women’s participation. Domestic and international election

observers said these problems should be addressed to make the confidence in the independence of Afghan election machinery (Ibid). A program was organized in Kabul in September 2012 by the FEFA (Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan) in partnership with NDI. The participants of this program developed a concrete and tangible plan to advance key reforms in electoral process of Afghanistan. These included:

- “Protecting the independence of the electoral bodies as – the Independent Electoral Commission, the Electoral Complaints Commission and the Candidate Voting Commission;
- Ensuring fairness and transparency in the conduct of these electoral management bodies, with the goal of enhancing public trust and ensuring justice;
- Encouraging political parties to nominate qualified male and female candidates, and engage in transparent reporting of campaign contributions and expenses.
- Developing a new identification system based on a national census in order to evaluate candidates accurately and identify fake voter ID cards;
- Conducting several elections simultaneously, if possible;
- Introducing a collaborative tracking system that will confirm the progress of the elections as well as the performance of the election management bodies;
- Amending articles of the election law to improve electoral fairness and transparency. The group also appealed to the international community and organizations to support the Afghan efforts to promote credible elections. This was particularly in the areas of financial accountability, political participation of voters across the country, and the political empowerment of women and minority communities” (National Democratic Institute 2017).

3.7 Quest for a Suitable Electoral Mechanism

It is important to decide how elections are conducted in healthy competitive manner among political parties, how the voting behaviour shows political the choices of the people, and how the determination of which political leader will form the government for the next few years. In any democratic country, independent electoral institutions

cover a huge number of responsibilities. Some alternatives entail breaks in the electoral system into its component parts which focus on the mechanics of how votes are translated into seats (Carter and Farrell 2009).

According to Horowitz, six goals of an electoral system are fundamental to understand before applying it in any state. “Some of these are mutually compatible, but some others are mutually incompatible; it is so important to understand about what one is choosing”. These six possible goals are following: “1) proportionality of seats to votes; 2) accountability to constituents; 3) durable governments; 4) victory of the ‘Condorcet winner’; 5) inter-ethnic and interreligious conciliation; and 6) minority office holding” (Horowitz 2003).

Electoral systems can be powerful institutions for shaping of the current politics in societies such as Afghanistan. The present condition of Afghanistan’s electoral mechanisms shows that there is no perfect electoral system as such. The Presidential elections and the subsequent assembly elections faced the fearsome challenge of transforming Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai’s victory and Afghanistan’s improved electoral system appear to represent an important step toward democracy. Yet, elections and electoral mechanisms are a necessary but insufficient means to the endurance of constitutional democratic government and its framework. The legitimacy of Afghanistan’s new democratic institutions will rest on the government’s progress in producing results, such as disarming the private militias of powerful commanders, and reduction the burgeoning poppy cultivation (Riphenburg 2007: 1). Some of these militias represent sizeable ethnic minorities. An effective electoral system is that system only which brings in progressive governments and performs to move forward for achieving goals of democracy.

3.7.1 An Overview of SNTV

The Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) election system is basically employed in multi-member constituencies. Voters have to cast their vote and the candidates who get the maximum number of votes win the seats allocated to their constituency. In Afghanistan, the SNTV method has been used for legislative and provincial council elections. In Afghan administration the SNTV system have 35 multi-member constituencies in the country’s 34 provinces. The constituencies have different

number of seats allocated in the Parliament, in proportion to their population. This system is mechanically quite simple. Each voter gets a single vote to cast for a single candidate and the top vote-getters win up to the number of seats in a given constituency (Reynolds and Carey 2012).

3.7.2 How SNTV was adopted in Afghanistan

The Single Non-Transferable Vote is used in a multi-member constituency and candidate-centred system in which voters have one vote. It is similar to Limited Vote except for the feature that SNTV gives only one vote to a voter. However, unlike Block Vote, not as many as there are seats to be filled. This is a preferential system in single- or multi-member districts. These systems tend to transform votes cast into seats in a way that falls somewhere between the PR systems and the plurality/majority systems (The Electoral Knowledge Network Project 2017).

The origin of SNTV in Afghanistan was accidental, born out of civil war era. In 2004, list-PR system was promoted by the UN for elections to the Afghan Wolesi Jirga as the most appropriate method, but in the adoption of the rules it was reportedly a misstep when they came before the cabinet (Reynolds and Carey 2012). Afghan cabinet minister alleged that proportional electoral system was poor electoral system, and so President Karzai changed the proposed list-PR system to SNTV. The President announced that voters would elect a candidate rather than a party, and that candidates could not show political party affiliation on the ballot (Reynolds and Carey 2012).

The electoral law decreed in 2004 thus announced that voters would elect individual candidates rather than parties, but still in the multi-member provincial constituencies originally intended for use in the list-PR system. There has also been major assumption that while Karzai's dislike for parties may have been genuine, the administration's adoption of SNTV was also a tactical calculation intended at weakening parties' potential as sources of political opposition (Ibid).

3.7.3 Advantages of SNTV

In this process, it is easy to vote and count votes and it has no complexities. This process helps smaller parties win seats in accordance to their votes. This process gives

proper representation to smaller parties. This also facilitates independent candidates as well as party candidates on equal footing to contest polls. Any independent candidate contesting polls have equal footing and edge over another contesting on party affiliation thus eliminating power equation during polls. Party line sentiment does not make the process transparent enough from the point of view of an individual contestant. It encourages minority and small parties as well as fragments of any large party giving opportunity to separate themselves from party lines following their ideology and principles (The Electoral Knowledge Network Project 2017).

3.7.4 Disadvantages of SNTV

In this system, a seat won by a political party in a district is not very similar to its share of obtained votes. This creates imbalance in the functioning of this system. It proves that this system is not very friendly for parties with wide-spread support. In this system, individual prominence may overtake party strength. “The number of candidates a party nominates in a district can affect the number of seats it wins.” Therefore, equal opportunity is not given in this system; it creates fractions within party spectrum and eventually, party fragmentation is created.

Votes spread among too many candidates may mean that none are elected; whereas votes concentrated on a few candidates may reduce the number of seats the party could have won making the outcomes unfavourable for any party, irrespective of its strength and reputation. If votes are spread among many candidates, many votes will not affect the result and a seat can be won with a small number of votes. In a multi-member district with a lot of seats, the link between voters and the elected members is weaker (The Electoral Knowledge Network Project 2017). In this respect, it shows that the mechanism of administration is weak and unstable. This system can cause political pressure in deciding district boundaries and the number of seats for a district. In turn, this will prove that it is against the ethos of democratic norms. Democratic norms always emphasize equal and true reflection of voters while choosing their representatives. There are also sufficient chances of extremist candidates using unjust means to manipulate their chances of winning breaking party position (Ibid).

3.7.5 Experiment with SNTV

Another remarkable feature of this SNTV system is that “it makes possible for members of small parties and independent candidates to win seats. This would be difficult, if not impossible, if the proportional system was in use. The lack of a census makes changes unviable in a system based on a single-mandate district. A proportional representation system could work within a multi-member constituency but requires the presence of political parties, which are largely yet to be established. This system also presents some issues related to size of the ballot paper in some constituencies. The 600 candidates listed in Kabul province are spread over 12 double-sided pages (The Electoral Knowledge Network Project 2017).

3.7.6 SNTV and way Ahead

Afghanistan’s SNTV electoral system was chosen during a moment of transition. At that time, Afghans and some international organizations raised various concerns about the appropriateness of the electoral system. They strongly supported its use in 2005 Parliamentary election and they felt that after elections the system should be improved, reformed and reconsidered. SNTV has performed in Afghanistan against what many sceptics predicted. New draft Electoral Law was submitted by the IEC in June 2012. This can inspire reforming the electoral system. Keeping it in mind, the following core principles may be pointed as to guide reform of the Afghan election system:

- Any reform should build on the current system and avoid radical change.
- The complexity of the existing system can be reduced by having fewer MPs elected within each provincial constituency, leading to fewer candidates, the lower likelihood of a fragmented vote, and more manageable ballot papers.
- Significant space needs to be created to encourage and facilitate the development of political parties and the groupings and alliances that are emerging within the current Wolesi Jirga. Political blocs will, over time, become more formalized and the system should allow voters to take them into consideration during elections.
- At the same time, any new system also needs to protect the space for the election of popular and legitimate independent candidates.

- It is crucial to avoid complexity within the system and to educate the electorate on not merely how to vote but how their vote will affect the government that forms (Reynolds and Carey 2012).

3.8 Impact of Ethnic Politics in Afghanistan

Ethnicity played a most significant role in the political reconstruction of Afghanistan. It is identified as crucial issue of conflict in the Afghan war. Balancing the ethnic issues in all institutions of government level is a core concern for the international communities. The root of ethnic politics and discrimination toward non-Pashtun ethnicities is not just a coincidence with the ‘buffer state’ of Abdur Rahman Khan from 1880 to 1901. Actually, it had started when the country emerged as an independent entity during Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747). Ahmad Shah’s policy was in favour of controlling Turkistan, the Northern region, and Hazarajat where Hazara ethnicity inhabited. Pashtun community, especially the Kuchis, Pashtun nomads emigrated to these lands and created new settlements. Ahmad Shah’s policy became the central policy of later Pashtun governments, particularly in the reign of Iron Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901). Oppression and discrimination of ethnic minorities and non-Pashtuns reached its maximum level during the Iron Amir’s rule. His policy was based on divide-and-rule. “This divide-and-rule policy found its extreme expression as the government employed Pashtun tribes-men who repressed openly non-Pashtun resistance.” Non-Pashtun communities were made victims in the hands of Pashtun community, their land was confiscated, and they were looted and killed (Simonsen 2004).

In 1893, Abdur Rahman mobilized large groups of Durrani Pashtun nomads from the south to occupy large areas of pastureland in central Afghanistan belonging to Hazara community. During and after that period, there were many political parties, but not in modern form. It is a fact that those parties were created in order to fight and remove the Soviet Union’s troops, but in the last two decades, they left their old ideas and chose ethnic ideology. Right now, the signs of ethnic identity are strongly visible within the political agendas of those parties, and they fought for the interest of their ethnic supporters. They had faith and loyalty only to their own ethnicity. Actually, they fought in order to gain more power and for the interest of their own ethnicity

rather than the national interest. Naturally, there were many factors behind the civil war. However, ethnicity was the crucial factor for them and there was no greater reason for the start of civil war other than the ethnic issue. Though it is well known that the Taliban movement is a religious movement, ethnic identity plays a prominent and crucial role within the movement and its policy (Qeyam 2012).

Mostly, the Taliban fighters belonged primarily to Pashtun community. During their rule, from 1996 to 2001, they ruled Afghanistan tyrannically with a crude mixture of theocratic intolerance, ethnocentrism, and brutality. Nevertheless, some political thinkers do not consider Taliban as a religious movement. Nigel Allen points out, Contrary to popular belief; the Taliban was an ethnic movement, not a religious group. It is very hard to disapprove Allen's statement because twenty-six out of twenty-seven members of the Taliban government's leadership were Pashtuns. Many of them had strong belief that Pashtunwali code would determine the non-Pashtun ethnic groups. Pashtunwali is a non-written ethical code and convention all lifestyle, which the Pashtun people follow. It is a system of law and governance that is preserved mostly in the rural tribal areas."During its regime, Taliban believed in the ethnic cleansing and tried for it. They killed the maximum number of Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik, and other non-Pashtun communities. This is a concise description of history of ethnic politics until the post-2001 International Community backed government. Now, the relationship between politics and ethnicity in the post-Taliban government and elections should be examined (Katzman: 2015).

3.9 Role of Ethnic Manipulation in Afghan Elections

Afghan electoral system favours independent candidates rather than political parties. According to the majority of scholars, this system does not fit in a severely divided country like Afghanistan. People vote for individual candidates, not the political parties. Because of the high politicization of the elections, ethnic groups are taken as political parties by both the candidates and voters. The main reason for the ethnicization of the elections is that they produce losers because the country is made up many ethnic groups. As an instrument to move ahead about unity in a plural society of Afghanistan, the SNTV is useless. For strengthening a feeling of unity among people, a party-based proportional representation system would have been more suitable. In addition, they may exclude constantly some candidates from the

power structure, if institutional mechanisms for distributing and dissolving power are not established at the same time (Qeyam 2012).

Afghanistan is a country where civil society is so weak. In most of the third world countries, civil society is weak and ruling power is strong. In Afghanistan also, politics is directed and controlled by politics of identity in the leadership. Ethnic identity of a politician is usually considered more important than his or her skill and political ability. Therefore, Afghanistan requires political reforms especially regarding the electoral system. The majority voting system for Presidential elections does not work successfully in a multinational country like Afghanistan. This system helps a single ethnic group to maintain its domination in the elections. Even though the majority ethnic group may come through elections, a strong, authoritarian and centralized, government is not suitable for the country. The electoral system of the country needs to be changed. Afghanistan should adopt a list-based proportional representation (list-PR) system rather than a single non-transferable voting system (SNTV). It is for sure that a list-based proportional representation system in Afghanistan will contribute to the De-ethnicization of its elections.

3.10 Origins of the Current Electoral System in Afghanistan

The suitability of Afghan electoral mechanism depends on the political system adopted. An electoral system that suits the political system could be adopted. After the internal civil war in 1990s and the USA attack in September 2001, Afghanistan successfully ran many elections. These elections were performed based on SNTV electoral system. In 2004 presidential election, Hamid Karzai won the victory. Here, who won in the election is not an important issue. However, here the important aspect is that president was elected based on democratic system. The 2005 parliament election, 2009 presidential election, and 2010 parliament election took place after 2004 presidential election. All these elections were conducted as per the prevailing Afghan electoral system. That these elections successfully happened is the victory of Afghan democratic system. (Riphenburg 2007).

Presidential election of 2004 was the first election since the 1969 parliamentary elections. Its importance can be understood by the fact that this election took place after 35 years. In Bonn Agreement, there was a provision to draft the constitution. The

Bonn Agreement called for a Loya Jirga to be convened within 18 months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority and for the use of the 1964 constitution as the basis for a new constitution”. The Constitution that came up established a two-round process for election of the President. The Electoral Law was proposed and signed by President Hamid Karzai. The Electoral Law sets up a single non-transferable voting method for elections to the *Wolesi Jirga* (lower house).

Afghanistan was a country basically without a state and where major commanders, or warlords endorse the country but often defy governmental authority when it benefits them to do so. During election process in 2004, many threats were given to presidential candidates and many international election workers were kidnapped. In spite of all these things, Afghans turned out to vote with enthusiasm; and Hamid Karzai won the election with bumper majority. It is not less important thing that in the atmosphere of threats, kidnapping, and murder, Afghan voters stood strongly with democratic system (Ibid).

The electoral process in Afghan society effects some projection for future democratic prospect. G. Bingham Powell, Jr. has evaluated the relation among voter turnout, government stability and violence in many democratic countries. He studies the relation of role of mobilizing voters and containing violence. He studies the issue why in some countries democracy succeeds and why in some countries it has failed. “He points out that the process of voting and their electoral consequences have interrelation and some special impact” (Menocal 2017). In *Political Parties*, Maurice Duverger discusses the advantages of PR system. He studies the relationship between a first-past-the-post system (FPTP) and the development of two party systems in the political structure and gives important conclusions. In analysing the French political system, he coined a new term ‘semi-presidential system’ (Duverger1954).

In the book, *The Political Consequences of Election Laws* Douglas Rae has studied about voting turnout (by PR system) and electoral formula. Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds have similar conclusion. They say that no one electoral system would be best for all societies. It is very hard to determine the best electoral system for a country. The best choice of electoral system depends on many factors and this is exclusive to a specific country. “While electoral systems can be powerful tools for shaping the content and practice of politics in divided societies, their design requires

being intimately related to context. Even then, the selection of electoral systems is at all times politically sensitive and always restricted by political understandings” (Rippenburg 2007).

Actually, electoral systems should be viewed from the political development of the country and “the broader constitutional framework of the state. Transitional democracies, mostly in third world countries, classically have a greater requirement for comprehensiveness and a lower limit for the vital oratory of oppositional politics than their established counterparts do. While, the political system of most Western countries are stable mostly where two or three main parties often expected regular periods in office through change of power”(Rippenburg 2007). The political condition of third world countries is very different from that of western countries. The political system of third world countries characterizes divided societies. The political system of western countries is like non-zero sum game; on the other hand, the political system of third world countries is like zero-sum game. It is in third world countries that winner is “identified as a contributor to the breakdown of democracy”. Such systems are inclined to “lock out minorities from parliamentary representation and, in the situation of ethnically based parties, can easily go ahead to the total supremacy of one ethnic group over all others. Under these circumstances, democracy can be a necessary condition of permanent inclusion and exclusion (means a zero-sum game) with unwanted outcomes” (Ibid).

Electoral systems have focused on the experiences of countries in the West, particularly in Europe and the United States. The countries, who adopted new democracies, are giving a considerable attention to the role of electoral systems in the Western countries. Afghan political system of electing president and resolving electoral disputes has many flaws. Therefore, this led recently to a political crisis that pushed the country into turmoil. The recent crisis was related to presidential election of 2014. However, this crisis was resolved through the mediating efforts of the USA. In presidential election of 2014, there were two candidates – Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. This crisis was resolved through a special power sharing agreement between both these candidates.

As part of the agreement, the candidates agreed to manage to change some relevant functions of *Loya Jirga*. Loya Jirga was given the powers so that it could amend the

constitution. By giving more powers to Loya Jirga, the importance of Loya Jirga grew up and became most powerful. Empowered to make significant changes to the constitution, the members of *Loya Jirga* got opportunity to debate alternative proposals for constitutional reform and embrace reforms to develop the effectiveness and legitimacy of Afghan governments. The *Loya Jirga* would be made of elected members in the parliamentary and district council elections. Yet, this problem could not be resolved. A fear remained among the people on taking both parliamentary and presidential elections.

Since the 2004 Constitution, the country “has seen numerous elections for governmental offices. In 2004, the constitution provided an Independent Election Commission (IEC) that is entitled to conduct all the elections in the country. IEC does not give any details regarding its framework, responsibilities, and mechanism to resolve election complaints. President Hamid Karzai himself was involved in the reforms of election process. In 2004 and 2005, the parliament did not exist. Therefore, going one step further, Hamid Karzai enacted the 2004 and 2005 electoral laws through presidential decrees. Many political parties and civil society organisations opposed the presidential decree. For several reasons, the adoption of this system worked in advantage of candidates in power and it benefited Karzai specifically. Through the President’s influence over the IEC, Karzai and his supporters had capacity and power to resolve the disputes. Since 2004, Afghanistan has held eight elections: three presidential elections, three provincial council elections, and two parliamentary elections. However, none of these elections could be conducted peacefully and smoothly. Critics accused these elections of committing systematic fraud and political manipulation.

3.10.1 Presidential Elections of 2004

In accordance with Bonn Agreement, Presidential elections had to be held by June 2004, two years after the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga. In the event, legal and technical difficulties and security considerations resulted in a delay of a few months for the presidential vote, which took place on 9 October 2004. The parliamentary election was delayed further until 18 September 2005. The UN reported that 8.1 million ballots had been cast, representing 70 per cent of registered voters. 40 per cent of voters were women. Around three quarters of a million Afghan refugees in

Pakistan and Iran also participated. Hamid Karzai won the election with 55.4 per cent of the vote, significantly ahead of his closest challengers, the ethnic Tajik Yunus Qanuni (16.3 per cent), the ethnic Hazara Mohammed Mohaqiq (11.6 per cent) and the ethnic Uzbek Abdul Rashid Dostum (10 per cent). The remaining 14 candidates each received less than two per cent of the votes (ICG Asia Report no. 88, 2004).

3.10.2 Parliament Elections of 2005

On 18th September 2005, the Wolesi Jirga and the Provincial Council elections were held in Afghanistan, which was second election process after 2004 Presidential elections. It was also the first general elections after Taliban Government was ousted in 2001. The Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), established through a Presidential Decree 40/2003, was responsible for holding the 2005 elections. The initial results of the polling were declared on 9 October 2005 and final results being delayed by accusations of fraud were ultimately announced on 12 November 2005. Approximately twelve million voters became eligible to vote for the 249 seat Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of parliament and 34 provincial councils. The voter turnout was approximately 48 percent which was well below previous Presidential elections (Katzman 2015).

The indelible ink allegation remained same during the elections also like in the previous occasion, creating chaos among polling officials and confusion among prospective voters. Some of the international observers strongly advocated for immediate reforms in this regard. Another problem is that each province elects a number of members, but each voter can vote for only one candidate. This runs the risk of fragmenting the votes to the point where candidates can be elected virtually by chance (EU Election Observation Mission Afghanistan 2005).

3.10.3 Presidential Elections of 2009

Millions of Afghans went to the polls on 20th August 2009 for the nation's second presidential elections. The designated voter registration period was from 6th October 2008 to 2nd February 2009. More than 4.5 million Afghans registered their votes during the process, according to a report released by the IEC Afghanistan in March 2009. The difference between men and women who registered was about seven lakhs,

though women still composed about 40 percent of all registered voters. The 2009 election was plagued, by assertions of a lack of credibility of the Independent Elections Commission. Its commissioners were selected by the President and were politically close to Karzai. As a check and balance to ensure electoral credibility, there was also a U.N. appointed Elections Complaints Commission (ECC) that reviewed complaints on fraud (Katzman 2015).

About 200 women competed for the 124 seats reserved for women (29%) on the provincial councils, although in two provinces (Qandahar and Uruzgan) there were fewer women candidates than reserved seats. In Kabul Province, 524 candidates competed for the 29 seats of the council” (Katzman 2011: 21). In the first round, about 7,000 polling centres were to be established but, of those, about 800 were deemed too unsafe and did not open. The European Union, supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) sent a few hundred observers (Katzman 2015).

3.10.4 Parliament Elections of 2010

To elect members of the house of the people (Wolesi Jirga), Afghanistan witnessed general elections on 18th September 2010. The Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) established in accordance with the article 156 of the Constitution of Afghanistan for the purpose of organizing and supervising all elections in the country postponed the poll from its original date of 22nd May to 18th September, were being more cautious regarding security arrangements (The New York Times 2010). “The results were delayed on several occasions, but ultimately were finalized on October 31, 2010.” Despite of Taliban threat to chop off fingers of voters and beheading all those contesting the elections, voters cast their ballots in 5897 polling centres across the country. “Controversy regarding fake Voter ID cards was dismissed by the IEC as rumour, though it was a matter of concern regarding genuine voter registration. The U.S. officials and many Afghans were concerned that the 2009 presidential election would not secure a better environment for the 2014 presidential elections, which occurred as international forces have been drawing down. The international community generally avoided holding the elections if noting free and fair standard (Katzman 2015).

3.10.5 Presidential Elections of 2014

The 2014 elections led to a historical change in Afghan politics. Under the constitution, the Presidential elections had to be held in 30 to 60 days before May 22, 2014, expiration of Karzai's final term. On October 31, 2012, the IEC set the election date as April 5, 2014, overruling Northern Alliance assertions that the election should be later to allow for the northern part of the country where support for non-Pashtun candidates is strong, to thaw after the winter. Provincial elections were due in 2013, but the IEC set these elections concurrent with the presidential elections because of the logistical difficulties and costs involved in holding a separate election. There were also 420 provincial council seats up for election in 2014 (Katzman 2015). Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan, a domestic body, assembled 50 political parties to endorse demands for election reform and oversee the unfolding election process (Ibid).

There were several potential frontrunners in the contest. For the 420 provincial council seats, 2,713 candidates were approved to run, including 308 women. The formal campaign period began on February 5, 2014. Several purportedly credible opinion polls were published in late December 2013; Afghan polling was sparse as in previous elections. Three candidates withdrew before the vote was held, including Karzai's brother, Qayyum, who reportedly bowed to his brother's urging not to run, and former Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak. All of the major candidates said they would, if elected, sign the Bilateral Security Accord (BSA) with the United States, required to keep some U.S. troops in Afghanistan after 2014 (Ibid).

According to IEC officials, turnout in the April 5, 2014, first round, was over 7 million (60%), the violent incidents were minor (Katzman 2015:25). The then American President Obama spoke by phone with Dr Abdullah on July 8 and sent Secretary of State John Kerry to Kabul to broker a resolution between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. On September 21, 2014, the crisis was apparently resolved when Ghani and Abdullah signed the power-sharing agreement. The IEC simultaneously declared Ghani the election winner while acknowledging that the audit did not necessarily resolve all allegations of fraud. Ghani was inaugurated President on September 29 and he immediately issued a decree appointing Abdullah as CEO

(Katzman 2015). Following this, various Bilateral Security Agreements (BSA) between Afghanistan and the United States were signed.

3.11 Role of Afghan Women in Electoral Process

Women are one among the many vulnerable classes of society in Afghanistan. Although at this time the Taliban is no longer in power, yet women still face serious problems of participation in the democratic process. Oppressive cultural customs and security risks still hinder women from speaking publicly about their voice, prevent them from participating in the reconstruction, and often prohibit them from accessing education, healthcare, employment, and other basic freedoms (Grenfell 2004). For Taliban, women should live in the home and they are condemned to live in the home. In the name Islam, Taliban regime imposed anti-women rules and measures on the society.

After collapse of the Taliban regime, Bonn Conference 2001 was signed, and the country's transitional period started through the establishment of the interim Afghan Government. "Two out of the twenty-three listed delegates were Afghan women, and a number of some other women attended as observers. The Bonn Agreement states that the delegates selected the members of the Interim Administration with due regard to the significance of the contribution of women. The Agreement was for creating a broad based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government up to 2004; thus this was for opening up the possibility of women's participation in the new political set up (Ibid).

The Emergency Loya Jirga of 2002 also made many efforts to ensure the participation of women in Afghan politics. Around 1500 delegates attended this meeting, of which 220 were women. The data is very weak in the matter of participation of women. However, participation of women was discouraged by the warlords and feudal culture. One female delegate Malalai Joya was provided special security because she has criticized openly the warlord dominance. "While Joya's ability to participate and the protection given to her are indications of change, the fact remains that most women are unable or unwilling to take such serious risks in order to enjoy their right to free and equal participation in political life, as required by Article 7 of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Grenfell 2004).

Table 3.1: Women’s Participation in the Electoral Process 2004-2014

Year	Female Provincial council candidates	Female Parliamentary candidates	Female Presidential candidates	Female Voters
2004			1/18	37%
2005	8.2% (247/3025)	12.8 (335/2775)		41%
2009	10.3% (328/3196)		2/39	38.8%
2010		15.8% (406/2775)		39.1%
2014	11.3% (308/2713)		0/8	38%

Source: https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/kasa_-_womens_rights_09.2014.pdf.

In late June 2004, a bomb was exploded in a bus carrying female election registration workers in Jalalabad, in which two Afghan women were killed and many others wounded. The women were culturally forbidden from fully participating in the elections. The Asia Foundation’s July 2004 survey, entitled “Voter Education Planning Survey: Afghanistan 2004 National Elections” found that 88 percent of men and 85 percent of women believed that women cast their votes with the permission of their husbands. Furthermore, around four fifths of the men surveyed stated that women need their husbands to use of their vote. This highlights the necessity for Afghanistan to take all proper dealings to transform such cultural views that are clearly based on stereotypical roles for Afghan men and women. One female candidate Masooda Jalal contested for President along with seventeen male competitors in the presidential elections of 2004. She was reportedly prevented, however, from speaking and campaigning at various places while legal permission was given to her for campaigning (Grenfell 2004).

3.11.1 Women’s Representation in Local Jirgas and Shuras

For the last 15 years, i.e. from the fall of Taliban government, the space for women opened up in the politics. The nation-wide surveys conducted by the Asia Foundation (2008 to 2013) found that almost 60 percent of Afghans are happy with women representing them in elected institutions, including provincial councils.” Younger women in particular appear increasingly willing to take social and even security risks in order to realize their political aspirations, having seen the first cadre of female leaders gaining importance after the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001.

In order to ensure political participation and representation of women, Afghanistan’s electoral law adopted quota system for them. Under the quota system, “27% of seats in lower house of the parliament and one fifth of the total seats in provincial assemblies are reserved for women. The electoral law also sets out that 16 percent of seats in Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of the Parliament) should be occupied by women.” A third of the upper house in the parliament is selected by President and it is required that President select half of them from women (International Crisis Group 2013). The turnout in the 2004 presidential election in Afghanistan included large number of women. The table 3.2 shows the percentage of women who participated in the past presidential, parliamentary and provincial councils on the national level as both voters and candidates (Azad 2013).

Table 3.2: Percentage of Women’s Participation in Afghan Elections

Elections	Percentage of women voters	Total candidates	Female Candidates
2004 Presidential	37	18	1
2005 PC*	41	3025	247
2005 Parliamentary	41	2775	335
2009 Presidential	39	3196	2
2009 PC*	39	3196	328
2010 Parliamentary	39	2577	406
2014 Presidential	38	2713	8
2014 PC*	38	2713	308

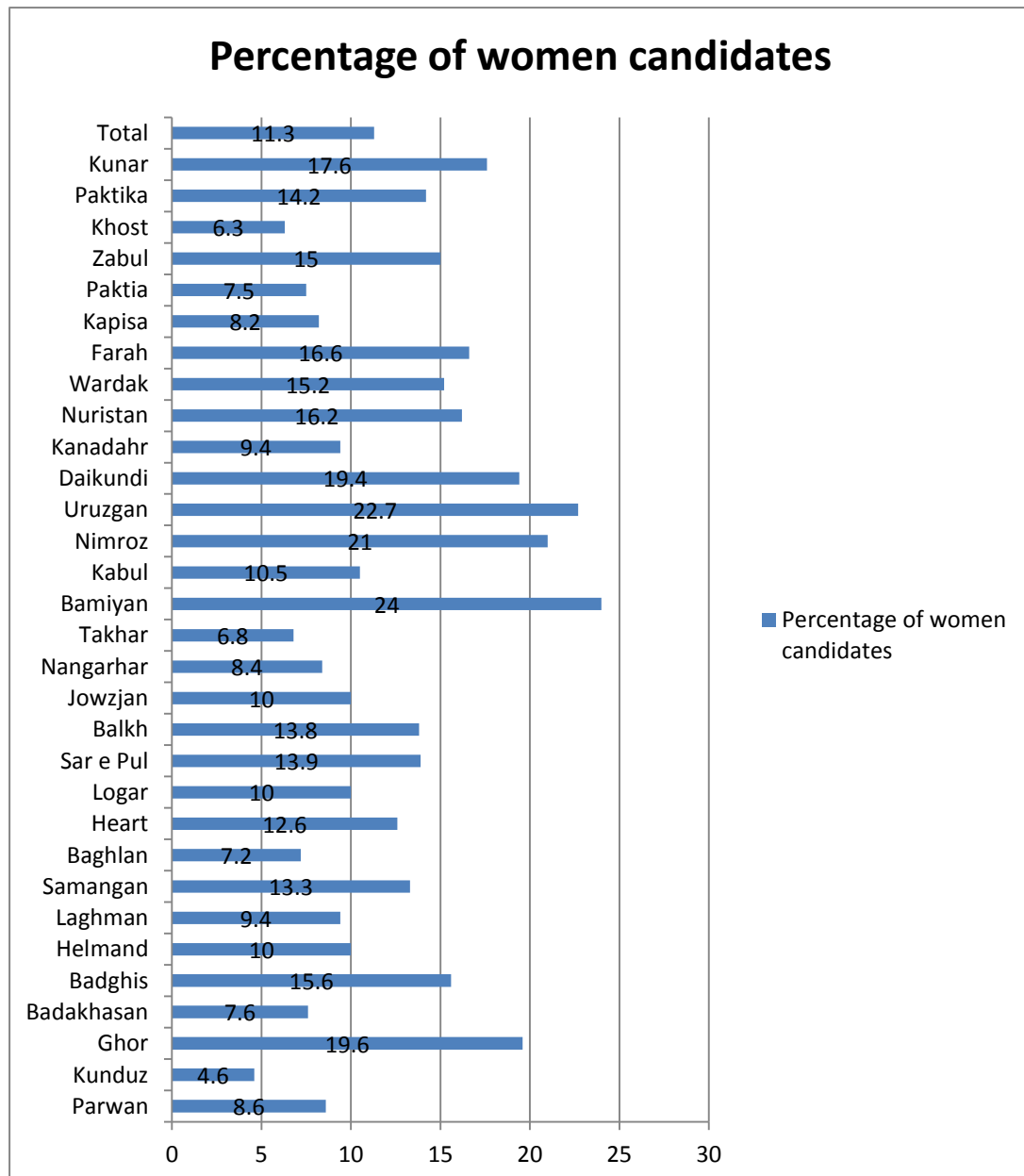
Source: UN Women Report 2012, “Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities: Women’s Participation in Afghanistan’s Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections”.

Note: * PC means Provincial Councils.

The 2014 provincial elections saw an immense female participation with around 12 percent of female candidates. However, female candidacy varied among provinces, with the lowest female participation in the rural and tribal provinces of Kunduz (4.6 percent), Takhar (6.8 percent) and Khost (6.3 percent). Kunduz and Khost are some of Afghanistan’s most unstable provinces, and in Takhar the number of violent incidents against women increased from 100 in 2012 to 180 in 2013. The central provinces Bamyan (24 percent) is known as one of the safest places in the country, Uruzgan (21

percent) and the southern province Nimruz, in contrast, saw more than 20 percent of female candidates. The results of provincial council elections held in April 2014 had been prolonged for the auditing process, and it remains to be seen whether the reduction of the female quota in the Provincial Council from 25 percent to 20 percent will influence the number of women elected (Kasa 2014:7-8).

Graph 3.1 Female Provincial Council Candidates, 2014



Source: https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/kasa_-_womens_rights_09.2014.pdf

Frud Behzan (2013) has discussed the women's movement which came into scene in Afghanistan as a revolution to ensure their rights and recognition in the society. She also discussed that female civil activists like Kofi and Amina were determined to fight against gender discrimination in Afghanistan (Behzan 2013). Farzana Bari (2005), in her draft, discussed "the general status of women in the world. She also explained the multiple challenges in expressing ideological factor, economic, political, and social perspective", in facing the patriarchy (Ibrahim 2014). Capability of Afghan women has gone up passing through hardships, which they faced in the past and also due to impartial policies from the new government.

Sara Van (2014) explained the legal rights of the women of Afghanistan. She also discussed the active and massive participation of the Afghan women in their elections of 2009-2010 and in recent 2014 which became a reason for the successful transition of country (Mussarat 2015). Jan Teorell (2006) explains "the basic concept of political participation. He also discussed different models and theories regarding the citizenship right for both men and women of country. Maria Eremenkoclears the concept of political participation through quoting the basic definition of *verba*. She also explained methods of political participation of three countries by using the *verba* model of political participation (Ibid).

3.12 Summary

The chapter has highlighted the choice of electoral system by Afghanistan and its evolution. The evolutionary process has been shaped by its unique political and economic circumstances of war and ethnicity. The challenges have been many and so have been achievements. The formation of IEC is one such achievement and secondly some participation of women in politics (however miniscule) a largely conservative country. The chapter also examines that experiences from all four previous elections and lessons learnt from the mistakes should be eliminated in due course of time for a stronger electoral process, platform and outcome. The dilemma regarding SNTV and the new mixed parallel system proposal by IEC in June 2012 must be discussed properly involving all stakeholders for a better electoral reformed mechanism. Finally, hope for progress must reach above security concerns and collective blueprint of progress by own sustainable mechanism; reducing reliability and dependence on

external role players can enrich the state of Afghanistan with an everlasting democratic canopy of fulfilment.

As far as the question of women is concerned, it should be said that women are more empowered in developed countries than males in the third world countries. Afghanistan is facing multiple challenges due to war of several decades. The women of Afghanistan are facing challenge to use their right to participate in elections as a candidate and also right to cast their votes. We realise the proper status and need of Afghan women as the need of hour than the present partial and preliminary results which were possible through the massive participation of Afghan women in 2014 presidential election. It is not hard to say that women's political participation remains one of the splendid symbols for putting Afghanistan on the path of transition and strengthening the democracy. As a result, the attempts of assassination, murder, violation and injustice against women may not lead the Afghan community because global communities, international organizations produce awareness for the protection and guarantee of their rights.

CHAPTER 4

ROLE OF ELITES IN ETHNO- POLITICS OF AFGHANISTAN WITH REFERENCE TO THE PASHTUNS

Role of Elites in the Ethno-Politics of Afghanistan with Reference to the Pashtuns

4.1 Background

Ethnic identities in Afghanistan have been strongly shaped by its socio-political history of different ethnic groups and their conflicts. The analysis of present ethnic conflicts in its electoral politics has to therefore necessarily take into account how certain ethnic identities have been shaped. In this ethnic conflict, Pashtun is the most dominant ethnic group in the country. Internal strife within these groups has been going on and the power struggle among different ethnic groups that emerged in eighteenth century has been going on till date. This ethnic conflict is not only going on among different ethnic groups but also within the Pashtun tribe. There are different clans within Pashtun tribe and the powerful clans continue to have conflicts with one another. Among these Pashtuns, the main struggle for power has been between the Abdali (or the Durrani) and the Ghilzai. Some other cultural groups among Pashtuns are saddozai, barakzai, populzai, orakzai, sarbani, bettani, etc.

In the eighteenth century, Nader Shah of Afsharid dynasty of Persia removed Ghilzaid dynasty and turned to the Abdali (Durrani) Pashtuns and established good relations with them. Nader Shah is one of the most powerful rulers in the history of Persia. He treated Ahmad Khan Abdali as his most trusted and his personal bodyguard. This historical era was more convenient for the development of Durrani dynasty to rise into power. Both Persia and Afghanistan were in political turmoil when Nader Shah was assassinated in 1747 in Persia. This assassination created political power vacuum in Afghanistan also, which was soon filled by Ahmad Khan Abdali who had big financial resources. With these financial resources, he established his own reign. After the assassination of Nader Shah, he became the King of Afghanistan. He started his career as a soldier and quickly became commander of the Abdali regiment. He retreated to Kandahar, a source of the imperial treasury. The emergence of Afghan state as an autonomous and recognizable political entity can be traced from this event.

Ahmad Khan Abdali founded a dynastic Durrani empire and died in 1772. He is regarded as a father of modern Afghanistan and during his reign, the kingdom stretched from Central Asia and Kashmir in the north and northeast to the Arabian Sea

in the southwest, and from Eastern Persia (Khorasan) in the west to the Indian Punjab in the east. It was the largest empire in the West Asia. This expansion had been aided by an important development and that was the decline of two of its neighbouring empires- the Persian Safavid in the west and the Moghuls on the east. Both the Safavids and Moghuls, who had been rivals for control over Afghan territories since the sixteenth century, were on decline around this time (Rasanayagam 2011).

After all, the Durrani Empire was established with the help of financial resources, governmental experience, support from non-Pashtun groups, and the eventual compliance of non-Durrani groups. It was built by urban military tribal elites and not by the frontier tribes which stood against the authority of any power for long periods. In Barfield's (2010) words, "it was no accident that it was non-Pashtun and not the unruly Pashtuns in the tribal hinterlands of the Mughal frontier that created the first Pashtun-ruled Empire" (Barfield 2010).

Under the Durrani dynasty, the Ghilzai clans were disempowered step by step. The Ghilzais were earlier dominant and powerful under Persian influence. The Durrani reduced the Ghilzai to a secondary status by excluding them from elite politics and expelling them from Kandahar that was its urban base. On the other hand, the Ghilzai never accepted that the Durrani were superior to them. Thus, the perennial struggle started between both communities.

Tribalism is the first factor that is concerned with the very structure of Ahmad Shah's rule and the nature of Afghan society. Ahmad Shah Abdali established a vast empire that was confederation at political level. But his confederation had a weak existence. It was extremely frail in its structure. The center of its confederation was comprised of four noteworthy Abdali or Durrani factions: Popalzai to which Ahmad Shah's own particular Sadozai family had a place, Barakzai which created the Mohammadzai tribe that expected the rule of energy from the Sadozai from 1826, Alikozai and Achakzai. Abdali's opponent family, the Ghilzai was on the fringe of the confederation. With the Ghilzai tribe Ahmad Shah prevailing with regards to producing a coalition that did not keep going long after his demise. Previously, the Durrani tribes had been occupied with serious and ridiculous competition struggle with the Ghilzais, as well as among themselves. Ahmad Shah's proxy and sensible arrangements in managing and controlling innate connections inside his confederation united them (Saikal 2004).

With his own policies and planning, Ahmad Shah succeeded in creating a central authority. But his ruling was not based on constructing a strong state based on the institutionalisation but more on personalisation of politics and horizontal integration rather than vertical federalisation. In other words, the kind of system of governance generated was centred on the charismatic and skilled leader like Ahmad Shah himself. But this governance lacked the ability to be institutionally self-generating and self-propelling in the absence of such a leader. After death of Ahmad Shah, his confederation began to break down and it lost its bravery centre. The periphery of the empire confronted for its central power. Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Abdali, became his successor. He tried to fill the vacuum by continuing regular policies that he inherited. At the outset, he appeared successful in holding the Durrani Empire together to a significant extent. But he did not have same leadership as his father, which presented him irresolvable difficulties in sustaining the firm grip on the levers of tribal authority and relationships. His rule was soon overwhelmed by challenges from within his own sub-clan, and revolts from other tribes and ethnic groups, particularly the Ghilzais, Khorasanis and Sistanis. He soon came out of these challenges. He made a treaty with the Emirate of Bukhara for strengthening his authority on south of the Oxus or Amu Darya River, but the destabilising performance stemming largely from inter-tribal and intra-tribal conflicts did not help him (Saikal 2004).

After 2001, the international community set itself the ambitious goal of bringing stability, political and social modernization in this multi-ethnic country. The present political reconstruction has revealed those challenges. Ethnicity plays a very important role in Afghanistan where people have multiple identities and they are living together. The population of the country is divided on the basis of ethno-linguistic and cultural identities. In Afghanistan, particularly rural Afghanistan, tribal and ethnic groups take primacy over the individual. Afghan population is divided into a myriad of these groups at the local level. The most important of these by population are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and Turkmen.

The second factor is Islam. This religion has a special place in the life and culture of Afghanistan. Apart from a few thousand Hindus and Sikhs and a few hundred Jews, all Afghans are Muslims. Around 99 percent are Muslims in Afghanistan. Eighty per

cent of these are from Sunni community while the rest are from Shia community and a small Ismailia minority of one to two hundred thousand people (The Asia foundation 2004).Afghanistan was not considered as a nation in contemporary terminology. In twentieth century, Afghanistan created as a country where the state is viewed as outside to society and where individuals' unwaveringness has a place for the most part with their nearby group. The main thing which all Afghans have in like manner is Islam. The life of Afghan individuals is saturated by religion. It gives the scholarly skyline, the arrangement of qualities and the code of conduct, despite the fact that this may include now and again conflict with different sets of principles, for example, that of the ancestral or family/sub-tribe framework (Roy 1990).

The mosque is usually situated in the centre of the village. It is also the only suitable place for gatherings on community basis, although the larger villages will also have tea rooms, and the *khan's* residence has its guest room (*hujra*). The mosques are used for the performance of religious rituals; collective prayer (*jama'a*) is regarded as having greater spiritual value than personal prayer. An example is the Friday gathering, when the whole village comes together for prayer. But the mosque is also the place where the people can meet to discuss the various issues and exchange their thoughts; it is the place where the people come to discuss problems and tries to resolve the conflicts. It is also here that strangers passing through the village are accommodated, where rich persons are hardly found. The system is to have five prayers every day, and the meals which have something of a sacrament about them. The rhythm of the year has its feasts which culminate in Ramadan. The rhythm of the language has sacred forms of address and expressions of consideration which invoke the name of God (Roy 1990).

The mullah is the most prestigious person of the village; but he is not part of clergy. The mullah is unofficial post in Islam who has religious study and does religious preaching. He is usually not a member of any institutionalized body and has scarcely any links with his superiors. He is neither appointed by them nor does he depend upon them for his income. When any mullah expires or retires, it becomes essential to appoint a new mullah for the village. They sit collectively for long discussion and, then come to any decision. This is particularly the case in the tribal communities, where the mullah belongs to a professional occupation (Ibid).

The mullah is often poor person. In Afghanistan there is no longer any *waqf* in the form of land or property owned by the mosque; the only *waqf* in the village is the mosque itself and its buildings. The mosque and the *waqf* are not enough for the fulfilment the needs of mullah. Sometimes he works in the village, becomes a job employee of the village. In these instances he is considered to be a craftsman specializing in religious ritual in the same way as the barber and the carpenter each have their own specializations. He is like a paid skill man once a year on a contractual basis; or he may be provided with money from the Islamic taxes as well as a payment for the work he has performed. Along with, the rich people help and support the mullah, but it is not possible for him to depend directly on the rich for his daily needs (Ibid).

The social status of the mullah differs significantly from areas to areas and villages to villages. He has low status in the tribal zones because of his exclusion from the tribal community. But he has higher status in some matters due to his knowledge and he has great respect granted to his family. The mullah has exclusive power on the religious activities such as prayers at the time of introduction, circumcision, marriage and burial, religious education, and the conduct of the Qur'anic school. In the small villages the mullah is not more educated; he is only usual educated man. Although he does not have any political power, he plays a role of mediator in disputes among people and groups. Sometimes he provides religious services in accordance to his religious post. Some other persons work like mullah, but they are not related to religious rituals. In this field, main rivalries of the mullah are the quacks, the doctors and other workers of magic. But in another direction, he competes with the teachers at the school and all the newly educated members of the population who do not have much respect for him (Roy 1990).

In Afghan society the religious elites have played an important role in the time of social conflict and crisis. Many *Amirs* regretted the practice powers of the mullahs. Many contemporary observers have testified that the mullahs held a stronghold over the Afghan population. The crucial role of Islamic symbolism in Afghan society has been in providing the overall framework of the ideological debate. During turmoil religious symbolism is particularly evoked since that is the time when social and

moral commitments stand their test. The traditional Islam has played a major role in the Afghan society and in developing the Islamic institutions of the country (Ibid).

4.2 Historical Pattern of Ethnic Identities

In the case of Afghanistan, modern ethnographies shape a valuable resource for exploring the socio-economic factors shaping tribal life, an aspect that is hardly touched upon by historical sources. Moreover, they stressed the focus on the power structure at the lower level of tribal organization and the relationships between leaders and followers are conceived from an inner, tribal perspective. They also focussed on the tribes as political entities within the state. These historical narratives come from colonial regime and so, Afghan chronicles are deeply related more or less to colonial regime. In opposition of the modern studies of social structure, a lot of work was produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These studies primarily viewed the Pashtuns in the light of government interests and focused on the Pashtun organizations whose leaders conspicuously cooperated with or opposed the rulers of country. Here to understand this whole issue, the theory of segmentary lineage is very useful. While the theory of segmentary lineage focuses the mechanisms in tribal society, the historical sources take the opposite approach and look for identifying the local hierarchies. This combined approach on the basis of anthropological and historical sources shows the different aspects of Pashtun tribalism (Noelle 1997).

The mediatory role of the local leadership between different tribes and state in the political landscape Afghanistan can be understood through an analysis of the position of the well-known tribal chiefs and the origin of their power. While understanding the impact of local organization and the collective processes in Dost Muhammad Khan's realm, historical data finds a range of Pashtun leaders among the so-called border tribes and the Ghilzais. Here, the main question is whether the tribe-state relations evolve according to a distinctive pattern or not. In this context, the degree of hierarchy within a tribal system is directly connected to the intensity of its contact with the state machinery. Of course, it did not happen in the linear progression of hierarchy (Noelle 1997).

The Pashtun trace their descent to the Prophet's contemporary Qais; and so the big majority of Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims. More generally, the Pashtuns are however

acknowledged as Indo-Europeans. There is evidence that the present-day Pashtuns have assimilated various outside groups in their history. Yet all of them are connected with a common descent, in which the border tribes are allotted a peripheral position to some extent. The ancestors of the Pashtuns have allegedly been only three generations after Qais. The Abdalis/Durrani along with the Eastern Afghan tribes of the Peshawar valley and the Yusufzais consider Qais' eldest Sarbanr their forefather. Qais' second son gave rise to the Ghilzais as well as dynasties of the Lodi (1451-1526) and Sur (1539-1555) at Delhi, by marrying his daughter Bibi Mato to a non-Pashtun Shah Husain of Ghor (Ibid).

The origin of some groups are closely related by descent to their migrations which started sometime around the fourteenth century. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Afghans/Pashtuns are mentioned by Indian and Chinese sources as inhabitants of the Sulaiman Mountains east of Ghazni. These mountains form an 'irregular parallelogram', extending from the Khyber in the north and separating Qandahar and Ghazni from the Derajat. Raverty is of the opinion that this region, generally known as 'Ghor' or mountainous country, more likely formed the original homeland of the Pashtuns than the often quoted region of Ghor located in central Afghanistan. This notion is confirmed by Ghaznawid sources. The famous medieval scholar Al-Biruni describes the Pashtuns as the inhabitants of the same mountain range. According to his contemporary Al-Utbi, they interacted closely with the Ghaznawid rulers, alternately defying their authority and furnishing troops to them (Ibid).

According to the Mughal historian Ni'matullah, the eastward migration of the Pashtuns was initiated by the Ghorid ruler Mu'izz al-Din (also called Shihab al-Din, r. 1173-1206) in the course of his military campaigns to India. The Mohmands, who were to move to the Peshawar region subsequent to the Yusufzais, resisted Mughal troops in Muqur (south of Ghazni) at that time. The eastward movement of the Pashtuns seems to have continued throughout Babur's era and beyond. In 1519 the Afridis were reported as having recently settled on the Bara River in the Khyber region. At that date, the Tarklanris, the future inhabitants of Bajaur, and the Utman Khel, the future inhabitants of the Peshawar border, were still dwelling further west in the region of Nangarhar (Noelle 1997).

The westward movement of the Pashtuns towards the region of Qandahar and Herat apparently started in the fifteenth century. According to Raverty, the Abdalis/Durrani moved to the Qandahar region during the reign of the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh (1404-1447), precisely in the year 1418. In the sixteenth century the area around Qandahar formed a bone of contention between the Ghilzais and Abdalis. During the reign of Shah 'Abbas I, the Abdalis gave in to Ghilzai pressure and moved toward Herat. This relocation further west was not only brought about by the rivalries among the Ghilzais and Abdalis but was also assisted and possibly initiated by the Safawid administration (Ibid).

The Pashtun expansion led to the displacement or subjugation of the local populations. One of the groups strongly affected were the Tajiks, the ancient sedentary, non-tribal population of the region. Prior to the Pashtun migration to the Kabul River valley, they had formed the dominant population of Kabul, Nangarhar and Laghman. Before the advent of Ghilzai nomads of the Ahmadzai division sometime in the late sixteenth century, the Logar valley located south of Kabul had also been a Tajik stronghold. In the Kunar and Laghman valleys near Jalalabad, the original Pashai and Kafir populations were pushed to the less fertile mountain regions by the successive waves of Pashtun immigrants. Prior to the sixteenth century the regions east and south of Ghazni were domains of the Hazara, the group of Central Asian origin that had entered Afghanistan during the Mongolian conquests in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Ghilzai stronghold Qalat-i Ghilzai area, for example, was populated by Hazaras at the time of Babur and was known as Qalat-i Barluk. The Hazaras also lost their foothold in the present-day province of Wardak when it was invaded by a Pashtun tribe with that name sometime in the course of the seventeenth century. Because of the predominant position of the Ghilzais and Abdalis in the Qandahar region, the local populations of Farsiwans, Hazaras, Kakars and Baluchs lost part of their previous possessions and were forced to pay revenues to their Pashtun overlords. In those areas where the Pashtuns did not displace the local populations entirely, the latter were likely to be reduced to the status of peasants (*raiyyat*) or tenants (*hamsaya*) ((Noelle 1997).

Many of the border tribes, such as the Afridis, Orakzais, the Wazirs, and the Daurs were also incorporated into the Mughal administration at least formally. Mughal and

Safawid interests overlapped in the region of Qandahar and Qalat-i ghilzai. Having been conquered by Babur in the early sixteenth century, Qandahar changed hands several times after 1558, finally falling to the Safawids in 1649. In the course of these events the Abdalis were able to enhance their position by taking over administrative tasks for the Safawids. The Abdalis were eventually able to translate their privileged position into supremacy over Afghanistan. Accordingly, this group came to derive its worldview from its linkage to the ruling house. The other groups, by contrast, took a more independent stance and formulated their identity in opposition to the surrounding governments. Therefore, the 'rebelliousness' of the Ghilzais and the border tribes was not only a label applied to them by imperial outsiders but also an essential ingredient of their own identity. Both groups continued to describe themselves as yaghi, 'rebellious', well into the nineteenth century. This identity was formulated in a dialectical confrontation with the state and thus required its presence in a continuous process of self-definition. This tension is expressed by juxtaposition in word pairs like yaghistan ('land of insolence') and hukumat ('government') as well as ghair ilaqa (alien territory) and sarkar ilaqa (government area). In this relationship of opposition, tribal life was conceptualized as all that government is not, and vice versa. Yaghistan is where no man is above another, in contrast to hukumat where there are governors and governed. The usage of this term also entered the language of all governments in the region, be they Mughal, Durrani or British. In his description of the North West Frontier in the nineteenth century, MacGregor employed it as a formal term for all the Pashtun groups lying beyond the reach of British administration (Ibid).

Others were less happy with such a generic application. For example, Raverty made the critical remark that the extensive use of the term 'Yaghistan' tended to obscure the actual relationship between the tribes in question and the British government. 'Yaghistan' appears to be a very extensive tract, according to Colonel C.M. MacGregor. It seems that any tract of country independent of the British Government is 'Yaghistan'; this is scarcely a happy term, to say the least of it, to apply to all parts not subject to British rule, and whose people, never having been British subjects, have never been in the position to rebel. If all independent people love their independence quite as dearly as Englishmen love theirs, are 'yaghi'; there are a vast number of insubordinate rebels in Asia and other parts of the world. The mere fact of people never having obeyed any one does not constitute them as rebels (Noelle 1997).

Pashtuns are recognized by a few related names. 'Afghan', which means a native of Afghanistan in the juridical sense, is tradable with 'Pashtun'. Numerous Pashtuns in Pakistan are aware of their ethnic character and still recognize themselves in official records as 'Afghan', a training that started in the raj. 'Pathan', a debasement of the local 'Pakhtun' utilized as a part of the subcontinent, distinguished the Pashtuns in British frontier ethnography (Siddique 2014). He has utilized term of Pashtun indicating to constitute about portion of Afghanistan's populace of 25.5 million. They are Pakistan's biggest minority, making up around 15-20 for each penny of the nation's 174 million residents in 2010. The first Pashtun country was arranged between the Hindukush Mountains in focal Afghanistan and the Indus River that divides Pakistan, however Pashtun people group are presently scattered over an immense domain (Ibid). In northern Afghanistan, the Pashtun populace reaches out to the Amu Darya (Oxus River, about 2,500 kilometers in length, is the longest stream in Central Asia) outskirts with Central Asia, where Pashtun people group have become considerably finished the previous century. Karachi, the southern Pakistani port city on the Arabian Sea, is today home to one of the district's biggest urban Pashtun populaces, the consequence of monstrous financial movement. About four million Pashtuns live among Karachi's twenty million individuals (Ibid).

Pashtuns have a history shaped by war, invasion and endemic violence for the last six centuries. In any case, they have made due to constitute a country in the model sense. Be that as it may, Pashtuns, all in all, have never been completely coordinated into a solitary domain, state or political framework however they have shaped realms of their own. Twentieth-century Afghanistan, before the Soviet invasion, was a Pashtun-dominated state where the elite attempted to advance a cosmopolitan national identity and culture. The alpine highlands of Swat in north-western Pakistan were a modern Pashtun princely state before the region's accession to Pakistan in 1947 and its administrative absorption into Pakistan in 1969. Ironically, the historic pattern of political instability and outside interference in the region has helped to preserve and reinforce the tribal nature of the Pashtun society, particularly in the countryside, where most Pashtuns live (Siddique 2014).

The awesome majority of Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi School. The Turi tribe in the Kurram Valley of Pakistan, some clans of the neighbouring Bangash and

Orakzai tribes, and small communities in Afghanistan are Twelver Shias. Some Sufi orders also have substantial following among Pashtuns. Many Pashtun clerics in both Pakistan and Afghanistan consider themselves Deobandis, or the followers of the Deoband Islamic movement, which originated in the second half of the nineteenth century in British India. Over the past three decades, Pashtun regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan have also become home to a range of radical Islamic political ideologies and sects that preach global jihadism (Ibid).

The Pashtun historiography has many records of foreign invasions and internal fragmentation that have for centuries affected the development and social evolution of this people. Adversaries of the Pashtuns have proven skilled at providing a twisted or outright biased reading of events that continues to colour the understanding of Pashtuns. Historical narratives of twentieth-century Afghanistan, each emphasising a perception of Pashtun antiquity and uniqueness, have all employed some degree of mythmaking. The development of the Pashtun identity, inspired heavily by Islam, has defined or helped shape political movements, empires and states over the course of five centuries. A greater understanding of the prominent figures and events in the history of the Pashtuns is the key to comprehending the contemporary problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including how the Pashtun regions have been transformed into incubators of extremist movements mobilized in the name of Islam (Ibid).

The population of most Pashtun regions had largely become Muslim by 1,000 A.D. The first predominantly Pashtun patriotic movement, woven around a moderate Sufic vision of the faith, came much later, in the sixteenth century. It arrived in the 'enlightened' movement, pioneered by Pir Roshan, a famous and popular saint. Pir Roshan whose real name was Bayazid Khan or Bayazid Ansari was born in Jalandhar, in the present-day northern India. But he was raised in Waziristan, in present-day Pakistan, after his family returned to its ancestral lands early in his childhood. He was born into an age where he witnessed the decline of Pashtun power on the subcontinent (Ibid).

The Pashtun Lodi dynasty (1451-1526) met its end because of attacking Mughals. Zahiruddin Babur (1483-1530), author of the Mughal administration, was a Chagatai from the Fergana Valley, which is situated in the present Uzbekistan. He was a descendent of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan (Siddique 2014). Repeated failures to

capture Samarkand and other regions in Central Asia pushed Babur to move east and south. He occupied Kabul in 1504 and Kandahar in 1522, using the conquests as stepping stones to move into India. He exploited internal strife among the Lodis and used an invitation from Daulat Khan, the Lodi governor of Punjab, to invade India. He defeated the last Lodi ruler, Ibrahim Khan, in a major battle outside Panipat, near Delhi, in April 1526 (Ibid). The Pashtuns challenged Mughal rule. Sher Shah Suri, an able general and administrator, defeated Babur's son and successor Nasirruddin Muhammad Humayun. The Mughal emperor subsequently sought refuge in Iran in 1540. Sher Shah died in the mid-1540s. The death of his son and successor, Islam Shah Suri, in 1554 effectively ended this Pashtun dynasty. With considerable Iranian help, Humayun recaptured the throne in 1555, amid feuding among the successors of the last Suri king. Humayun's son and successor, Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar, would go on to lead one of the most stable periods of Mughal rule (Ibid).

The sufferings that the resistance to Mughal Empire brought upon the Pashtuns had a lasting influence on Pir Roshan, and ultimately defined his writings and political struggle. It was a time when, it has been argued that the word 'Mughal' represented 'calamity' or 'enemy' in the Pashto language. Such metaphors first emerged in folklore, and later gained currency in spoken language and literary traditions. Amid the Pashtun liberation struggle, Mughal ruler Akbar founded a new religion: Din-e Ilahi, or 'heavenly faith,' which combined elements of Islam, Hinduism, Catholicism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. At its core, Din-e Ilahi was a personality cult. Pir Roshan's movement launched an open rebellion, which eventually grew into a Pashtun national uprising. Pir Roshan travelled from Waziristan to other regions to inspire and instruct the masses (Ibid). In a radical departure from the established practices of religious leaders of his age, Pir Roshan developed a body of work that was republican in spirit, but that also adhered to moderate Sufi interpretations of Islamic *sharia* law. Based on extensive research and readings of Pir Roshan's original writings, Saifur Rehman Masud has concluded that he sought to ultimately unite all Pashtuns under a single national ideology combining religion and politics (Ibid).

The Roshnya movement (à la Pir Roshan) spearheaded Pashtun resistance against the Mughals for nearly a century. The family's involvement was not just philosophical and theoretical. Pir Roshan's sons and grandsons led troops against the Mughals on

the battlefield. Roshnya functioned like a modern political organization, seeking to use knowledge and ideology to organize the resistance. The movement also gave the Pashto language its first script and introduced thirteen new alphabets. This script, still in use with modifications, was adopted from Arabic. The movement produced several notable Pashto language poets and writers (Siddique 2014).

Imperial decline in the early eighteenth century provided the Pashtuns the opening to form a homeland. But the seeds of this opportunity were planted much earlier. The death in 1707 of the puritanical Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir offered an early hint of the possibilities for political union. After Aurangzeb's death, the once-mighty Mughal dynasty fragmented and was unable to counter rising Hindu Maratha power in southern India. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the influence of the three Muslim empires that had divided South and Central Asia – the Mughals, the Iranian Shia Safavid and the Uzbek Astrakhanid (or Janid) – was on the wane.

The Mughals and the Safavids struggled for control over Pashtun regions, Kandahar in particular. In 1709, Mir Wais, a leader of the Hotak clan of the Ghilzai Pashtuns, led a rebellion against Giorgi XI. The rebellion against the Georgian mercenary and Safavid governor of Kandahar faltered, and Giorgi exiled Mir Wais to the Safavid court in Isfahan. The Ghilzai chief used his exile to visit Mecca to perform the *hajj* Islamic pilgrimage. While there, Mir Wais secured a *fatwa*, or religious edict, that legitimised a revolt against the apostate Safavid governor. Mir Wais and his successors, Shah Mahmud and Shah Ashraf, succeeded in conquering most of Iran. But the empire lasted only until 1729. That year, Nadir Shah Afshar, a Turkmen general and tribal leader, drove the Ghilzais out of Iran and subsequently established his own empire in 1739. But it was another short-lived empire. Returning with booty from a trip to Mughal India in 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated near Mashhad. An ensuing nine-day Pashtun tribal *jirga* in Kandahar chose a young charismatic commander in the imperial army, Ahmad Shah Abdali, to be ruler of the Afghans. He changed the name of his tribal confederation from Abdali to Durrani, the traditional rivals of the Ghilzais. At the invitation of the Indian Muslim cleric Shah Waliullah, the Durrani crushed the Maratha Hindus, a rising power, in 1761 (Siddique 2014).

Ahmad Shah ruled until 1773 a quarter-century that saw the expansion of the Afghan Durrani Empire. His son, Taimur Shah, and grandsons Shah Zaman, Shah Shuja and

Shah Mahmud, continued the Sadozai dynasty until 1826. But the reigns of the latter three were undermined by intrigues and infighting. Timur Shah moved the capital away from the Pashtun heartland of Kandahar to the ethnically mixed zone of Kabul in 1776. He also concluded a treaty with the Uzbek Khanate of Bokhara, which for the first time recognised Afghan authority south of the Oxus River. The Europeans first came in contact with the Pashtuns during this period. Mountstuart Elphinstone, the first envoy of the British East India Company, visited Shah Shuja's court in Peshawar in 1805. The Durrani Empire, until 1793, enjoyed cohesion. At its peak, the realm of the Durrani extended from Central Asia to Sirhind near Delhi, and from Kashmir to the Arabian Sea. It was the second largest Muslim empire of the eighteenth century, behind the Ottomans. But internal disunity and tribal rivalries led to collapse. The Durrani Empire had broken up by 1818, when Afghanistan fragmented into four fiefdoms. Dost Mohammad Khan, governor of Kabul, was elected *Amir* in 1834. With his accession to the throne, power moved from the Sadozai clan to the Barakzai clan within the Durrani tribal confederacy (Siddique 2014).

Internal conflict among the Durrani aided the rise of a brief but powerful Sikh empire in Punjab, which had become a prized colony because of its fertile plains. The first significant Sikh victory came in the Battle of Attock in 1813. In the following years, the Afghans lost Multan, Kashmir, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan to the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But the loss of Peshawar in 1833 proved the most devastating blow. The Durrani never recovered the valley, which had served as their winter capital. The Durrani failure to attempt reclaim of Peshawar might have been part of a strategy by Dost Mohammad Khan not to provoke the British. The Sikhs suffered a decisive defeat in the 1837 Battle of Jamrud (Ibid).

In the nineteenth century, the 'Great Game' started with the debilitating of the Durrani Empire and the desire of European colonialism on Afghanistan. The Pashtun domains of the present Afghanistan and Pakistan were the Game's focal field. The British East India Company vanquished Delhi in 1804, and British powers attacked Afghanistan in 1839. Be that as it may, the primary Anglo-Afghan war, which endured until 1842, demonstrated a fiasco. The British invading force, called the Army of the Indus, was

defeated by an uprising in Kabul. The entire British force was annihilated as it retreated east towards Jalalabad.

As early by the late 1820s, the British had become concerned about Tsarist expansion. Russian advances in Central Asia reached Afghanistan's borders by 1876. For the first time in history, the Tsar controlled all territories north of the Amu Darya, Afghanistan's northern border. Afghan Amir Sher Ali's efforts to establish friendly relations with Russia led the British to launch the second Anglo-Afghan war in 1878. The British deposed Sher Ali and forced him to leave Kabul. The war marked the peak of the Great Game. After occupying Kabul, the British forced Sher Ali's son Amir Yaqub Khan to sign the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879. The *amir* agreed to let the British open an embassy, and conceded control of several frontier districts to the British, including most of today's FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) in Pakistan and parts of Balochistan. The pact warranted British support to Asian country against external aggression. The rule conjointly provided associate annual grant of cash and arms. However, most Afghan governments since then have disowned the pact as a result of it absolutely was signed underneath force. In a very additional show of imperial management, Russia and Britain demarcated the country's northern and western borders with Central Asia, Asian nation and China between 1870 and 1896 (Siddique 2014).

Following the Second Anglo-Afghan War, British administrators created new mechanisms to control the territories and people under their domination. They designed special border regime that included separate legal statuses and governance mechanisms for Afghanistan, the Pashtun borderlands, and Pashtun and Baloch regions adjacent to the territories under the administration of British India. In Afghanistan, the British needed an autocrat. They invited Abdul Rahman Khan, a nephew of Amir Sher Ali Khan, who was living in exile in Central Asia, to take up the throne in 1880. During his twenty-year reign, the 'Iron Amir' suppressed all the dissents pitilessly. He decreed the country's administrative institutions and set the ground work for a modern Afghanistan. Crucially, he agreed to the demarcation of the Durand Line. Though in his defence, many historians have pointed out that the *amir* was actually against excluding the Pashtun tribal territories from Afghanistan.

After the 1893 Durand Line demarcation, the British placed five Pashtun tribal regions under their direct control in Delhi. A political officer was appointed for Khyber in 1878. Kurram became an agency (the official parlance for a tribal district) in 1892, while the Malakand and Waziristan agencies were created in 1895-96. In 1901, Lord Curzon, the British viceroy of India, created the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Mohmand, Bajaur and Orakzai were lapidarian out of alternative social group districts when the creation of Asian nation in 1947. the British devised associate degree oppressive legal regime known as the Frontier Crimes laws (FCR) to administer these regions. The FCR continues to be the law of the land in FATA. the aim of this demarcation had been each strategic and defensive: to delimit the individual spheres of influence of the *amir* of national capital and of the British over the unruly Pashtun tribes on either aspect of the road, and to discourage armed incursions into British Asian country by wild predatory parties from the Afghan aspect (Siddique 2014).

The substantial Pashtun populations on the British side were nominally subjects of the *amir*. Nor could the British be said to have been actually administering at that time the whole of that vast territory west of the Indus. The ‘pacification’ campaigns against the fierce Pashtun tribesmen, in an era of jubilant Victorian jingoism, incidentally inspired a great deal of romantic literature, including Winston Churchill’s rather fanciful accounts of his youthful exploits in the Malakand campaign (Rasanayagam 2011). The 1907 convention between Imperial Britain and Tsarist Russia formally ended the Great Game. The deal divided Persia into respective zones of influence, and formally protected Afghanistan’s western borders from Russian penetration. The two sides agreed to recognise Chinese control over Tibet. St Petersburg conceded Afghanistan to the British sphere of influence, but London was supposed to stay out of Afghan internal affairs and refrain from occupying or annexing any part of the country. The Afghan suzerain, Amir Habibullah, declared the convention illegal because Kabul was not party to the agreement. The great powers paid little attention to his protests (Siddique 2014).

With Afghanistan lacking a modern army, the rulers of Kabul often mobilised Pashtun tribes to fight their wars. In 1919, the nationalist and modernist King Amanullah Khan declared a jihad to end British control over Afghanistan’s foreign affairs. The

month-long war that followed was fought by Pashtun tribal *lashkars* composed of volunteers from both sides of the Durand Line. This was the Third Anglo-Afghan War, which ultimately led to Kabul obtaining full sovereignty. The British Empire, exhausted after the First World War, formally recognised Afghan independence in the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi (Ibid).

4.3 Demographic Analysis

As Mojumdar (2011) argues, “In the traditional statecraft of Afghanistan, population concerns were considered an aspect of the overriding problem of preserving internal security and maintaining control over the diverse and antagonistic groups in the country. Relying on crude calculations and statistical indicators, government authorities from the time of Abdur Rahman showed an awareness of and sensitivity to the size, distribution, and prosperity of different groups and communities. An official census was reportedly ordered by Abdur Rahman in 1892 as a means of identifying different national elements, increasing tax revenues from various sections of the country, and preparing a registry of men available for military service. The scope and outcome of this exercise are not known, but Lord Curzon came away from his visit to Kabul in 1895 quoting an estimate of 5 million people, a figure that was generally accepted at the time. Abdur Rahman’s concern for the security of his regime and for the effects of population pressure in the agricultural zones near Herat and Kabul contributed to his decision to support a settlement program in the relatively empty northern and northwestern regions” (Mojumdar 2011).

The conviction that massive expanses of arable land have been available to house any increases in populace has remained usual in Afghanistan. The second five-12 months plan (1963-sixty seven), as an example, accepts as a ‘fundamental reality’ that no-significant populace strain exists within the U. S. Nonetheless, the ‘population hassle’ in Afghanistan started out to be redefined in the Sixties and 1970s as the first our bodies of demographic facts, nevertheless of restricted extent and doubtful quality, have been gathered and the prices of establishing new agricultural settlements have become extra obvious (Lieberman 1980). Inside the following paragraphs, a few dimensions of Afghanistan’s political demography are being examined, earlier than turning efforts to provide a quantitative announcement of the scale, distribution, and dynamic characteristics of the population.

The leading group in Afghanistan's poly-ethnic system is the Pashto speaking, Sunni Muslim Pashtuns. Pashtun control is due to numerical power and mobility and to a social and political organization that imparts strong primordial sentiments to members. Pashtun tribal organization has been characterized by Barth¹ as a system of segmented, self-replicating units without centralized institutions. The basic unit is the *khel*, the clan community and military group. Khels are grouped into tribes, *kaum* or *qabili*, which are themselves linked into confederations. Conflict within and between Pashtun tribes and tribal groupings, between Pashtun and non-Pashtun communities, and between Pashtun and other ethnic groups and government forces has long been a feature of life in Afghanistan.

A major military and political competition among Pashtun tribal confederations has been that many of the Durrani, who are settled inside the region of Kandahar, and the in large part nomadic ghilzais, who're based totally definitely in the area amongst kalat-i-ghilzai and Ghazni. Extraordinary Pashtun tribes and tribal groupings, the source of full-size turmoil and struggle of their private proper, occupy regions inside the south and east of Kabul. From their conventional base, the Pashtuns now obtained a demographic foothold in areas beyond the Hindu Kush. this resettlement in non-Pashtun regions emerge as first off fostered through Abdur Rahman, himself of the Barakzai department of the Durrani confederation, as a way of diluting Ghilzai tribal resistance and of putting in place a devoted Pashtun presence some of the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Pashtun migration to northern provinces and to strategic South-western locations has endured in today's years with the opening-up of irrigated tracts for cultivation in what have been as soon as wastelands (ICG Asia Report no. 62 2003).

Pashtun khels generally occupy a common locality in which lands are owned by member clans and families. Tribal social organization has egalitarian and hierarchical features. Traditions of hospitality, strong kinship ties and mutual aid, martial valor, equity, and revenge are codified in the Pushtunwali, the unwritten system of tribal law that guarantees the right to be heard in a *jirgah*, a clan or tribal assembly, and sanctifies the principle of community authority. Tribal cohesion and equity were once promoted through periodic redistributions of land holdings. Control of land now rests

¹Thomas Fredrik Weybye Barth (22 December 1928 – 24 January 2016) was a Norwegian social anthropologist who published several ethnographic books including on Pashtuns of Afghanistan.

with economically and politically prominent individuals, tribal khans, who serve as patrons and landlords to kinsmen and to *hamsaya*, the non-Pashtun client groups living within or in proximity to Pashtun settlements. The tribal notables are less wealthy and less powerful than their counterparts in Pakistan and in pre-land reform Iran. Afghan tribal khans typically owe their pre-eminence to personal qualities of leadership and to a willingness to compete for followers through the exercise of patronage (Karrer 2012).

Other groups of numerical and political significance in Afghanistan include the Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkomans. The Persian speaking Hazaras live in tribally organized agricultural and pastoral settlements in the mountainous central provinces called the Hazarajat. The Hazaras are largely Shiite and have been subjected to invasion, heavy taxation, and en-serfment by orthodox Sunni Uzbeks and, more recently, Pashtuns. Many Hazaras have become debtors and bonded sharecroppers to nomadic Pashtun traders. An acute land shortage in the Hazarajat has produced a migration to Kabul and other urban centers and a movement to Pashtun areas where Hazaras, together with Baluch, Brahui, and other client groups, serve as sharecroppers. Northern and north-eastern areas of Afghanistan are occupied mainly by Persian-speaking Tajiks and Turkic-speaking Uzbeks and Turkomans, although the demographic composition of this onetime frontier area changed as a result of the immigration and settlement of Pashtun nomads, which continued into the 1950s (Karrer 2012). Tajiks are heavily represented in urban commercial and artisanal occupations while maintaining a strong agricultural tradition in the provinces of Baghlan, Takhar, and Badakhshan. Sizable numbers of Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkomans fleeing Soviet rule entered Afghanistan from the north of the Amu Darya in the 1920s and 1930s. The tribally organized Uzbeks and Turkomans are based in Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, and Samangan in Afghan Turkestan where they mostly are farmers.

The size of each of those one of a kind parts of the Afghan polity has lengthily been reckoned on the premise of administrative indicators and regulations of thumb. A usually encountered calculation puts the Pashtun proportion at over one-1/2, the Tajik at under one-third, and the combined Uzbek and Turkoman percentage at one-eighth of the populace. Hazara, Nuri, Baluch, Brahui, and different groups make up the the

rest. However, estimates of general populace size at any given time and the numbers within the extraordinary constituent groups have varied extensively. Luckily, current paintings, in particular the countrywide Demographic and own family steering Survey- the first countrywide demographic survey of Afghanistan, undertaken in settled areas among fall 1972 and fall 1973 and a few of the nomadic populace inside the summer season of 1974, and the more Kabul Survey of mortality and fertility patterns, carried out between 1972 and 1973, allows a better mapping of the Afghan populace in quantitative phrases than has heretofore been feasible.

This is “funded in large part by way of the us employer for International improvement and organized by way of the country college of New York at Buffalo and the Afghan critical Statistical office, performed approximately 21,000 household interviews, overlaying some 140,000 individuals, a few of the settled populace. The numbers of instances and indeed the whole set of strategies followed in surveying the nomadic populace continue to be undisclosed. The change records Streams (advertisements) changed into a steeply-priced and tough project in which a number of revolutionary strategies and tactics have been added. Exceptional amongst these were a technique of sampling and estimation in which inference from sample to non-sample units depended on populace size measures now not available while the sample changed into drawn, and using girl interviewers to collect pregnancy histories in far flung rural settings. Questions had been raised with recognize to the validity of the sampling scheme and the assumptions followed in generalizing pattern consequences to total population estimates.

In addition, the reliability of the survey results has been a source of some concern, particularly with respect to age misreporting and under enumeration of women. “Despite the necessity for the application of sizable correction factors, there is fair agreement, on the basis of ADS results, that the total settled population in 1972-73 was 11.5 million. There is less confidence in the ADS-based estimate of the nomadic population – 1.3 million in 1974 – as independent government estimates put that population at roughly 2.4 million in the mid-1970s. Accepting the corrected ADS figures and an ADS-based estimate of the current growth rate of 2.2 percent yields a mid-1979 estimate of 13.3 million for the settled population of Afghanistan and a total population estimate of 14.8 million. Accepting the larger figure for the nomadic

population yields a mid-1979 total of 15.8 million. ADS results provide some insights into the size of the urban population and the distribution of population within Afghanistan's rural sector" (Lieberman 1980).

The sedentary population is thought to account for at least 90 percent of the population, with urban and settled rural groups constituting 15 and 85 percent, respectively, of this total. Within the urban segment, Kabul (uncorrected population estimate of 597,000 in 1973 and perhaps 750,000 in 1978), Kandahar (uncorrected 1973 estimate of 160,000), and Herat (uncorrected 1973 estimate of 111,000) are major cities, and Baghlan, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Ghazni, Gardez, and Kunduz are important regional centers. The rapid growth of Kabul can be marked out in approximate terms through reference to Soviet estimates of 215,000 in 1954 and 378,000 in 1962, a 1965 Greater Kabul Census estimate of 435,000, and a 1969 UN advisory team estimate of 520,000. The growth of cities and towns in Afghanistan since World War II has reversed a decline in urban population and prosperity that began in the nineteenth century. Traditionally, Afghanistan's cities were transit and trading centers with groups of artisans and small-scale manufacturers. Cities now have important administrative and military command functions and provide a refuge for impoverished rural groups. Afghanistan's rural population includes the million and a half or more nomads, most of whom are Pashtuns, who move from winter grazing sites in the valleys and plains to the west, northwest, and southwest of the Hindu Kush to summer pastures in the Hazarajat and in Badakhshan to the north-east (Lieberman 1980).

For the non-nomadic, largely agricultural segment of the rural population, density of settlement is greatest in eastern Afghanistan in the intensively cultivated plains and valleys formed by the Kabul River and its tributaries. A second region of significant rural settlement is in the lower valleys of the Kunduz and Khanabad Rivers (provinces of Takhar and Kunduz), which drain into the Amu Darya (Palka 2001). Density of settlement stays at low tiers within the newly irrigated areas inside the provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, within the basin of the Hari Rud in Herat Province, and inside the deserts and mountainous wastelands of western and primary Afghanistan. Inside the rural region, there appear like vast variations within the in step with capita availability of agricultural resources. The Kunduz and Helmand Valleys, zones of land reclamation and improved irrigation, are favoured, while the provinces of the Kabul Basin and the vital provinces of Bamiyan and Wardak are at a disadvantage in regard to the in line with capita availability of irrigated land. The latter location, with a large Hazara population, is said to be experiencing aid depletion, a deteriorating nearby financial system, and continuing outmigration. (Lieberman 1980).

Results of the ADS and the Greater Kabul Survey (GKS) indicate that vital rates are high in Afghanistan and likely to remain so. Estimates place the birth rate at between 50 and 53 per thousand populations per year and the total fertility rate at approximately 8 per woman. These estimates are consistent with fertility patterns in other heavily rural and economically backward Islamic settings. ADS results indicated that nearly 50 percent of women in the age group 15-19 were currently married and virtually all women married by the end of the childbearing years; only 4 percent of women in the childbearing years could read; and less than 10 percent of the women interviewed in the survey were labour force participants. Both the ADS and the GKS show a similarity in the pattern and levels of fertility in urban and rural populations (data are for settled populations only). Marital fertility rates are apparently slightly higher for urban women under age 40, but this difference is offset by the smaller proportions of urban women in all age groups who are currently married (Lieberman 1980).

An analysis of the demography of Afghanistan provides the interesting data's and facts on the various geographical aspects of the country. Afghanistan is a landlocked country situated in the central part of Asia continent. Since the earlier times, Afghanistan has been under the fearsome authority of Persians, Arabs, Turks, and Mongols from time to time” (Demographics of Afghanistan 2017). To know more about the geographical demography of Afghanistan, some information on the bordering nations such as Pakistan (that lies towards the south and on to the east), Iran (on to the west), Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (towards the north), and China (in the northeast) is needed.

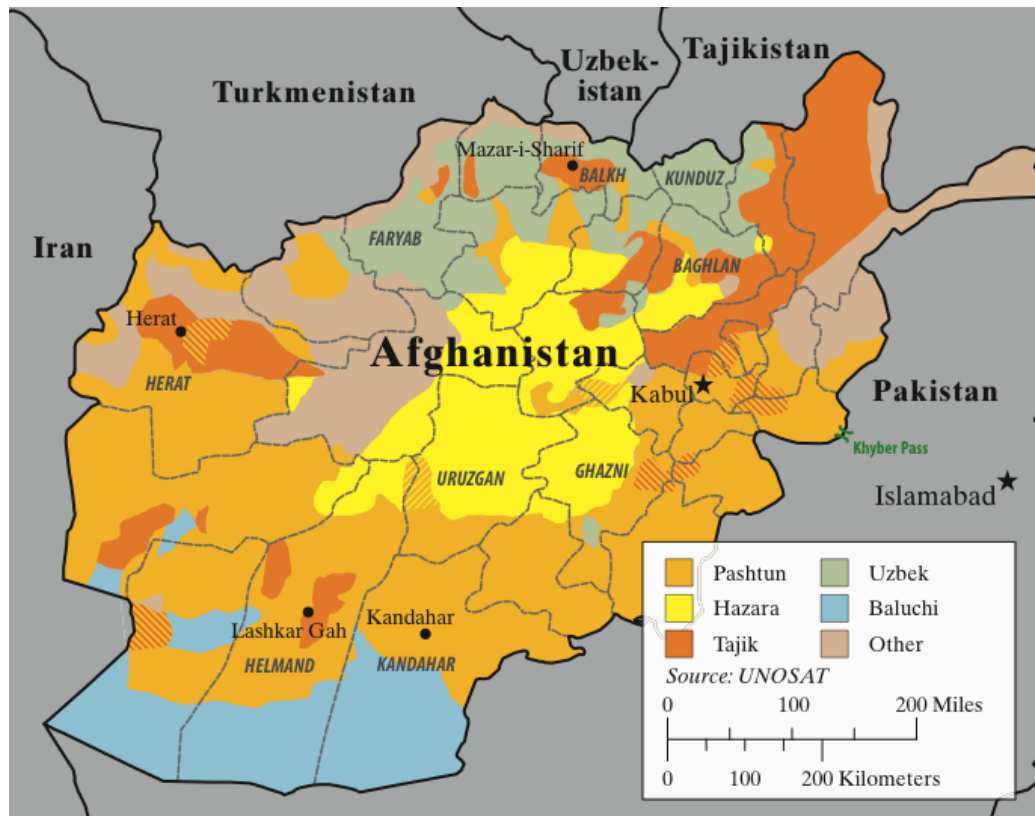
The area of Afghanistan is 647,497 sq km. It's important to note that Hindu Kush mountain range ranges from the east corridors of the country to the west which invariably forms an inevitable part of the geographical identity of its country. “A comprehensive demographics of Afghanistan points out to the fact that the land is inhabited by different ethnic groups like Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baloch and Hazara. Unlike other countries, Afghans feel still proud of their historic heritage, ethnicity and language. The classical Persian poetry has molded the different aspects of Afghan culture. In the majority of the Afghanistan, Dari language is widely spoken, followed by Pashto, Hazaragi, Nuristani, Brahui, Pamiri, Hindko, and Urdu. The political demography of Afghanistan has undergone topsy-turvy with radical changes taking place at different periods. The ongoing warfare has destroyed many of its infrastructural facilities which has well-affected the normal life of the country” (Demographics of Afghanistan 2017).

The population of Afghanistan in 2015 was estimated around 32 million. The estimated figure of 32 million in 2015 equates to a population density of 49 people per square kilometre or 127 per square mile. This makes Afghanistan the 150th most densely populated country in the world. There is a diverse range of ethnic groups within the country. Of the 31 million or so Afghan residents, 42% are Pashtun, 27% Tajik, 9% Hazara, 9% Uzbek, 4% Aimak, 3% Turkmen, 2% Baloch and 4% fall into an unspecified 'other' group. The Afghan government recently began issuing ID cards that state the ethnicity of each citizen, which should eventually reveal more precise numbers about the many ethnic groups in the country. Pashto and Dari – both are the official languages. Dari is spoken in mostly Tajik and Hazara areas, while Pashto is mostly spoken in Pashtun areas. Turkmen and Uzbek are spoken in the northern areas of the country. Many residents of the country are multilingual. Muslims account for 99% of the population of Afghanistan, with between 80% and 89% practicing Sunni Islam while 10-19% is Shia. There is no public Christian church in Afghanistan. As far as the ages of the population are concerned, this is another significant factor and one that is contributing to a rise in numbers overall. At the start of 2012, it was claimed that just 2.4% of all Afghan citizens were aged over 65 (Ibid).

4.4 Pashtun Factor in Political Reconstruction

The Pathan (Pashtun) humans represent the main ethnic and linguistic community, accounting for just around 1/2 the populace. Tribally organized, the Pathans are focused within the east and the south. As they gained manage over the relaxation of the U.S. in the 19th century, a lot of them settled in other areas too. The Pashtuns by and large speak Pashtu and they may be typically Sunni Muslims. a few Pashtuns, dwelling in Kabul and different close to vicinity, talk Dari. they're divided into tribal and sub-tribal businesses to which they stay loyal. these tribal divisions were the source of battle amongst Pashtuns in the course of their history. Even today, the Pashtun parties are divided alongside tribal lines. the majority of Pashtuns make their living off of animal husbandry and agriculture in addition to some exchange. In Afghanistan, Pashtuns have historically resided in a big semi-circular place following the Afghan border from north of the Darya-e-Morgab east and southward. Enclaves of Pashtuns live scattered amongst other ethnic agencies in a good deal of the rest of the united states, particularly within the northern regions and inside the western interior because of the resettlement rules of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, who ruled Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901.

Map 4.1: Afghanistan's major ethno linguistic groups



Source: <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2010/10/07/should-afghanistan-exist/>

From its founding in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani, Afghanistan has traditionally been dominated by the Pashtuns, who before 1978 constituted a 51% majority in the country. However, as a result of the 1979 Soviet invasion the population distribution in Afghanistan has changed. About 85% of the 6.2 million Afghan refugees who fled to Iran and Pakistan and around the World due to the Russian invasion and the war that followed it are Pashtuns. This, accordingly, lowered the percentage of Pashtuns inside Afghanistan temporarily and raised the percentages of the country's other ethnic groups. By the mid-1990s many of the refugees returned restoring the Pashtuns to their status of the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan constituting about 45% of the population (Pashtuns of Afghanistan 2002).

The Soviet invasion of December 1979 has been the major determining factor in Afghanistan's ethnic relations.

From that time, until mid-1991, the various factions of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, all dominated by Pashtuns, controlled the country's government. All other factions were either opposed or aligned

themselves with the PDPA (with most in the opposition), including several Pashtun factions... it should be noted that most of the factions were ethnically homogeneous and were engaging in a constant shifting of alliances worthy of traditional balance of power theory and continue to do so today. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 has only affected the power relations among the country's various factions but has not changed the fact that they are in constant competition with each other (Sawe 2017).

The Dari-speaking Tajik are the second-largest community, accounting for approximately 25% of the population. They are strongly identified with normal farming and town life, mostly in the fertile eastern valleys north and south of the Hindu Kush. Some 11% of the population are Turkic, mostly Uzbek and Turkmen, who live in the northern plains as farmers and herders. The central mountains yield a meagre living to some 1.1 million Hazaras, a Mongoloid people who mostly speak Persian. There are many smaller communities, the most important of which are the Nuristanis, of the high mountains of the east and the Baluch of the desert south (Worldatlas 2018).

With Sibghatullah Mojaddedi taking control of the 'Islamic state' of Afghanistan, a new phase has certainly begun in the country's history. Its significance was not so much because it automatically spells an end to the long years of strife and deprivation for the population, but because the coming together of at least some of the main guerrilla groups to form the present alliance can provide some room for other forces to set to work towards ending the long years of war. And yet it is unlikely that groups which dividedly sought to control the Kabul government for so many years should agree to work together regardless of the power equations in the government that they formed. That reality was inescapable even with the capitulation of the Hezb-i-Islami, which was obviously a consequence of Pakistan distancing itself from the group by acknowledging the Mojaddedi government.

There was the other aspect of the Afghan situation. The ethnic and tribal differences and rivalries fostered by the years of conflict under Najibullah. It is ironic, though not surprising, that the Pashtuns, who formed the single largest population group, could find any representation in the government. The groups which have come together comprise largely the northern tribal and ethnic minorities which have traditionally had little say in Kabul. The Islamic Jihad Council's permanent members are all

northerners, Ahmed Shah Masud, the Tajik military commander who has emerged as a prominent figure, general Abdul Rashid Dost, the Uzbek military commander, general Mansoor Naderi, the Ismaeli leader, and Abdul Momin the first army general commander of the 70th brigade in the north, who rebelled against Najibullah. However, over the years it is the Pashtuns who have sought refuge outside the country and the Hezb-islami chief Hekmatyar's base was stronger among them than on the ground, notwithstanding the intensity of the attacks by the group in Kabul recently. The possibility that the other smaller Pashtun generals in the east would link up with Hekmatyar has been proved baseless. In any case, the combination which has come together to form the Islamic government in Kabul comprises those who were more willing to make compromises. In other words, they had less to lose by giving in than did Hekmatyar who has been propped up by Nawaz Sharif's government, especially the Jamait-i-Islami sections. If Sharif's government moved away from Hekmatyar, it was in part due to American pressure. It was equally due to internal problems created by the Jamait's stand on Sharif's policies directed at opening up the economy and encouraging foreign investment. Even so, Sharif spent a good deal of time in trying to persuade the Hezb-islami leader to accept compromises.

It became was hoping that at the least some of the Pashtun generals could be accommodated inside the authorities in close to future, which might necessarily be large-based. Hekmatyar has within the in the meantime stated that he could guide intervening time leaders for the first six months but presidential elections would should be held right away, observed by means of parliamentary elections. The primary stipulation appeared rather an not possible one, given the ground conditions. The uniting of Pashtun forces, especially if Pakistan's Jamait-i-Islami persevered to present aid to Hekmatyar regardless of the authorities' stand, became anticipated a opportunity, hence giving a boost to Pashtun objectives. As proved later, Mujahedeen government could not sustain for a long period because a Pashtun leadership was lacking in it. The Karzai government solved this, and later Abdullah had also to relent to pressure from becoming President after Karzai's term, kneeling to Pashtun factor.

4.5 Role of Elites in Electoral Politics of Afghanistan

The issues related to electoral politics in Afghanistan come after Second World War, as no political parties were there in 19th century. But we shall concentrate on this

topic especially during the post-Taliban era. After the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, political elites had a unique opportunity to create an ethnically inclusive state. There was a lot of possibility to strengthen democracy in Afghanistan. This democracy may be solid democracy and inclusive for all tribal communities. Ethnic inclusion can take many forms. For example, some forms depend on the implementation of quotas and distribution of resources, while others seek to establish free and fair policies regardless of ethnic background (Daud 2014).

But these democratic norms could be implemented partially. The implementation challenges the cultural explanation that suggests limited experience with democracy as well as religious and cultural values. The political-institutional rationale presents two key arguments about the problems of democratization in Afghanistan. First, there was a fundamental mismatch between the new institutions developed under the auspices of the US and international community and local conditions. Local conditions were not ready to adopt the democratic process under the US direction. Second, Afghan elites managed these new institutions for taking power. The democratic institutions were managed and manipulated for the interests of Afghan elites. This widened gap between Afghan elites and common citizens. By widening this gap, the international community got colluding with local elites under the guise of democracy process. Afghan democracy depends practically on elites more than citizens (Daud 2014). Afghan elites catch up with the Afghan population in embracing democracy for what it is the rule of the people. Elites in Afghanistan are defined as those groups or persons who control the major share of power and resources. In Afghanistan, there is old popular proverb: three traditional resources of power and power struggle – gold (*zar*), women (*zan*) and land (*zamin*). These are the three the foundations of wealth, for getting reputation, and political alliances in Afghan society.

Historically, the country was ruled through exchange contracts between monarchs and traditional landed elites with inherited titles, the *khan* people, white-bearded elders, royal family and religious *ulema*. These kinds of governance reflect the ideal type of traditional authority analysed in the theory of German sociologist Max Weber. Max Weber describes three types of authority – traditional, charismatic and legitimate. Afghan monarchs and elites fit into the traditional type of authority. When monarchs

began to introduce forms of representative government (post-1965), those appointed or elected to public office achieved status. In the era of post-1989, the educated (mostly urban) elites had close links to the Communist party (or their factions) and the former Soviet Union (Barfield 2004). These types of elites were gradually overshadowed by political-military entrepreneurs who achieved elite status by proving their clout. In the post-2001 era, there emerged several new groups of technocrat elites who obtained access to resources and power through government positions and links to international actors (Schmeidl 2016). The competition between these groups has been a feature of the modern political landscape of Afghanistan.

The elites are socio-culturally powerful in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, socio-cultural power gives a strong impact on the political scenario. The people who are powerful or dominant or elite in socio-cultural issues would be powerful or elite in political scenario. In post-Taliban era, these elites played a significant contribution to decide the political future of Afghanistan. All ethnic groups through these elites were trying to become dominant and they were all craving to capture the political power. In the post-Taliban era, to establish the balance of power and political settlement was the major challenge before Afghan leaders. Political settlements are aimed to provide frameworks for ending hostilities among elites of different groups and a guide to post-conflict containment of failed states. On 5th of December 2001, the international community as well as the Afghan political elite groups concluded the agreement on provincial arrangements in Afghanistan for the re-establishment of permanent government institutions (the Bonn Agreement). The Agreement began an internationally-supported four-year political process that included the holding of an Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) in June 2002 to elect an Interim President to guide an intermediary government which in turn would ratify a new Constitution in 2003. This was then followed by a Presidential election in October 2004 and the legislative elections a year after (Saran 2017).

However, the meetings of the Bonn Conference could not succeed in the political settlement of resolving the Afghan elite conflicts. This is because it had the seeds of elite disunity, the consolidation of power by the internationally supported Karzai faction and eventually a conflict over the state which brought Afghanistan closer to inter-factional political violence in 2009. The formal survival of the Bonn Agreement

is not an indication of its success and fundamental necessity, but it is due to the prevention effect provided by external assistance and the presence of foreign troops. Bonn Conference was driven by the conflicting forces of huge pressure to produce a stable and pro-Western power in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks. This was organised in a domestic political environment which was particularly ill-disposed for negotiation. There was a swing in the compositions and positions of the ruling elite factions as the Taliban were driven out and some former Jihadi leaders were killed to be replaced by new Jihadis and pro-Western technocrats. This transform however was not significant in terms of the composition of the Jihadi elite and the nature of their power. The Bonn Conference as an exercise in elite restructuring that shaped a reshuffling of political elites rather than the elimination of parties or a fundamental change in the nature of their power (Saran 2017). With this shuffling of the political dialogue, the same elites who were responsible for the civil war returned to power in the post-Taliban state building.

Amid the confusion of conflicting and opposing elites, the 2004 presidential election took place. On this election many ethnic powers had been acting to keep authority. The sport of energy was equal in this election moreover. Hamid Karzai belongs to the maximum dominant tribe, mainly Pashtun tribe and so he received the election and has turn out to be president. Regarding 2004 presidential elections, it's far said: "This did now not lessen the keenness of the Afghan population to take part. Afghans had started out to question the dedication of their very own government and additionally the global community to democracy, they had been although keenly inquisitive about the political way. This may supply a reason behind why Afghan electorate became out in large numbers (round 70 in keeping with cent, of which forty in line with cent have been girls) on Election Day. Some people were testing the durability of these new democratic institutions in terms of bringing one of Karzai's rivals to power. This might also explain why Hamid Karzai though winning only received 55.4 per cent of the votes in the first round, scarcely over the required majority margin in an election, was contested by 17 candidates (Shahrani 2002).

Although Hamid Karzai got popular support from people, nevertheless many irregularities were claimed to observe. When elections was observed in rural Kabul province, electoral officers entered the ballot booths with villagers ostensibly helping

them to vote, or pointing to Karzai's name on the ballot paper as to where to tick the box. According to a renowned observer, Thomas Ruttig, Karzai did not even make the 50-per cent hurdle at the first go, and only ended up winning when the coalition of the major defeated candidates was arm-twisted to relinquish a second round of voting. Furthermore, human rights groups reported threats by local powerful people during the elections. In politics here today, whatever the gunmen want ultimately happens (Ruttig 2006).

Elites played their role in the 2004 presidential election, appearing more as an isolated event than part of a long-term strategy for democracy. In particular, the civic education is designed so that Afghans could understand how to manoeuvre in the new democratic set up by the 2004 constitution (Coburn and Larson 2013). While working with the many organizations on civic education in performance with the UN, their staff seemed more interested in teaching the logistics of elections than in explaining the workings of a presidential democracy. Some of our UN counterparts also had a formalistic approach that betrayed little understanding of the realities of Afghan society.

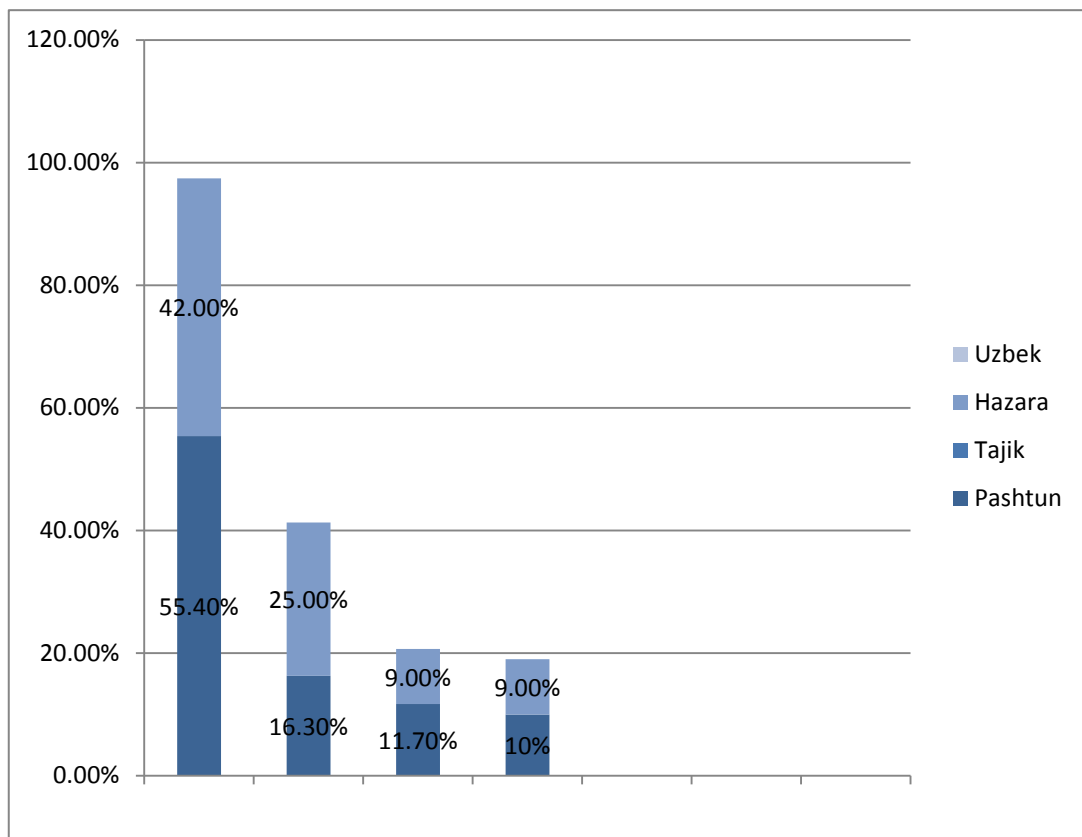
4.5.1 Afghan Presidential Elections, 2004

In the presidential election of 2004, Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun candidate, won the election with the majority votes. Yunis Qanooni, a Tajik candidate, got the second largest number of votes. Mohammad Mohaqiq, a Hazara, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek, obtained respectively the third and fourth highest votes. Figure illustrates that the ranking of each candidate corresponds to the size of his ethnic group.

Karzai, as the incumbent since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, was expectedly the most viable Pashtun candidate, and so he dominated the ballots in the regions with a Pashtun majority. The voters defected from all of his Pashtun rivals, as their tallies remained below 1% nationwide (IEC 2004), even while some very influential Pashtun elites like Sayed Ashaq Gilani and Ahmadshah Ahmadzai, leaders of two Mujahidin factions, were also in the race. The defection from these elites by voters shows a strong voting coordination among Pashtun voters when they have a clear expectation about the viability of candidates. Perhaps one other factor that helped Karzai with 13.6% higher votes is the refugees' votes. Unlike in the 2009 and 2014 elections, in

2004 Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan were allowed to vote, resulting in over 846,776 refugees in these countries casting their votes (Bijlert and Martine 2012: 4). Karzai won 80.2% votes from refugees in Pakistan, in which 85.1% of refugees are ethnic Pashtuns. He also secured 44.4% votes of refugees in Iran, which hosts 15% Pashtun refugees. Mohammad Yunis Qanooni, prominent Tajik elite, won 16.3% votes.

Graph 4.1: Candidates' votes and their ethnic population: Presidential Election of 2004



Source: (Mobasher 2016)

Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group, comprising an estimated 27% of the population. This suggests that Qanooni received 9.3% votes lower than the estimated Tajik population. Since other Tajik candidates received only 3.4% of the votes in total, Karzai's coalition with some Tajik powerbrokers is the most plausible explanation for the remaining discrepancy (Mobasher 2016).

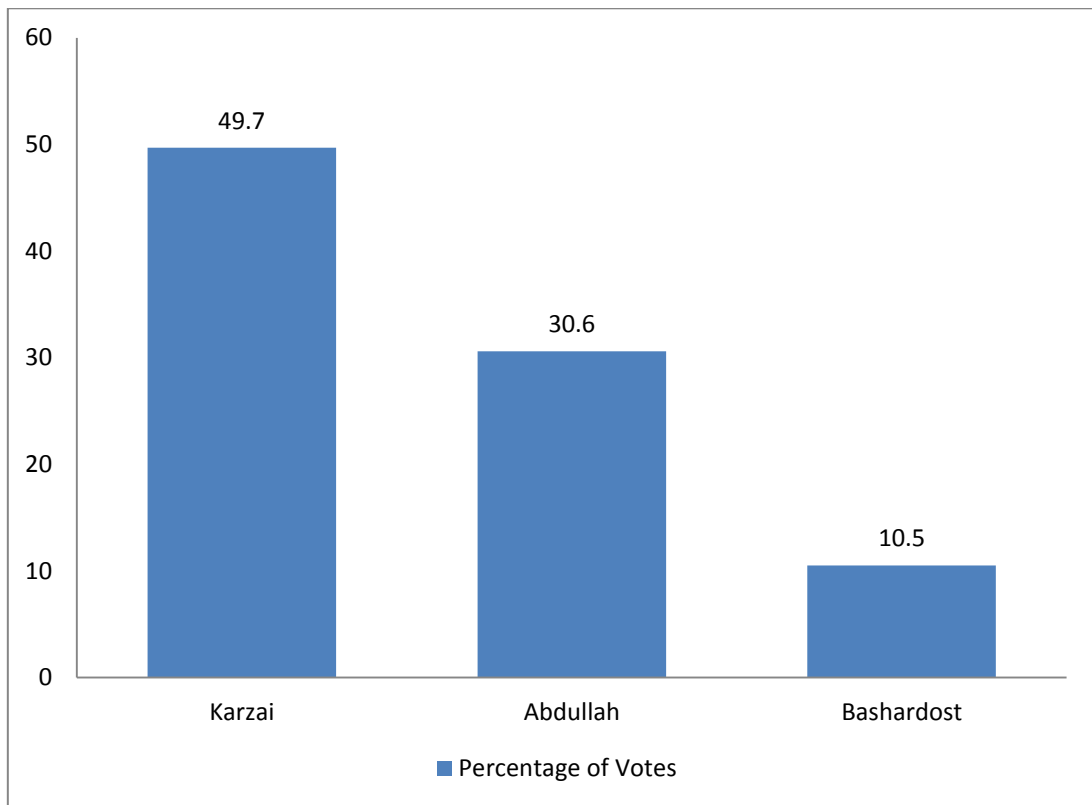
4.5.2 Afghan Presidential Elections, 2009

The results of the 2009 election (see figure below) exhibited a pattern of ethnic-election association, similar to the Presidential election of 2004. In that race, Karzai won the highest number of votes. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Tajik elite, won the second highest votes. Dr. Ramazan Bashardost, a Hazara technocrat, stood as the third leading candidate. Uzbeks did not have any candidate in the presidential election of 2009.

Karzai won 49.7% of the votes, winning around 5.7% lower than his previous total of votes. He still received around 7.7% higher votes than the estimated Pashtun population. Again, this discrepancy is likely attributable to inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic bargains that Karzai sealed with ethnic *Tikadarans*. Karzai, whose popularity was damaged by 2009, first attempted to establish himself as the most viable candidate among Pashtuns (*Reynolds and Carey 2012: 14*). He persuaded some strong Pashtun contenders, such as Gul Agha Shirzai (then governor of Nangarhar) and Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi (the head of a Pashtun nationalist party) not to run against him. Then, Karzai began negotiations and patronage to elites of different regions, to undermine other Pashtun counterparts in their local constituencies. For instance, Karzai appointed Haji Din Mohammad, a relative to two other candidates, Nasrullah Baryalay and Amin Arsala, as his campaign manager (Mobasher 2016).

Karzai's most electorally beneficial alliance was the one with Mohaqiq and Dostom, both former presidential candidates. Karzai succeeded in obtaining their support in exchange for several seats in his cabinet and the promise of upgrading two Hazara populated districts to provinces. Karzai's coalition with Mohaqiq, however, did not bring him as many Hazara votes. Hazaras, unlike Uzbeks, had a candidate of their own ethnic group, Dr Ramazan Bashardost, for whom they mostly voted (*Ibid*).

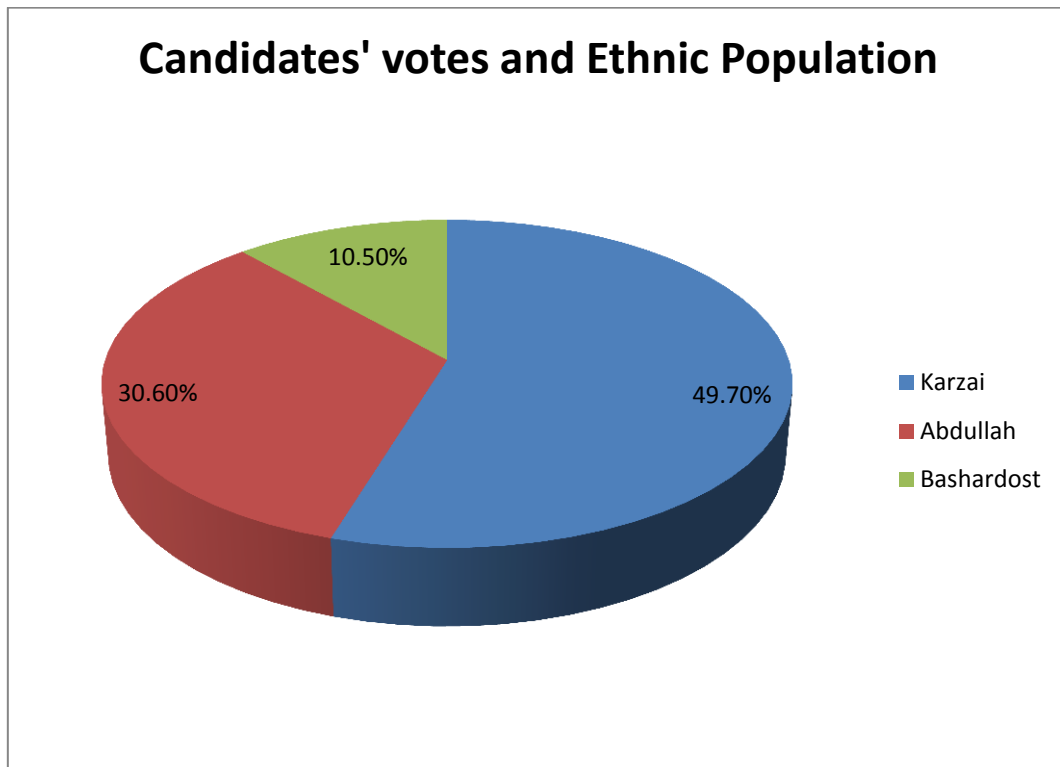
Graph 4.2: Candidates Votes in Presidential Elections of 2009



Source: <https://www.law.gonzaga.edu/law-review/files/2016/06/4-Mobasher-Pgs-355-416.pdf>

Considering his personality and past, Dr Bashardost's appeal to Hazara voters adds more to our understanding about the dynamics of ethnicity in relation to elections. Even though he is an ethnic Hazara, Dr Bashardost explicitly campaigned for national loyalty at the expense of ethnic loyalties. He vocally attacked ethno-political elites, including those of Hazaras (BBC NEWS 2009). Considering Dr Bashardost's loose ethnic ties with the Hazaras, Karzai's team did not expect Dr Bashardost to garner much of the Hazara votes, bearing in mind Mohaqiq's alliance with Karzai, who is still considered the most powerful leader of Hazaras. Nevertheless, the data shows that most Hazaras choose to vote for Dr Bashardost.

Chart 4.1: Candidates' votes and ethnic population in Afghanistan



Source: <https://www.law.gonzaga.edu/law-review/files/2016/06/4-Mobasher-Pgs-355-416.pdf>

The two most likely reasons for Hazaras choosing Dr Bashardost over Mohaqiq's endorsement were the former's viability and charisma. Dr Bashardost was not just the only Hazara candidate; he was also one of the viable candidates across the board, according to pre-election polls (Election observation mission 2009). His viability would normally have been magnified by the ethnic sentiments of his supporters, who would want him to at least finish second to Karzai in the first round of election in order to compete in the second round. The second most likely reason was Dr Bashardost's popularity among other ethnic groups, due to his anti-corruption commitment as the Minister of Planning and his campaign against poverty. Indeed, his viability increased by the expectation that he would mobilize a considerable number of protest votes from other ethnic groups. He did receive some votes in non-Hazara constituencies.

4.5.3 The Presidential Elections, 2014

The presidential election of 2014 broke from the pattern seen in the 2004 and 2009 elections, where a Pashtun candidate led and a Tajik candidate followed. This time, a Tajik candidate, Dr Abdullah, led the race, whereas an ethnic Pashtun, Dr Ghani, came in second. This dramatic change from previous presidential elections raised three important questions: First, if ethnicity determines the election outcome. Second, a Tajik candidate wins 45% of the votes, while the Tajik population was estimated at a mere 27%. Third, conversely, a Pashtun candidate obtains only 31.6% of the votes, while the Pashtun population was estimated around 42%. The answer to each of these problems points to the failure of strategic coordination among Pashtun candidates, a lack of information about viable candidates among Pashtun voters, and Dr Abdullah's success in cross-ethnic coalitions (Katzman 2015).

In the initial list of candidates, 10 out of 11 were Pashtuns, and only one was an ethnic Tajik. Just prior to the election, three Pashtun candidates pulled out, which only increased the chances of the other two Pashtun candidates. The seven remaining candidates held several meetings behind closed doors to decide whether one should step aside in favour of the other. None, however, yielded to another; as a result, Pashtun voters experienced an expectation crisis as to who would be the most viable candidate. The frustration of Pashtun voters became more obvious when Pashtun tribal elders from 26 provinces held a *Jirga* (council) in Kabul to reduce the number of their candidates and unite behind one (Ruttig 2014).

Considering the strong performances of different Pashtun contenders in different regions, it is not surprising that they did not back down. For instance, Dr. Rassul received a majority of votes in the Southern Provinces. Sayyaf, who ranked fourth among the candidates, was able to obtain 7% nationwide. Dr Ghani scored 26%, mostly from Pashtun dominated provinces in the East and Uzbek dominated provinces in the North. Indeed, during the election, Pashtun candidates campaigned against one another, rather than against Dr Abdullah (Khetab 2014).

In 2014, presidential election has evaporated in the wake of its contested second round due to surrounding success of the first round election. It happened after months of power struggle which finally produced a result: a government of national unity.

Ashraf Ghani is the newly-elected president of the country. His main rival Abdullah Abdullah was appointed as the Chief Executive by Ghani through a presidential decree. Subsequently, within the next two years, the constitution will be amended to create a prime ministerial position. It was observed the Afghan elections of the post-Taliban era had already foreseen a deceitful and contested election (Daud 2014). “It may be reasoned that national institutions are weak in bringing democratic stability. While the absence of strong institutions is an impediment in conducting free and fair elections, the main problem is that the actors or agents (elites) have not agreed upon the rules of the game institutions in their entirety. Institutions are supposed to define, clarify and consolidate power distribution and contestation arrangements – which they have not in the case of Afghanistan. Now the question is: are elections the right mechanism for contesting power in Afghanistan” (Leftwich and Wheeler 2011).

Elections have been taken the basis of the democratic form of governance implemented by the Western powers. “This idea was first coined by Boutros Boutros Ghali and Lakhdar Brahimi in ‘An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping’ and the ‘Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (The Brahimi Report)’ respectively and has been applied extensively around the globe since early 1990s. Despite elections being part Afghanistan’s political narrative for a long time, there is a lack of genuine commitment to the electoral process on the part of elite. Presidential 2014 election is not the only fraudulent election the country has experienced. Every single election conducted since 2004 has been fraught” as opposition claims (Daud 2014). The answer is not that simple but there are a few obvious explanations. One way to identify the electoral problems of this war-torn country is to assess the structure of power and study the behaviour and actions of its elites vis-à-vis the democratic structure of contestation of power (Ibid).

4.6 Role of Elites in Parliamentary Elections

After the 2004 presidential elections, the 2005 parliamentary elections was the major election in Afghan electoral politics. This was a major opportunity to choose their representatives. Again, however, elites intervened to maintain the upper strata of power structure. It can be described in many facts. Firstly, Karzai attempted to curtail

the influence of former Mujahedeen Parties and Jihadi factions by disallowing party lists in favour of an electoral system where Afghans could vote only for individual candidates. This rule is also excluded in new political parties that could have brought good candidates into the parliament: civil society was also marginalised and political activity in universities and schools was banned. Secondly, misunderstanding about implementing a complicated proportional representation system led to the adoption of the rarely used Single-Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV). It may be possible that Karzai and other leaders did not understand the full consequences of SNTV for Afghan politics.

However, warlords were able to enter parliament due to the lack of institutional capacities to implement the full letter of the Electoral Law. It has many reasons. First, not all individuals were barred from the election process because the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) was only able to obtain proof of this for 208 candidates. Second, the absence of a transitional justice process and effective electoral institutions meant that very few candidates were disqualified under the constitutional provision of having been convicted of certain human rights abuses (Schmeidl 2016). Though at times well-documented allegations of grave human rights violations existed against several warlords, none had been officially charged, prosecuted and convicted. Thus, many were able to stand for election and win a seat. This is how a minimum of 100 total individuals made it into the 249-member parliament and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission put the figure at 60-80 per cent.

4.6.1 Conflict among Elites in the System Formation

Afghanistan's current elite is a culmination of a half a century of power struggle. In its current form, the setup is probably the broadest formation of elite in the history of the country. Hamid Karzai has had a solitary vision for Afghanistan as a country that is home to everyone. Afghanistan's polity is a testament to that since it includes members of all groups from the former Communists to the Mujahideens, to the so-called technocrats, and even the Taliban. But it is still an arrangement that, in John Schwartz mantel's words, denies the possibility of popular sovereignty. It is a setup that gives elites unmatched power compared to the citizenry at large. Subsequently, the Emergency *Loya Jirga* (grand assembly) in 2002 endorsed the same elite to run the country until a constitution was drawn up and the presidential and parliamentary

elections were held. The constitutional process was dominated by a few powerful members of the Afghan elite, chiefly Karzai, the head of the Transitional Government, who in cahoots with the Americans made sure the constitution gave the next president immense powers. Thus, it created a setup that decidedly favoured the elites (Daud 2014).

In short, the main winners of the current system are the former Mujahideen commanders or the so-called former warlords, and the technocrats. They are either Afghan returnees or prominent individuals from the Afghan NGO community that was mainly based in Pakistan with operations in Afghanistan prior to the collapse of Taliban rule. So, if elites have become so disproportionately powerful and the contestation of power has been confined to elections at least on work can Afghanistan called an elite democracy. The answer to this question is central to deconstructing the reasons behind the troubled elections (Daud 2014).

Scholars of elitism have come to see democracy as a sham. Joseph Femia called it as ‘imaginary dream’ because it creates the illusion that the people or the masses are the main decision-makers through participating in political undertakings and political institutions. He calls it exercises in futility. In effect, many embedded democracies around the world are elite democracies in which elites make people believe their government is by the people, for the people and of the people (Dye and Zeigler 2006). To respond to this situation, the elitist theorists of democracy have reduced a radical doctrine – democracy in its classical sense – to a conservative one (Mosca 1923). Robert Michels conclude that “democracies are mere competitions between elites or as Vilfredo Pareto calls them demagogic plutocrats who have managed to distort voters’ interests and limit their choices significantly (Pareto 1935).

4.6.2 Democracy at Risk

Democracy is not an absolute concept. It is relative and should be understood as contextual, with limitations. By comparison, classical democracy puts the emphasis on the citizen or individual human as a unit whose development is the primary function of the democratic system. The citizen in turn is active, informed, democratic and aware of his moral and social responsibilities. The elitist theorists contest this concept as dangerously naïve and unrealistic because it overlooks a number of factors,

most crucially, ‘demagogic leadership, mass psychology, group coercion and the influence of those who control concentrated economic power (Daud 2014).

Afghanistan’s present democratic setup has two major flaws. First, there is only partial belief by its elites in democracy. For an elite democracy to function there has to be an uncompromising and comprehensive inter-elite consensus over the democratic form of contestation of power. Secondly, Afghan elites have failed to generate some measure of responsiveness to the opinion of the ‘apolitical clay’ or masses. Afghan elites fear that, once out of power, they will not only be unable to make a comeback but may also face extreme persecution at the hands of rivals, as is evident by Afghanistan’s history. As a result, they have exercised very little responsiveness to the aspirations of the population at large. Western elite democracies are ‘benign elite democracies’ because their elites are ‘public-minded and public-regarding (Itoh 2010).

In contrast, the Afghan elites are highly self-centered and “predatory”. An Afghan labourer interviewed by Tolo TV on September 17, 2014 regarding the implications of this year’s lengthy electoral process described his country’s elites as follows: “Those in power, whose houses are protected by blast walls, have bulletproof cars, whose children go to school in a bulletproof car with bodyguards and who have filled their domestic and foreign bank accounts with dollars, hardly feel the consequences of election stalemate’. This description fits the traits of “predatory” leaders who constantly seek external rent; concentrate power in personal rule and use it to discreetly control economic resources for personal gain with no commitment to common good; ruthlessly apply coercion and repression to gain and maintain power; and ‘use a mixture of fear and reward as a means of retaining the loyalty and considerable brutality and exclusion as the means for punishing opponents or competitors’. Therefore, the current Afghan political setup can, at best, be called a malfunctioning and incomplete elite democracy and, at worst, a pseudo-democratic, predatory machine” (Daud 2014).

In spite of obstacles, post-2001 measures have been favourable for a long-standing democracy, if properly carried out. Whatever the nature of the Afghan polity, there existed until recently an implicit consensus many of the Afghan elites to at the least keep the modern-day Afghan country. That consensus has been shaken up by means

of successive fraudulent elections. There additionally existed a unmarried strength elite ‘beneath the surface appearance of democratic variety’ until the presidential election of this yr. as a consequence, until the Afghan elites create a consensus over the form and mode of contestation of power and mend the defective setup, the contemporary election impasse will preserve unabated, becoming graver over the years and morphing into new crises (Daud 2014).

4.6.3 Lack of Powers of Elected Representatives

In democracy, ideally power stays with masses. But practically their representatives wield power. All political leaders strive for power. In this quest, they prefer to hold an elected office to avoid getting arbitrarily removed. Of the public offices, those that come with executive power, making elites ‘executive leaders or chief executives’ are more attractive to politicians. Such positions give them ample authority to not only devise and implement policy but also exercise greater power over societal commodities, economic resources and the political setup. By holding an executive office, elites can mainly exercise four forms of political power within the modern state: ‘political coercion, political authority, political influence and political manipulation. ‘Political Coercion is defined as the control of citizens by agents of the government using force or the immediate threat of force, leaving the citizen with no real choice about their behaviour. Political Authority is defined as the exercise by certain designated persons and institutions of the right, generally regarded as legitimate, to make and implement decisions that are binding within a prescribed area of jurisdiction. Political Influence is defined as the exercise of indirect or direct influence over the personnel or decisions of governmental institutions and agencies. Political Manipulation is defined as the activity of shaping the political opinions, values and behaviour of others without the latter realizing that this is happening. In other words, elites enjoy the highest level of control over others when they are executive leaders (Ibid).

Stability of democracy is another significant substance. long-windedly structured executive leadership is essential for creating stable polities as power is more usually disseminated and contested, giving a share to most elites and political groups. Afghanistan’s current formal polity is the farthest contrary of the above. Its Constitution provides for only one executive elected office at the national level – the

presidency – while the two vice presidents only exercise executive authority in the absence of the president. Sovereignty is essentially presidential in these countries. A lot has already been said and written about decentralization and devolution of power and the mistakes made by the Americans and Karzai in promoting a highly centralized political system in Afghanistan. Regardless, it is pertinent to note that the main reason that presidential elections are so fiercely contested in Afghanistan is that the appointments to all other executive positions at both national and sub-national levels are made by the president (Daud 2014).

Hierarchy is also part and parcel of democratic setup. But how far the power is devolved and distributed over the institutions of democracy decides the nature of hierarchy, whether low or high in governance. In Afghanistan, powers are centralized in president. All government positions equivalent or above the departmental directorships (civilian) and brigadier general's rank (military) are required to go through approval by the presidency. According to a former minister, cabinet meetings in the early years of Karzai's rule would witness far more debate, disagreements and even dissent. In the later years of his presidency, Karzai overruled ministers at will as he gradually purged his cabinet of strong personalities. In that respect, the Afghan presidency is a disproportionately powerful hierarchical position in a vastly egalitarian society. This structural flaw is one of the reasons behind Karzai becoming the most powerful politician in the past 15 years (Daud 2014).

Moreover, “the president's clout and power is not restricted to the official side of institutional schedule and has a distinguishing aspect of political planning of informal structure. When Afghanistan's former first vice president, Qaseem Faheem, passed away earlier this year, the responsibility of leadership in his commune, an informal position, was passed on to his eldest son by Karzai in a nationally-broadcast televised ceremony. In this way, Afghanistan's presidency reduces local leadership's dependence on legitimacy within their communities, and undermines the traditional accountability and transparency mechanisms. The practice is indicative of the policy of the colonial powers in the 19th and 20th century who to a large extent absolved local leadership in Asia, Latin America and Africa from local legitimacy, dealing a decisive blow to local power arrangements” (Daud2014). This partly explains Abdullah and his allies' insistence on being part of the next government and that some

authorities of the president should be delegated to the position of the Chief Executive. He and his allies have seen the writing on the wall. Without holding ‘high offices in the legally-sanctioned state’, they will gradually become irrelevant (Ibid).

4.7 Role of Elites in Provincial and Municipal Elections

The “Afghan constitution does provide for elected mayors, something that has received negligible consideration. Latest figures reveal that between 25-30 percent of the Afghan population dwells in the five major urban centers of Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar. The discomfiture of not holding a single mayoral election in the past 15 years is bewildering. Becoming elected Kabul mayor will be an striking viewpoint for up-and-coming as well as seasoned politicians. Consider this: Haneef Atmar and Amrullah Saleh, questionably two of the most proficient cabinet members of Afghanistan, were fired by Karzai in 2010. Four years down the line, they are still out of the executive power, despite being at prime age to serve in public office. The national unity government deal may give them a chance to be part of the cabinet once again but it will not protect them from being dismissed whenever the president wishes to do so. Also the popular MP and sacked former minister, Ramazan Bashardost, would be a viable choice for the Kabul municipality if the election were held today. By holding municipal elections, power would be automatically devolved for 30-40 percent of the population. It is interesting indeed that every time there is talk of devolution and decentralization, it is proposed a change of constitution rather than its full implementation” (Daud 2014).

Municipal elections cannot be escaped without trouble. The issues of urban revenue, the allocation of development funds from the national budget, policing, and urban management and development will take years to be agreed upon between the central and city powers. City boundaries need to be recognized so that provincial governors and mayors have transparency on what areas come under their respective jurisdictions. However, none of these dilemmas should not arise in the way of conducting municipal elections which, according to the constitution, should anyway take place at some point (Ibid).

Mobasher’s finding suggests that tallies across provinces, to a large extent, reflect ethnic divisions. Some findings also suggest cross-ethnic political bargains. These

findings indicate a higher level of cross-ethnic voting in some provinces over others. There are provinces of special interest that show a higher level of cross-ethnic voting or where voting pattern changes dramatically from one election to another. Mobasher incorporates analysis of data from both ethnically diverse and ethnically homogenous provinces. For instance, Kunduz, Ghazni, Baghlan and Kabul are the most ethnically heterogeneous provinces of Afghanistan. Zabul, Panjshir, and Daykundi are the most ethnically homogenous, or nearly homogenous provinces, composed of Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras respectively. No province is exclusively populated by Uzbeks. Faryab, Samangan, and Jauzjan represent the largest population of Uzbeks in the region (Mobasher 2016).

In the later years, Karzai refrained from publicly endorsing any of the candidates. His presumed choice, Zalmay Rasool, proved unelectable. Kabul city had an elected mayor already, that person could well have been seen as a natural successor to Karzai. In the whole world, almost Presidents come from capitals or major cities – Donald Trump comes from New York, David Cameron comes from London. A capable and yet electable mayor from any of the five major cities would naturally be seen as a strong contender for the presidency in Afghanistan. A number of Karzai's cabinet members and local leaders claim to have the capacity to lead the country. In fact, a big numbers of young Afghans aspire their country to become a self-independent and strong country one day. Municipal elections would not only provide the opportunity for them to assess their abilities to run a successful campaign but also prove their durability of election process. There is a lot of politicians like Amrullah Saleh, Haneef Atmar, the current education minister Farooq Wardak, or human rights activist Nader Nadery – they all believe in democratic process. They may have proved to be successful managers or convincing orators. This can only be answered if they have the opportunity to run for a public office in their view (Daud 2014).

Herat is a province of Afghanistan that is located in western part. "There is an ongoing tussle between liberal and conservative forces here. This province has also an urban and rural divide. Mayor of Herat position has been hotly contested in recent years. Several liberal groups' campaigns to have their representatives appointed have fallen flat. As a cultural and knowledge centre, Herat deserves to have the position put forward for election. It will also give a strong indication of the true political

inclination of the city. On the other side of the country, in the South Eastern province of Paktika – a multi-tribal, predominantly Pashtun province – one major tribe, *Zadran*, is neither represented in the lower nor the upper house of parliament (Daud 2014).

In 2005 Parliamentary election, the chief of this province lost the election. In the same year, two representatives from each of the *Kharoti* and *Sulaiman Khel* tribes were elected into the Afghan parliament. Many groups have experienced constant exclusion due to a flawed and broken system. With municipal elections, this could be made part of the local power-sharing arrangements. Most importantly, the leader of the notorious *Haqqani* insurgent network,² Jalaluddin Haqqani, comes from the *Zadran* (Pashtun) tribe. By creating alternative sources of power for his fellow tribesmen, his influence within the tribe could partly be curtailed” (Daud 2014). Some changes are being seen in the contemporary Afghan politics in favour of women and youth since last 15 years. Many women and young leaders have come to the fore in this period. However, many of them remain at the mercy of a setup that is dominated by old men. Young leaders and generations are experts in the areas of technology and modern methods. They could shake up this ancient structure and make the new society favourable for women and the young. Municipal elections could also serve the best of a number of young presidential aspirants.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the role of elites in different elections in Afghanistan. These elections have been taking place in the post-Taliban era. The electoral process and democratic norms are being implemented continuously in every election and it is improving. Elections per election, electoral processes are being fine-tuned. All ethnic communities are participating in this process, although these communities have irresolvable conflicts within them.

The traditional Islam has played a major role in the Afghan society and in developing the Islamic institutions of the country. In the case of Afghanistan, modern ethnographies shape a valuable resource for exploring the socio-economic factors shaping tribal life, an aspect that is hardly touched upon by historical sources.

²This is an insurgent group in Afghanistan that is fighting against the US led NATO forces.

Moreover, they stressed the focus on the power structure at the lower level of tribal organization and the relationships between leaders and followers are conceived from an inner, tribal perspective.

A nine-day Pashtun tribal *jirga* in Kandahar, following the assassination of Nadir Shah, chose a young charismatic commander in the imperial army, Ahmad Shah Abdali, to be ruler of the Afghans in 1747. He changed the name of his tribal confederation from Abdali to Durrani. From its founding in 1747 Afghanistan has traditionally been dominated by the Pashtuns. In the nineteenth century, the 'Great Game' began with the weakening of the Durrani Empire and the ambitions of European imperialism on Afghanistan. The Pashtun territories of today's Afghanistan and Pakistan were the Game's central arena. The Pashtuns, before 1978, constituted a 51% majority in the country. The Pathan (Pashtun) people constitute the dominant ethnic and linguistic community, accounting for just around half the population. Tribally organized, the Pathans are concentrated in the east and the south. As they gained control over the rest of the country in the 19th century, many of them settled in other areas too. The Pashtuns mostly speak Pashtu and they are generally Sunni Muslims. Some Pashtuns, residing in Kabul and other near area, speak Dari.

Other groups of numerical and political significance in Afghanistan include the Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkomans. The Persian speaking Hazaras live in tribally organized agricultural and pastoral settlements in the mountainous central provinces called the Hazarajat. The Hazaras are largely Shiite. A commonly encountered calculation puts the Pashtun proportion at over one-half, the Tajik at under one-third, and the combined Uzbek and Turkoman proportion at one-eighth of the population. Hazara, Nuri, Baluch, Brahui, and other communities make up the remainder. However, estimates of total population size at any given time and the numbers in the different constituent groups have varied widely.

After the 2004 presidential elections, the 2005 parliamentary elections was the major election in Afghan electoral politics. This was a major opportunity to choose their representatives. Again, however, elites intervened to maintain the upper strata of power structure. Accusations of fraud were many in 2009 presidential elections. The 2014 elections went into impasse, pointing at the need of power sharing at the centre, between posts and ethnic leaderships. The deal to resolve the current impasse lacks

structural guarantees to ensure to every side – either government or various ethnicities. At present, the government is perceived by the Abdullah camp to be an inclusive one; otherwise there will certainly be another crisis. However, there is no guarantee that both camps will continue to respect the deal in future and that the national unity government will remain stable.

By delaying municipal elections, the central leadership was denying the opportunity for new noticeable leaders to come up. However, some changes are being seen in the cotemporary Afghan politics in favour of women and youth since last 15 years. Many women and young leaders have come to the fore in this period. However, many of them remain at the mercy of a setup that is dominated by old men. Technology and modern methods should make the new society favourable for women and the young. Municipal elections could also serve the best of a number of young presidential aspirants, challenging the former elites.

CHAPTER 5

THE PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN: AN ANALYSIS

The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Afghanistan: An Analysis

5.1 Background

The year 2004 in Afghanistan was a historic mark, as it was the first post-Taliban election and rightly observed as an important move for the nation. Since 1969, this was the first election for the Afghans who enthusiastically participated in it. About 8.1 million ballots were cast and images of Afghan women with ink-stained fingers instantly became iconic of democracy's universal potential. Roughly about 80 to 90 percent of Afghans exhibited support in favour of polls for equal rights, electoral accountability, political parties, and peaceful opposition.

This was the period which saw the Taliban losing ground. Kabul was now an open city and the economy was witnessing a double digit growth. Hope and belief was emerging once more. However, it must be noted that from a historical perspective, the fact that Afghanistan's founding election was seeing some relative success in so much so that it was held, participated in by large numbers and overall accepted as legitimate both by the Afghans as well as the international community was not an unusual phenomenon in itself. There have been a number of such successful founding elections post conflict or transition that seek to inaugurate a new democratic regime, notable examples being Nicaragua in 1990, Cambodia in 1992, Mozambique in 1994 and Bosnia in 1996. There are also the notable examples of elections in West Germany and Japan in 1946. (Miller, 2014)

There do remain the grave exceptions, such as the ones in Angola and Liberia. The 1992 elections held in Angola saw the losing party launch a civil war while the year 1997 saw the Liberians electing a brutal warlord as they feared the backlash if he had lost. Usually such elections are noted for being problematic, expensive and inconvenient from a logistical standpoint. Their origins can be generally located in a post conflict scenario, be it a civil war (Bosnia), a struggle for independence (East Timor) or an interstate warfare (West Germany). Factors such as poverty, oppressive governance, poor infrastructure, social schisms, brain drain etc. all contribute towards the emergence of the need for such elections. Criminal gangs, smugglers and war lords flourish in the absence of any stable and good governance. (Ibid.)

The huge amount of resources and attention that founding elections attract both domestically as well as globally is one of the major reasons for their success. Parties participate in such elections only on the assurance that these elections are a rather preferable not to mention cost effective way to pursue their agenda rather than continuing to engage in conflict. The time, vigour, and resources earlier dedicated to fighting are now utilised for political contestation. The civilian public, furthermore, sees these elections as a window of opportunity for peace. The trouble and risk of registering to vote and casting a ballot is incentivised with the prospect of normalcy in their lives. Democracy is seen as an aspirational ideal. With having no opportunity to fail, the process of democratisation carries no disillusionment. Moreover, there are large amount of funds available from well resourced non-governmental organisations, international bodies and aid agencies all of whom are dedicated to elections, democratisation and processes of political transition. In addition to all of the aforementioned factors, there is also a certain elusive element attached to founding elections which creates an atmosphere that inspires devotion and dedication from the masses, idealism from international backers as well as a sense of mutual loyalty and pride among election cadres and security personnel alike. (Miller 2014)

By the time one approaches the second or third election, much of the advantage and motivation mentioned above tend to fade away while many of the challenges remain unaddressed. The elites on realising the actual extent of their popular hold may get disappointed, voters might find out that elections do not automatically ensure employment or infrastructure and international donors may have moved on to the next crisis/conflict situation. It is in fact precisely for these reasons that the second or third elections become far more vital and determine the extent of a country's commitment towards the democratisation process. As a scholar puts it, *"If nothing else, the convening of scheduled multiparty elections serves the minimal function of marking democracy's survival"* (Ibid).

The 2009 elections held in Afghanistan were troublesome on account of some predictable reasons. It was a major test given that the Afghans were for the first administering the elections, the 2004-2005 ones having been conducted by the UN-dominated Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). While the elections were conducted they had a lower voter turnout, especially in the Pashtun areas, which saw

more violence than the previous elections. Notwithstanding the same, probably some five million legitimate votes had been cast there as well (Ibid). Widespread election charges further discredited the elections in the eyes of the public. The Elections Complaints Commission (ECC) cancelled about a million votes due to fraudulent issues. When Karzai was found to be short of the 50 percent threshold mark, a second round was called for. However, due to international pressure as well as concerns whether the second round would be a transparent one or not, Karzai's main competitor Dr Abdullah Abdullah pulled out, cancelling the second round. The 2009 elections, fortunately, was a dry test run for the real challenge, the 2014 elections. The international community in 2009 was still keen on funding and providing security. It was the same that was responsible for brokering a deal between Karzai and Abdullah to bring an end to the post election crisis. The role played by them meant that the Afghans had not really tested their own ability to conduct elections. Given that Karzai as had been expected, won elections, meaning that there was not any real test of a peaceful transfer of power. The 2009 elections were to be seen, rather, as a cautionary tale, of what was to be avoided in the 2014 elections. It illustrated to the international community both the dangers and promise of the next elections- the danger of how corruption and insecurity could undermine the election process, and the promise of how the Afghans, who for the first time, conducted the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), investigated charges of corruption while administering the entire electoral process. Sadly, however, the observers have overlooked the existence and success of an Afghan-led process that investigated the corruption charges and invalidated over a million ballots (Miller 2014).

In global politics, Afghanistan has a pivotal role because of its geostrategic locations and its history associated with conflict and governance. Afghanistan has had a long history of continual struggle and conflict. This conflict and ceaseless civil war is a corollary of the Cold War. In the era of Cold war, great powers and their allies had been attempting to affect Afghan policies or trying to occupy the Afghan land. In the Cold War, Pakistan's wishful ambition of having a control over the country by calling it 'strategic depth' and the long struggle between the various ethnic groups of the country had contributed to an uneasy atmosphere. Meanwhile, on the one side, majority of Pashtuns wanted to establish their hegemony, and at the same time the rest of the ethnic groups tried to merge adequate representation in the political arena

of Afghanistan (Abraham 2013). For Afghanistan, it is very significant to understand the region as a factor but it also requires an analysis of the varied dynamics of its society, primarily its ethnic conflicts, which defines and evaluates the political structure of the country and its dealings with regard to the world. Such exercises need to emphasize and decipher the significance of the Pashtun factor and the role of ethnicity in Afghanistan that aims to help conceptualize a way out for the reorganization of Afghanistan after the US forces pull out (Ibid).

Afghanistan with more than one ethnic group and multiple languages has always been a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country with manifold and multi-layered identities. Ethnic conflict, does, however, pose a serious obstacle in front of the process of state formation. A different type of politics, one that is culturally sensitive, integrative and politically participative is required in such a situation. (Rais, 2008) There are four major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, namely the Pashtun, the Tajiks, the Hazaras, and the Uzbeks. Nuristanis, Turkmen, Baluchis etc. form some of the minor ethnic groups in the land. About 99% of the people follow the Islamic faith. There is, however, the presence of Sikhs, Hindus and even some Jews in the country. The U.S led intercession in 2001 defeated the Taliban rule and ended three decades of civil war. The civil conflict came to an end in December 2001 with the signing of the Bonn Agreement. The latter laid the broad framework for constructing a functioning, democratic government in Afghanistan. According to Maley, the agreement laid down the framework for not only rebuilding the political institutions of Afghanistan but also a timeframe for accomplishing these goals. (Maley 2011)

The US-led intervention in Afghanistan brought in its wake a formal democratization process in its state building. This intervention in Afghanistan gave a new political shape to the country and later a new constitution was proclaimed that provided for an elected President and Parliament along the familiar western lines. However, elections were not new for Afghanistan. Afghanistan already had six elections from 1923 and 1990s. Most had created National Assemblies and elections in one form or other. However, since the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, the Bonn agreement has drawn the Afghan political roadmap. In 2004 Afghanistan was to hold the Presidential and Parliamentary elections under the 2001 Bonn Agreement to substitute the intermediary government, which was led by the Northern Alliance. In Afghanistan,

Presidential election was held in 2004, but Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections were held in 2005, and subsequently presidential elections was held again in 2009 and parliamentary elections in 2010 to make Afghanistan a democratic country. Since the defeat of the Taliban regime in 2001 and the consequent beginning of the Bonn Process, Afghanistan (with the input of international donors) has begun technical and political process of democratization. This has led to the restoration of a presidential system of government, provincial councils, a bicameral parliament and an electoral cycle which has seen a round of elections and another that has begun (Katzman 2014).

This chapter discusses the important elections that were held after 2001. The democratic kind of elections is a new experience for Afghan people and politics.

5.2 Role of Ethnic Groups in Presidential Elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014

It was during the Bonn conference where the holding of Presidential Elections in Afghanistan was initially discussed. Many issues with respect to the same were identified out which political reconstruction; economic re-building and improving the security condition were the three major ones. All three are inexorably interrelated and are dependent on each other. Concerning political reconstruction, it was decided that there should be an election held in June 2014 in order to legitimise a new government. Registration of votes was initially a very slow process. By the end of February, 2004 only approximately 10% of the total estimated number of voters had been registered. A choice of degrees of unsteadiness and the necessity of the presidential and national assembly elections as well as the varied elementary processes required for holding the two simultaneously seemed difficult.

There are also serious shortfalls in the transition political parties into new and democratic ones. Without time to organize political parties, it was worried that the Legislative Elections would only institutionalize the current warlord based political hierarchy. Hence, there were doubts as to whether the parties doing good electorally would be favourable to Afghanistan's young, nascent democracy. The idea of elections being ethnicized was also a concern. In addition, there was constant apprehension before the presidential election, as to whether individual candidates or parties help garner support from the various ethnic groups.

5.2.1 Presidential Elections, 2004

October 9, 2004 witnessed the opening of 4,900 polling centres across the country to facilitate all registered voters to implement their rights for the first time, after Taliban was defeated in Afghanistan. About 120,000 Polling Officers were employed in order to organize these polling stations. To observe the election, ANFREL (Asian Network for Free Elections) deployed 32 observers in nine provinces of Afghanistan, including six regional centres, and visited 136 polling centers. ANEREL is a network that ensures free, fair and transparent elections in the Asian countries (Asian Network for free elections 2005).

A joint body appointed by Afghan President nominating 6 members and 5 international experts selected by the UN special representative conducted the elections. The elections were organized and executed by a Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). This JEMB consisted of six Afghan members. The appointment was done by the President. The body also had five international experts selected by the special representative of the UN. This hybrid body was made to attend to, on the one hand, the inefficiency of Afghans in running elections and, on the other hand, the need for the elections to have Afghan ownership. On the day of the election, 8.1 million votes were cast in Afghanistan. Out of this, 40 percent of the votes were cast by women. The estimated turnout was 70 per cent of registered voters. In addition, approximately 260,000 Afghan refugees in Iran and 590,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan also voted. The unfortunate problem with the ineradicable ink gave the opposition a perfect pretext to do what they had previously announced, that is, to boycott the election. They presented a list of grievances, some of which were legitimate and this led to the formation of a self-governing panel of international experts who would examine the complaints. The decisions taken by this panel did not essentially change the result, though it arguably damaged the JEMB's authority to arbitrate complaints. This international panel sowed the seed of the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC). In the subsequent years, the semi international JEMB would be converted into an all Afghan Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). This led to the evolution of their electoral institutions now (Smith 2004).

On 9 October 2004, an election to the office of President of Afghanistan was held. Hamid Karzai won the election. He won the election with 55.4% of the votes.

He had won three times more votes than any other contestant. There were 12 candidates, who secured less than 1% of the votes. It is estimated that more than three-quarters of Afghanistan's nearly 12 million registered voters cast ballots. The Joint Electoral Management Body conducted the elections. This body was chaired by Zakim Shah. Ray Kennedy, an American working for the United Nations was the vice chairperson. After some accusations of fraud circulated on the day of the election, at least fifteen candidates declared that they were boycotting the ballot, but the boycott dissolved when the United Nations announced it would set up a three-person independent panel to investigate the charges of irregularities. The panel included a former Canadian diplomat, a Swedish electoral expert, and the third member was later named by the European Union. The date was originally set for July 5, 2004. The elections were twice postponed, first until September, and then until October (Ibid).

Meanwhile, the contestants attempted to make use of the time they received due to the postponement. Two vice presidential candidates were nominated by those contesting for the president's post. This was used by some of the candidates to balance their ticket with respect to the nation's three major ethnic groups. If none of the candidates were to secure 50% of the votes, a run-off election would be held. This was to be Afghanistan's first direct elections. There had been legislative votes back in 1965 and 1969, but they had been indirect. There were rumours during the campaign that these elections were to be eventually decided by negotiations, as some candidates had allegedly bargained for promises of some political positions under Karzai or another candidate in lieu of dropping out of the race. (Smith 2004)

Barring Karzai, Gailani and Aarian, rest of the candidates publicly confirmed that they would boycott the ballot and would disregard the results successfully bringing Karzai's disparate opponents together. However, Mohammed Mohaqeq, the Hazara leader and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader quickly stated they were not part of the boycott. When it became clear that registration of voters would not be even close to complete in March 2004, the Afghan government began a series of postponements first to June, then August, and finally October 2004. October was the last realistic deadline before the mountains were covered with snow and led to a blocked country. The government also decided during the summer to separate the

presidential election from the parliamentary vote. The presidential election would be held first as announced and the parliamentary balloting would be postponed until the spring of 2005.

Since the vote for presidential election used the same ballot countrywide, this was much easier to carry out than the more complex parliamentary elections that would require the recruitment and listing of candidates at the local level. It also postponed the problem of dealing with local power holders who might seek to interfere with the election process. They would have relatively little impact on a national presidential election, but fighting was likely to take place regarding the choice of local candidates for parliamentary seats. A total number of 18 candidates chose to run for the presidency and qualified for the ballot. Of these only the Pashtun Karzai and three others – Yunus Qanuni, an ethnic Tajik from the Panjshir Valley; Hajji Mohammad Mohaqiq, an ethnic Shia Hazaras; and Abdul Rashid Dostum, the ethnic Uzbek from northwest Afghanistan – were expected to draw more than a few percent of the votes.

With the large turnout of voters, it can be said that the Afghan people were intrinsically and motivated to see success of the election. This was a defeat for the Taliban, not Karzai's rival candidates. The insurgents proved unable to interfere with the process despite the many threats they made, provoking fears of voter intimidation and terrorist incidents. While security was put in place and undoubtedly had some impact, it would not have been possible to have such a smooth election if the Afghan people had not been so solidly in support of it. Many Afghans see this, combined with the failure of Taliban candidates to garner significant support anywhere, as evidence that the Taliban are becoming a spent force politically (Barfield 2004).

Afghanistan at present is on a road to recovery. The economy, after decades of war lies in a state of ruins while the environment continues to revolve in a state of crisis. The Presidential elections of the nation were finally set for the 9th of October, 2004. The voter turnout during the same was about 8 million. The Joint Electoral Body of Afghanistan on the 3rd of November, 2004, certified the elections and declared as interim president, Hamid Karzai. He polled 55.4% of the total votes followed by Yunis Qanooni who gathered 16.3% of the total votes polled. The new constitution was adopted and in 2004, the nation was declared an Islamic Republic. The Constitution empowers the country's government with a popularly elected president,

two vice presidents as well as a national assembly. The latter consists of two Houses, House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga) and the House of People (Wolesi Jirga). An independent Judiciary consisting of the Supreme Court (Stera Mahkama), High Courts and Appeal Courts, was also created. As per the Constitution, the members of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President with the approval of the Wolesi Jirga.

5.2.2 Presidential Elections, 2009

The Presidential Election of 2004 was seen as the beginning of a new dawn. After decades of conflict, the election was expected to bring about hope, optimism and expectations for a brighter future. The deteriorating security situation, rise in ethnic tensions and the increasing influence of local warlords and commanders are now challenges for the upcoming electoral process. Doubts as to whether the government is capable of meeting the basic amenities like economic and social needs of its citizens, as recognised in the Government's Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Furthermore, the rule of law is limited, public institutions and governance structures are frail, and there are numerous and often parallel structures of state and non-state governance entities (Kippen 2008).

Some issues were already brewing up, especially regarding the electoral reforms as some glaring deficiencies have been found in the Election Law. Parliament attempted to revise certain measures in the run up to the August 2009 elections. For instance, Wolesi Jirga mulled over changes that would have required a parliamentary vote of approval on the appointment of Election commissioners and Afghanistan's head of state run media. A draft law to bring alteration in the electoral system to bring about mixed proportional voting system was also considered. However, this did not lead to any new legislation as there were disagreements over allocation of seats to Kuchis which is a nomadic group. Another legislation with the provision to alter the Political Party Lawis legislation would have raised the minimum number of signatures from 700 to 10000. The legislation however was not signed into law was passed until after election by the President. The change at that time would have led to consolidation in the number of political parties (National Democratic Institute 2009). Another issue was that when the sitting president has some link with government media, it should not continue when he would run for another term. "The independence of the Election

Committee needs to be firmly established and control of the state media should be insulated from sitting President running for office. Afghanistan's constitution prevents changes to the Electoral Law less than a year before the end of a legislative term (Ibid).

For the August 20 polls the total number of candidates for president was 41. Three withdrew from the race by the day of the election, leaving 38 active candidates. It was an increase from the 23 presidential candidates who stood for election in 2004. Observers from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) noted that the main candidates energetically campaigned throughout the length and breadth of the nation. They held discussions on crucial issues and this played an important role during the official campaign period. The incumbent President Hamid Karzai seeking endorsements from power brokers across the country, including anti-government elements and tribal leaders, ran on a platform of national unity. Dr Abdullah Abdullah, a trained ophthalmologist who was former advisor to Ahmad Shah Masood as well as a former foreign minister under the post-Taliban transitional administration and Karzai's cabinet, campaigned on switching to a parliamentary system, reducing the powers of the presidency and strengthening provincial governments. Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, an academic and former finance minister under the post-Taliban transitional government, prioritized economic progress, employment and education (Ibid).

This time around, the participation of candidates was large. The IEC reported votes being cast for 32 candidates in the final certified results: 26 ministers under Karzai's administration and a sitting parliamentarian, whose campaign that ran on a platform of anti-corruption gained thrust in the final weeks before the polls. Also participating in the race were two female candidates. Member of Parliament, Shahla Atta's campaign agenda included judicial reforms and mandatory education. Frozana Frana, a medical doctor, laid emphasis to equal rights for women and disarmament in her Presidential campaign. In the 2004 Presidential election, only one woman, Masouda Jalal, ran for President. She was later appointed as minister for women's affairs. NDI observers noted that during the official campaign period, candidates were able to carry out campaign activities in provinces of the different ethnic bases. For example, Karzai held large campaign events in Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat and other northern cities

while Abdullah held a rally in Kandahar attended by more than 4,000 supporters. There were no reported clashes between supporters of the different candidates (National Democratic Institute 2009).

Security remained overall a problem. It affected the size of campaign gatherings. For instance, in Kunduz, infested with militants, the Presidential campaign made special provision for campaign in the form of campaign offices in addition to normal offices. These campaign offices provided lodging to elders and local leaders. The local leaders would collect campaign material to distribute them among their communities. (Afghanistan. gc.ca 2014).

On 20 August 2009, presidential elections were conducted in Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai won the elections with 49.67% of votes, followed by his rival Dr Abdullah Abdullah who finished with 30.59% of the votes. He received around 7.7% higher votes than the estimated Pashtun population (Mobasher 2016). He introduced two prominent Tajik and Hazara strongmen- Marshal Qasim Fahim and Karim Khalili- as his vice president candidates, Karzai attempted to draw cross-ethnic votes. He also secured the backing of some influential Tajik leaders such as Burhanuddin Rabbani (the former president), Ismail Khan (the former governor of Herat), Ahmad Wali Massoud (brother of the late Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Northern Alliance figure), and the former Minister of Interior, Moqbel Zarar. Karzai's most electorally beneficial alliance was the one with Mohaqiq and Dostom, both former presidential candidates. Karzai succeeded in obtaining their support in exchange of several seats in his cabinet and the promise of upgrading two Hazara populated districts to provinces. Karzai's coalition with Mohaqiq, however, did not bring him as many Hazara votes. Hazaras, unlike Uzbeks, had a candidate of their own ethnic group: Dr. Ramazan Bashardost, for whom they mostly voted (Mobasher 2016).

The election lacked security, voter turnout was low, people were not aware of the election and election process, and there was widespread ballot stuffing, threats, and other electoral rigging. A second round run-off vote was scheduled for 7 November 2009 under heavy U.S. and ally pressure but this did not take place as Abdullah refused to participate. Hamid Karzai was declared President of Afghanistan. His tenure was for the next 5 years. Under the 2004 constitution, elections should have been held no later than 60 days before the end of President Karzai's term in July

2009. Karzai was accused by his opposition of attempting to extend his power beyond his term. In February 2009, the Independent Election Committee was called by Karzai to hold the election based on the country's constitution. This meant reiterating the August date forcibly, and seizing the critics, who were afraid of a leadership void between May and August. There were complaints from some potential Afghan opponents regarding Karzai's move. They said it was a move to clear his challengers out of his way so that they would not be able to campaign for the 2009 election. Karzai was forced to accept the date of 20 August 2009 as his move was objected and rejected by the international community and the IEC. The Supreme Court of Afghanistan in March 2009 announced that until a new leader came to power Karzai's term would be extended. "His opponents called the decision highly unconstitutional and deplorable, and said that it put Karzai in a position to exploit the office to secure his electoral victory (Afghanistan. gc.ca 2014).

The preliminary list of registered candidates was officially released by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) on 17th May 2009. Initially, the total number of candidates registered was 44 in number. Three candidates withdrew as the Election Day came closer. Each presidential candidate fielded two vice-presidential candidates. Karzai who filed his candidacy on the 4th of May, 2009 retained his incumbent second, Vice President Karim Khalili belonging to the Hazara ethnic group but did exchange his first Vice President Ahmad Zia Massood for a Tajik former warlord, Mohammad Qasim Fahim. The United National Front announced their presidential candidate on the 16th of April 2009. Their candidate was Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the former foreign minister.

Dr Abdullah being foreign minister of the Northern Alliance from 1998 onwards was a dominant figure in the Alliance. He was appointed as the foreign minister in the interim government that was installed after the U.S. invasion. The first person to have declared his intention to run, Dr. Ramazan Bashedost formally registered for the presidential election on May 7, 2009, with vice-presidential candidates Mr. Mohammad Mosa Barekzai, a professor at the Kabul Agricultural Institute and Ms. Afifa Maroof, a member of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and with a dove, a symbol of peace and liberty, as their campaign symbol. Bashedost has candidly criticized the government and has levied corruption charges on the

ministers. As the planning minister, Bashardost was always doubtful of foreign organizations in Afghanistan taking away the aid money intended for the Afghan people. He resigned later under foreign and government pressure (Colomer 2004).

5.2.3 Presidential Elections, 2014

The 2014 presidential election is the most important election in the electoral history of Afghanistan, because, for the first time, an elected president was replaced by another elected president. The official campaign for presidential election 2014 started in February 2014. However, there is no doubt that the political positioning started even in 2013. Eleven people were permitted to participate in the presidential election, but three resigned before the voting. Each candidate chose two additional people for vice-presidents. The selection of these candidates was a tool to achieve higher votes among all the main ethnic groups of Afghanistan, i.e. Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara (Piotrowski 2014). Contrary to the dominant expectation, the elections had a high turnout with 58% of registered voters (seven of 12 million) coming to cast ballot, the highest in the history of any election in Afghanistan. The higher turnout was achieved mainly in urban areas because urban area people participated in a big level. Younger Afghans, also, voted in large numbers. There was weak participation in the rural areas, including in Nangarhar province where the Taliban was still influential. For comparison, the presidential elections of 2009 had an official 38% participation rate, but it was in fact much lower and there was evidence of likely fraud in both the voting and results. The elections of 2004, with a reported 77% participation rate, were certainly not a true picture of the situation then (Ibid).

The final results of the second round and swearing-in of the new president of Afghanistan was expected in June 2014. According to declarations by the main candidates, there was no risk of a situation similar to that in 2009 when the second round was boycotted by Dr Abdullah Abdullah in protest of perceived fraud in favour of Karzai (Ibid). It was also expected that before the second round there would be a much sharper debate on the legacy of Karzai especially on corruption and the dysfunction of the central administration. Even though polls in Afghanistan have their imperfections, it seemed clear that there remained only about three main contenders: Abdullah, Zalmi Rasoul and Ashraf Ghani. Each of these candidates is moderate and had cultivated good relations with the NATO countries.

There is no doubt that the campaign was a clash of the three. Abdullah was from a mixed ethnic family but was perceived mainly as a Tajik. He was one of the leaders of the *mujahedeen* resistance to the Soviets, then a close advisor to the legendary leader Ahmad Shah Masoud and to the Northern Alliance, which struggled with the Taliban in the 1990s. He was positively perceived in the West and familiar for his time as head of Afghan diplomacy. Abdullah was supported during the campaign by Mohammed Khan (Pashtun) and Mohammed Mohaqia (Hazara). During the second round, ‘Abdullah’s troika’ was likely to compete against Rasoul or Ghani, both supported by Karzai. Rasoul was presented as the preferred candidate of the then presidential election. Rasoul was head of Afghanistan’s Security Council and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rasoul had chosen for vice-presidents the Tajik leader, Ahmed Zia Masoud (brother of Ahmed Shah, who was killed by Al Qaeda) and Habiba Sarabi (Hazara), the only woman in this campaign. Ghani is Pashtun and was an expert with the World Bank and an economics professor in the U.S. before becoming head of Afghanistan’s Ministry of Finance. During the campaign, Ghani was accompanied by famous Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum and former Minister of Justice Sarar Danish (Hazara). It was assumed that these three possible coalitions would ease ethnic divisions, responsible for the past conflicts in Afghanistan (Piotrowski 2014).

The presidential and provincial council elections of 2014 were a major challenge to the task of continuation of democratic transition of the country. These elections were the fifth that had been held since the fall of the Taliban. They were also the first to be administered under a legal structure that underwent democratic legislative progression rather than presidential decree. The Afghans and the international community both saw these elections as an important opportunity to combine the gains made toward democratization. With the prospect of a self-governing and peaceful devolution of power this was seen as an important landmark in Afghanistan’s political narration. Dr Ashraf Ghani was inaugurated as president on September 29, 2014 after an election process that had lasted more than six months. The process included both Afghanistan’s first presidential runoff election and a historic not to mention unprecedented comprehensive audit of ballot boxes. Shortly after President Ghani was sworn in, Abdullah Abdullah was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the

runner-up - Afghanistan in the presidential election. After the runoff election a new situation was created as a part of the unity government signed by two candidates.

The provincial council elections ended on 26 October announcing the last certified results by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC). DI (Democratic International) organized an international election observation mission for the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections. This was funded in cooperation with the USAID. DI observed all phases of the election process, including the first round of election held on 5 April, the presidential runoff election of 14 June, and the comprehensive audit of ballots cast in the runoff. Results were published in *Afghanistan Election Observation Mission 2014 – Final Report*, and published in 2015 (Democracy International 2015).

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the Afghan leaders and the international community worked to set up a political structure for the democratic growth of Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement set up a framework, to plan a transitional government and a system for subsequent elections. A representative body, or Loya Jirga, convened and drafted a new constitution, which established a presidential system of government. The constitution called for direct presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections, beginning with a presidential election in 2004. The 2004 presidential election was conducted by the Joint Electoral Management Body, an entity composed of representatives both from Afghanistan and from the international community chosen and supported by the United Nations. An estimated 70 percent of Afghans turned out to vote in the election, with Hamid Karzai receiving more than 50 percent of votes necessary to avoid a runoff election. Despite allegations of widespread fraud, the result was broadly accepted by the Afghan people and hailed by the international community as a major step forward in Afghanistan's democratic transition.

On 18 September 2005, Afghans cast ballots for parliamentary and provincial council candidates. This time, however, only approximately 50 percent of registered voters chose to participate. The elections were marred by some of the same allegations of fraud that were raised after the 2004 elections, such as problems with indelible ink, ballot stuffing, and charges of multiple voting. These allegations and the subsequent investigation delayed the announcement of results until early November 2005. Many

voters reported confusion regarding the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system and a lack of knowledge of individual candidates. These factors may have contributed to the significantly lower turnout than in the 2004 election. The SNTV system has been criticised because it prevents the development of political parties by creating disincentives for candidates in the same province to form coalitions. It also prevents broad representation in an elected body by favouring those candidates with bases of support in urban areas. Under SNTV, voters in each province cast only one vote, despite being represented by multiple individuals. This leads to fragmentation in the vote and results, in many instances, in members being elected with a small percentage of the vote. This was especially prevalent in Kabul where a large number of candidates competed and winning candidates were often elected with extremely small percentages of total votes cast (National Democratic Institute 2006).

The 2009 presidential and provincial council elections were held on 20 August 2009. In contrast to the 2004 and 2005 elections, a new Independent Electoral Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) conducted the 2009 elections rather than the UN-supported Joint Electoral Management Body, supported by an Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) with both Afghan and international community members. By all measures, these elections were more problematic. Allegations of fraud, while present in previous elections, were significantly greater in scope and scale. There were major incidents of violence, which might have contributed to low turnout, which was estimated at less than 40 percent. The initial results indicated a landslide victory for President Karzai, who appeared to have exceeded the 50 percent threshold needed to avoid a runoff election between him and the runner up, Dr Abdullah Abdullah. However, the allegations of fraud resulted in more than 2,500 official complaints being submitted to the ECC. The vast majority of the complaints concerned ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, ghost polling stations or other types of electoral fraud.

In response to these complaints, the ECC determined that the results of the election in more than 3,000 polling stations were considered suspicious. Because of time constraints and logistical challenges, the ECC decided it was not possible to conduct a full audit and recount of all polling stations with suspicious results. The commissioners eventually ordered an audit and recount of a random sample of approximately 10 percent of those suspicious polling stations and the results were

ordered to be extrapolated to the full population of suspicious polling stations. After the sample audit was finished, the ECC ordered the invalidation of an estimated 1.26 million votes. More than 1 million of these were for Karzai. As a result, Karzai's total vote fell below 50 percent; this necessitated a runoff election between him and Abdullah. On the same day, the ECC released its decisions. Democracy International issued a statement urging the IEC to certify the results based on the ECC's decisions and hold a runoff election as required by Afghanistan's Electoral Law. Initially, Karzai refused to accept the ECC's decision and insisted that he had won outright in the first round. In response to significant worldwide pressure, President Karzai had no option but to agree to accept the ECC's decision and participate in a runoff election against Dr Abdullah.

The runoff election was scheduled for November 7. Shortly after the announcement that a runoff would be held, Dr Abdullah's campaign issued a statement demanding that the government needs to address the fraud that had occurred in the first round. Notably, he demanded personnel changes at the IEC. His demands culminated in an ultimatum that he would withdraw from the race if he was not satisfied that the runoff would be conducted fairly. The IEC essentially ignored Abdullah's demands and on November 1, 2009, he announced that a transparent election would not be possible under the current conditions and withdrew from the race. One day later, the IEC announced the cancellation of the scheduled runoff election and confirmed President Karzai as the winner.

Soon after the 2009 election and the subsequent controversy, there was widespread support for electoral reforms. The problems with the SNTV system that surfaced in 2005 and 2009 further contributed to the argument for reform. Although President Karzai publicly supported calls for reform, he believed that foreign interference rather than the issues identified by observers was the major problem that needed to be addressed. As a result, he moved unilaterally to amend the election law by decree during a parliamentary recess and in doing so eliminated any role for foreigners on the ECC. His decree was broadly criticized as undemocratic and the lower house of parliament voted to reject it. Vetoing a presidential decree requires the approval of both the upper and lower houses of parliament in Afghanistan. However, the upper house refused to consider the rejection of the decree. As such, the decree remained in

force and served as the electoral legal framework for the 2010 parliamentary elections. While the decree remained in force, in April 2010 President Karzai did ultimately allow two international members to be on the ECC. This was seen as an overture to the international community but also as pragmatic on Karzai's part since the international community expressed frustration and reluctance to support a process that was unlikely to avoid the problems of the past.

Furthermore, the president replaced the IEC chair and chief executive with two individuals who were widely seen as credible and competent. These were undeniably positive developments, but the lack of any changes to the SNTV system meant that the problems that arose in the 2005 election were likely to surface again in 2010. The parliamentary election was held on September 18, 2010. Once again, there were widespread allegations of fraud. The IEC announced preliminary results on October 20 and the results for all constituencies except Ghazni province on 24 November. Immediately after the election, the ECC began investigating complaints. The IEC and ECC would eventually disqualify numerous candidates and invalidate more than 1.3 million of the estimated 5.6 million votes cast. This meant that 24 candidates who had been initially declared winners had not won seats after the announcement of results. On December 1, 2010, the IEC announced results for Ghazni. The candidates who were denied victories formed an advocacy group to demand that the election results be invalidated and a new election held. Under Afghan law all decisions of the ECC are final, and there was, therefore, no legal recourse for the candidates to pursue their grievances.

Nonetheless, on December 26, President Karzai issued a decree that established a special court to investigate the results of the election. Many observers questioned the legality of this action, but the special tribunal began investigating the results of the election. In June 2011, the special tribunal ordered the removal of 62 sitting Members of Parliament (MPs), creating further controversy. Throughout the rest of the summer and into the fall of 2011, the controversy continued, with various numbers of MPs being threatened with removal. In the end, the IEC ordered 21 candidates from 12 provinces removed from office. This tumultuous process was finally concluded in November 2011, more than a year after the 2010 election. The lasting controversy highlighted the already urgent need for electoral reform in Afghanistan.

5.2.4 Security Preparation during the Elections

The constitution of Afghanistan, though talks about free, universal, secret, and direct' vote for elected institutions, it is indeed a flawed document when it comes to many of the details of the electoral process in the country. According to the constitution, the term of office for the president expires on May 21 and the Wolesi Jirga term on June 21 of the fifth year after their election. Elections to the aforementioned bodies as per the constitution must be conducted thirty to sixty days prior to these dates. This requires that these elections take place in the spring. This requirement means that in the harsh conditions of the winter, preparations of most of the logistics are required as well as campaigns, when snowfall, snow melting, rainfall and floods cannot reach the country most of the time. In addition, given that Afghanistan is largely an agricultural country and spring is the busiest time for farmers and rural communities, a large part of Afghan society can influence voting negatively for elections.

Article 61, which states if a candidate dies during the first or second round of polling, or after elections before the announcement of results, elections should be conducted once again is another problematic section. Regardless of whether he or she had significant support, the death of a candidate during the stipulated period would require the elections to be conducted again. Whatever might be the original purpose of the constitution's drafters, given the Taliban strategy of targeted killings of political actors, this provision, adds a major liability to the process.

5.2.5 Media Environment and Campaign Coverage

With the growth and activity of this increasingly vibrant sector, journalists and their employers are being exposed to greater risks in fulfilling their obligation to cover and report the news – especially as it relates to politics and elections. This reality was highlighted by the murder of a highly respected journalist and his family in March 2014 attack on the Serena Hotel. While that journalist was not the only casualty of the campaign period, his death prompted Afghan journalists to band together and refused proactively to report terrorist attacks for 15 days to deny anti-government groups the publicity they seek. This type of boycott raises its own questions about the role and responsibilities of journalists and the media sector. The omission of terrorist attacks from the news left a strong impression among the Afghan public and international

community that the election environment was more peaceful and the security services were more successful in preventing such incidents than was anticipated. The impression of a more secure election cycle, one shared even by DI's observers, later proved to be incorrect once actual incident data was collected and reported from around the country (Democracy International 2015).

5.2.6 Accusation of Irregularities about Election

In July, certain charges regarding deceitful practices in the voting process came to the surface. Six observers were sent by the European Union in the provinces of Kabul, Balkh and Herat. President Hamid Karzai, meanwhile was accused by Dr Abdullah Abdullah of rigging the elections. The former met with the two candidates on 24 August, and told them to rapidly close the audit process. The inauguration ceremony was then set for September 2, 2014, one month after it was scheduled by the UN. He was of the view that the failure of the candidates to compromise on the results had led to the weakening of Afghanistan. President Karzai maintained that he would step down on 2nd September; he did not, however, due to security concerns. In the interim period, the results of the election remained in dispute, despite the proposal put forth by the United States that the candidates should agree to a power-sharing agreement, that had been agreed to earlier. An UN-led audit was unable to influence Abdullah as he maintained that the audit team was not able to explain superfluous votes counted in the run-off. Supporters of Ghani insisted on a deal, keeping the door open to discussions (Archiwal 2015).

On the 19th of September, Ghani was declared a winner by the Independent Election Commission. Five hours later, a power-sharing agreement was signed between Ghani and Abdullah: Ghani was to be the president and Abdullah was to take on an important position in the government. The deal was signed in front of the Presidential palace, with incumbent President Hamid Karzai in attendance. The deal also stipulated that the Independent Election Commission would not let loose the exact number of votes in total during the second round of voting (Ibid). The table 5.1 gives number of votes and percentage received by candidates in the Presidential voting of 2014.

Table 5.1: First and Second Rounds of Voting in Presidential Elections, 2014

Candidate	Nominating Party	First Round Votes	%	Second Round Votes	%
Asraf Ghani	Independent	2,084,547	31.56	4,485,888	56.44
Abdullah Abdullah	National Coalition	2,972,141	45.00	3,461,639	43.56
Zalmai Rassoul	Independent	750,997	11.37		
Abdul Rassoul Sayyaf	Independent	465,207	7.04		
Qutbuddin Hilal	Independent	181,827	2.75		
Gul Agha Sherzai	Independent	103,636	1.57		
Mohammad Daud Sultanzoy	Independent	30,685	0.46		
Hedayat Amin Arsala	Independent	15,506	0.23		
Invalid Votes	---	---	---	---	---
Total		6,604,546	100	7,947,527	100

Source: Independent Election Commission 2017 (<http://www.iec.org.af/>)

5.2.7 A Comparative Analysis of the Ethnic Division in the Context of the Presidential Elections

The first Presidential elections in the country were held on October 9, 2004. The leading candidates included Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, Yunus Qanuni, a Tajik, General Dostum, a warlord and Mohammad Mohaqiq, a Hazara Shia. Both Dostum and Mohaqiq had poor human rights record. A woman candidate named Masooda Jalal also ran for the post. In the portfolios, candidates showed their ethnic, tribal and ideological affiliations. The complex voter registration procedure took nine months to be completed and was conducted in three phases. The citizens living in Iran and Pakistan were also registered as voters in the registration which saw unexpectedly high number. More than ten million Afghans registered themselves in which more than 40 percent were women. Amidst reports of technical problems and minor incidents, voting took place. The mood however was positive. The major problem however was that all candidates except Karzai boycotted the election over the issue of

use of poor quality of ineradicable ink used in the voting. On this, international monitors also raised questions. Later, however, these candidates re-joined the process after getting assurance that UN fact finding commission would be set up to look into the issue. Hamid Karzai however did not agree to calls for fresh elections. The concerns of candidates were addressed by setting up a three member UN team. This team gave their report that said that elections were generally fair. The candidates then accepted the report. They also accepted that Karzai received highest percentage of votes. He was declared the winner and international community quickly congratulated Afghan people for conducting successful elections.

The Karzai Presidency witnessed a high drama over the Bilateral Security Agreement that the United States wished to sign with Afghanistan to arrive finally at an arrangement that could enable the US to leave some forces in Afghanistan. The United States accused Karzai of trying to stall the signing of the agreement by employing delaying tactics. Karzai, on the other hand, had several objections to the Agreement. One among the objections was the clause that exempted the US soldiers from prosecution in Afghanistan. Karzai wanted approval by a *Loya Jirga* (grand council). The *Loya Jirga* finally in Late November 2013 approved the agreement. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, was for the approval of assembly and for the document signed before the end of the year. However, the document was not signed until early December. Later Karzai was said to have made new demands like help in getting the talks with Taliban back on track and end of military raids on Afghan homes that violated their cultural sentiments. Stopping Drone strikes that killed civilians indiscriminately was also among demands. Prisoner releases has been an impediment to agreement. The Afghan government was overseeing all detentions earlier in 2013. However, the release of some prisoners attracted criticism from the US for they were alleged by latter to be responsible for attacks on NATO and ANSF personnel. The Afghan government however was not convinced.

Later, when NATO ministers expressed discontent by saying that the signing of the agreement is not possible and that all troops would be withdrawn. The Pentagon, too, appeared to be arranging for complete withdrawal. However, the US Secretary of State John Kerry agreed to sign the agreement. He said, "It will be signed by the way. Whether it's signed by him or not we obviously have serious reservations, but all six

of the candidates for the presidency of Afghanistan have said that they will sign it” (gocsan.bolgspot.in 2011).

The debate surrounding BSA and the frequent acrimonious exchanges between the US and Karzai were reflective of the narrow approach and short sightedness that did not take cognizance of the potential ethnic fissures. The agreement just concerned an arrangement for the withdrawal of the US forces without providing a safety arrangement that could bring stability in the event of a failure of political system that is still in its infancy. Since Karzai belongs to predominant Pashtun community, certain things have been taken for granted. USA probably is in no mood to touch the sensitive ethnic issue for fear of getting embroiled in things that it cannot have control over and can be messy.

Here, let us take a comparative look at the 2004 and 2009 Presidential elections to examine the critical role of ethnicity in post-Bonn politics. Afghanistan has a number of sizeable ethnic groups. The constitution and anthem have documented 14 different major ethnic groups living in Afghanistan. It is also called the ‘land of ethnicities (Larson 2015). The voting pattern in the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections clearly shows ethnic hostility regarding questions of power distribution, state legitimacy, and joint ownership over the new Afghanistan. The 2004 and 2009 presidential election results rendered indescribable the hopefulness that there was an emergence of a greater sense of nationhood amongst various social groups in post-Bonn Afghanistan. They rather showed that the issues of power distribution, ethnic identity, and quest for empowerment remain politically divisive. In Afghanistan, the issue of ethnicity is as complex and multifaceted as its demographic, geographic, social, and cultural realities. This diversity has inflicted serious harms upon the development of a coherent sense of people hood. Afghanistan has a ‘mosaic’ composition of ethnic groups, which are viewed as rigid, permanent and clear-cut boundaries separating them with peculiar characteristics making them solid cultural units which are divided by obvious boundaries and have engaged in conflict for hundreds of years (Schetter 2004).

Ethnic Hazaras who in terms of absolute number rank third behind Pashtuns and Tajiks, sometimes become crucial in electoral battles. The ethnic group participated in large numbers in the last presidential and parliamentary elections, leading them to be

called a 'vote bank'. In a society where institutions tasked with the management of inter communal relations have collapsed and where political pluralism and shared institutions do not exist and where violent conflicts have endured leading to an atmosphere of mistrust and incompatibility, elections are seen as a crucial medium for changing individuals conflictive preferences into peaceful collective decision making. In various parts of the world, following a number of international interventions in order to to curb ethnic violence, elections have been tested successfully as a conflict management tool. Because of the aforementioned significance, in most of the peace agreements of modern times, they become a crucial part of peace-making endeavours aimed at helping a post-conflict society transition into a democratic one. They enable the larger processes of institution building, nation-building, and, most importantly, transform warring armies into peaceful political parties (Reilly 2006).

Post-conflict election encourages democratic and civic engagements. Some scholars argue that democratic competitions facilitated by elections are the most sustainable as well as the cheapest method of resolving tensions that are inherent to all societies. However, others argue that elections in conflict-prone societies foment tensions carrying with them the inherent potential to become a lightning rod for popular dissatisfaction and extremist sentiments. Elections, it is argued, carry a great threat of becoming the source of increasing violence as well as renewed tension with the potential of plunging a post-conflict society back into instability.

According to Katzman, "the election is widely considered to be a major pioneer of the stability in the country. Afghanistan's political development, and a metric" to judge the legitimacy and popularity of Afghan partner in American mission. (Katzman 2012). It is essential here to see the observations of Simonsen (2004) as well. According to him, elections in societies where civic engagement does not last and elites tend to strengthen their positions through identity manipulation can persuade the masses to vote along ethnic lines, at times, even to their disadvantage. In Afghanistan, where the feeling of nationhood is weak and voters tend see their interests linked inextricably to the notion of ethnicity, people would hardly be influenced to vote for someone with a different ethnic identity. In line with this tendency, the candidates, while choosing their running mates from other ethnic groups, tend to make only intermittent appeals to groups outside their own for broader support. They would

rather focus on the majority of the inhabitants who belong to their own ethnicity, or they could mobilize on ethno-regional consciousness or tribal ties.

Identity manipulation is comparatively easy in post-conflict societies because in these societies, conflicts coincide with ethnic boundaries and ethnic identities have a tendency to gain in salience relative to other identities. All types of mass-interactions, therefore, remain prone to identity manipulation. The ground remains fairly open for competitions, decisively designed and executed along ethnic lines; the elections held in 2004 and 2009 providing a classic example. (Simonsen 2004).

Thus, elections were set to bring peace to the Afghan society. In 2004, for the first time in the history, Afghanistan was experienced in which peaceful transfer of power was expected. The results showed how social dissolution was deep. There were four prominent contenders for the presidency: namely Hamid Karzai, Yunis Legal, Mohammed Mohkik, and General Rashid Dostum, who represented Pashtun, Tajik, Hazaras and Uzbek respectively.

In order to create a government among all ethnic groups in one country, instead of giving the opportunity to nationalist rhetoric, and institutions and platforms on all the lecturers and activities, rather than it would be a daunting task to providing opportunities for constructive conflicts, a means was provided for ethnic competition. Karzai, because he had accused Pashtoon of cheating in his government, Kandahar, for 91% voting for Karzai in 2004 and 88% in 2009 to punish many non-believers, along with 4.8% being counted, The power of another Pashtun candidate South is not a potential event, at least in the near future.

Paktya is another province that voted 95.9% for Karzai in 2004 and 82.2% in 2009 with 6.5% for Ghani—making Pashtun average 88.7%. While this reduction in Pashtuns' vote illustrates the tolerance of this tough and guarded Pashtun territory towards other groups, the leaders and the masses as heirs to the kings would not easily let go of the sense of bearing the responsibility for the preservation of the South's dominance (Larson 2015).

Finally, Kabul the capital, is considered a vital province in providing the stronghold for institutions like government, the media, and educational institutions. These institutions serve as means of multi-layered public interactions. The city has been home to nationalist movements and is a preferred destination in migration flow from the rural to urban areas. Kabul is considered as a 'melting pot' for manifold identities.

Leading candidates, keeping the above in mind, applied their campaign tools here in endeavours to make cross-community penetration and appeal to sections outside their own. Voting patterns in this city, therefore, closely reflect the national pattern. “In 2004, Karzai received 53%, Younis Qanooni 19.9%, Mohammad Mohaqqiq 17.9%, and Dostum just 0.8%. In 2009, Karzai, Abdullah, and Bashardost received 48%, 31%, and 13% respectively” (Sahar 2014).

Though the proportion of the votes received in 2009, despite some changes, it does not justify general optimism that inter-communal boundaries along with the increase in literacy rates in big cities are in the process of erosion. Karzai should have got an additional 17% votes passed to Mohakkik in 2004, but Bashardost, without a thorough campaign, performed very well, won 13%.

Abdullah attracted a large number of voters, and there are two main reasons for this. First of all, Kabul is their hometown and a powerful group of Panjshiris, who have created large political and economic networks, will have helped them win the vote. Secondly, the important parts of thousands Pashtun. Which disappointed Mohammed Abdullah failed to lift his promises, who were trying to expel Karzai's network. The urban class, which is less than racial involvement and development and change, voted Abdullah, who constantly asked for improvement and change (Sahar 2014).

October 9th, 2004 was a historic site for Afghanistan. This opportunity was especially important for those ethnic minorities which were ruled by Pashtun ruler continuously. It was broken in the conventional power balance at the center. This election was brought to autonomy of the Authority; it was mobilized to establish the identity and proportion of the people. Consequences "As the polling pattern showed ethnic loyalty and voting for candidates from their own racial groups more than 90% in 7 provinces in a manner of national census on racial. The 2009 presidential election saw little different results. It produced to display results with national integration, social cohesion, and the emergence of ethnic harmony. However, the miserable truth is that within the coalition, individual and collective identity, group consciousness, and political loyalty breed rarely disconnected from ethnic encroachment, sharing of powers, and the joint ownership of new Afghanistan, ethnic and more political and disintegrated communities. The issue of resolving in is a challenge of national influence (Rais 2009).

In both 2004 and 2009, Hamid Karzai had been the only leading Pashtun candidate in the elections. The votes of Karzai were proportional to the Pashtun population in all provinces in both presidential elections. He won a higher percentage of votes in the provinces that had a Pashtun majority. Conversely, he won fewer votes in those provinces in which Pashtuns were not the majority (Mobasher 2016). In 2004, Karzai's best poll results came from the two southeast provinces, Khost and Paktika, where he earned 96% in each—the Khost and Paktika populations are comprised of 99% and 96% Pashtuns, respectively. On the other hand, Karzai's worst poll performance was in Panjshir, where he won below 1% in 2004. The estimated Pashtun population in this province is nearly 0%. Similarly, in the 2009 election, Karzai's highest scores were 81% in Kunar and 75% in Nangarhar, which are Pashtun dominated provinces; his lowest votes in the polls were 24% in Ghazni and 32% in Badakhshan (Ibid).

Karzai gained the backing of both Mohaqiq and Khalili. In exchange for their support, Khalili was introduced as his second vice president candidate, and Mohaqiq was offered five seats in the cabinet and other governmental positions. Karzai also promised to upgrade two districts of Hazara residents to the provinces. In addition to the support of these elite classes, Karzai has supported the most prominent Shia cleric, Ayatollah Asaf Mohseni, in return for signing the famous Shi'a Personal Statement Law, with thousands of mainly Shi'a, with these measures. It was not surprising that Karzai had topped the vote in Bamiyan, although only 0.5% of the difference between him and Dr. Babbardost, who did not have a candidate in the 2009 election. Karzai was defeated in all other constituencies (Mobasher 2016).

In 2004, apart from Dostum and Abdul Satar Siraj, another bright aristocracy also ran for president. However, less than 1% of votes were received in the latter half. In the presidential election of 2004, a new window opens for our understanding of caste-election mobility by examining the Dostom vote, as the race plays an intermediary role in this election. Dostom did not only get votes from Uzbek, but also from tournaments, because Uzbekistan and Turkmen are ethnic Turkic, even if they are considered ethnic groups separately (Mobasher 2016).

5.3 Role of Ethnic Groups in Parliamentary and Provincial Elections 2005, 2010, 2015

In addition to presidential elections, elections in parliamentary and provincial councils also have more or less identical ethnic cleavage. The last phase of the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections ended with the selection of the leadership of the National Assembly in Afghanistan during the last week in December. These elections not only represent an important step in the democratic development of Afghanistan, they also fulfill the major political objectives of the Bonn Process.

However, the Taliban regime was overthrown by the US-led coalition, and the experts saw the September 18 elections, for the first time in Afghanistan, the independent, democratic parliamentary elections could announce a new beginning for the war-torn country. About 12.5 million Afghans have been registered in the parliamentary elections to vote, which comes one year later when Hamid Karzai was elected to the country's first free presidential election. Still there may be obstacles in the progress of some fear if the Taliban members or the Sardars who control the country's widespread wrapping in Parliament get enough representation in the Parliament.

It is expected that all representative bodies will also be divided by caste. The National Assembly has two houses, directly elected lower house, Wolsy Jirga and an upper house, elected and indirectly, to the elected members of the House of elders. Afghans voters will cast two ballots: For candidates for a Volsi jirga. And one candidate will have to sit on the provincial councils in each of the fourteen provinces. The leaders of the provincial councils, Heads will contain, and the House of Elders shall appoint a person to the presidency. Walosi Jirga will be one seat in the House of men until 24 9 seats for next year's district council elections, half of the final total.

5.3.1 Constitutional and Legal Provisions for the Regulation of Elections

The Afghan Constitution is the basis of the electoral framework. However, certain regulations remain vague, giving rise to disputes and delays. The legal framework governing the electoral process was based on the Afghan constitution, electoral law, political party law, executive decrees and regulations issued by the Joint Electoral

Management Body (JEMB). While some of these rules succeeded in providing a sound basis for regulating the elections process, there were problems in the design, implementation and enforcement of many of the rules and regulations. Certain regulations governing the electoral process were vague, such as the definition of the campaign period, and the belief that candidates would comply with regulations. There were also delays in releasing important regulations until relatively late in the pre-election period. One example of this concerned regulations on counting procedures, which were needed to specify procedures regarding the ability of domestic election monitors and candidate agents to accompany ballot boxes as they are transported from polling centres to provincial counting centres. Many candidates expressed concern about the security of this vote-counting process, which could have been addressed through the early release of these regulations and protocols (National Democratic Institute 2006).

The weakness of the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) as the country's electoral system is another issue. Under SNTV, each electoral has one vote in multiple-member provinces, candidates with the highest vote totals were sequentially awarded the seats assigned to each province. Political parties face great challenges in competing in elections under SNTV. The system favours large highly organized and sophisticated political parties, few of which existed in Afghanistan prior to the elections.

5.3.2 Role of Political Parties

The needs of political parties in Afghanistan are not given importance, and not even in the new democratic process. At the time of nomination process (May 2005), 73 parties were eligible to participate in the September 2005 elections. These parties, in addition to many non-registered parties, represent a mix of old and new political groups, some of which have evolved over the past three decades. While political parties are not new to politics in Afghanistan, the presidential election was first held in October 2004 that political parties had the opportunity to participate in the democratic election process. Some presidential candidates were party-affiliated, and even those who did not trust party support and organization often during their campaigns. Many parties also participated in the presidential election as candidate agents, in which a large percentage of 65,000 candidates recognized by JEMB were

formed. Political parties that have emerged have different policy orientations, geographical reach and resources available to them.

The SNTV electoral system does not favour political parties. In fact, several factors have limited development of an effective party system.

Firstly, the public opinion of the parties was never favorable, because the idea of the party system is related to the previous civil strife. To avoid these associations, President Karzai chose not to join a political party or join together; Hashim party organizations after the 2004 presidential election. As discussed earlier, the SNTV election system is in favor of independent candidates, because most parties, especially those who have recently emerged, lack the organizational capacity to effectively organize their supporters under this system. is. Finally, JEMB decided to exclude party names and symbols from the ballot. Thus, it was difficult for voters to identify a candidate's party affiliation, if any. In addition, some independents were, in fact, aligned with a party, although their allegiance was not well known or even actively concealed (National Democratic Institute 2006).

Since political parties have not been formally recognized in the elections, it is difficult to predict the political mobility of Parliament. A large number of independents mean that the balance of votes can be released from the release. However, on the basis of informal party affiliations, the initial and predicted prediction of the emergence of large potential political groups can be made in Table 5.2, which can outline the strength of the estimated party in Wolesi jirga.

Table 5.2: Larger Political Parties in Wolesi Jirga

Political Party	Party Leader	Estimated No. of Seats
Hezb-e-Jamiat Islami Afghanistan	Burhanuddin Rabbani	25-30
Hezb-e-Junbesh-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostum	23-25
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami-e-Mardum Afghanistan	Mohammad Mohaqiq	20-25
Hezb-e-Afghanistan Naveen	Mohammad Younis Qanooni	22-26
Hezb-e-Tanzim-e-Dawat Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf	10-12
Hezb-e-Mutahed Milli Afghanistan	Nur al-Haq Ulemi	10-12
Hezb-e-Afghan Milat	Anwar al-Haq Ahadi	7-8
Hezb-e-Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan	Sayyed Ahmad Gailani	6-8
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami	Mohammad Karim Khalili	5-6
Hezb-e-Eqtedare Islami	Seyyed Mustafa Kazemi	5-6

Source: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/2004_af_report_041006.pdf

5.3.3 Ethnic Communities and Tribal Parties

Along with the expected, the results of the election indicate that citizens have voted mainly with ethnic lines. One of the biggest challenges for new legislative institutions will be to avoid becoming a battlefield for the specific ethnic groups of Afghanistan, everybody is entering into the rare regional development resources, government appointments and other benefits, which each believe. They have been denied. Though different types of interests and ideas have been represented in the new Wolesi jirga. It seems as if most members are conservative, either tribal elders or former jihadis. A very low ratio will be of slightly more moderate, democratic approach. The main challenge to face the middle parties is that they can unite in a fast and effective way.

Table 5.3: Ethnic Composition of the Wolesi Jirga (WJ)

Ethnic Groups	No. of WJ Members	% of Total WJ Members
Pashtun	108	43
Tajik	73	29
Hazara	39	16
Uzbek and Turkmen	26	10
Balochi	2	.8
Nooristani	1	.4
Total	249	100

Source: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/2004_af_report_041006.pdf

5.3.4 Distribution of Seats in the Meshrano Jirga

There are two houses in the National Assembly: Walsi Jirga (Lower House) and Mesharano Jirga (upper house). Members of the Wolesi Jirga were elected with the members of the 34 provincial councils of the country during the September 2005 elections. According to the Afghan constitution, members of Mesharon Jigga come from three sources: 1) 34 members are elected from provincial councils; 2) 34 members were elected from the district councils; 3) and the remaining 34 members are appointed by the President.

Meshrano Jirga is much less powerful than Wolesi jirga. For example, while the two houses will have the right to accept or reject the law, vote with majority will be override in the upper house in Wolsey jirga if the situation of both houses can not be resolved by a joint legislative committee (The Electoral Knowledge Network 2017).

In the absence of the Zilla Parishad elections (which have been postponed until 2007 or later), the quorum required to hold Mesharon Jirga was doubtful. In order to solve this problem, the Supreme Court considered two options: 1) In the absence of any district councils, the President will appoint only half of his 34 appointed persons; Or, 2) Provisional members will be selected from newly formed provincial councils, till the district councils were established and members could be selected from their ranks, till then to serve in Mesharon Jigga. In October 2005, the Cabinet passed a decree, in

which two Meshorno Jigga members were selected from two provincial councils during their elections in early November 2005.

Table 5.4: The Ethnic Composition of the Meshrano Jirga (MJ)

Ethnic Group	No. of MJ Members	% of Total MJ Members
Pashtun	35	35
Tajik	31	31
Hazara	17	17
Uzbek and Turkmen	8	8
Balochi	3	3
Nooristani	3	3
Others	3	3
Total	100	100

Source: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/2004_af_report_041006.pdf

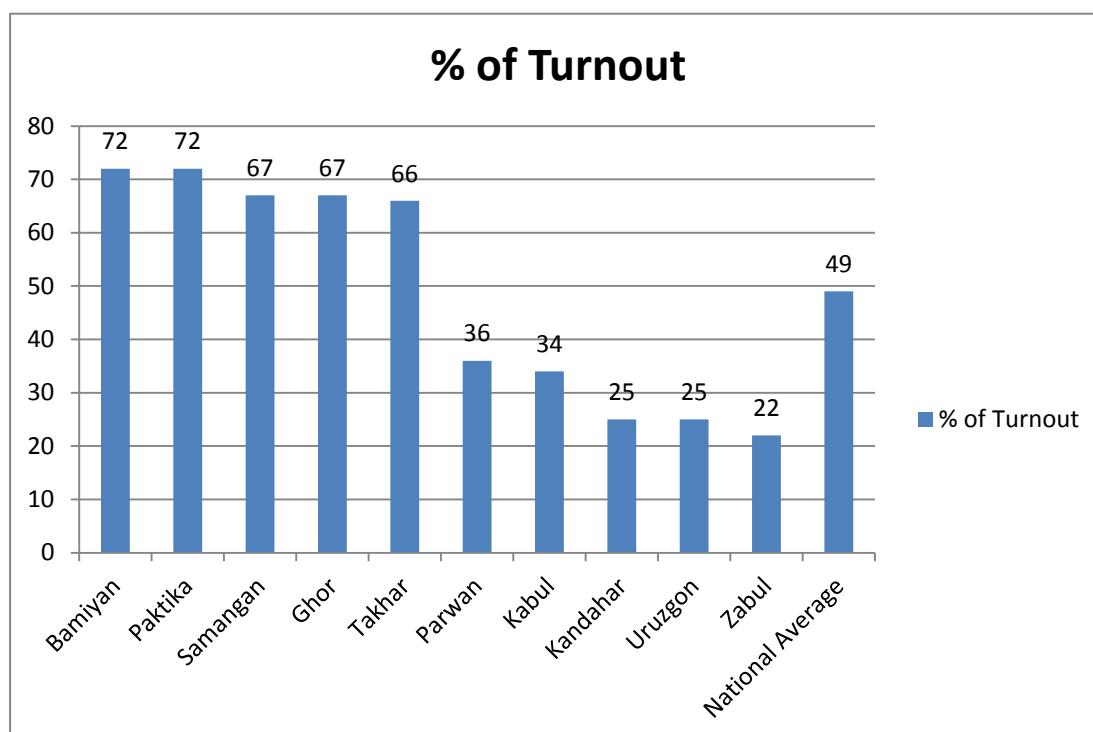
Only 13 percent of the officially registered candidates were formally associated with a political party. However, most observers believe that the correct figure was very high. Many prominent candidates have decided to register as independents for two main reasons. First of all, due to delays in the party registration process, many big parties were prevented from registering till the eve of the nomination process. The new party of Yunus Legal was the eldest of these parties, and finally most of his candidates were registered as independents. Second, due to the negative notion of parties in the history of recent Afghanistan, due to destructive forces many candidates led to hide their party affiliation to avoid a popular backlash.

Absence of public party identities and platforms during campaigning meant that nearly all the candidates had to run as independents. This also meant that parties did not come out openly in support of candidates and so the campaigning took place in a restricted manner, confined to a narrow geographical area. There was hardly any dominance of media outlets by parties or party candidates due to tight control over media through Media Commission. During this period, independents took advantage of the subsidized advertisements. Also, despite an active and pervasive campaigning by independents in most provinces, the presence of a large number of separate

campaigns put obstacles to the campaigning on grounds apart from ethnic, regional or tribal affiliations. (National Democratic Institute 2006: 29-30).

According to the JEMB, “6.4 million registered voters cast votes in the 2005 Elections. This figure was significantly lower than the 7.3 million votes recorded in the 2004 presidential election, but the decrease in voter turnout was not as large as many media outlets initially reported. In addition, the percentage-based voter turnout figures may have been understated due to instances of citizens holding multiple voter cards, which artificially inflated the total number of registered voters” (Ibid).

Graph 5.1: Percentage of Turnout in 2005 Elections in select provinces



Source: National Democratic Institute Report 2005, the September 2005 Parliamentary And Provincial Council Elections In Afghanistan.

5.3.5 Provincial Elections, 2009

On August 20, 2009, the Afghans voted for the second time in the history to elect members of the provincial councils. The elections were primarily organized by Afghan institutions and preparations were made for elections between the armed conflict in the southern and eastern areas and the sporadic violence in other areas of the country. Polling was due to massive fraud, especially in those areas where the

rebellion was affected. The results of the final provincial council were delayed for about four months because election complaints were decided and ranks were also conducted along with the audit. Security is affected by every aspect of the 2009 election process. As the start of the election day, Taliban and other anti-government militants attempted to block the elections through call for boycott, threatening rivalry against candidates and their supporters against voters and violence. Other terrorist groups also contributed to the overall instability of some places. Despite threats and violence, candidates actively campaigned and Afghan citizens showed keen interest in the electoral process (The Electronic Knowledge Network 2017).

The fraud on Election Day was systematic and widespread. Allegations of fraud and electoral irregularities also marred the provincial council polls and led to the recount of ballots in a number of provinces. The adjudication of complaints surrounding the provincial council races was delayed due to the extensive fraud in the presidential election, and the results of the provincial council elections were not certified until late December 2009. The certification process was criticized by Afghanistan's National Assembly, which further postponed the inauguration of the new provincial councillors and the Meshrano Jirga elections. The newly elected representatives of all 34 councils were seated in late January 2010.

During the 2009 elections, the ECC, and to a lesser degree the Media Complaints Commission was regarded by some as the only administrative bodies that displayed independence from the president's office, which was instrumental in addressing the electoral irregularities that occurred. The president already had the authority to appoint the leadership of the IEC, seizing the power to appoint the ECC commissioners effectively consolidated authority over the administration of the elections in the office of the president and represented a significant obstacle to the possibility of administering free and fair elections. To mitigate concerns regarding the impartiality of the ECC, President Karzai eventually agreed to appoint at least two international commissioners.

5.3.6 Campaigns for Provincial Council, 2009

The result of the last provincial council was delayed for about four months because the decisions of the elections were given priority and the ranks were also organized along with the audit. Security is affected by every aspect of the 2009 election process. In the beginning of the election day, the Taliban and other anti-government militants attempted to block the elections through boycott call, threatened opponents and rivalries against the candidates and their supporters, and other terrorist groups also gave some places. Despite the threat and violence contributed to the overall instability of the candidates, actively promoted by the candidates and Song citizens displayed deep interest in the election process (The Electronic Knowledge Network 2017).

25 percent of the provincial council seats are reserved for women, and 328 female candidates participated in the national level in 2009, and in the elections of 2005, 285 women increased the election. Kota constituted about three to five reserved seats for every province, in view of its large population, eight seats were reserved for women. In Afghanistan, women had to fill 124 reserved seats, however, the number of women in the Kandahar and Uruzgan race was less compared to the number of reserved women seats. This was the same situation in Uruzgan in 2005 (National Democratic Institute 2009)

The tone and visibility of provincial council campaigns varied greatly across the country. There were publicly contested elections in the more secure areas. Most campaigns focused on the development needs of the province. Incumbents tended to promise more construction projects and new candidates attacked incumbents for corruption and not fulfilling previous campaign promises. Many provincial council candidates described to NDI difficulties in raising funds for campaign materials and travel within the province (Ibid).

5.3.7 Quota System

Despite fewer turnouts of women voters, significant improvement was reported on their election. "Having seats reserved for women on the provincial councils played a critical role in ensuring women's role in government. Of the 117 women elected in 2009, 20 women won competitive seats and 97 were elected through the quota. Women received enough votes to be seated without the quota in several provinces

including Kabul, Ghazni, Nimroz, Uruzgan, Herat, Farah, Badakhshan, Takar, Jowzjan and Balkh. This is a significant improvement in provinces such as Uruzgan and Farah in terms of the acceptance of female engagement in the political process. However, fewer women were elected to the Kabul provincial council in 2009 than in 2005 – only six won competitively compared to eight in 2005. The success of women candidates likely was affected by lower female voter turnout, compared with 2005, and the worsening security situation (National Democratic Institute 2009).

5.3.8 Parliamentary Elections, 2010

Afghanistan held elections on September 18, 2010 to choose representatives to the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of the National Assembly). These were the second parliamentary polls, and the fourth national elections, conducted since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. “More than 2,500 candidates – including nearly 400 women – contested seats to the 249-member chamber. Although violence affected the electoral process in many parts of the country, millions of Afghans turned out to vote in these elections. The Independent Election Commission (IEC)’s preparations, which included the adoption of several fraud mitigation measures, showed substantial improvement over past elections. However, the electoral process was marred by a number of problems and challenges, some dating back to Afghanistan’s first elections in 2004. This includes a faulty voter registration process, barriers to women’s involvement, and the need to secure the freedom of the two election bodies of Afghanistan, the IEC and the Election Commission Commission (ECC). In Afghanistan’s 2010 elections, widespread vote fraud, Taliban and other insurgent groups in the electoral cycle suffered from the threat of violence and suspicion about freedom of election officials.

The 2009 presidential and provincial council elections were first organized by Afghan institutions, and the preparation of these elections took place between the armed conflict in the southern and eastern areas and the sporadic violence in other areas of the country. Rigged in the affected areas, and final election results were postponed for the month after the election was fixed. The second parliamentary polls were the September 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections. It was the fourth national election, conducted since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. “More than 2,500 candidates – including nearly 400 women – contested seats to the 249-member chamber.

In preparation for the 2010 elections, the IEC implemented reforms aimed at preventing fraud and many stakeholders noted the confidence with which the IEC carried out its role. Integral to the process was the replacement of both the IEC Chairman and the Chief Electoral Officer. Additional reforms made it possible for the IEC to detect fraud, and recounts and audits eventually led to the invalidation of more than 1.3 million ballots (National Democratic Institute 2011). The 2009 presidential and provincial council elections were first organized by Afghan institutions, and the preparations of these elections took place between the south and east areas and the countries of other areas in the sporadic violence. The affected areas in the rigged, and the final election results were fixed.

5.3.9 Security

The 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections were conducted in a violent atmosphere as the country's security environment had deteriorated in the lead up to the polls. In recent years, security incidents had increased and the influence of insurgent groups had spread throughout the country. There was a considerable influx of opposition groups in provinces directly around Kabul and in different regions. In addition to the spread of armed opposition groups (AOGs) into areas previously considered secure, militia groups connected to candidates posed a particular threat to security during the Wolesi Jirga elections. Security concerns were anticipated by international and Afghan security agencies, which drew up plans that were effective to varying degrees (National Democratic Institute 2011). The IEC in 2009 claimed that it was not within their powers to invalidate results and instead deferred decisions pertaining to quarantined boxes to the ECC. In 2010, the day after the announcement of preliminary results, the 2010 ECC announced that it would not entertain complaints regarding ballots excluded by the IEC. Candidates and voters were left with no legal recourse for allegations of electoral misconduct about invalidated votes and debate ensued among candidates, stakeholders and donors over the correct interpretation of the clause.

5.3.10 Legal Framework

A number of issues are not addressed in documents outlining the legal framework of the ECC. The ECC did not have procedures outlining criteria for determining whether

there is clear and convincing evidence that violations took place. The IEC was put under significant pressure by the Afghan government to produce or expose standards that they used for invalidations. The ECC, however, was not put under as much pressure, despite the fact that criteria would have helped maintain consistency and transparency. The grounds for invalidation of certain candidate's ballots versus the results of an entire polling station are entirely unknown. In reviewing ECC decisions, they occasionally appear circumstantial. ECC did not have a consistent procedure on investigative steps. Most PECCs relied on documentation provided by the complainant, and statements by the respondents. Consistent methodology was not applied for the decision to audit a ballot box or for the actual audit of the contents of the box, rendering it difficult to apply criteria (had there been any) for clear and convincing evidence of fraud. Procedures did not clearly address the ECC role at polling stations. The IEC scheduled the 2010 parliamentary elections for 22 May. However, it announced its postponement in January 2010.

The IEC reported a number of problems such as insufficient budget, security concerns and logistical hurdles. On 17 February 2010, President Karzai issued a presidential decree based on Article 79 of the Constitution, thereby amending the Electoral Law of Afghanistan. Among key changes, the decree grants the President the authority to appoint all five commissioners to the Electoral Complaints Commission. The presidential decree can be nullified only if both chambers agree to do so. While the House of the People (Wolesi Jirga) rejected the decree on 31 March, the House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga) stated that the Constitution prohibits Parliament from discussing amendments to the election law in the last year of the legislative term (Archiwal 2015).

Meanwhile, security concerns have piled up. As the insecurity increased in the war against Taliban rebels, shadow and soldiers and civilians are reaching record levels killed in the 2010 elections. The number of civilians killed in the war increased by 31 percent in the first half of 2010, reaching 1,271. Five hundred foreign soldiers died from 521 for the whole of 2009. The US government has planned to gradually withdraw its troops from July 2011. It is considered an important step for the control of Afghan forces to conduct reliable polling. Security of the country till 2014 On June 23, the election campaign officially started. In all, 2,447 candidates, including 386

women, were betting for 249 seats in the House of the People. Sixty-eight seats are reserved for women and 10 are for Kuchi (Ibid).

5.3.11 Polling Centres

It was announced on 18 August 18 by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission that 5,897 polling for the 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections would be opened. This is 938 less than the original plan to have 6,835 centers opened. The IEC was of the opinion that decisions on the polling centers was made in conjunction with the country's security agencies" (National Democratic Institute 2011: 15). On 5 September, it was said that it would be too late to open more. This decision found support from "the United Nations and Democracy International. On 8 September, the IEC said that 81 polling centers in eastern Nangarhar province would remain closed. These closed centers, numbering 1,019, were almost 15 per cent of the preliminary list of 6835 (National Democratic Institute 2011).

5.3.12 Candidates

Eminent candidates were among the participants of 2010 elections. "There were 2,584 candidates on the ballots for the 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections, across 34 provinces and a countrywide electorate for the nomadic Kuchi tribe. Some 406 candidates were women, who are allocated at least 68 seats. Notable incumbent candidates include Ramazan Bashardost, who came third in the 2009 Afghan Presidential election; Younus Qanooni, runner-up to President Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential election and the inaugural Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga; Shukria Barakzai, a vocal supporter of women's rights; and Mullah Abdul Salaam Rocketi, a former jihadist who earned his name from his skill in shooting rocket-propelled grenades during the Soviet occupation. All three of them are standing again for one of the 33 seats assigned to Kabul province. Other candidates for Kabul include comedian Zamir Kabuli, who is famous for ridiculing politicians; Farida Tarana, a 29-year-old former female contestant on *Afghan Star*, the local equivalent of *American Idol*" (National Democratic Institute 2011).

5.3.13 Party Results

Very few candidates contested the election on a party ticket. Many of the elected MPs were somehow associated with certain parties. The table 5.6 provides the NDI's assessment of formal Party strength. The figures given are not exact due to uncertain Afghan party politics. The table does not include unofficial party supporters, but are instead limited to the candidates who openly declared their party allegiance.

Table 5.5: Parties and Results of Election, 2010; Total Seats: 249

Party	Leader	Seats
Jamiat-e Islami	Burhanuddin Rabbani	17
PIUPA	Mohammad Mohaqiq	11
Junbish	Abdul Rashid Dostum	10
Jamhori	Engineer Habib	9
Hezbe Wahdat	Karim Khalili	8
Mahaz-e Milli	Ishaq Gailani	7
Afghan Mellat	Anwar ul Haq Ahadi	6
Dawat-e Islami	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	4
Paiwand-e Milli	Sayed Mansur Naderi	4
Harakat-e Islami	Sayed Hussein Anwari	4
Hezbi Islami	Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal	4
Mutahed-e Milli	Nur ul-Haq Ulumi	1
Adalat-e Islami	Qazi Mohammad Kabir Marzban	1
Nahzat Hambastagi-e Milli	Sayed Ishaq Gailani	1
Wahdat Islami Millat-e	Qurban Ali Erfani	1
Hezbe Eqtedar Milli	Sayed Ali Kazemi	1
Niaz Milli	Fatima Nazari	1
Naveen Party	Yunus Qanuni	1
Musharakat-e Milli	Najibullah Kabuli	1
Jamhorikhwahan	Sibghatullah Sanjar	0

Source: Political Parties in Afghanistan, National Democratic Institute Report, 2011

5.3.14 Democratic Process

Democracy International (DI) organized and led the largest international election observation mission to the September 2010 parliamentary elections with the help of United States Agency for International Development (USAID)". In spite of a challenging security setting, about 80 international observers to 14 of Afghanistan's provinces were successfully deployed. Even though most of the observer teams saw opening and closing of the polls, conduct of voting and its counting procedures, the free movement was significantly hampered. The findings of DI suggest recommendations for strengthening Afghan democracy and improving future electoral processes (National Democratic Institute 2011).

5.3.15 Provincial Elections, 2014

On 5 April 2014, the provincial council elections took place as the After the first round of Presidential election, the Independent Election Complaints Commission stood on the first stage of the audit and responded in response to several Election Day complaints. This process was largely presented at the provincial level, which means how complaints were handled and it made a lot of difference in how the decisions were often initiated. The initial results were announced on May 19, 2014, six weeks later. The Independent Election Committee (IECC) had started dealing with many complaints against initial results. At the beginning of June 2014, in the six open sessions, the complaints were referred, but were not actually discussed. Instead, when it became clear that both fraud and manipulation of the result had become widespread, IEC decided to have a second round of audit far and wide. (Kabul Perspective 2012).

In many provinces, the complaining candidates demanded a full recount, but due to time constraints, the IECC asked the candidates to agree on lists that contained a more limited number of polling stations. The audit and recount, however, came to a halt when the Independent Election Commission announced it no longer had time to help out, given that it was also preparing for a second round of the presidential elections. After the presidential second round, the IEC was preoccupied with an ever-expanding audit. It was only after the presidential results were announced in late September 2014 that the IEC and IECC could return to the provincial council audit and recount.

Because of these delays, it took the IECC almost five months to finish the audit and decide on the complaints (Ibid).

On October 25, 2014, the final results of the provincial council elections were announced by the IEC. In a press conference, IEC President Yusuf Nurstani praised the President's vote. It was informed by them that allegations of genocide fraud and electoral voting were not supported with audit results. At the beginning of June 2014, in the six open sessions, the complaints were referred, but were not actually discussed. Instead, when it became clear that both fraud and manipulation of the result had become widespread, IEC decided to have a second round of audit far and wide.

More than 2,713 candidates, including 304 women, competed for provincial council seats in the election was held on April 5, 2014. On April 5, millions of Afghan men and women went to the polls to elect a new Provincial Council representative. The campaign period began on March 4 for the provincial council election. The campaign period ran until April 3, when all candidates must cease campaigning and respect a period of silence for 48 hours before Election Day. Provincial council preliminary results are scheduled to be released in May 17, with final results available on 7 June (Afghanistan.gc.ca 2014).

In October 2013, there were more than 300 women out of 2,713 candidates registered as provincial council candidates, however, this number has been reduced because the Independent Election Commission (IECC) continued to inspect the candidate's documents and the complaints were mediated. According to its mandate, Provincial council candidates were campaigning for 458 seats. It was distributed in 34 provinces of Afghanistan using population based formula. Ninety-six seats (20%) were reserved specifically for women across the country. Once elected, the council members will work for a four-year term.

The IEC released partial preliminary results from the provincial council elections on May 20, but final results were not released until October 26, five months later. The delay in finalizing and releasing the provincial council results was largely due to the controversy that arose from the presidential runoff election. The adjudication of the provincial council election complaints was delayed, and, consequently, the release of the final results postponed, which created significant problems for the continuity and

functioning of government at both the provincial and national levels. This undermined the public's perception of the IECC's competency and credibility. It also prevented the election of provincial council members to the Meshrano Jirga, which is required to occur within 15 days of the final results of the election (Article 27(1), Electoral Law). That delay, in turn, tarnished the legitimacy of the Meshrano Jirga and prevented it from performing its legislative functions at the national level (Democracy International 2015).

5.3.16 Women's Political Participation

The success of any election is also seen with the participation of women. Their involvement in all aspects of the election process - in the form of voters, candidates, election officials, security personnel and supervisors - is important. "Canada has been vocal supporter of women's right to participate in the elections, Canada requested the Government of Afghanistan That all the necessary to ensure the rights of women to use their election rights completely on the day of election To reach the feet, many government agencies and civil society organizations are working on issues to increase the awareness of women's voting rights, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs has also been conducting security inquiries at the entrance of women's polling booths. Has committed to recruit and train 13,000 female searchers to ensure that women are terrorized Can vote in the free environment.

5.3.17 Parliamentary Elections, 2015

The IEC of Afghanistan announced the schedule for the parliamentary and district council elections as on 15 October. Ahmad Yousuf Nuristani, Chief of IEC, announced during a press conference in Kabul that the elections would only be organized in time provided that the government takes imperative steps in arranging the budget, security for the candidates and electoral workers and ballot boxes (Khaama Press News 2016). Meanwhile, there were controversies around "reforms in the electoral system that existed with Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah saying that unless reforms were incorporated in the electoral system the elections would not be properly organized. Speaking during the Cabinet of Ministers meeting, Abdullah announced that the elections would be planned under the direction of the new Independent Election Commission, insisting that the foundation of stability,

security, law, sovereignty and justice would not be possible in the absence of reforms in electoral system (Ibid).

The National Unity Government document states that the president should issue a verdict “immediately after the establishment of the government of national unity to establish a “special commission for the reform of the electoral system. No further details were given other than that the commission would report to the CEO on its development and present its recommendations to the cabinet for review and implementation. The president, showed very little interest in carrying out this pledge (Bijlert 2014). The date then was announced for 15 October 2016. The elections planned for this date are already overdue, as according to the Constitution they should have been held by June 2015. The Wolesi Jirga elections will be held for the third time, but the district council elections – which will be held for the first time – are a different matter, with the large number of electoral constituencies, several of which are highly insecure, and the practical obstacles of varying district lists and unclear boundaries (Ibid).

Meanwhile, the differences between President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah emerged again. "In the 2014 presidential election, two main candidates have been in the center of dispute between the Afghan coalition government, before the new parliamentary elections, the overhaul of the Afghan election system was an important part of the power-sharing deal after the presidential election. Whose chairman Mohammad Ashraf Gani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah had reached. , The first were not involved in both elections, there were differences on what should be continued and should take care of what the process. For the post of Ghani, Shukaria Barakzai's recommendation was rejected by Abdullah, who saw him as very close to Ghani. Along with this, Abdullah opposed the same officials who supervised the election and inspected the 2014 presidential election, due to which it was widely believed that Ghani benefited from the irregularities of 2014 elections against Abdullah. happened. This is the fact about the fact that no official has been charged from the election for any crime or removal. Contrary to more stringent line calls for Abdullah's total overhaul, supporters of Ghani have been more supportive of limited reforms.

It was stipulated, going by the Afghan Constitution, that the next parliamentary elections be held before June 2015. This date was opposed by most of the Afghans and international actors. However, the president's legal advisor, during a conference on 16 November, stated that he is committed to upholding the constitution and with that, the constitutional election date (Rutting 2014). Parliamentary elections were to be conducted on 15 October 2016 to elect members of the House of the People. This however was postponed. A great deal of overture to the election has focused on reforming Afghanistan's electoral laws. The current system is one of single non-transferable vote (Mashal 2016).

In the elections, it was late before. In reality, the only election on time under the new constitution was held in the 2015 presidential election and the election of the provincial council. There is a clear difference between different ideas but both the top politicians, Abdullah Abdullah is insisting that there should be no election without complete reforms in the process including the replacement of all election commissioners. On the other hand, Mohammad Saver Danish, vice president of Ashraf Ghani, said that the reform would not be so complete. Failure in this area, the panic in Afghanistan is increasing, has been damaged by a political deadlock for a long time before the election. Only one-third of cabinet ministers are in place, and constant uncertainty has made a catastrophic impact on the economy, to woo trade.

5.4 A Comparative Analysis of the Ethnic Division in the Context of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial elections

The 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections were an important milestone in Afghanistan's democratic transition. These elections not only paved way for the first democratic Parliamentary election in Afghanistan, but it also ended Afghanistan's transitional period and led to the beginning of an elected form of government. On 19 December 2005 the new parliament was sworn in; the wheel of power was now fully in the hands of Afghanistan's democratically elected leaders (Election Observation Mission Final Report 2005).

Under the JEMB of Afghanistan-United Nations on 18 September 2005, elections - parliamentary and provincial - Taliban were organized after Afghanistan. Elections were held for 249 seats for Wolesi Jirga (People's Assembly), for which 2,775

candidates contested. Simultaneously, the indirect election for Messarro Jirga (102 seats) and provincial councils were held on that day. The women were allotted 68 seats in the Valoji Jirga and 25 per cent seats in local councils. "In the parliamentary elections, more than 50 percent of the voters chose voters." Although elections were held on non-party basis, Afghan political analysts criticized the alliance and political parties who openly campaigned for their candidates, especially the Islamic parties For Mujahidin members. Another important feature was the election system. The lower house was elected by SNTV, in which voters gave ballots for individual candidates rather than political parties. The irony is that this election system was chosen by Karzai without considering its impact on the political system of the country. It only encourages patron politics where candidates take bribe to get certain votes and strengthen the strength of the tofanddar in Afghan politics. It also lowered the development of the stable party system and contributed to the emergence of a split parliament.

Afghanistan's presidential election set for April 5, 2014 was the most important political event in its decade-long transition to democracy. While the overthrow of the Taliban, the Bonn Process of political reconstruction, and the initial rounds of elections in 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 started Afghanistan down the path of democratization, these were only a beginning. The most important election in a country's transition to democracy is not the first one, but the second or third after the novelty and excitement of liberalization have faded, after international donors and observers have withdrawn, after the mundane reality of democratic politics sets in and, crucially, after the first set of democratically elected leaders are replaced. Two previous rounds of elections have left some Afghans disillusioned and uncertain if real democracy, honest and competent, has a future in their country (Archiwal 2015).

Despite the ambiguity and suspicion, the aim of the President and parliamentary elections of Afghanistan was to end the two-and-a-half year political process, its purpose was to establish a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government though in Afghanistan Now there is an elected president, however, there are still many obstacles in his political transition, the 2001 Bon agreement has given importance Kankshi target - the formation of a full representative and elected government in June 2004. The time limit was seen more and more

ambitiously, because it was within six months of an emergency Loya Jirga, a new constitution within eighteen months of approval, the progress of a legal framework for elections and countless administrative And for the first time after 25 years of registration of millions of voters like the military tasks and the completion of the census. Frequently changed Elections were postponed from June to September, then by October 2004. In the end, it was decided to hold the presidential election on October 9 only. This will delay the parliamentary, provincial and district polls till April 2005 (Koloram 2004).

Elections had to be conducted, despite security threats. A deteriorating security environment put free and fair elections at risk. A resurgent Taliban threatened to dissuade candidates and threatened voters. Heightened insecurity was an issue for electoral preparations, including voter registration, civic education and monitoring. Intimidation by, and struggle between, warlords and commanders posed another problem to a smooth process, in the absence of effective disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of their militias (Ibid).

However, the presidential election was successful. The turnout of voters was surprisingly high, and The predictions of widespread attacks by the rebels were estimated, however, there were many problems in this process indisputably. The elections were made in haste and lacked sufficient international obligations. He also included miserable training of election staff; Failure in many polling stations to mark voters with incompatible ink; Especially inadequate international election surveillance attendance; The lack of transparency in establishing the lack of women election workers and inadequate international security presence rules. However, these shortcomings did not weaken the result. In fact, an independent international team, which has been entrusted with the investigation of the fraud, has certified the credibility of the election. However, no elected national legislature or representative institutions are present at the provincial or district level (Colomer 2004).

The Joint Electoral Management System (JEMS) decided to postpone legislative elections in 2005. JBB consists of President Qazi's six presidents and five UN representatives. "He justified the postponement and said that" citing difficulties in allocating parliamentary seats in the absence of good population" Officials of the United Nations and Afghan government also indicate the importance of effective

DDR to ensure that parliamentary elections, which can be more due to threats than the presidential elections, will be free and fair. "However, some presidential candidates, they were suspicious about the president's separation from parliamentary elections." He observed that "in order to postpone parliamentary elections, there is a conscious attempt to strengthen all the powers in the President's office, which would rule without any check and balance in the absence of otherwise elected assembly (Colomer 2004).

It should also be taken care to ensure that all candidates get equal opportunities and access to government resources in running their operations. The legitimacy of parliamentary elections will determine their ability to strengthen the government institutions. With the help of the international community, the United Nations should assist the Afghan government in order to make a peaceful parliamentary election to the scheduled public. An independent and unbiased process should also be ensured to apply the learned lessons learned from the presidential election (Ibid).

5.5 Role of Ethnic Identity in Afghan Interim Government

As far as the role of ethnicity in the post-Taliban era is concerned, ethnicity plays an important role in political institutions, policy making, and exclusively in elections. Post-Taliban governance and politics are organized by ethnicity. The tragic and shocking 9/11 terror attacks on American soil and the start of U.S. military action against the terrorist organizations, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, injected new urgency into the search for a government that might replace the Taliban. Once the defeat of the Taliban was certain, a conference was organized in Bonn on 5 December 2001 to create the post-Taliban Afghanistan. The goal was to lay the groundwork for Afghanistan's future political processes and institutions of governance based on the commitment of the right of the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice. It is important to remember that the Bonn Agreement had stipulated establishment of an interim governing structure and setting up of a time table for transitioning to fully representative government that would be gender sensitive and multi-ethnic. It was under this agreement that a six month interim government called Afghan Interim Authority was set up with Hamid Karzai elected as its chairman. (Johnson 2006). In fact, some of the past discrimination against certain ethnic groups

was abandoned in the decade-long Karzai government. However, the centralized system failed to balance the power sharing among ethnic groups and deliver governance at the sub-national level.

Rob Aitken (2007) points out that though international organizations and peace processes have emphasized on peace building and reconciliation, yet there are hardly any signs of ethnic divisions reducing. He argues, “Afghanistan has become increasingly ethnicized since the 2001 invasion” (Aitken 2007). Ethnic favouritism and discrimination are strongly visible in administration of ministries and local governance. For example, most appointments in the Ministry of Defence in 2002 were biased toward a single ethnic group, the Tajik. Former defence minister and current vice-president, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim is a member of Tajik ethnic group. During his ministry, Fahim chose about thirty-eight Generals to constitute the general staff of the Afghan Army. Ironically, thirty-seven of these Generals were from the Tajik ethnicity and one was Uzbek (Giustozzi 2003). The case is not different in other ministries. In order to balance power sharing among ethnic groups, despite the over-representation of some ethnicities, the ministries are distributed in proportion to each ethnic group. However, each individual ministry uses the ethnic cards. For example, when Dr. Spenta, a Tajik, was the head of Foreign Affairs, most of the members of this ministry were from the Tajik ethnic group. Now, Zalmay Rasool, a Pashtun, leads it and he Pashtunized the ministry. In Afghanistan, all politicians are seriously affected by tribal mentality.

5.6 Electoral System of the country and ethnic Manipulation in Elections

The present Afghan electoral system favours independent candidates rather than political parties (Adeney 2008). According to the majority of scholars, this system does not fit in a severely divided country like Afghanistan. People vote for individual candidates, not the political parties. Because of the high politicization of the elections, ethnic groups are accepted equally as political parties by the candidates and voters. “The main reason for the ethnicization of the elections is that they create losers because the country is made up many ethnic groups. As an instrument to bring about unity in a diverse society of Afghanistan, the SNTV is futile. For this purpose, a party-based proportional representation system would have been more suitable. In addition, it may lead to the permanent exclusion of the candidates from power if

institutional mechanisms for distributing and dissolving power are not established at the same time (Relly and Reynolds 2005).

Afghanistan is a country where civil society is so weak and ethnic identity of a politician is more important than his or her skill and political ability. The country needs permanent political reforms especially regarding the electoral system. The majoritarian voting system for presidential elections does not work in multicultural Afghanistan. This system helps a single ethnic group maintain its domination via elections. Even though it may come through elections, a strong centralized government is not an appropriate form in the country. The electoral system of the country needs to be changed. Afghanistan should adopt a list-based proportional representation (list-PR) system rather than a single non-transferable vote (SNTV). It is proposed that a list-based proportional representation system will contribute to the de-ethnicization of elections (Qeyam 2012).

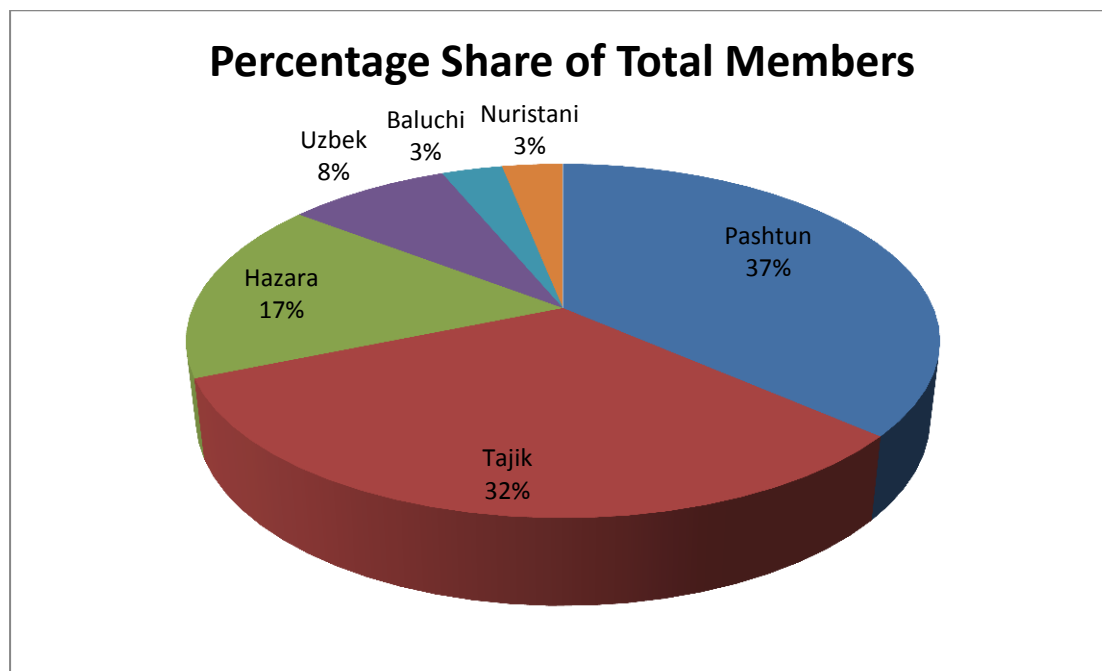
After 2001, the international community set itself the ambitious goal of bringing stability and even a more challenging goal of political and social modernization in a multi-ethnic country. The present political reconstruction has revealed those challenges. Ethnicity plays a very important role in Afghanistan where people carrying multiple identities are living together. The population of the country is divided into a wide variety of ethno-lingual groups. Rural Afghanistan in particular is an excellent example of a place where tribal and ethnic groups become more eminent than the individuals are. Afghanistan population is divided into a myriad of these groups at the local level. Among them, the most important are the Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek and Turkmen.

5.7 Political Representation of Ethnic Groups

Sven Gunnar Simonsen, a researcher at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) studies the various ethnic groups of Afghanistan historically. Simonsen shows that Muhammadzai and Durrani among Pashtuns of all the ethnic groups, followed by Tajiks and Uzbeks, have in general achieved positions of political influence. Simonsen further opines that the Hazaras have largely not been included in the government historically. They had minimal representation in public institutions. The representation of ethnic groups in government has been a perennial and a contentious

issue in Afghanistan. The Brookings Institution’s Afghanistan Index 2011 shows that the number of Pashtun seats decreased by 16 in the 2010 elections, while there was an increase in the seats of Hazaras and Tajiks in the elections.

Chart 5.2: Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders)



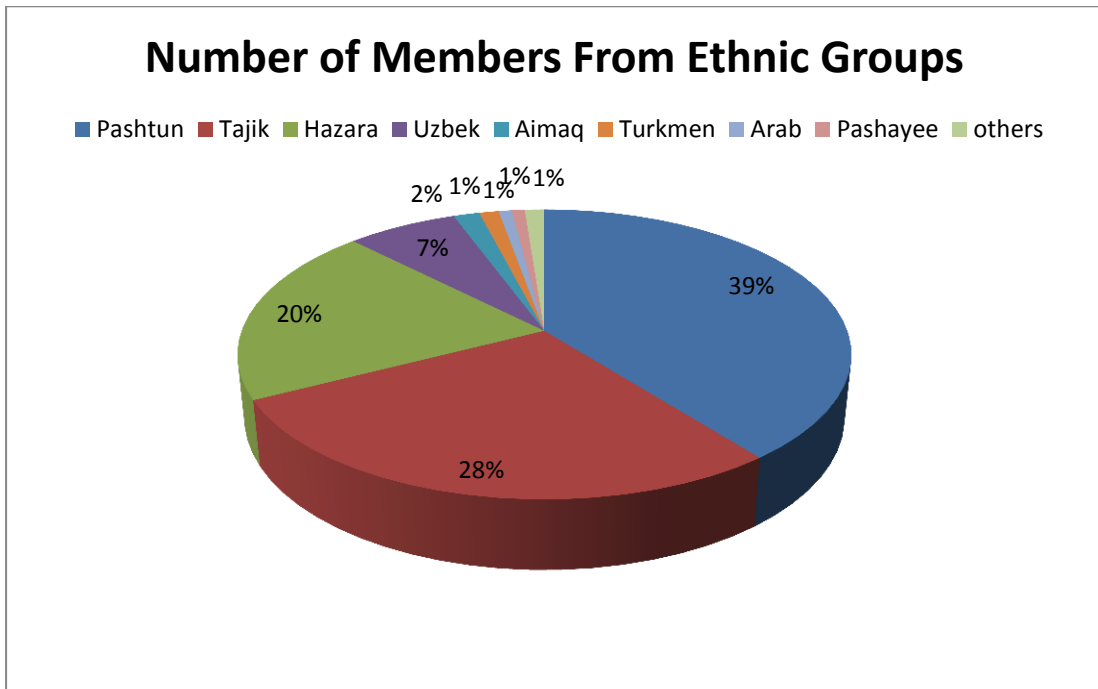
Source: Adapted from Brookings Institution, Afghanistan Index 2011

Table 5.6: Ethnic Representation and Political Parties in Afghanistan

Name of the Political Parties	Dominant Ethnic base	Leadership
Hezb-e-Islamia	Pashtuns	Gulbuddin Hekmatayr
Hezb-e-Jumhori Afghanistan		
Jamat-e-Islami	Tajiks	Sayed Noorullah Emad
Afghan Peace Movement		
Harkat-e-Islami-yi Afghanistan	Non-Hazara	Ayatullah Md Asif Muhsisni
Afghan Social Democratic Party (Afghan Mellat)	Pashtuns	Stanagal Sherzad
Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan	Hazara	Karuim Khalili
Mahaz-e-Milli	Pashtuns	Pir sayd Ahmed Gailani
Afghanistan Welfare Party		Mir Mohammad Asif Zaifi

Source: Political Parties in Afghanistan, National Democratic Institute Report, 2011

Chart 5.3: Wolesi Jirga (House of People; Total members 249)



Source: http://www.hazara.net/downloads/afghanistan/afghanistan_ethnic_compositon_wolesi_jirga_2010.pdf

A problem for parties during interviews is in answering the question: ‘what is the current role of political parties in Afghanistan?’ The roles of a large number of parties have changed since their inception. Hence, a re-definition of these roles post-2001 has been mandatory.

5.8 Summary

After Taliban rule, Afghanistan adopted democracy via the electoral process. This is very significant and milestone change towards democracy in Afghanistan. By now, Afghan democracy is becoming stronger. In the beginning, Afghan democracy was very naive. Presidential election of 2004 was the first election. In this election, many accusations came from opposition and world media that a big fraud was done during election. However, in 2014 Presidential election, this accusation became weak. Actually, in Afghanistan, ethnic factor plays a pivotal role in every sector of society. This is fully true in politics. In Afghanistan, the largest ethnic groups are Pashtuns at 42 percent and the Tajiks at 27 percent. Besides these groups, the rest are the Hazaras, Uzbeks and Aimaq. Many problems in Afghanistan arise due to ethnic diversity.

The ethnic conflict has spilled over to the borders with many ethnic groups having transnational loyalty to their tribes. It is important to see the ethnic dimension of the recently conducted elections. The current election scenario is fraught with several possibilities. It has thrown up a mandate, which has not been wholeheartedly accepted by both the candidates. In 2014 election, both candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani were locked over the results that have given a victory to the latter. The former strongly believes that the elections had been rigged in several places. Even as Afghanistan prepares to conduct a United Nations supervised and US brokered deal to recount the votes, both candidates do show much signs of reconciliation. The whole world has focussed on the results and the future scenario in the event of recount showing a different result than earlier or declaring status quo. However, the underlying political factors are more worrying.

The election results could be a result of massive rigging in any country experiencing democratisation in initial stages. But what makes Afghanistan unique is the fact that both the leading candidates are Pashtun and this is the case after another Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, completed his two Presidential terms this year. In a country that has substantial Pashtun population, the two things referred to here should not raise eyebrows. Abdullah Abdullah, with a mixed Pashtun and Tajiki identity is able to attract Hazara and Tajiki votes and still loses twice only shows that votes are strongly divided along ethnic lines. Both these main contenders had received votes that saw cleavages along ethnic lines. Ashraf Ghani got mostly votes of dominant Pashtuns and Abdullah Abdullah got votes mostly from Tajiks and the marginalised Hazaras. However, the improvement brought in shows that dominant ethnic groups could share the two important posts of the country (President and CEO), if the Tajik mix of Dr Abdullah Abdullah can be taken into account.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the contributions of this thesis and the possible impact upon the electoral process in Afghanistan, as it is found, and presents the important directions and new dimensions for future research in the related area. The central problem addressed in this thesis aims at examining the role of ethnicity in electoral politics of Afghanistan after the Taliban regime. It is found that no alien power could ever find a stable foot inside the country, issues of ethnicity dominated the Afghan affairs, especially by the Pashtuns, and efforts to form a secular state overriding ethnicity and religion failed. It is also found, while examining, the reactionary role of ethnic political sphere vis-à-vis the neutrality of electoral system in Afghanistan. However, the neutrality is found imbalanced by the greater ethnic linkage of Pashtun group's influence in political sphere.

6.1 General Findings

It is observed that Afghanistan has suffered from chronic instability, invasions, civil wars and ethnic purges both during its classic and modern history due to its geographical and geopolitical importance. Afghanistan is the homeland for various distinct ethnic groups of whom Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras are the largest. These groups are the main actors in the socio-economic and political scene of the country. There is not a majority ethnicity despite the fact that the groups are tremendously different in size. Actually, in Afghanistan, ethnic factor plays a pivotal role in every sector of society. This is fully true in politics. In Afghanistan, the largest ethnic groups are Pashtuns at 42 percent and the Tajiks at 27 percent. The other groups are the Hazaras, Uzbeks and Aimaqs. Ethnic diversity has many problems in Afghanistan. It is important to see the ethnic dimension of the recently conducted elections. The current election scenario is fraught with several possibilities. It has thrown up a mandate, which has not been wholeheartedly accepted by both the candidates.

After the 2004 presidential elections, the 2005 parliamentary elections was the major election in Afghan electoral politics. This was a major opportunity to choose their representatives. Again, however, elites intervened to maintain the upper strata of

power structure. Accusations of fraud were many in 2009 presidential elections. The political and democratic consolidation has not yet happened due to these multi factors.

In 2014 elections, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani were the leading contenders. Abdullah Abdullah, with a mixed Pashtun and Tajik identity was able to attract Hazara and Tajik votes and still lost twice only shows that votes are strongly divided along ethnic lines. In the latest presidential elections, both the main contenders had received votes that saw cleavages along ethnic lines. Ashraf Ghani got mostly votes of Pashtuns and Abdullah Abdullah got votes mostly from Tajiks and the Hazaras. There are issues, such as culture, economy, religion, geography, and ethnicity that each has its own influence in the political history of Afghanistan. However, among these, ethnicity has a unique impact on politics.

The 2014 elections went into impasse, pointing at the need of power sharing at the centre, between posts and ethnic leaderships. The deal to resolve the current impasse lacks structural guarantees to ensure to every side – either government or various ethnicities. At present, the government is perceived by the Abdullah camp to be an inclusive one; otherwise, there would have been certainly another crisis. However, there is no guarantee that both camps will continue to respect the deal in future and that the national unity government will remain stable.

In 2014 election, both candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani were locked over the results that have given a victory to the latter. The former strongly believes that the elections had been rigged in several places. Even as Afghanistan prepares to conduct a United Nations supervised and US brokered deal to recount the votes, both candidates do show much signs of reconciliation. The whole world has focussed on the results and the future scenario in the event of recount showing a different result than earlier or declaring status quo. Nevertheless, the underlying political factors are more worrying. The election results could be a result of massive rigging in any country experiencing democratisation in initial stages. However, what makes Afghanistan unique is the fact that the leading candidates are always Pashtuns and this is the case with Hamid Karzai, who completed his two Presidential terms. In a country that has substantial Pashtun population, the two things referred to here should not raise eyebrows. Abdullah Abdullah, with a mixed Pashtun and Tajiki identity is able to attract Hazara and Tajiki votes and still loses twice only shows that votes are

strongly divided along ethnic lines. In the latest presidential elections, both the main contenders had received votes that saw cleavages along ethnic lines. Ashraf Ghani got mostly votes of Pashtuns and Abdullah Abdullah got votes mostly from Tajiks and the marginalised Hazaras.

By delaying municipal elections, the central leadership was denying the opportunity for new noticeable leaders to come up. However, some changes are being seen in the cotemporary Afghan politics in favour of women and youth since last 15 years. Many women and young leaders have come to the fore in this period. However, many of them remain at the mercy of a setup that is dominated by old men. So, it does mean that the age old patriarchal and anti-women custom still hurting the actual initiative for democratic articulation.

The part of the study demonstrated that the ethnicization of politics is a historical reality for Afghanistan. When the country emerged as a political entity under a Pashtun ruler, Ahmad Shah Durrani, Pashtunization of Turkistan, Hazarajat, and Tajik regions began. However, the land occupation turned into the systematic ethnic oppression of non-Pashtun communities during the ethnocentric regime of Iron Amir Abdurrahman Khan between 1880s and 1901. After a century, in 1992-2001, ethnic discriminatory policy of Iron Amir mixed with radicalism under Pashtun-dominated regime of the Taliban manifested itself in a harsh way. The defeat of the Taliban under the “war on terror” and spreading democracy opened a new door of hope for war-torn Afghanistan, in general, and the oppressed Uzbeks, Harazas, Tajiks, and other minor groups, in particular.

In fact, so many good things, such as opening school and doors for women, granting some political rights for all individuals regardless of ethnic, religious, and gender background, and holding elections, have happened since then. Nonetheless, internal and external actors of post-Taliban Afghanistan ignored the problem of ethnic politics. They failed to establish an ethnically balanced and inclusive government. Instead of establishing a power-sharing state, political elites of the Bonn Conference insisted in maintaining a single person-run strong centralized governance model. Although post-Taliban Afghanistan experienced two presidential and two parliamentary elections, it is difficult to claim that Afghanistan was on the right track towards democracy. Because of adopting an inappropriate electoral system for a

severely divided country and maintaining the tribal mentality, elections were ethnicized. Moreover, elections turned into a modern Pashtun domination via ethnic manipulation in elections.

The kind of multi-ethnicity that Afghanistan has and experiences now shows that it is not only a multi-ethnic country but also a country with a predominance of the Pashtuns. The majority ethnic group, the Pashtuns, had since 2013, contentious relationship with the other ethnic groups such as Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Aimaq, Baluch and Nuristani population. With such a composition, the electoral politics becomes an important medium to assert power and control. History of Afghanistan produced two different types of resistance movements against the state, which affected the capacity of the Afghan state building. The dividing lines were drawn between the modernists and the Islamists since 1920s. The Afghan society is ethnically very complex with regional and tribal differences. In Afghanistan, Islam and ethnicity had often led to civil conflict and local rebellions. The Pashtuns had occupied top positions in the government and all the kings, except for a brief period in 1929, were Pashtuns.

The patronage of a foreign power (or powers) proved akin to drug addiction. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no central government in Afghanistan could survive and maintain high levels of political and social control without support from abroad. The state's increasing economic and military dependence on external sources was complemented by the two-pronged threat posed by exogenous influences. First, a marginalised group in the Afghan polity could always appeal to an international sympathiser. Thus, after 1992, the Hazaras enjoyed a cordial relationship with Iran, whereas Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan built a good rapport with the leadership of Uzbekistan; similarly, the Pashtun Taliban exercised power, from 1996 to 2001, very much at the behest of Pakistan. Second, the dominant elites in Afghanistan have seldom been completely cohesive themselves. Members of ruling solidarity groups have often tried to promote their interests by securing foreign patronage. During the reign of Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), his brother, Nasrullah Khan, actively cooperated with the Germans, in contrast with the overall pro-British orientation of the state. Mohammad Daoud, during his premiership, from 1953 to

1963, leaned towards greater cooperation with the Soviet Union, whereas his rival cousin and brother-in-law, King Zahir Shah, generally pursued a pro-American line.

The political empowerment of women has also been analysed particularly in the third chapter. On this front, Afghanistan is facing myriad challenges amidst some signs of progress. Although women have got the right to vote and even to stand in elections as candidates, they are facing resistance in these areas of participation. Women candidates are frowned upon and even looked at curiously. Even the numbers of women candidates has not been encouraging so far. But since this is just the beginning of empowerment, even a low percentage of participation as voters and candidates can be regarded as a big achievement. Old ethnic norms have been a retarding factor in their participation. The constitution has sought to overcome this by allowing women to participate. But well entrenched tradition and tribal norms that have restricted women to a negligible political role continues to be a roadblock. Despite this roadblock, women participated massively in 2014 elections and even male candidates have taken note of this in a country where males have always dominated through their traditional norms.

Further, the research study tried to find a way out of the ethnic problems by focusing on comparative aspects of democracy in the case of Afghanistan. A parliamentary or a federal system is the best option for multi-ethnic Afghanistan. A parliamentary form of governance with a prime minister is one of the most politically preferable alternatives if the ethnic diversity of the country is taken into consideration.

A federal system in the form of decentralization is another preferable form of governance although it is a contested system in the context of Afghanistan. As it came to the fore several times, most of the strong objections to the decentralization of the country come from Pashtun leaders including Afghan (Pashtun) Taliban because of ethnic interests. A strong centralized state is against the nature of the ethnic diversity of the country and it is a failed system, and creating 56 regional autonomies can reserve the ethnicization of politics. However, it seems that ethnic politics is likely to remain a significant issue in the political context of the country. The character of the central government will decide the relative importance of the problem. If the central government will be able to establish an ethnic pluralistic and equal power-sharing

state along its ethnic groups, this problem will be removed or at least will be significantly reduced.

Besides, it has seen that, after the Taliban rule, Afghanistan adopted democracy via the electoral process. This is very significant and milestone change towards democracy in Afghanistan. By now, democracy in Afghanistan is becoming stronger. In the beginning, democracy in Afghanistan was very naive. Presidential election of 2004 was the first election. In this election, many accusations came from opposition and world media that a big fraud was done during election. However, in 2014 Presidential election, this accusation became weak. Actually, in Afghanistan, ethnic factor plays a pivotal role in every sector of society. This is fully true in politics. Many problems in Afghanistan arise due to ethnic diversity.

The ethnic conflict has spilled over to the borders with many ethnic groups having transnational loyalty to their tribes. It is important to see the ethnic dimension of the recently conducted elections. The current election scenario is fraught with several possibilities. It has thrown up a mandate, which has not been wholeheartedly accepted by both the candidates. In 2014 election, both candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani were locked over the results that have given a victory to the latter. The former strongly believes that the elections had been rigged in several places. Even as Afghanistan prepared to conduct a United Nations supervised and US brokered deal to recount the votes, both candidates showed much signs of reconciliation. The whole world focussed on the results and the future scenario in the event of recount showing a different result than earlier or declaring status quo. However, the underlying political factors were more worrying.

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Ghani got mostly votes of dominant Pashtuns and Abdullah Abdullah got votes mostly from Tajiks and the marginalised Hazaras.

6.2 New Dimensions

Here are given some significant dimensions that suggest how to solve politicization of ethnic identity and re-establish a democratic Afghanistan. The future stability of Afghanistan requires the completion of an accurate census of the population. Since Afghanistan does not have accurate demographic data, both the country's population and the size of each ethnic group are based on estimations, which are generally believed to be very poor. The issue of conducting a census itself is a politicized issue. Throughout Afghanistan's history, the Afghan governments did not want to conduct a clear census because the Pashtuns, the ruling ethnic group, always claimed that they constituted more than half of the population. Due to their claim and holding the central state, they wanted to ignore other ethnic groups. Thus, Pashtun-run governments did not want make clear both the size of Pashtuns and non-Pashtun ethnic groups. One of the main reasons for ethnicization of politics is the lack of an accurate count of each ethnic group. If the government holds a census, there will be equal political, socio-economic, and educational opportunities for all ethnic groups based on the group's size.

The second dimension is on solving the crisis of national identity of the country. In terms of ethnic politics, one of the most controversial and problematic issues is the crisis of the construction of a national identity. Being Afghan is the national identity of the country, so the citizens of Afghanistan are referred to as 'Afghan'. Historically, the word 'Afghan' has been a synonym of Pashtun. Instead of the term Afghan, most non-Pashtun individuals prefer to use 'Afghanistani' to identify themselves. Therefore, using the term 'Afghanistani' is more preferable than the term 'Afghan' and it may reduce the tensions among the ethnic groups over national identity. For this reason, the dictate of the term 'Afghan' as the national identity in a country where so many different ethnic groups inhabit is not meaningful, and so it must be solved. Otherwise, the dictation of Afghan leads non-Pashtun groups to lose gradually their own identity.

Third dimension is on changing the current governance system, i.e. the strong centralized unitary system. After the collapse of the ethno-religious extremist regime of the Taliban, there were more hopes that the warn-torn country will take its place beside the democratic and developed countries. Moreover, another civil war or ethnic conflict is waiting Afghanistan, especially after the withdrawal of International Community in 2014.

After 2014 US withdrawal, no one was able to predict whether Afghanistan would experience heaven or hell. Two decades of civil war in the country were in large part caused by the Pashtun-tribal state's inability to move beyond notions of ethnic domination. Unfortunately, the post-2001 governments had followed the tradition of ethnic domination of Pashtuns over non-Pashtuns. After the collapse of the Taliban, the international community decided to unify the country via establishing a strong centralized government. It is possible that the U.S. was convinced that a centralized government was the best for Afghanistan. However, right now in this sensitive period, the international community still has a chance to bring a permanent solution in Afghanistan. They should seriously discuss the unbiased and stable political order and the state form of Afghanistan.

The current regime of Afghanistan carries the dream of the myth that only the Pashtuns have a right to govern the country. It is strongly suggested that the priority of governing Afghanistan should not be given to the question of who should rule the country; instead, the priority should be given to how to run the country. For this reason, any attempt to re-impose a strong centralized regime controlled by a single tribe, family or ethnic group should be strongly resisted. As it was explained throughout the thesis, the strong centralized government ruled by a specific ethnic group did not and does not work in an ethnically divided Afghan society. If it is re-imposed after the complete withdrawal of coalition forces, it will breed nepotism, ethnocentrism, internal colonialism, and eventually a second civil war.

Unfortunately, the international community ignored this historical reality of Afghanistan. The active role of international players is needed to maintain the federal form of decentralized or a power-sharing parliamentary government of Afghanistan. Because all of the central governments failed to establish a just, democratic, and inclusive state and because the non-Pashtun communities suffered from Pashtun tribal

and single person-centred states, a federal or parliamentary form of government might be the most suitable arrangement in Afghanistan. Changing the current model of governance and adopting a new system of power sharing will solve the ethnic tensions in the country.

Fourth dimension is on the amendment of the electoral system. The current parliamentary electoral system, having SNTV method, is not an appropriate system in a multi-ethnic country like Afghanistan, and it should be changed. In this system, there is no recognition of political parties, thus the parliament became fragmented and too weak. In the case of Afghanistan, as discussed earlier, a list-based proportional representation (PR) would be a better electoral option. Moreover, the electoral system for presidential elections has to be amended. Instead of people, the parliament should appoint the Afghan president because only this way would it be possible to limit the power of the President. A President with a full authority holding all the powers like a king is against the nature of plural society of Afghanistan.

Fifth and final dimension, which is a sheer necessity for Afghanistan, is on adopting a new constitution based on representative democracy and ethnic and religious pluralism of Afghan society. The current constitution is a remnant of the 1964 constitution under Zahir Shah, the last king of Afghanistan. It is in favour of empowering of a single tribe instead of empowering common people. In order to ensure the broad representation of ethnic diversity, the statement should act responsibly and realistically to solve the existing ethnic problems and the deficiency of the political system. In this regard, adopting a more democratic constitution significantly contribute to solve the pervasive ethnic discrimination against particular ethnic groups.

Therefore, it is an urgent and inescapable need to amend the current constitution of Afghanistan. From the Bonn Agreement to the present, the international community and some elites in the Afghan government have ignored this important issue. As a result, the problem of ethnic politics has remained unsolved. As long as it remains unsolved, the road to prosperity for the country gets longer and longer. There is perhaps a real opportunity to design a system recognizing the rights of all the citizens incorporating non-Pashtun peoples into the state. If this opportunity is not seized, once again, Afghanistan will be in chaos and its people will lose their faith in

democracy. After a long neglect, peace, reconstruction and development efforts under the UN umbrella are now going ahead. However, landing to safe soil is yet to witness for the Afghan people.

6.3 Validation of Hypotheses

The study has two hypotheses. First hypothesis is that ‘the perpetuity of ethnic factor in Afghanistan’s electoral politics has questioned the neutrality of Afghan President and Independent Election Commission’. In retrospect, it becomes clear that the first hypothesis turns out to be valid. It has been seen that ethnicity is a major factor affecting the neutrality of elections and the authority of the President. The second hypothesis is that ‘Pashtuns commanding the majority are also helped by their cross-border linkages for a greater degree of political mobilization compared to the non-Pashtun groups.’ This hypothesis is also turned out to be valid, as Pakistan and its creation ‘Taliban’ are found to have propped up support practically to Pashtuns than to the nation.

On first hypothesis, the analysis has found substantial data to corroborate the argument made therein. The neutrality is found imbalanced by the greater ethnic linkage of Pashtun group’s influence in political sphere. In the presidential elections of 2004, Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun candidate, won the election with the majority votes. Yunis Qanooni, a Tajik candidate, got the second largest number of votes. Mohammad Mohaqiq, a Hazara, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek, obtained respectively the third and fourth highest votes. Karzai, as the incumbent since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, was expectedly the most viable Pashtun candidate, and so he dominated the ballots in the regions with a Pashtun majority.

The voters defected from all of his Pashtun rivals, as their tallies remained below 1% nationwide (IEC 2004), even while some very influential Pashtun elites like Sayed Ashaq Gilani and Ahmadshah Ahmadzai, leaders of two Mujahidin factions, were also in the race. The defection from these elites by voters shows a strong voting coordination among Pashtun voters when they have a clear expectation about the viability of candidates. Perhaps one other factor that helped Karzai with 13.6% higher votes is the refugees’ votes. Unlike in the 2009 and 2014 elections, in 2004 Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan were allowed to vote, resulting in over 846,776 refugees

in these countries casting their votes. Karzai won 80.2% votes from refugees in Pakistan, in which 85.1% of refugees are ethnic Pashtuns. He also secured 44.4% votes of refugees in Iran, which hosts 15% Pashtun refugees. So far, the Afghanistan's President has been a Pashtun and it has influenced even the functioning of Independent Election Commission.

IEC whose prime job is to conduct free and fair elections has been found to suffer from corruption. In this, ethnic ties have been found to be the major motivation behind corrupt practices. IEC has also brought some reforms to encourage political party system. These include restricting number of Members of Parliament (MPs) elected within each provincial constituency to a smaller number. This is expected to boost development of political parties, groupings and alliances that are gradually emerging in the present Wolesi Jirga. Independent candidates are also expected to perform well in such system. Besides, reforms are also aimed at educating the electorate not only about how to vote but also about how their vote would affect their lives.

However, the 2009 Presidential Elections were marred by charges of ballot stuffing. Irregularities were reported in 2014 elections also. In many cases, these irregularities have been found to favour a particular candidate. The elite section has been accused of torpedoing the free and fair elections. The domination of one ethnic group has been aided by a highly centralized Presidential system of government in Afghanistan. For instance in the initial phase of Hamid Karzai's rule, there were more debates, discussions and dissents than in the later phase as he set about removing powerful personalities from his cabinet. Another factor has posed a major challenge to the conduct of free and fair elections. This was due to the presence of Haqqani network led by Jallaluddin Haqqani who belongs to Zadran tribe of Pashtun group from Paktia province. These above facts give credence to first hypothesis as well as the second one, which talks about cross border linkages.

The accommodation of many ethnic communities and interaction among them are factors in country's myriad problems and by virtue of this, they hold the solution too. The multi-ethnicity of Afghanistan has shaped its history, culture and society since time immemorial. This thesis has analysed how this multi-ethnicity has determined country's electoral politics so far.

6.4 Strength and weakness of the research study

The strengths of this study are present in the analysis and period of the work. The analysis has been done by using historical facts as well as statistical data. The statistical data from a recent period (which has been available and accessible) has been analysed in the context of historical discourse on ethnicity in Afghanistan to critically look at role of ethnicity in the present electoral system. Therefore it combines different areas and disciplines to arrive at a relatively fuller picture than what has existed so far. Also, a mere presentation of statistical data has been avoided in this way. Secondly, the period of the study is very significant. Afghanistan has seen its very important milestones in development of democracy and electoral system during this time. This period has witnessed several political stresses also. So, ethnicity has got adapted to new conditions during this time. Today, (at the time of writing this thesis), there is a National government in the country with two key positions distributed between persons belonging to different ethnic groups. There are signs of both adjustments and competition fuelled by ethnic competition for power and influence.

However, the study is limited in nature due to some reasons. Firstly, this is based mainly on analysis of secondary data accessed from Indian libraries and internet. Field study was not undertaken due to financial constraints and security reasons. Travelling to the field was not considered safe due to situation in the field country. So many inputs from the field, that could have either corroborated or thrown new light on, the conclusion here, are missing. It has been compensated by collecting opinions through emails from Afghans living abroad or from those residing in India. Collection in this manner helped in correcting many notions. But the major reliance has been on secondary sources and only limited government sources. Also, while discussing historical data, the scholars have been directly quoted in number of places which has led to high similarity index. However, proper citation has helped in placing it correctly. Another problem encountered during research and analysis has been lack of data available in native language. Very few translators proficient in the native language are available who can do justice to the task of translating official documents. Therefore, the researcher has used resources available in English.

6.5 Epilogue

The study covered the ethnic factor in the electoral politics of Afghanistan from 2004 to 2014. It has been found that several strands of thought and analyses have grown in the literature on electoral politics. In this thesis, the scope was to examine the ethnic factors in electoral politics in Afghanistan and to analyze the influence of ethnicity in the post-Taliban state building process, the electoral system, and the presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. To be precise, though the study could reach some conclusions on the factor of ethnicity and a better electoral system than the SNTV pattern, the arena is found rich brimming with further scope of studies.

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