



### BKTEF organizes 24th Monthly Study Circle for Baacha Khan Fellows

The Baacha Khan Trust Educational Foundation (BKTEF) held 24th monthly study circle at the BKTEF head office on August 4, 2018. The study circle was attended by almost 45 participants belonging to different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA including Peshawar, Mardan, Swat, Charsaada, Shangla, Hangu, Dir, Waziristan, Khyber Agency, Mohmand agency and Tank. The participants had an in depth discussion on the general elections 2018 and its aftermath.

The participants unanimously agreed that there was pre-poll engineering and there was no equal playing field to all the political parties. Moreover, muzzling of media, terror attacks and Election Day irregularities were widely observed during the elections. Almost all state institutions, including Election Commission of Pakistan, National Accountability Bureau, caretaker government and judiciary were used in favour of a particular party.

Dr. Sarfaraz summarized the discussion expressing that there appeared a general agreement among the participants on pre-poll rigging but there are differences among the participants as to the polling day rigging. The results of elections were also doubted on the basis of large number of rejected votes, undue delay in poll results, complaints from several districts regarding counting sans polling agents and 'crash in the RTS' which was later proved that it was not crashed. He said that it appeared a number of factors played role in the victory of PTI including the role of social media and print media as well as that of establishment. But the question, however, arose why did the enlightened nationalist movement fail to stand up to it and whether it was possible to have a nationalist movement in isolation from democratic struggle.

The discussion was concluded by Dr.Khadim Hussain on the note that there existed three structural contradictions understanding which was necessary to know why some parties and groups were brought to power and some were kept out of power by the mighty establishment of Pakistan. They contradictions were:

1. Class contradictions,
  
2. Unequal place and space for smaller nations and smaller federating units in the federation of Pakistan in decision making and in resource distribution, and
  
3. Civil-Military contradictions.

He said that the mega narrative of so-called 'change' and 'naya Pakistan' that was constructed in favour of PTI involved the use of various tools including word of mouth, involvement of institutions, substantial space in electronic media, pre-poll rigging in the shape of NAB cases, selective justice and terror attacks . The Election Day rigging included that results in favor of PTI were announced on the same day while the results in favor of other party candidates were announced 24 hours later. The cancellation of huge chunk of votes, the absence of Form 45 and ousting of polling agents at the time of counting votes all summed up to match the mega narrative of the winning party.

He said that this was high time that alternatives were found to counter the reduced representative role of Pashtuns in the Parliament. He said that there were internal and external alternatives that could prove to be beneficial if carried out effectively.

The external alternatives included the role of intelligentsia, media, professionals and youth using their human agency. Inclusion of all groups of Pashtuns, especially the teen age

population through organising social media seemed to be compulsory not optional. Making of alliances too had a role to play. He said there was a need to form strong alliances between Baloch and Pakhtuns as well as with the enlightened progressive elements of Punjab and Sindh to struggle for civilian supremacy and people's right to govern themselves. He also maintained that an alternative media was needed for which the youth needed to start working on building social media campaigns.

The internal alternatives included doing away with contradictions in the enlightened nationalist narrative of human dignity, nationalist identity, gender equality and social justice. The intellectual vacuum must be filled through training of youth. He said that it was time to own our people. Scientific analysis was needed since election itself was a science.

Dr. Khadim Hussain expressed that it was the science of bringing voters, casting votes and counting votes. Therefore, a trained and organized cadre was needed to look after the process to make sure that form 45 was present and that casting of vote was organized. Furthermore, there was a need to form relevant committees including administrative committees, casting vote committees, communication committees, transportation committees, polling station committees and facts finding committees long before the elections.

The next study circle was decided to be held on September 1, 2018. Book decided for the coming study circle was Maulvi Fazal Mahmood Maghfi written by Fazl Zaman Shalman.









