Muhammad Zahoor's Cartoons: A Case for the *de facto* Status of Inflation as General Realism in Pakistan

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Abstract: Pakistan has faced multiple economic challenges like inflation, unemployment, and lack of resources etc. However, these challenges doubled during the regime of PTI; somewhere due to the policies of the previous governments and elsewhere, due to PTI's own bold economic decisions on getting debts from IMF on rigorous conditions. Due to these factors, inflation grew higher as compared to the previous governments in Pakistan. The present research is an attempt to unveil the rigidity of inflation as a concrete phenomenon in Pakistan by analyzing Muhammad Zahoor's cartoons. The concepts of different theorists like Kenneth Gergen (1985), Waheed Qureshi (2016), Rom Harré (2006), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), Mark Haugaard (2022), and Judith Butler (1990), related to Social Reality Theory, have been used as conceptual framework for the present study. In the same way, Catherine Belsey's (cited in Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022) model of textual/semiotic analysis is used for the purpose of analysis and interpretation of the selected cartoons. It is found that inflation in Pakistan has increased due to multiple reasons like Covid-19, debts taken from IMF with rigorous conditions, and people's dissatisfaction with their livelihood and the government etc. It is concluded that inflation in Pakistan has now become an accepted reality for the general public which finds its due place in Zahoor's selected cartoons.

Keywords: *Accepted Truth; Context; de facto; Ideology; Inflation; Social Reality*

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's economy has gone through significant changes over the past few decades. In the 1960s, its economy was mainly agriculture-based, with a focus on producing cotton, wheat, and rice.During the 1970s, nationalization of major industries, including banking, was initiated by the government, leading to a more centrally planned economy.In the 1980s, Pakistan embarked on a policy of economic liberalization, which included deregulation, privatization, and reduction in trade barriers. Throughout the 1990s, its economy remained stagnant due to political instability, high inflation, and low foreign investment. Today, Pakistan's economy has become more diversified, with the service sector making up a larger proportion of GDP (Gross Domestic Product).The government has implemented policies to encourage foreign investment, and as a result, Pakistan has seen an increase in foreign direct investment.The country has also improved its infrastructure, including the development of modern highways, ports, and airports. It has also made efforts to increase its exports, particularly in the textile and agricultural sectors.

However, despite these improvements, Pakistan still faces challenges such as high inflation, unemployment, and a large informal economy. Additionally, political instability and security concerns continue to affect Pakistan's economic growth.

The PTI government inherited an economic crisis when it came into power in 2018. It implemented a series of reforms aimed at stabilizing the economy, such as seeking assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), implementing austerity measures, and improving tax collection.

Pakistan's economy has been struggling with a high level of debt, trade and fiscal deficits, low foreign exchange reserves, and a large informal economy for many years. These issues have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted global economies, including Pakistan's.

Although, it is not accurate to attribute the entire economic crisis in Pakistan solely to the previous PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) government as the economic challenges faced by Pakistan are the result of a combination of long-term structural issues, external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and government policies of previous administrations; yet, some of these policies have been criticized by PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) and the public due to PTI's empty slogans of positive change.

Although, the previous PTI government may not have fully contributed to the economic challenges in Pakistan and it may not have been declared officially by the state agencies, yet, it is in fact partially responsible for them because of factors like its political tug-of-war, deals with IMF on difficult conditions, and losing of the public consent due to the empty promises who conceived of inflation as a reality in Pakistan that is indispensable and unavoidable.

Rationale of the Research

The economic instability which Pakistan is facing today can be traced back throughout history of its independence. However, there is a strong need to dissect the genuine, modern, and the most important reasons of the ongoing inflation in Pakistan today. The present research is an attempt to arrive at the facts of this inflation through an analysis of the cartoons of Zahoor.

Significance of the Research

The present research is significant in multiple ways. First, it will lead to a broader understanding of how cartoons present social realities beyond comic effects. Those working in the fields of semiotics will be benefited from the present research. Secondly, it will raise an awareness among the common masses of Pakistan regarding the empty slogans of the so-called fair politicians and will let them know the persuasion strategies employed by the politicians to befool them. Third, it will provide an insight into the thinking of a common man concerning economic crises in different forms like inflation, debts, hiking, income, revenue, and capital etc. They will be able to know the mechanisms of World Bank, and IMF (International Monetary Fund) to lower down the economic stability of a country and the aftereffects of the rising in the value of dollar.

Statement of the Research Problem

Inflation occurs when the value of local currency decreases. People face difficulties in buying and selling due to price hike. The cartoons and caricatures of Zahoor present a panorama of an era of inflation due to the instability of political situation in Pakistan and the price soaring caused by it. The present study is an attempt to show how Zahoor's cartoons present 'inflation' as a social reality in Pakistan.

Research Objective

To explore the concept of inflation as becoming fact in Pakistan, in the context of the selected cartoons.

Research Question

How do the selected cartoons present an outlook of rising prices as an accepted truth in Pakistan?

Conceptual Framework

Social Reality Theory is a sociological and philosophical perspective that argues that our understanding of reality is constructed through social interaction and language. Gergen (1985) is of the opinion that it is language through which reality is constructed and maintained and that the understanding of the social practices is determined by the cultural, social and historical contexts that surround us. According to the perspective of Qureshi (2016), the reality thus achieved is "based upon the assumptions of the participants that they have learnt overtime. These assumptions include various facts, beliefs and traditions that are regarded permanent and eternal within a specific community or culture" (pp. 141-142). It suggests that the reality that we experience is not objective or fixed, but is instead shaped by our social and cultural context. In the same terrain, Harré (2006) while writing about Muzafer Sherif, explains that he emphasized the role of "joint action" (p. 202) in creating an individual identity for group formation. This action which pertains to the collective psychology of the members of a particular group, makes a reality socially acceptable for them.

According to this theory, our perceptions of the world are not solely determined by physical reality, but are influenced by social norms, cultural values, and the language and symbols we use to describe our experiences. In other words, our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are shaped by the social structures and systems around us. In this regard, Berger and Luckmann (1966) assert that a reality is established through the practices of different institutions and so the beliefs created by such institutions; that this reality is

negotiated and maintained in the mainstream social structure by routine communication and interactions of the members of a society. In the same way, Haugaard (2022) while referring to Foucault, explains that power is central for him in the construction of reality and that this construction of reality is done through institutional practices of control, supervision, and regulation. Likewise, talking about the role of social practices in the construction of social reality of female as woman, Butler (1990) is of the view that our understanding of female as woman is due to the social construction of the reality that she is weak, and humble as compared to man. According to her, gender and sexuality are not given and natural phenomena but are maintained through everyday practices in a culture which are outcome of patriarchal language.

The theoretical perspective for the present research has been chosen as Social Reality Theory since the economic distress in Pakistan has no roots in abstract thinking but rather has actively been faced by the public. 'Pakistan is going through an age of inflation' has become the slogan of every Pakistani citizen and now they believe that it is actually happening and is a reality. In a social setup like Pakistan, where everything has reached far beyond the access of a common man, there is no reason to suppose that Pakistan is not in bad debts. Previously, talking about the huge debts in public spheres was not taken seriously and was supposed to be the result of political debatefor parties' purposes but now-a-days, it has become an accepted reality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Shahbaz (2013) explored the impact of monetary policy on inflation in Pakistan. They used time series data from 1972 to 2010 to analyze the relationship between money supply, interest rates, and inflation. The research found that there is a long-run relationship between money supply, interest rates, and inflation. The authors used the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) to show that money supply and interest rates have a significant impact on inflation in Pakistan. Specifically, an increase in money supply leads to higher inflation, while an increase in interest rates leads to lower inflation. The paper also found that the impact of monetary policy on inflation is asymmetric. That is, contractionary monetary policy has a stronger impact on inflation than expansionary policy. The authors argued that this may be due to the fact that inflation expectations are more responsive to changes in monetary policy when the policy is contractionary.

Saima Siddiqui and Nasir Iqbal (2013) examined the inflation dynamics and the role of food and energy prices in Pakistan's economy. The authors used time series data from 1990 to 2012 to analyze the factors that contribute to inflation in Pakistan. They found that food and energy prices are important determinants of inflation in Pakistan, and that the pass-through effect of international energy prices on domestic inflation is significant. They argued that this is because Pakistan is highly dependent on imported energy, and changes in global energy prices have a significant impact on the domestic economy. They also examined the relationship between inflation and other macroeconomic variables, such as money supply, exchange rates, and interest rates and found that money supply, exchange rates, and interest rates have a significant impact on inflation in the short run, but their impact is relatively weak in the long run.The study concluded that policymakers in Pakistan need to pay close attention to food and energy prices when formulating monetary and fiscal policies. The authors suggested that policies aimed at stabilizing food and energy prices, such as subsidies and price controls, can help to reduce inflationary pressures in the economy.However, they

cautioned that these policies need to be carefully designed to avoid unintended consequences, such as distortions in the market and fiscal imbalances.

Muhammad Arshad Khan and Muhammad Tariq (2015) aimed to identify the key factors driving inflation in Pakistan. The authors used time series data from 1980 to 2013 and apply the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model to analyze the short- and long-run relationships among inflation, its determinants, and other macroeconomic variables.Their study found that monetary factors, such as money supply and interest rates, have a significant impact on inflation in the short run. However, in the long run, the authors find that supply-side factors, such as oil prices and food prices, have a more significant impact on inflation. The authors suggested that this finding is consistent with the structuralist hypothesis, which argues that inflation in developing countries is primarily caused by supply-side factors rather than monetary factors. They found evidence of a significant pass-through effect of international oil prices on domestic inflation in Pakistan, which the authors argued is due to Pakistan's reliance on imported oil. Moreover, the authors found that exchange rate depreciation has a significant positive impact on inflation in the short run, although its effect diminishes in the long run. The study suggested that policymakers in Pakistan need to focus on addressing supply-side factors, such as improving agricultural productivity and infrastructure, to control inflation in the long run. Additionally, the authors argued that the government needs to develop effective policies to reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported oil to minimize the impact of global oil price shocks on domestic inflation.

Arshad Hassan and Shujahat Haider Hashmi (2016) examined the trends and determinants of inflation in Pakistan. The authors used time series data from 1973 to 2013 and apply the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model to analyze the short- and long-run relationships among inflation, its determinants, and other macroeconomic variables.They found that inflation in Pakistan has been volatile and persistent over the sample period. The authors identified a number of factors that have contributed to inflation, including monetary factors such as money supply and interest rates, as well as supply-side factors such as food and oil prices.Their study also found that exchange rate depreciation has a significant impact on inflation in Pakistan, as it increases the cost of imports and raises the domestic price level. Moreover, the authors found that government spending and fiscal deficits have a positive impact on inflation in Pakistan, indicating that fiscal discipline is essential to controlling inflation in the country.Their study concluded that Pakistan needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to controlling inflation that addresses both monetary and supply-side factors. The authors suggested that policies aimed at stabilizing food prices, improving agricultural productivity, and reducing Pakistan's reliance on imported oil can help to reduce inflationary pressures in the economy. Additionally, the authors recommended that the government needs to adopt sound fiscal and monetary policies to maintain macroeconomic stability and control inflation.

Ali Kemal and Saman Atta (2018) analyzed the persistence of inflation in Pakistan and identifies the potential factors that can lead to structural breaks in the inflation series. The authors used time series data from 1973 to 2017 and applied various econometric techniques to examine the stationarity and persistence of inflation, as well as the presence of structural breaks. The study found that inflation in Pakistan is highly persistent, which suggests that shocks to the economy have long-lasting effects on the price level. The authors also found evidence of structural breaks in the inflation series, which they attributed to changes in the monetary and fiscal policy regimes, shifts in global oil prices, and other exogenous factors.The authors argued that their findings have important implications for inflation targeting in Pakistan. They suggested that policymakers need to be aware of the potential for structural breaks in the inflation series and adjust

their policies accordingly. For instance, the authors recommended that the State Bank of Pakistan should adopt a flexible inflation targeting framework that takes into account the potential for structural breaks and allows for adjustments in response to changing economic conditions.

Gohar Abro(2019) examined the factors that have contributed to the recent surge in inflation in Pakistan. The author used time series data from 2005 to 2018 and applied various econometric techniques to analyze the determinants of inflation in Pakistan. His study found that the recent surge in inflation in Pakistan is largely driven by supply-side factors, particularly food and energy prices. The author attributed the increase in food prices to supply-side shocks such as floods and other natural disasters, as well as government policies that have led to disruptions in the supply chain. Additionally, the author suggested that the increase in energy prices is due to a combination of global oil price hikes and the depreciation of the Pakistani rupee. The study also found that monetary factors such as money supply and interest rates have a significant but relatively weaker impact on inflation in Pakistan. The author suggested that the State Bank of Pakistan needs to adopt a more proactive approach to managing inflation by targeting both supply-side and monetary factors. He concluded that Pakistan needs to implement a comprehensive strategy to address the underlying causes of inflation in the country and suggested that policies aimed at improving agricultural productivity, enhancing the efficiency of the energy sector, and strengthening the overall macroeconomic environment can help to reduce inflationary pressures in the economy. Additionally, he recommended that the State Bank of Pakistan needs to adopt a more flexible inflation targeting framework that takes into account the potential for supply-side shocks and allows for adjustments in response to changing economic conditions.

Ahmed and Ahmed (2019) conducted a study on the relationship between inflation and economic growth in Pakistan, using the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) approach. The study covered the period from 1980 to 2017 and analyzed the long-run and short-run relationships between inflation and economic growth in the country. It found a negative long-run relationship between inflation and economic growth in Pakistan, indicating that higher inflation rates have a negative impact on economic growth. The short-run analysis also showed a negative relationship between inflation and economic growth, but the impact was found to be less significant in the short run. It also analyzed the impact of other macroeconomic variables on economic growth in Pakistan, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), government expenditure, and exports. The results showed that FDI and government expenditure have a positive impact on economic growth, while exports have a negative impact.

Khan et al. (2021) study explores the determinants of inflation in Pakistan. The authors found that inflation in Pakistan is influenced by multiple factors, including money supply, exchange rates, fiscal deficits, foreign inflation, and oil prices. The study found that an increase in money supply, depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, higher fiscal deficits, and higher foreign inflation lead to higher inflation in Pakistan. Additionally, the study found that changes in oil prices have a significant impact on inflation in Pakistan, with a rise in oil prices leading to an increase in inflation. The authors suggest that policy makers in Pakistan need to address these factors to control inflation in the country.
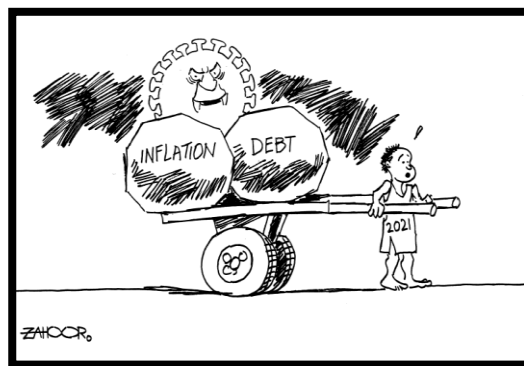
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DELIMITATION OF DATA

The data for the current study was selected from https://www.dawn.com/newspaper/cartoon— an editorial cartoon website. These cartoons are drawn by Zahoor, a leading Pakistani cartoonist and they ranged from January 1, 2021 to April 20, 2021. As an extension of the previous MPhil research, where 10 (ten) cartoons

were selected for the purpose of analysis; for the present study, only 2 (two) cartoons were selected. As the aim of the present research was to explore inflation as a social reality in Pakistan in the selected cartoons, therefore, it was preplanned to search for such cartoons that had the dim traces of some kind of inherent price hiking. Having this purpose in mind, first those cartoons were opted among the available 10, which were thought to be apt. By skimming and scanning, a vague and general idea of different cartoons under study as vehicles containing 'soaring prices' was got. As, in both skimming and scanning, purpose allocation is there, therefore, purposive sampling was used first to allocate data. During this sampling, 2 cartoons out of 10 were selected and analyzed in detail. Belsey's (cited in Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022) model of textual analysis (semiotic analysis here) was used for the analysis and interpretation of the selected data with a special focus on tools like context, historical background, minute details, tensions and flux, and themes in the cartoons (cited in Jabeen, 2022: pp. 6-8; Jabeen et al., 2022: pp. 8790-8791).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Following is the analysis of the selected cartoons. The text in the cartoons has been enclosed in quotation marks and made bold and italic with the purpose to differentiate the original text from the general commentary. Also, the analysis and discussion go hand in hand due to the qualitative and descriptive nature of the study.

2021—A Year of Economic Crises

Cartoon1.("Painsahead"), cited in cited in (Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022)

Analysis and Interpretation
The year 2021 approached with bad news for the world in general and Pakistan inparticular as it was already passing through an age of extreme inflation and internalpolitical strife between the establishment and opposition. Pakistan was already seeing thepressure of heavy debts in the form of interest that multiplied every year. In such direcircumstances, the approach of Covid-19 proved to be a blow on Pakistani economy aseverything stopped and major cities and markets observed lockdown. In order to fight thedisease, Pakistan had to close all the business hubs which resulted in inflation. The whole year passed with extreme difficulty and uncertainty.

According to "Pakistan agrees to swallow bitter IMF pill",2021,IMF agreed to sanction $6billion as bailout

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package for Pakistan to stabilize its rupee value in response to the hiking of US dollar as a result of the inflation in the country due to corrupt practices of the previous governments and heavy debts. This sanction was tied with strict conditionsfor Pakistan by IMF like: the bailout amount will not be paid in lump sum, Pakistani government will increase taxes, it will raise oil prices monthly etc. This was not an easytask to do for Pakistan as the masses were already under the stress of heavy taxes. Byincreasing taxes and oil prices more was like fanning the fire of inflation. Onfinding no other alternative, finally Pakistan agreed to these conditions of IMF and thetaxes grew higher on monthly basis. Such a situation added to the miseries ofthe poor class who were already living from hands to mouth. Due to IMF's crude policiesand difficult conditions, the government had to raise the ratio as compared to the previousstatistics. Oil, medicine, edibles, vegetables and fruit were no more in the grasp of thecommon people who worked on daily wages. The rise in fuel prices was extremely disliked and criticized by the public as it created inflation in the country. In the same way, the outbreak of Covid-19 also left Pakistan in a miserable situation. The cases arosehigherandhighersinceFebruary26,2020whenaresidentofKarachicamefromIranandtheother wasspotted in Islamabad. Accordingto areport:

> Daily maximum cases in Pakistan were reported on June 14, 2020, i.e., 6,825cases. 213 cases were the lowest official number that were reported on August 30,2020. Second wave was started in the second week of October, reached 3,795official case on December 6; maximum in the second wave. Although the casesstartedincreasingthemaximumnumberremainedcloseto1,000casestillFebruary 2021. The ongoing third wave in Pakistan was officially recognized tohave started in the second week of March 2021. The number of cases (on March18,2021)areincreasingat8percentinfectionrateandCFRis1.2percent. Total cases are more than 600 thousand and are expected to increase due to increase ininfection rate as well as outbreak of new variant of virus. ("Impact of COVID-19", quoted in Jabeen, 2022: pp. 42-43; Jabeen et al., 2022: p. 8792)

The caricature pulling the cart is a stereotype representing the whole Pakistani population who belong to the poor class. His rugged clothes and a little hair are the symbol of hispoverty and misery. In the same way, he is not wearing any trousers/shalwar which alsoalludes to his miserable condition. He is also not in the position to have any shirt/kameezand is just wearing a simple jacket. All this gives a clear picture of his plight; he seemsextremely depressed which is shown from his wrinkled forehead. He is also anticipatingsomething very dire which is evident from a small bubble over his head. The emptybubbleissuggestiveofthehollownessthat2021has.Thewrittentag*"2021"*onhisjacketisremarkableinthese nsethatitreferstotheyear2021,astakingwithitCoronavirus, inflation, and debt, represented respectively by the symbol of Coronavirus,*"INFLATION"*, and *"DEBT"*. The possible reason of the cartoonist not using name forCoronavirus and instead representing it through an ogre emoji, may be the severity anddeadliness of the disease. Moreover, the road under the tires of the cart is pressed downwhich alludes to the weight of the cart having the heaps of Coronavirus, *"INFLATION"*,and *"DEBT"*. The 'heap' shape suggests the large quantity of the stuff that the cart iscarrying.

A poor Pakistani person, representing the whole community looks to be in great flux anddoesnotknowthesituationahead.He,whiledrawingthecart,anticipatestheconsequences that the year 2021 will take with it. His grim face is the identification of

hisshatteredmindandworryingtemper.Inthesameway,hissize,ascomparedtothesize of the cart having 3 heaps of the biggest issues, is not less important which shows hisincapacity to deal with these kinds of diverse situations in 2021. The tag '2021' makesthis year a very vicious and ominous. Among the three heaps, the one representingCoronavirus,hasbeendrawnwithaverydrastic,dangerous,andfearfulwaytorefertoitsfatalanddeadlyconsequences;ifitisnotcontrolledintime,itmayspreadgloballyand can cause genocide. These three issues are the most serious and greatest, which willbe confronted by Pakistan in 2021. The cartoon can be regarded as a precautionary toolfor the government of Pakistan to think in advance and devise strategies to tackle thesocial,economic, andhealth issues impendingto befacedby it in2021.

The dominant theme is the incapability of Pakistani public to deal with diverse situationlike ailments, pandemics, economic crises, and poverty. The downgrading of Pakistanieconomy as a result of the hiking of dollar, also finds its place in the image. In the sameway, the poor quality of the road construction, mismanagement of the governmentalorganizations,increasingpovertylevel,loweststandardoflife,andshortageofthenecessitiesoflifeetc .aresomeof thethemes whichareevidentintheimage (Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022).

PTI's Promises to End Economic Crises

Cartoon3.("Youmustnotfear"), cited in (Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022)

AnalysisandInterpretation
Imran Khan won the 2018 general election with heavy mandate. It was such a time thatwasfullofcrisesandthecountrywasgoingthroughextremedifficultconditions.There was poverty, joblessness, corruption, inflation, malpractices in organizations etc. in thecountry. He came with a new vision to end all the mischief from Pakistan and to make itthe visionary state of the world. Also, the heavy debts that encircled Pakistan, are not lesstomention.Insuchcrises,whereeverythingwasinfluxandorganizationalmismanagement was at the peak, he pacified the people by asking them to be patient andthat he will get everything right. He also did many tall claims and promises which werenot in his capacity to achieve. Due to these reasons, people became averse to him and hisgovernment and were at discomfort. They lost hope of any positive change taking placeandbecameextremely critical.

PTI government was elected with heavy mandate in the general election of 2018. Theelections were

heavily criticized by other parties in Pakistan who considered electioncommission to be partial having supported Imran Khan. The leadership of PML (N) (Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz Group) andPDMasserted in their viewpoints time and again that army was responsible for thewinning of PTI in the present election wherein "the military and intelligence agency ofbeing behind his outer as premier and installing their "puppet government" by bringingImran Khan into power" and that the present government of PTI is not electedbuta"selected"one(TheHindu,quoted in Jabeen, 2022: p. 50; Jabeen et al., 2022: p. 8794).ImranKhan,beingstaunchlycriticalof the corruption done by the previous governments and political   parties   for throwingPakistanintobaddebts,wasdeterminedtotakerevengefromthembycomingintopower.   He   was enthusiastic to make Pakistan a corruption-free country and welfare andvisionary state of the world. Before the general elections of 2018, PTI announced the first100days plan aftergaining thegovernment. Thisplan was:

> The   creation   of   a   new   province   in   Southern   Punjab,   reconciliation   with alienatedBalochleaders,developmentofKarachi,povertyalleviation,andbettermentofthe   economy overall. The plan included a jumbo development package for FATAto which other provinces will contribute   three   per   cent   of   their   share   ... ThepromisewasmadetoimplementthejobquotareservedforBalochistan.Thefederal   government would   announce   a   development   package   for   Karachi   after   thecompletionofsix-pointagenda...Toimprovetheoveralleconomyofthecountry, it was promised that 10 million jobs will be created, the manufacturingsector will be resuscitated, small and medium-sized businesses will   be developedfast,andtheprivatesectorwillbeassistedinbuildingfivemillionhouses.Reformationoftaxadm inistration,increaseintourism,thetransformationofstate-ownedenterprises,andovercomingoftheenergychallengeswasalsopromised ... Through this plan, it was promised that national security would berevamped by creation of four national security organizations. ("First 100 days ofImranKhan's primeministership", quoted in Jabeen, 2022: p. 51; Jabeen et al., 2022: p. 8794).

Unluckily and up till now, the plan did not prove successful due to plethora of economicchallenges faced by   Imran   Khan.   This   greatly   disturbed   the   public   who   through differentmeanslikesocialandprintmediasharedtheirfeelingsofdisgustwiththepresent government of PTI on the basis of its false promises and inability. The disgust and unrestof the public aggravated as soon as the government hiked the diesel and petrol prices. The sudden and huge rise in the prices of diesel and petrol was in response to the reservationsmade by the IMF as Imran Khan resorted to IMF for loan to run the affairs of the statebecausethegovernmenttreasurywasempty.IMFalreadythecreditor,agreedto sanction $6 billion more loan for Pakistan in installments on the conditions: if it "raises the taxesbefore the final approval" and "increase revenue by increasing a fuel tax by 4rupees (0.02 cents) a liter every month till it reaches 30 rupees a liter" (FaseehMangi&IsmailDilawar,quoted in Jabeen, 2022: p. 52; Jabeen et al., 2022: pp. 8794-8795).Thisraisedtheamountofthepprevioustaxesincomparatively higher ratio for the already burdened average industry owners and in thehighest ratio for the poor who were living from hands to mouth. Oil, medicine, edibles,vegetables and fruit were no more in the grasp of the common people who worked ondaily wages. The rise in fuel prices was extremely disliked and criticized by the public asit

created inflation in the country. People suffered economically but Imran Khan wouldjust pacify them but proclaiming that 'do not panic' and that have patience. The fuelprices rose even higher and higher and he retained the same view and stuck to the samestatement of 'do not panic' and that things will be better soon. The prices hiked, inflationrose, taxes doubled but the Prime Minister solicited the people with the words 'you arenotto worry'.

The image has two caricatures. The first caricature that is coiled around is that of a poorperson. He is a stereotype who represents the common public of Pakistan who are livingin extreme difficult conditions. His miserable condition is evident from his bare feet, thinbody, and squeezed face. His disarrayed hair which are not combed properly add to hismisery and tough time. His teeth are evident and represent the stress under which he isgoing. He is so strongly pinched by the coil that he seems breathless. He seems to bestruggling hard to be free from the grip of the coil but in vain as the force of the coil ismuch greater than that of the person. The rope-like material that is coiling him is theflexiblehose/producthoseorpipeofthefueldispenserorfuelunit.Ithas been represented likeananacondacoilingaroundthepreyandgoingtodevourit.Thenozzleof the flexible hose is represented like the head of the anaconda who seems very angry.Theoilpouringdownfromthenozzleisrepresentedliketheforkedtongueoftheanaconda sensing the condition of the prey. The second caricature is that of the PrimeMinisterImranKhan.Hisspikynosewithoblongface,smalleyes,peculiarhairstyle,and the black waistcoat do necessitate him to be Imran Khan. The fact that he is ImranKhan is strengthened by the statement **"GHABRANA NAHI..."** which is proclaimed byhim and refers to his idiolect and catchword. His mocking is evident from his sprawlingjaws which shows his laughing over the situation of the person coiled by flexible hose ofthefuel dispenser.

The whole contention is based upon the analogy of 'GhabranaNahi Hai', proclaimed byImran Khan in August, 2018 when he became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. During hisera inflation increased with the soaring prices of many food items like chicken; petrol,electricitybills,taxes,andmedicineetc.thatextremelyshockedthelowerclassofPakistan and those working on daily wages. According to Imran Khan, whatever the casemay be, and how much the inflation increases, do not matter. What matters, is paying ofthetaxesbythepublic.AccordingtoNailaInayat(2021),anartistgaveamusicaltouchtothecatchword slogan of Imran Khan:

> PakistanimusicianSaadAlavi'ssatiricalcoverofPMKhan'ssloganwouldresonate with anyone who splurges on a bath soap, eats more than one roti, orthinks they can spend on medicine and also pay their children's school fees. Wakeupy'all,collectallthatmoneyandonlypayyourtaxes.Orbetteryet,letquomremainindeepslumber,theydon'tneedtoknowwhathappensinthe real world. Bedagarkhojaye,aapnepachhtananahin—theraftmaysinkbutyou shouldn't regret. Aap ne ghabrananahin is PM Imran Khan's vain messagefor the Pakistanis. But the magic of Alavi transcends it beyond borders. ManyIndians might think he was singing for them too in these times of inflation. (quoted in Jabeen, 2022: pp. 53-54; Jabeen et al., 2022: pp. 8795-8796)

Theflexiblehoseofthediesel/petroldispenserrepresentstheanacondathathascoiled/entangled the public of

Pakistan in its clutches. How steadily they try to free fromthe soaring prices of the fuel, it is of no use and that it will destroy them by taking awayfrom them even their meals. They are already under the heavy burden of taxes and therising prices of diesel and petrol even more, will add to their further embarrassment as thedelivery of goods necessary for life is based upon transportation which is again directlyaffectedbythesoaringpricesofdieselandpetrol.ButthePrimeMinisterisstillnotaware of these facts. He does not want to know about the plight of the poor people. Theonly thing that he needs is to pay the taxes by the people. He does not care a fig for thepoor people of Pakistan and is active behind just hoarding money in government treasuryeven if it is at the risk of snatching the livelihood of the people and leaving them todiseases,hunger,inflation,joblessness,andhomelessness.Peoplecannotaffordtheexpenses of everyday life but he is still in jolly mood telling people that everything willget right and that 'you must not worry'. This is like a joke that he is playing on the poorpeopleofPakistan ashehasbadly failedto keepany promisethathe hasdone.

The image is important in as far as the Socialist ideology is concerned. Unless and untiltheresourcesareownedbyallthemembersofacommunityalike,notrueprogresscanbeachievedandthattheri chwillgrowricherandthepoor,poorer.Italsohas the ideology of anti-Riyasat-e-Madina which was proclaimed by Imran Khan. The vision ofsuch a 'Riyasat' or state seems dreamy. In the same way, the inability of Imran Khan asthe Prime Minister also finds place in the image. Despite being the strongest of the PrimeMinisters in the history of Pakistan, he is not able to achieve something availing forPakistan (Jabeen, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022).

Findings

It is found that the existing problems are due to different factors. Mainly, it is IMF that is responsible for inflation in Pakistan as it gave her debts with strange and difficult conditions. Secondly, the sudden outbreak of Coronavirus worsened the situation even more. People were restricted to homes and could not get their daily wages due to which the ratio of poverty increased. It is also found that people have become psychology depressed due to the increasing inflation. In the same way, Imran Khan's government due to facing huge economic challenges, was unable to keep its previous promises. It is found that he relieved the flux and tension of people merely by uttering his slogan of 'Ghabrana Nahi' repeatedly, without actually dealing with the situation.

Conclusion

Inflation in Pakistan increased due to the economic policies of the PTI government. Previously, the people of Pakistan, although had faced economic distress, did not face inflation to an unbearable extent. It is in the regime of PTI that inflation reached its peak. This was proved to the public in true sense in the form of rising prices and their conception of inflation as a reality. Zahoor's cartoons truly represent this shift from the mere theoretical discussions on the country's bankrupted economy to an actual and concrete reality in the form of inflation. Inflation has become de facto in Pakistan and has been accepted by the Pakistani public as a general reality.

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