



ATTENDANCE REPORT

Twenty-fifth Session of the
National Assembly of Pakistan

November 6, 2015 to November 11, 2015



Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN)
www.fafen.org

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Executive Summary

Twenty-fifth session of National Assembly spanned over four sittings only and proved to be the smallest session of the current parliamentary year. It was second session since the National Assembly started sharing publicly attendance of its members. The lawmakers' attendance in this session showed significant improvement compared to previous sessions. On average, 235 lawmakers attended each sitting while 97 remained absent and eight members applied for leave. There were 140 lawmakers who attended all four sittings of the House. The number of lawmakers who did not attend any sitting during this session fell to 18 from 25 in the last session. The Leader of the House, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif came only once to the House to cast his vote in favor of his party's candidate for speakership. The ministerial attendance also improved during this session. The improvement might have been stimulated by the election of the Speaker where all parties tried to ensure maximum attendance to support their candidates.

Introduction

Members of the Parliament and all provincial assemblies are entrusted with public mandate. Plus, millions of rupees of public money are allocated to parliamentary sessions. Members of the elected assemblies are paid travel and daily allowances from national exchequer. There is dire need to bring in place the mechanisms by which transparency and accountability is ensured. However, since the formation of the first constituent assembly in 1947, the attendance of its members has been kept private and never made public. Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) kept stressing the need for making public representatives' attendance public as a measure of increased parliamentary transparency and accountability. FAFEN even started headcount of the lawmakers as an alternative solution when its persistent efforts received no response from the concerned authorities. The attendance statistics based on headcount were made public through daily factsheets, session reports and annual reports of the respective elected houses. FAFEN continued to advocate the need for making the attendance record public through all its factsheets and reports. Other means of engagement such as formation of a parliamentary caucus, advocacy campaigns with incumbent Members of the Parliament and communication with parliament secretariat through letters and petitions were also employed. It was through these continuous efforts that the National Assembly Secretariat finally took up the issue of making members' attendance public and for the first time in the parliamentary history of Pakistan, lawmakers' attendance for the 23rd (budget) session of the National Assembly was made public through its website. This is the third session since the National Assembly has been sharing the attendance record of its lawmakers. This report is based on the data acquired from the website of the National Assembly.

Overall Attendance

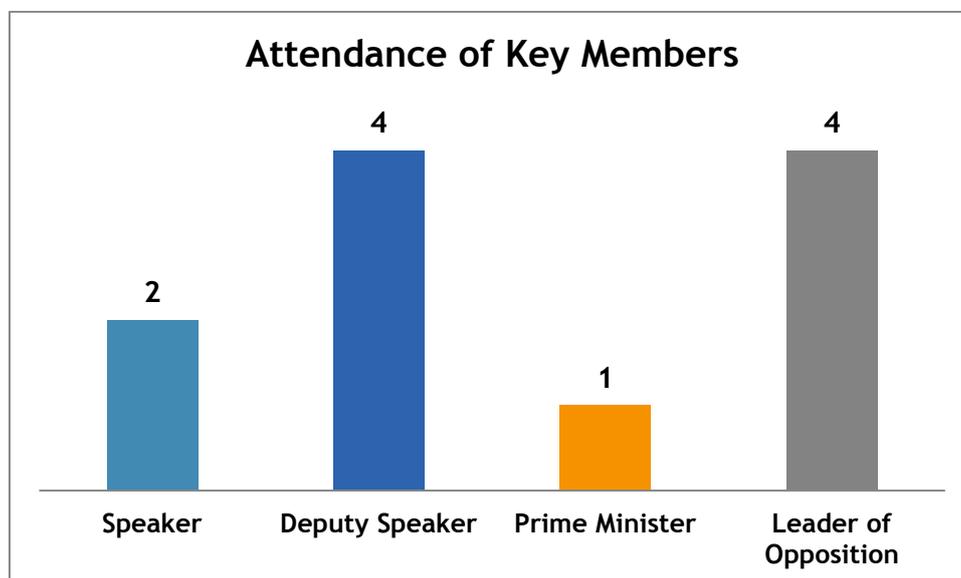
The National Assembly's 25th Session was held on November 6, 2015 and was prorogued on November 11, 2015. The House held four sittings during this period.

As many as 140 (41%) lawmakers attended all four sittings during this session. Of these 140 members, 78 belonged to PML-N, 19 to PPPP, 17 to PTI and 9 to JUI-F. The list of regular members included Leader of the Opposition Khursheed Shah, Parliamentary Leader of PkMAP Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Parliamentary Leader of AML Sheikh Rasheed and PTI lawmakers Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari and Asad Umar.

There were 18 (5%) MNAs who did not show up in any of the 4 sittings of the session. Half of these absent lawmakers belonged to PPPP, four to PML-N, two to PML-F and one each to PTI, PkMAP, and JUI-F. Moreover, this list also includes the names of Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Pir Sadruddin Rashidi, former Prime Minister Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali, Prime Minister's son-in-law Capt. Muhammad Safdar and former President Asif Ali Zardari's sister Faryal Talpur.

Attendance of Key Members

The Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif attended only one sitting while the Leader of Opposition was present in all four sittings. The office of the Speaker was vacant until second sitting. Of three sittings after his election, the Speaker attended two of the remaining three sittings whereas the Deputy Speaker was present during whole session.



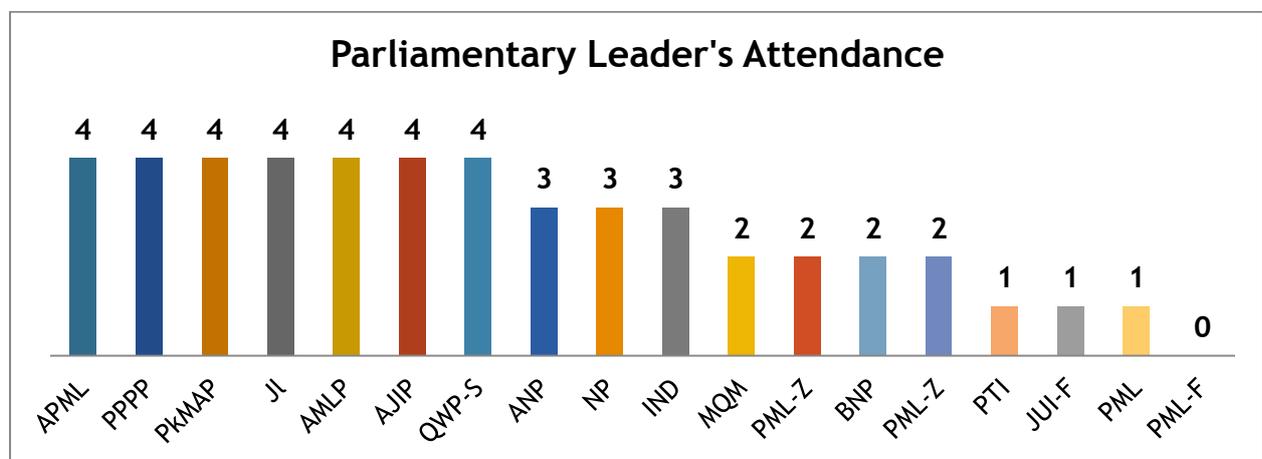
Ministerial Attendance

The incumbent Cabinet comprises 27 ministers of which three are Senators and 24 are Members of the National Assembly (MNAs). Attendance of the ministers who are members of Senate is only required when a question regarding their ministry is raised by any lawmaker in the Lower House. This section only covers the attendance of 24 ministers who are MNAs.

Only five of the cabinet members attended all four sittings while the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Pir Sadruddin Rashidi did not come to the House during entire session. Seven ministers attended three sittings while six came to two sittings only. The remaining five ministers were present during one sitting only.

Attendance of Parliamentary Leaders

The parliamentary leaders of only PkMAP and JI and lawmakers belonging to single-member parties AMLP, AJIP, QWP-S and APML were present during four sittings of the session. The Parliamentary Leaders of ANP, Independent Group and sole member of NP were present in three sittings. The Parliamentary Leader of MQM and sole members of PML-Z and BNP came to two sittings while the leaders of PTI, JUI-F and PML attended only one sitting during 25th session. The Parliamentary Leader of PML-F did not attend even a single sitting.

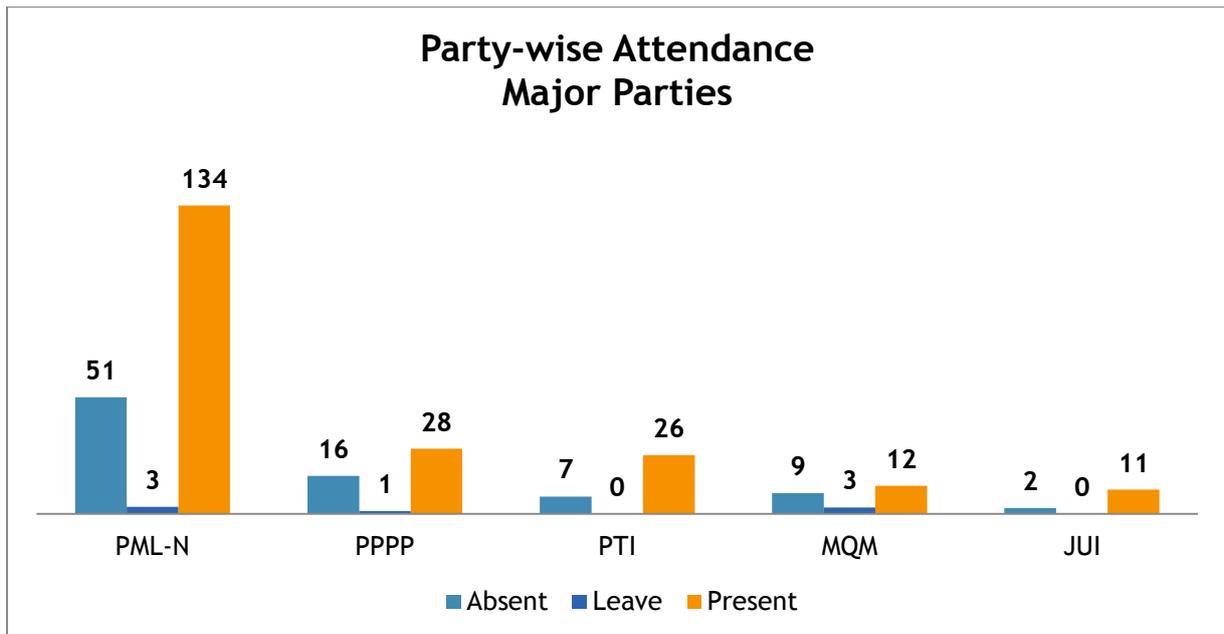


Party-wise Attendance

There are 309 political parties registered with Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) however, only 18 of these parties have representation in the National Assembly. PML-N is the majority party in the House with 188 (55%) lawmakers followed by PPPP (46), PTI (33), MQM (24) and JUI-F (13). There are nine independent lawmakers as well while smaller parties share the remaining seats.

On average, 134 (71%) of the 188 PML-N members in the House attended each sitting, 51 (27%) remained absent while 3 (2%) requested for leave. Similarly, 28 (61%) of the 46 PPPP lawmakers, on average, remained present in each sitting, 17 (37%) were absent and one (2%) availed leave. Moreover, 26 (79%) of the 34 PTI lawmakers, on average, came to the House in each sitting while seven (21%) remained absent. Twelve of the 24 MQM lawmakers attended each sitting, nine remained absent and 3 applied for leave. Eleven of 13 JUI-F lawmakers also came to attend the proceeding during session.

The entire JI parliamentary group was present during the session while half of PML-F lawmakers attended each sitting on average. The lawmakers belonging to single-member parties were present during entire session.



Gender-wise Attendance

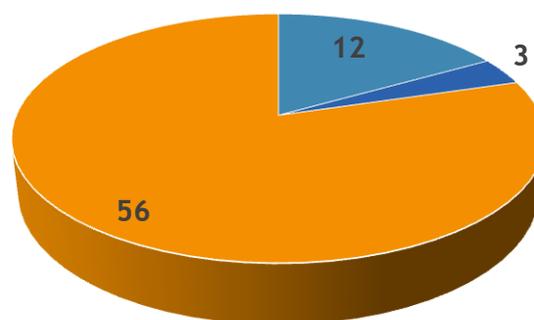
There are 70 female lawmakers in the National Assembly of which nine were directly elected through popular vote, 60 came on seats reserved for women and one on seat reserved for minorities.

On average, 56 (80%) of 70 female members attended each sitting, twelve remained absent while three applied for leave. Meanwhile, 179 (65%) of 269 male lawmakers were present during each sitting, 85 were absent and five requested leave of absence.

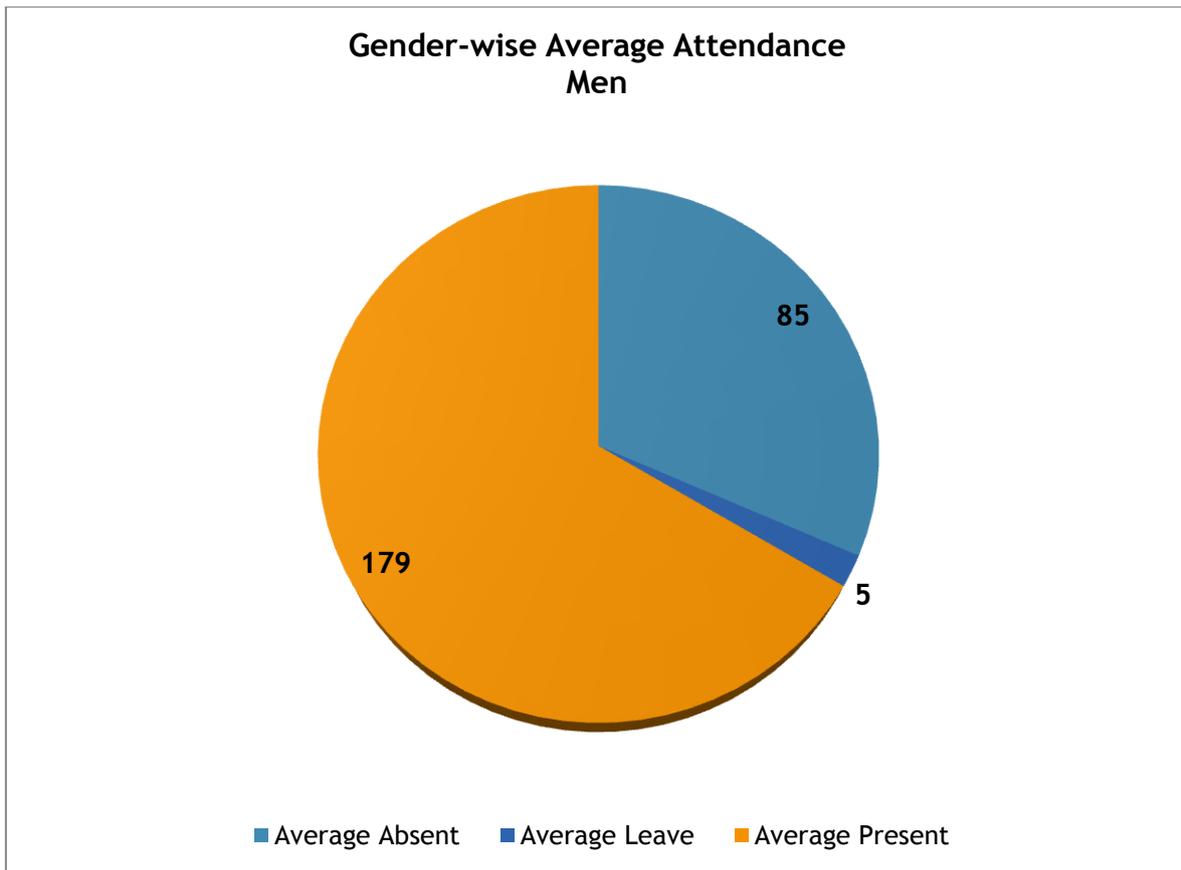
Of the 60 women on reserved seats, 49 were present on average during each sitting while eight preferred to stay absent and two applied for leave.

Similarly, on average, seven of the ten minority lawmakers attended each sitting of the House and three remained absent.

Gender-wise Average Attendance
Women



■ Average Absent
 ■ Average Leave
 ■ Average Present



Region-wise Attendance

On average the lawmakers belonging to FATA were more regular than lawmakers of other federating units. Their average attendance during each sitting remained 91% followed by 81% of KP lawmakers, 71% of Punjab MNAs, 65% of Balochistan members and 56% of Sindh legislators. One lawmaker belonging to ICT attended all four sittings while the other member came to half of the sittings only.