



BY-ELECTION

OBSERVATION REPORT

PP-20 Chakwal-I

ILLEGAL CANVASSING, LACK OF CRITICAL ELECTION MATERIALS MARK PP-20 BY-ELECTION

ISLAMABAD, January 09, 2018: Despite an improved legal and regulatory framework, electoral irregularities, procedural violations and weak enforcement characterized the low-turnout by-election of PP-20 Chakwal-I held on Tuesday, which otherwise remained peaceful, says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN).

This was the first by-election held under the Elections Act, 2017 which came into force in October, 2017. The new law has considerably enhanced the authority of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) over all aspects of electoral process in an effort to improve the quality of elections. Under this law, the ECP has the powers to penalize officials on election duty, who have not performed their assigned responsibilities.

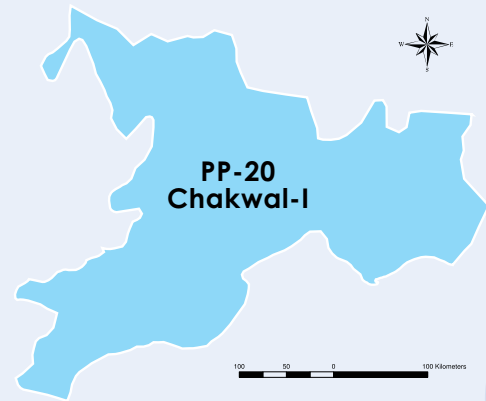
Despite improved election arrangements, the incidents of illegal campaigning and canvassing on the polling day were reported from one-fourth of the observed polling stations. Moreover, critical election materials including ballot books, the Result of the Count (Form-45), the Ballot Paper Account (Form-46) and necessary legal packets were also unavailable at around 42 polling stations. FAFEN observers were duly accredited by the ECP; however, at eight polling stations, the observers were barred from observing voting and counting processes.

More significantly, a majority of polling stations were not setup in line with the provisions of Section 59 of the Elections Act, 2017, which requires, as far as practicable, assignment of not more than 1,200 voters at a polling station and 300 per polling booth. In case of PP-20, as many as 116 polling stations were assigned more than 1,200 voters. On average, 1,231 voters have been assigned to each polling station while 343 to each polling booth.

FAFEN conducted the observation of the pre-election process

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

The constituency covers the Chakwal city, Union Council Bhoun and adjoining villages.



REGISTERED VOTERS

There are 279,530 registered voters in the PP-20 Chakwal-I. Among them, 144,191 are men and 135,339 are women.

BY-ELECTION 2018

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
144,191	135,339	279,530

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
130,373	120,012	250,385

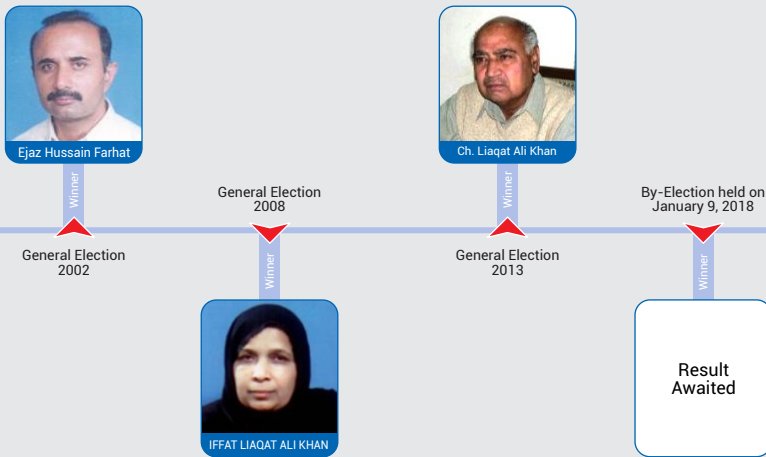
POLLING STATIONS (PS)

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up 227 polling stations – 61 male, 61 female and 105 combined for the by-election. Overall, 814 polling booths – 421 male and 393 female – were established.

MALE PS	FEMALE PS	COMBINED PS
61	61	105
814		
POLLING BOOTHS		

and polling day through 46 trained and non-partisan observers. Observers spent between 60 and 120 minutes in each polling station to document their observations and findings on a standardized checklist that is based on the provisions of the Elections Act, 2017, the Elections Rules, 2017 and instructional handbooks that the ECP has provided to election officials. This preliminary report is based on the observation findings from 118 polling stations.

TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



On average, almost two violations of electoral laws, rules and codes of conduct per polling station were reported. This average is almost half of the number of violations recorded in the last by-election held in NA-4 Peshawar during October, 2017. The highest number of reported violations (74) pertained to illegal campaigning and canvassing. Parties' camps were witnessed outside 29 polling stations within the prescribed 400 meters boundary for campaigning and canvassing while transport was being provided by candidates and parties around 28 polling stations. FAFEN observers reported voter slips with party symbols printed being produced before polling officers at 10 polling booths. The observers also witnessed the parties' or candidates' promotional material displayed on the walls of five polling stations, while an observer also reported the presence of candidates' promotional material inside a polling station. The political workers were also seen attempting to influence the voters at one polling station.

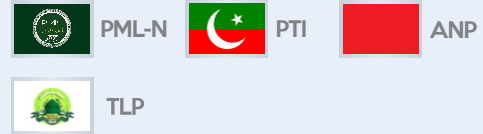
At 42 polling stations, FAFEN observers reported that less number of ballot books were available with election staff than the number of registered voters. Moreover, at seven polling stations, FAFEN observed that less number of Ballot Paper Account (Form-46) were available than the number of contesting candidates. As many as five Presiding Officers did not carry the required Packet-I to Packet-XV for carrying the election forms including the Ballot Paper Account and Result of the Count.

FAFEN observed 42 violations relating to polling stations' security. Observers witnessed the presence of armed persons

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as 5 candidates – 4 representing political parties including PML-N, PTI, ANP and TLP and 1 independent candidate contested the by-poll.



TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
5	0	5

POLLING PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICERS	227
ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS	814
POLLING OFFICERS	814

ELECTION HISTORY

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

The seat had fallen vacant after after the death of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Ch. Liaquat Ali Khan.

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
250,385	6,130	63.3%

GENERAL ELECTION 2008

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
220,924	2,792	57.5%

GENERAL ELECTION 2002

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
194,206	2,270	53.8%

MARGIN OF VICTORY

2002	2008	2013
4,382	7,047	26,518

ELECTION OBSERVERS TRAINED

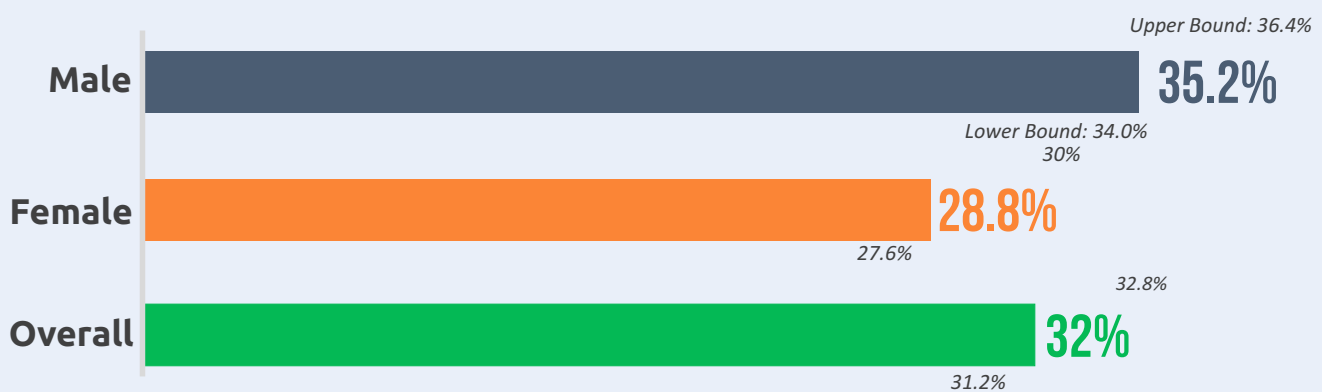
MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
36	12	48

inside six polling stations, while voters at four polling stations were given the permission to enter the premises without the security check by officials. Moreover, the security officials outside 32 polling stations told FAFEN observers that they did not receive any training on election security.

The polling officials were observed deviating from the provisions of the law regarding calling out loud the name of every voter before issuing him/her a ballot paper and crossing his/her name from the voters' lists at 42 polling booths. At one polling booth the polling officer was observed not crossing the name of the voters on the electoral rolls who were receiving the ballot papers.

The observers also witnessed presence of unauthorized men at two female polling booths. Moreover, unauthorized presence was also reported from two polling stations before the start of the polling process. As many as eight accredited FAFEN observers were barred from observation of polling and counting processes in the constituency.

ESTIMATED TURNOUT BY GENDER



According to FAFEN estimates, the overall voter turnout is expected to remain at 32% with women turnout estimated at 28.8% and men at 35.2%. The overall turnout during 2013 General Elections was recorded at 63.3%. FAFEN observers reported suspicious voting patterns at three polling booths. In these polling booths, the reported votes were higher than 45 per hour at the time the turnout data was documented. In following the voting procedure as prescribed by the law, polling staff at one polling booth can only process up to 45 votes at one booth in an hour.

The ECP conducted a pilot-test of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) at nine polling stations. FAFEN observed that these EVMs were placed outside polling booths at two instances, while the machines were run by operators of the EVM provider company instead of the polling staff.

The ECP has introduced the Result Transmission System (RTS) for prompt transmission of the Result of the Count to the ECP and Returning Officers by the Presiding Officers. As many as six Presiding Officers shared with the observers that they had not received the training on RTS. The observers also reported four incidents of voters other than elderly or disabled being accompanied by other persons behind the secrecy screens installed in polling booths. In addition to this, irrelevant persons were also seen stamping the ballot paper at one polling booth.

The seat had fallen vacant after the death of PML-N lawmaker Chaudhry Liaquat Ali Khan. The ECP had set up 227 polling stations including 61 polling stations each for men and women, and 105 combined polling stations. A total of 814 polling booths – 421 for men and 393 for women – were established for the polling day. As many as 1,916 election officials including 227 Presiding Officers (PrOs) and 814 Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) and Polling Officers (POs) each, and 61 Naib Qasids were appointed to perform election duties. There are 279,530 registered voters, including 144,191 (52%) men and 135,339 (48%) women. An increase of 11.6% has been recorded in the number of registered voters in the constituency after GE 2013.