



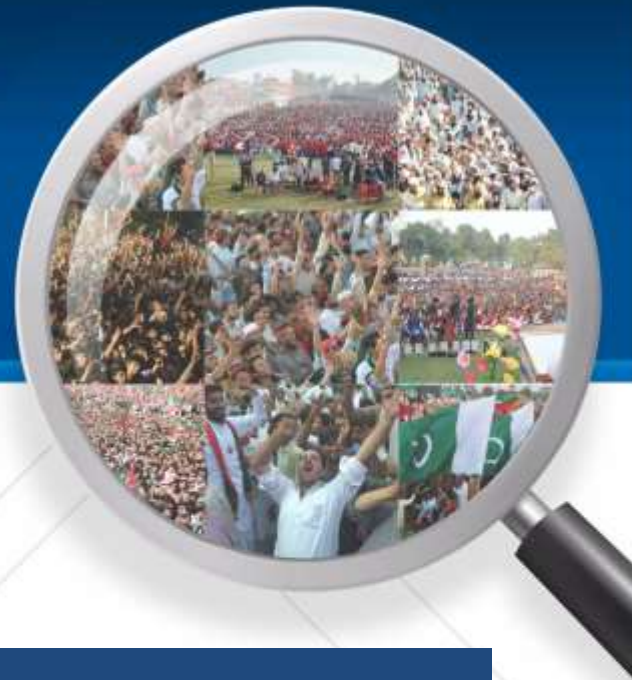
Assessment of Polling Stations

General Election 2018

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has been conducting periodic assessments of the political environment and the implementation of election related laws, rules and regulations since January 2018, as part of its multi-phase observation of General Elections (GE) 2018. The purpose of the observation is to contribute to the evolution of an election process that is free, fair, transparent and accountable, in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Elections Act, 2017. FAFEN produces regular updates, information briefs and reports to provide objective, impartial and evidence-based information regarding the quality of electoral and political processes to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), political parties, the media, civil society organizations and citizens.

This assessment of polling stations comprises analysis of the Final Lists of Polling Stations available on the ECP's website, and findings by FAFEN observers on the availability of facilities at 10,895 polling stations in sampled electoral areas, perceptions of 1,574 National Assembly (NA) candidates regarding the process of finalizing polling stations and estimations by 12,104 citizens concerning ease of access.

As part of its election observation methodology, FAFEN randomly sampled 50 electoral areas in each NA constituency. In each sampled electoral area, FAFEN interviewed three citizens, including women, to gauge citizen perception towards various electoral processes and preparations, including polling station access. FAFEN observers also visited polling stations in each sampled area for a basic-facilities audit.



The preparation of constituency-wise lists of polling stations is part of the election planning which ECP is required to include in its Action Plan to be prepared four months prior to a general election under Section 14 of the Elections Act, 2017. Section 59 of the Act outlines the following process for finalizing polling stations for an election.

1. District Election Commissioners (DECs) provide the Lists of Proposed Polling Stations to concerned Returning Officers (ROs) within a week of their appointment.
2. ROs personally verify the proposed polling stations and issue a Preliminary List of Polling Stations within 15 days of receiving Lists of Proposed Polling Stations.
3. Voters get 21 days to file objections or suggestions to the District Returning Officers (DROs) regarding their assigned polling stations.
4. DROs hear the objections and consider suggestions and alter changes to the Preliminary Lists of Polling Stations accordingly.
5. Final Lists of Polling Stations shall be published in official gazette and ECP website at least 30 days before polling.
6. DROs may make changes in the Final Lists of Polling Stations only in exceptional circumstances with the prior approval of the Election Commission.



1. ANALYSIS OF FINAL LISTS OF POLLING STATIONS

ECP will set up a total of 85,277 polling stations comprising 244,949 polling booths for over 106 million registered voters, averaging one polling station per 1,242 voters. The average number of voters per polling station is marginally higher than it was in GE-2013 when 1,235 voters were assigned to a polling station on average. For GE-2018, Punjab houses 47,473 polling stations, Sindh 17,757, KP including FATA 14,662, Balochistan 4,550, and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 786. As many as 23,054 polling stations will have polling booths for men only, 21,355 for women only while 40,819 will house both men and women polling booths. Nearly 55% (or 134,088) of the polling booths will be set up for men who constitute 56% of the country's registered voters while the remaining (45% or 110,861) polling booths will be for women voters.

Table 1 shows the regional distribution of the numbers of finalized polling stations and registered voters in GE-2018, accompanied by comparative data from the last three general elections.

Table 1

Regional Distribution of the Numbers of Polling Stations and Registered Voters Since GE-2002

Region	GE 2018		GE 2013		GE 2008		GE 2002	
	PS	Voters	PS	Voters	PS	Voters	PS	Voters
KP	12,826	15316299	9306	12,266,162	8178	10661212	8055	8925808
FATA	1,884	2510154	1208	1,738,316	1080	1280365	1134	1281705
ICT	786	765348	550	625,969	382	482801	380	384070
Punjab	47,473	60672868	40078	49,259,342	37342	44500257	37504	41253858
Sindh	17,758	22391244	14980	18,963,377	13206	19506473	13957	16141566
Balochistan	4,550	4299494	3679	3,336,662	3457	4365274	3440	3926843
Total	85,277	105,955,407	69,801	86,189,828	63,645	80,796,382	64,470	71,913,850
Average Voters per PS	1242		1235		1269		1115	

Section 59(12) empowers District Returning Officers (DROs) to declare a polling station highly sensitive if, in their assessment, the concerned polling station requires special security measures. Of 85,277 polling stations, ECP has designated 17,007 (approx. 20%) polling stations as highly sensitive on polling day. ECP may also install surveillance cameras in these polling stations to monitor polling proceedings, including counting



of votes and preparation of results by Presiding Officers. Table 2 shows the regional distribution of highly sensitive polling stations.

Table 2 Regional Distribution of Polling Stations Designated as Highly Sensitive

Region	No. of Highly Sensitive Polling Stations
Punjab and ICT	5487
Sindh	5878
KP (including FATA)	3874
Balochistan	1768
Total	17007

Section 59(3) of the Elections Act, 2017 limits the number of voters per polling station and polling booth to 1200 and 300 voters respectively, as far as practicable, in order to improve the efficiency of the polling process. According to the lists of polling stations available on the ECP website, nearly 50% or 43,031 polling stations have been assigned more than 1200 voters each; including all of the 240 polling stations set up in NA-247 Karachi South-II and more than half of the polling stations in 139 (51%) of 272 NA constituencies each. Although the Act allows deviation from the general limit to accommodate exceptional circumstances,¹ using this discretionary power in case of half of the polling stations is antithetical to the spirit of the law. Table 3 shows the regional numerical distribution of NA constituencies disaggregated by varying percentages of polling stations exceeding the 1200-voters limit.

Table 3 Region-wise Number of NA Constituencies w.r.t. Percentage of Polling Stations with more than 1200 Voters

Percentage of Polling Stations with more than 1200 voters	Balochistan	ICT	KP (including FATA)	Punjab	Sindh	Total
Up to 10%					2	2
11% to 20%	5	3	1		5	14
21% to 30%	6		5	1	2	14
31% to 40%	4		10	19	12	45
41% to 50%	1		11	32	14	58
51% to 60%			8	32	5	45
61% to 70%			7	41	4	52
71% to 80%			9	14	3	26
81% to 90%				2	7	9
90% to 100%					7	7
Total	16	3	51	141	61	272

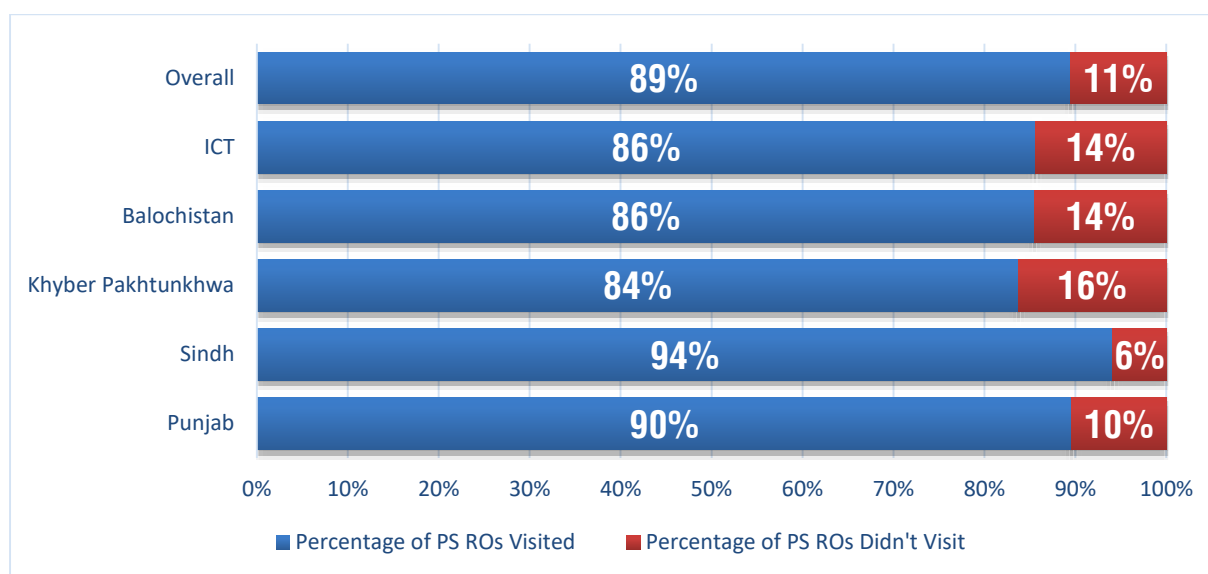
¹ According to the Elections Act, 2017, the reasons for any such deviation must be recorded in writing.



2. OBSERVERS' ASSESSMENT OF ESTABLISHED POLLING STATIONS

FAFEN observers visited 10,895 polling stations in the sampled electoral areas to assess the availability of basic facilities and compliance of the polling stations' finalization process with the law. The observers sought confirmation of visits by Returning Officers (ROs) to each proposed polling station building from their administrators. The majority of the administrators (89%) confirmed that the concerned RO visited the building to personally verify the polling station. Figure 1 shows the regional distribution of confirmed RO visits to the observed polling stations.

Figure 1 Regional Distribution of Status of RO Verification Visit to Polling Stations



FAFEN observers noted that basic facilities were missing at a number of polling stations. Nearly 20% (or 2,201) of the polling stations lacked ramps at entry points for wheelchair bound voters. Moreover, four percent polling stations lacked clean drinking water facility, three percent lacked washrooms and two percent were without boundary walls. Table 4 shows the regional distribution of missing facilities at polling stations.

Table 4 Regional Distribution of Necessary Polling Station Facilities Observed to be Missing

Region	PS without Ramp	PS without Clean Drinking Water	PS without Washrooms	PS without Boundary Wall
Punjab	13%	1%	1%	1%
Sindh	36%	11%	10%	5%
KP (including FATA)	24%	2%	2%	1%
Balochistan	21%	15%	17%	15%
ICT	7%	3%	1%	0%
Total	20%	4%	3%	2%



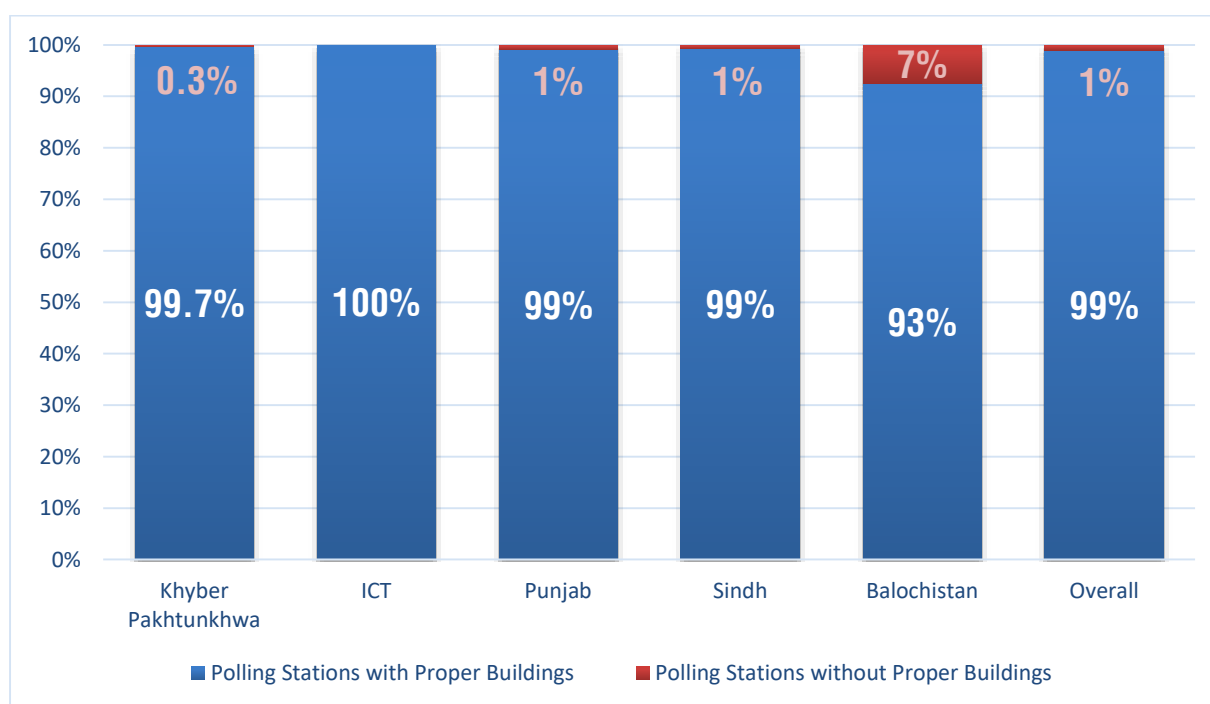
As many as twelve of the 10,895 observed polling stations were observed to be improvised, i.e. they were set up in an open public property due to unavailability of a government building or a registered private educational institution. Table 5 provides a list of the observed improvised polling stations.

Table 5

PS Name	Constituency
Improvised Polling Station Peeshak	NA-269 Khuzdar
Govt Gas Factory,zaiton Colony Dargawala(IMPROVISED)	NA-128 Lahore-VI
Improvised Compound Mudrisa Riaz ul Islam moh. Chanda Wala	NA-115 Jhang-II
Improvised Polling Stations Chandan Rind	NA-196 Jacobabad
Improvised Polling Station Bhatt Zeedi	NA-269 Khuzdar
Improvised Polling Station Pati Karak	NA-269 Khuzdar
Improvised Polling Station dadaro karkh	NA-269 Khuzdar
Tentage near Mazar Public School	NA-90 Sargodha-III
Tentage near Pak-Arab Academy Mujahid Colony	NA-90 Sargodha-III
Improvised Plot Water Tanky, Dhaji Road, Jhang Sadar	NA-115 Jhang-II
Government Boys Primary School Behlool Wala (Improvised through Partition) (Female)	NA-183 Muzaffargarh-III
Main road chak no.17/4-(improvised) Okara	NA-142 Okara-II

Moreover, FAFEN observers noted that nearly one percent polling stations were not located in proper buildings, with the largest proportion of such polling stations being found in Balochistan (7%).

Figure 2 Region-wise Status of Polling Station Buildings





3. CANDIDATES' ASSESSMENT OF POLLING STATIONS

FAFEN observers interviewed 1,574 NA candidates – 978 belonging to 82 political parties or electoral alliances and 596 independents (refer to Annexure-I for a party-wise number of interviewed candidates). As many as 807 NA candidates were interviewed in Punjab, 348 in KP including FATA, 314 in Sindh, 84 in Balochistan and 22 in ICT. Amongst other electoral processes, the observers asked the candidates about their perceptions regarding finalization of polling stations. The overwhelming majority of candidates were largely satisfied with the process, however, 10% expressed dissatisfaction with the finalized polling stations in their constituencies. Notably, half of the interviewed candidates affiliated with PkMAP were unsatisfied. Figures 3 and 4 respectively show the regional and party-wise distribution of candidates' responses.

Figure 3 Region-wise Candidates' Responses Regarding Satisfaction with Final Polling Stations

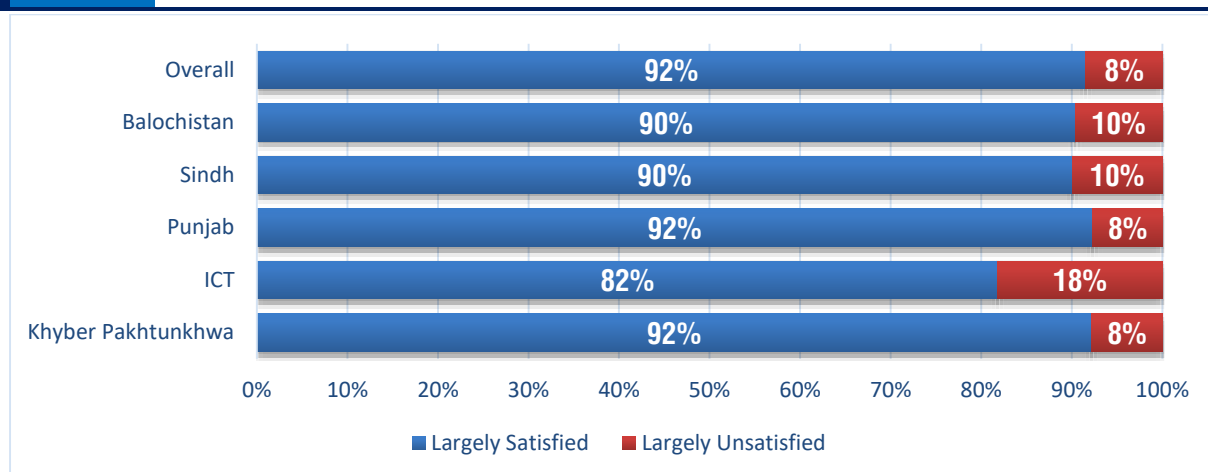
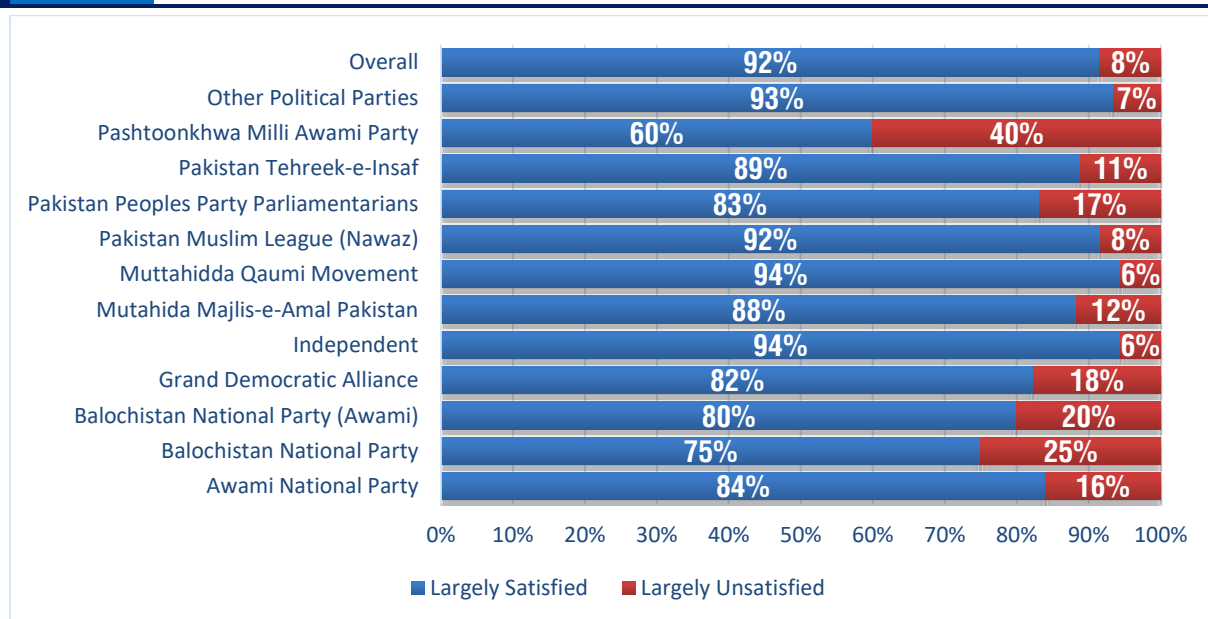


Figure 4 Party-wise Candidates' Responses Regarding Satisfaction with Polling Stations





Nearly 15% or 226 of the interviewed candidates said they or their voters had filed objections/suggestions to the DROs regarding relevant polling stations in their constituencies. The percentage of candidates filing objections was higher in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa than in other regions. Of the objectors, around 25% expressed dissatisfaction with the decisions given by DROs. Figures 5-8 show the regional and political distributions of the candidates' responses.

Figure 5 Region-wise Candidates' Responses Regarding Filing Objections/Suggestions to DROs on Polling Stations

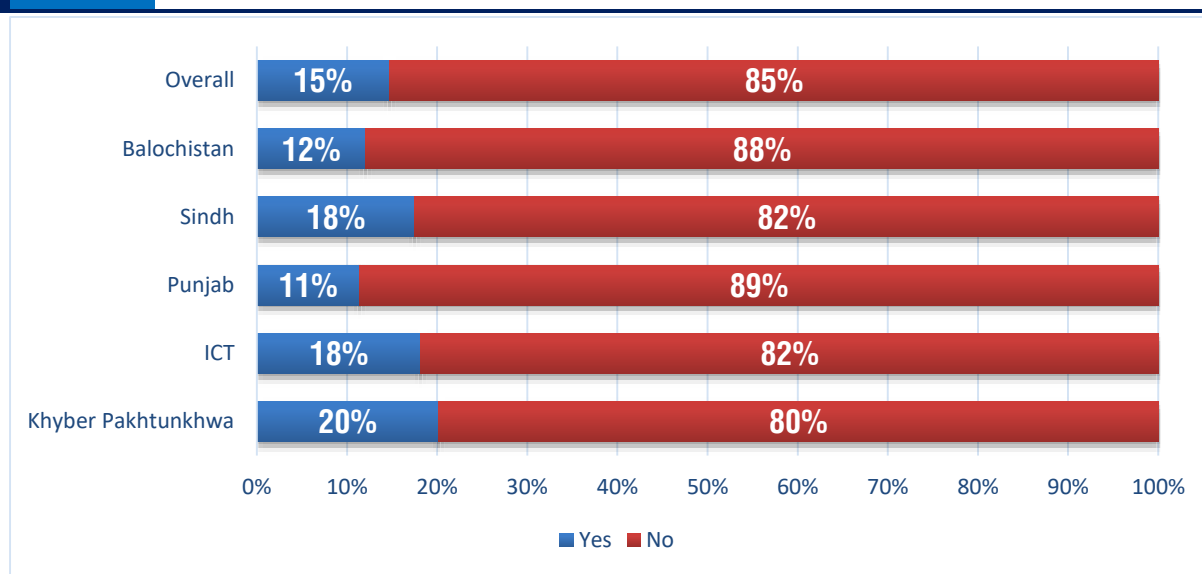


Figure 6 Party-wise Candidates' Responses Regarding Filing Objections/Suggestions to DROs on Polling Stations

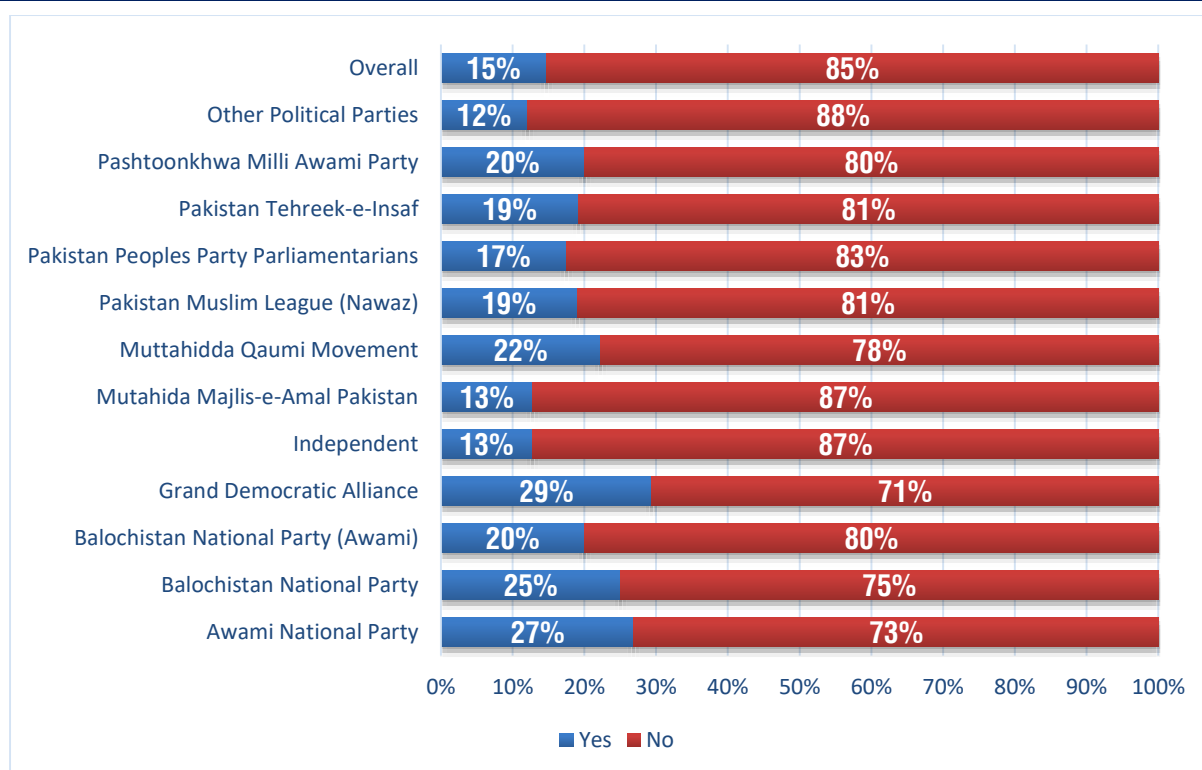




Figure 7

Region-wise Responses of Candidates' Satisfaction with DROs' Decisions Regarding Objections/Suggestions on Polling Stations

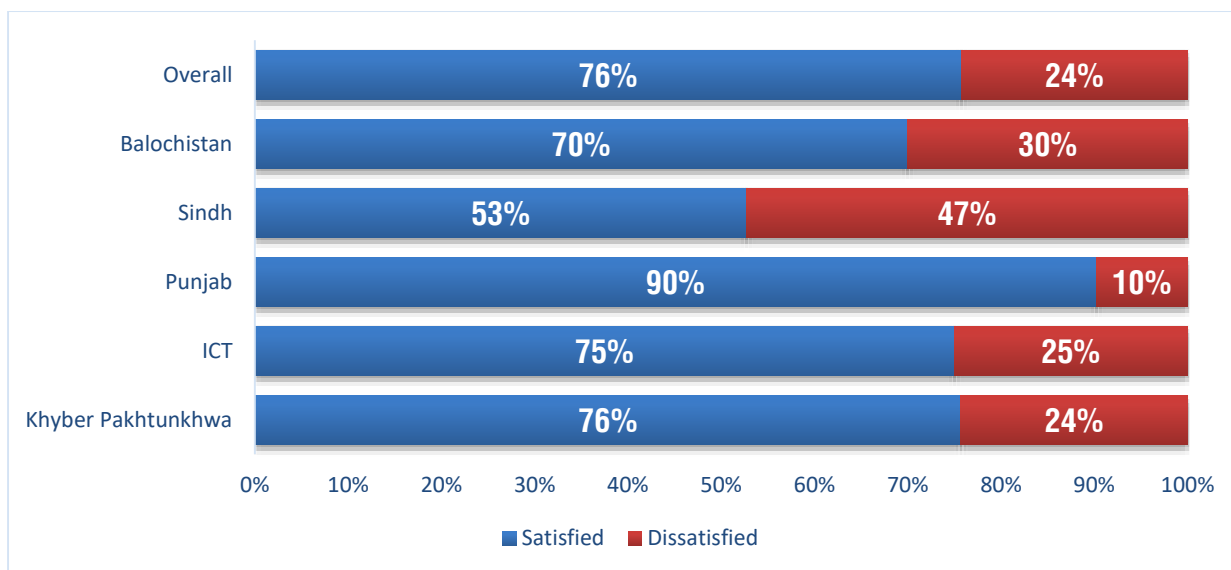
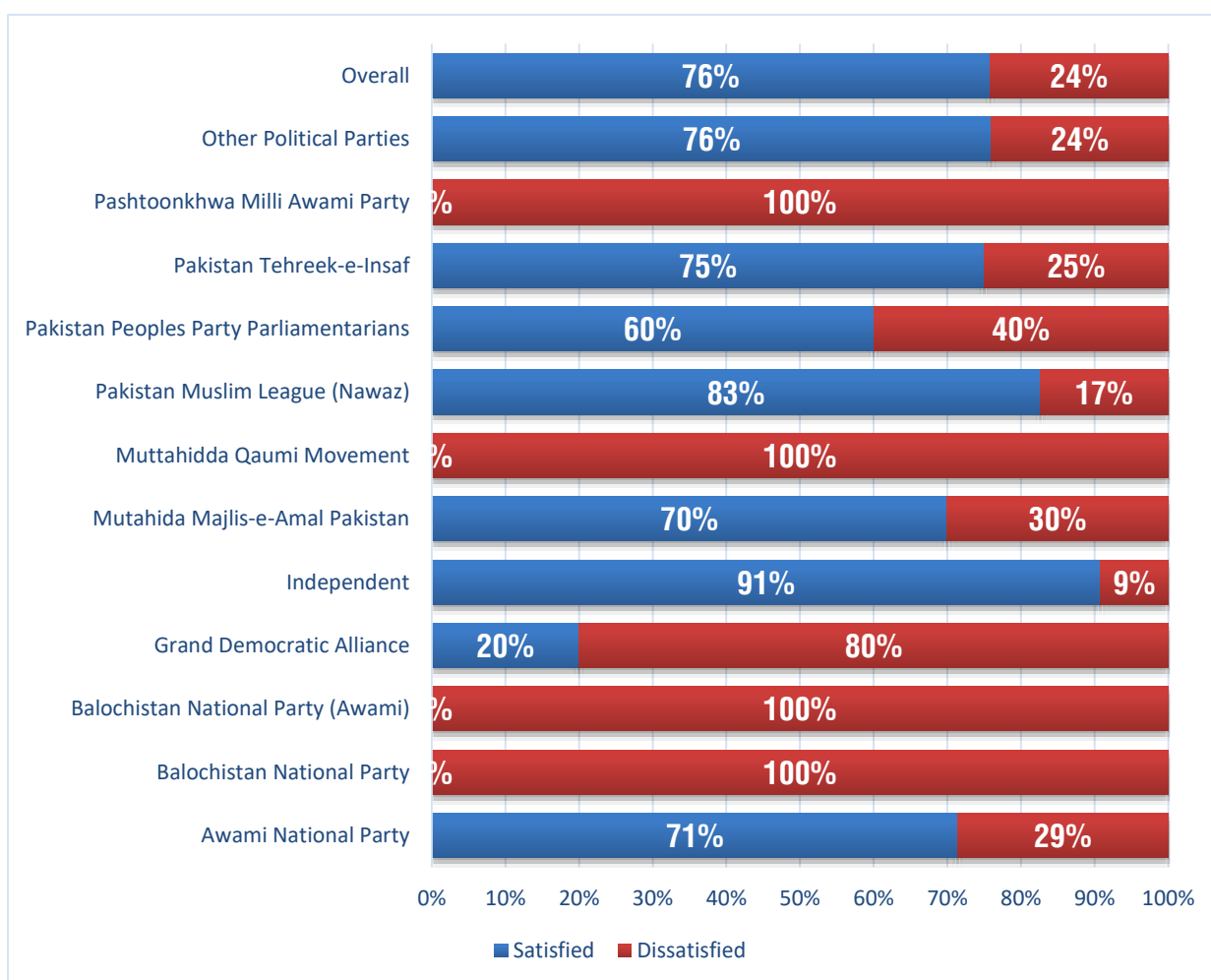


Figure 8

Party-wise Responses of Candidates' Satisfaction with DROs' Decisions Regarding Objections/Suggestions on Polling Stations

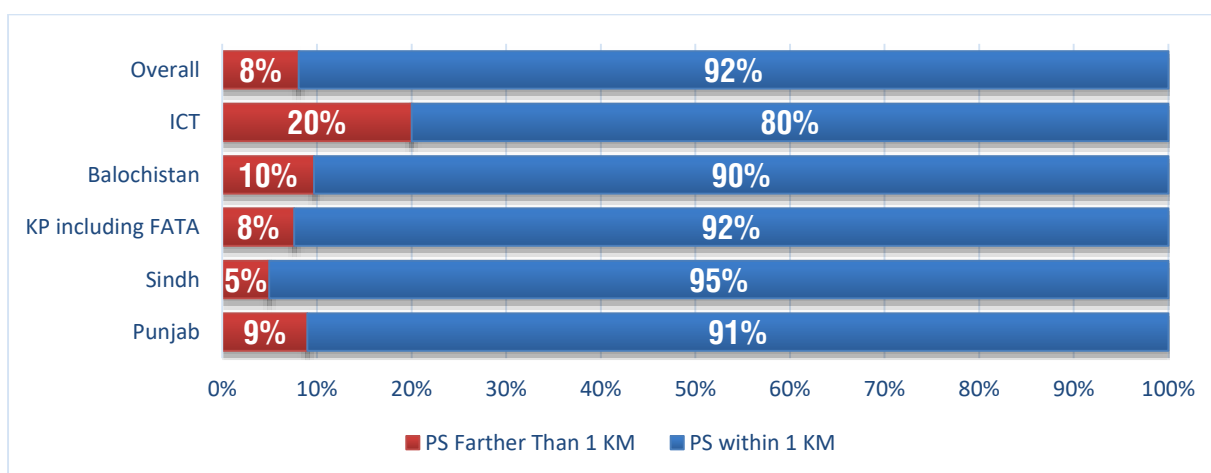




4. VOTERS' ASSESSMENT OF POLLING STATIONS

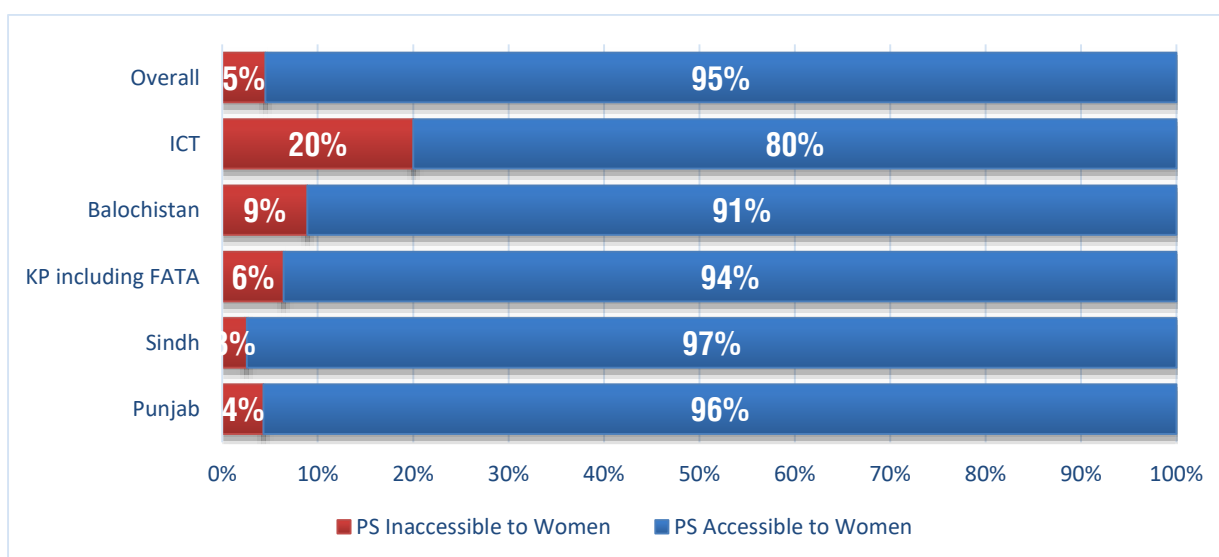
Under Section 59(2) of the Elections Act, 2017, the distance between a polling station and the voters assigned to that station should preferably be not more than one kilometer, in order to ease voter access to polling stations. Nearly six percent (or 673) of the interviewed citizens claimed that the distance between their place of residence and assigned polling station exceeded one kilometer. Figure 9 provides the regional distribution of citizens' responses.

Figure 9 Regional Distribution of Citizens' Responses on Distance to Polling Stations



Moreover, around five percent (or 545) of the respondents said that the polling stations in their electoral areas were not easily accessible for women. Figure 10 shows the regional distribution of citizens' responses regarding women's access to polling stations.

Figure 10 Regional Distribution of Citizens' Responses on Women's Access to Polling Stations





Annexure-1

Region	Political Affiliation of the candidate	Candidate/ Representative
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	All Pakistan Muslim League	3
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek	2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Awami National Party	19
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Awami Workers Party	2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Humdardan-e-Watan Pakistan	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Independent	178
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan	9
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Fazal Ur Rehman)	16
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Sami -ul-Haq)	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Nazryati Pakistan	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	11
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pak Sarzameen Party	5
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Awami Inqelabi League	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Falah Party	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Justice & Democratic Party	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Muslim League	7
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	16
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Muslim League Jinnah	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Peoples Party (Shaheed Bhutto)	3
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	24
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party	3
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	23
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Gulalai	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaniat	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Qaumi Watan Party (Sherpao)	8
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Tabdeeli Pasand Party	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Tehreek Jawanan Pakistan	1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan	4
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam	3
ICT	All Pakistan Muslim League - Jinnah	1
ICT	Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek	1
ICT	Awami National Party	1
ICT	Awami Party Pakistan-S	1
ICT	Awami Workers Party	1
ICT	Humdardan-e-Watan Pakistan	1
ICT	Independent	4
ICT	Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	2
ICT	Pakistan Justice & Democratic Party	2
ICT	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	1
ICT	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	1



Region	Political Affiliation of the candidate	Candidate/ Representative
ICT	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	2
ICT	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Gulalai	1
ICT	Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party	1
ICT	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam	2
Punjab	Aam Admi Tehreek Pakistan	1
Punjab	Aam Awam Party	1
Punjab	Aam Log Party Pakistan	1
Punjab	All Pakistan Minorities Alliance	1
Punjab	All Pakistan Muslim League	12
Punjab	All Pakistan Muslim League - Jinnah	1
Punjab	Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek	27
Punjab	Amun Taraqqi Party	4
Punjab	Awam League	1
Punjab	Awami Justice Party Pakistan	3
Punjab	Awami Muslim League Pakistan	1
Punjab	Awami National Party	2
Punjab	Barabri Party Pakistan	4
Punjab	Front National Pakistan	1
Punjab	Independent	293
Punjab	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad Pakistan	1
Punjab	Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan	4
Punjab	Jamhoori Wattan Party	2
Punjab	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Fazal Ur Rehman)	1
Punjab	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Sami -ul-Haq)	1
Punjab	Jamiat Ulma-e-Pakistan (Noorani)	1
Punjab	Jannat Pakistan Party	1
Punjab	Move on Pakistan	1
Punjab	Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	39
Punjab	Muttahidda Qaumi Movement	2
Punjab	Muttahidda Ulema-e-Mashaikh Council of Pakistan	1
Punjab	National Party	5
Punjab	National Peoples Party	1
Punjab	Pak Sarzameen Party	3
Punjab	Pakistan Aman Party	1
Punjab	Pakistan Awami League	1
Punjab	Pakistan Awami Raj	6
Punjab	Pakistan Awami Tehreek	1
Punjab	Pakistan Falah Party	2
Punjab	Pakistan Freedom Movement	1
Punjab	Pakistan Human Party	2
Punjab	Pakistan Human Rights Party	3
Punjab	Pakistan Justice & Democratic Party	2



Region	Political Affiliation of the candidate	Candidate/ Representative
Punjab	Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (Ch. Anwar)	3
Punjab	Pakistan Muslim Alliance	1
Punjab	Pakistan Muslim League	3
Punjab	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	83
Punjab	Pakistan Muslim League (Zia)	1
Punjab	Pakistan National Muslim League	3
Punjab	Pakistan Peoples Party (Shaheed Bhutto)	10
Punjab	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	73
Punjab	Pakistan Quami Yakjehti Party	2
Punjab	Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party	1
Punjab	Pakistan Sunni Tehreek	4
Punjab	Pakistan Supreme Democratic Party	1
Punjab	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	97
Punjab	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Nazriati	4
Punjab	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Gulalai	2
Punjab	Roshan Pakistan League	1
Punjab	Sarakistan Democratic Party	1
Punjab	Sunni Ittehad Council	1
Punjab	Sunni Tehreek	1
Punjab	Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan	67
Punjab	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam	13
Sindh	All Pakistan Muslim League	3
Sindh	Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek	4
Sindh	Amun Taraqqi Party	1
Sindh	Awami National Party	3
Sindh	Grand Democratic Alliance	17
Sindh	Independent	96
Sindh	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Fazal Ur Rehman)	2
Sindh	Jamiat Ulma-e-Pakistan (Noorani)	3
Sindh	Jannat Pakistan Party	1
Sindh	Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan	1
Sindh	Mohajar Qaumi Movement Pakistan	8
Sindh	Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	25
Sindh	Muttahidda Qaumi Movement	16
Sindh	Pak Sarzameen Party	15
Sindh	Pakistan Justice & Democratic Party	2
Sindh	Pakistan Muslim Alliance	3
Sindh	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	18
Sindh	Pakistan Muslim League (Sher-e-Bangal) A.K. Fazal-UI-Haque)	1
Sindh	Pakistan Peoples Party (Shaheed Bhutto)	4
Sindh	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	38
Sindh	Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party	4



Region	Political Affiliation of the candidate	Candidate/ Representative
Sindh	Pakistan Sunni Tehreek	2
Sindh	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	19
Sindh	Pasban	2
Sindh	Peoples Muslim League Pakistan	4
Sindh	Sindh United Party	6
Sindh	Tabdeeli Pasand Party	2
Sindh	Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan	11
Sindh	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam	2
Sindh	Tehreek-e-Suba Hazara	1
Balochistan	Awami National Party	1
Balochistan	Balochistan Awami Party	7
Balochistan	Balochistan National Movement	2
Balochistan	Balochistan National Party	4
Balochistan	Balochistan National Party (Awami)	5
Balochistan	Independent	25
Balochistan	Islami Tehreek Pakistan	1
Balochistan	Jamhoori Wattan Party	1
Balochistan	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Fazal Ur Rehman)	4
Balochistan	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Sami -ul-Haq)	1
Balochistan	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Nazryati Pakistan	1
Balochistan	Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	1
Balochistan	National Party	5
Balochistan	Pakistan Justice & Democratic Party	1
Balochistan	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	3
Balochistan	Pakistan Peoples Party (Shaheed Bhutto)	1
Balochistan	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	7
Balochistan	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	5
Balochistan	Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party	3
Balochistan	Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan	3
Balochistan	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam	2
Overall		1574