



OBSERVATION REPORT

NA - 205 - Ghotki II

Ghotki-II By-Election Witnesses Slight Decline in Turnout Since GE-2018, Low Incidence of Electoral Irregularities Observed

ISLAMABAD, July 24, 2019: NA-205 Ghotki-II by-election held on July 23, 2019 witnessed a slight decline in voter turnout since 2018 General Elections (GE), and low incidence of electoral violations says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its report on Wednesday.

FAFEN deployed 74 (64 men and 10 women) trained, non-partisan and duly accredited observers for the observation of NA-205 Ghotki-II by-election. This report is based on the observation of 129 polling stations (and 374 polling booths) using a standardized methodology based on the Elections Act, 2017, Election Rules 2018, respective codes of conduct and ECP's handbooks for election officials.

Pakistan Peoples' Party – Parliamentarians' (PPPP) Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Khan Mahar won the by-election by securing 89,359 votes (53 percent of the polled votes), while the runner-up Ahmed Ali Khan Mahar, an independent candidate, got 70,848 votes (42 percent of the polled votes). According to the Provisional Consolidated Statement of the Result of the Count (Form-47), a total of 6,032 (three percent) votes were excluded from the count. During the GE-2018, Ali Muhammad Khan Mahar had won this constituency as an independent by securing 72,082 votes, later he joined Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) while PPPP's Ahsan Ullah was declared runner-up securing 41,885 votes. The seat had fallen vacant due to the death of Ali Muhammad Khan Mahar.

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...



REGISTERED VOTERS

There are 360,875 registered voters in the NA-205 Ghotki-II, including 204,980 male voters and 155,895 female voters.

General ELECTION 2018

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
191,841	147,858	339,699

BY-ELECTION 2019

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
204,980	155,895	360,875

CHANGE

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
13,139	8,037	21,176

POLLING STATIONS (PS)

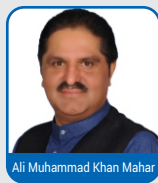
Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) set up 290 polling stations – 56 male, 56 female and 178 combined for the by-election. Overall, 867 polling booths – 469 male and 389 female – were established.

MALE PS	FEMALE PS	COMBINED PS
56	56	178
867 POLLING BOOTHS		

Voter Registration and Turnout

Despite the addition of 21,176 registered voters to the electoral rolls since GE-2018, the voter turnout in this by-election dropped from 50 percent to 48 percent. A total of 173,953 out of 360,875 registered voters voted during the by-election. Male voter turnout declined from 54 percent to 51 percent, while the female turnout declined from 46 percent to 45 percent. The total number of registered voters during the by-election was 360,875 including 204,980 male and 155,895 female voters.

TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



Ali Muhammad Khan Mahar

Winner
General Election 2018



Sardar M. Bux Khan Mahar*

Winner
By Election 2019

The constituency had recorded a six percent increase in the number of registered voters since GE-2018. As many as 13,139 male voters and 8,037 female voters were added to the electoral rolls during the year.

Voting Process

Overall, FAFEN observers reported a total of 148 violations from 129 polling stations – averaging 1.1 violation per polling station. At 326 (87 percent) polling booths, FAFEN observed the secrecy screens were placed in a manner which upheld the secrecy of vote, while the placement of these screens at the remaining 48 (13 percent) polling booths allowed the persons present inside the booths to see the voters marking their ballots. Similarly, of the observed polling booths, CCTVs cameras installed in 94 (25 percent) booths were directed towards the voting screens and might have compromised the voters' secrecy.

Polling agents or candidates' representatives were observed to be seated at a majority of the polling booths (345 or 92 percent). However, the seating arrangements for the polling agents at 29 polling booths were made as such that they were not able to completely observe the polling process.

At four polling stations, FAFEN observers reported 17 instances where voters were not allowed to cast their ballot despite showing their National Identity Card (NIC). Similarly, at

* As per Provisional Result (FORM-47)

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS

MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as nine candidates including a representative of PPPP and eight independents contested the by-poll.



PPPP



IND

TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

GENERAL ELECTION 2018

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
9	0	9

BY-ELECTION 2019

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
9	0	9

POLLING PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICERS	290
ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS	867
POLLING OFFICERS	867

ELECTION HISTORY

Reason of By-Election

The seat has been vacant due to the death of PTI's Ali Muhammd Khan Mahar.

General ELECTION 2018

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
157,906	13,514	50%

BY-ELECTION 2019

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
167,921	6,032	48%

MARGIN OF VICTORY

GE 2018	By Election 2019
30,197	18,511

ELECTION OBSERVERS TRAINED & Deployed

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
64/64	08/10	72/74

two polling stations observers reported that voters with disability were not allowed to seek assistance from persons of their choice to cast their vote.

Counting Process

FAFEN observed the counting process at 22 polling stations. Of these polling stations, the Presiding Officers (PrOs) counted the ballot papers twice at 18 polling stations, while a recount was conducted on the request of the polling agent at one polling station. Observers reported that PrOs did not paste the copies of Statement of the Count (Form-45) and the Ballot Paper Account (Form-46) outside eight and 12 polling stations, respectively. Moreover, out of 22 PrOs interviewed after completion of counting process, one said that he had transmitted the Form-45 to the Returning Officer (RO) through RTS, while 21 PrOs were unable to transmit the result through it.

FAFEN also interviewed the PrOs during the polling process. As many as 23 of the 129 PrOs mentioned that they were provided with mobile phones by ECP to electronically transmit the election's result after completion of count; however, a total of 69 PrOs stated that they would use their own phones, while 34 PrOs mentioned that they will transmit the result manually. A majority of the PrOs (91) were not satisfied with the training on use of RTS.

Conduct of Security Staff

Security personnel were observed to be present outside all (129) polling stations, and checking voters' NICs as well as voter chits (parchees). Similarly, at 127 polling stations, security officials were observed frisking the voters before allowing them to enter the polling station. Security personnel were also deployed inside 290 out of 374 observed polling booths.

Campaigning and Canvassing

FAFEN observers noted the presence of party camps in the surroundings of 76 polling stations. Of these, observers witnessed the presence of armed persons inside the party camps set up outside four polling stations. Similarly, FAFEN also observed the contesting candidates providing transportation to voters at 27 (21 percent) of the observed polling stations.

Contesting Parties and Candidates

As many as nine male candidates contested the by-election in NA-205. Only PPPP had nominated its candidate for this by-election, while the remaining eight contested as independent.

Setting Up of Polling Stations

ECP set up a total of 290 polling stations – 56 male, 56 female and 178 combined – for 360,875 registered voters of the constituency, averaging 1,244 voters per polling station. A total of 66 of the observed polling stations lacked the ramp facility for wheel-chair bound voters.

The Elections Act, 2017 highlights a limit of 1,200 voters to be assigned to a polling station for smooth voting process. However, additional voters may be assigned in exceptional circumstances with the reasons to be recorded in writing. According to Final List of Polling Station (Form-28), the election authorities assigned up to 1,200 voters to 133 (46 percent) polling stations and 1,200 to 2,000 to 149 (51 percent) while the number of voters assigned to eight (three percent) polling stations exceeded 2,000 voters.