

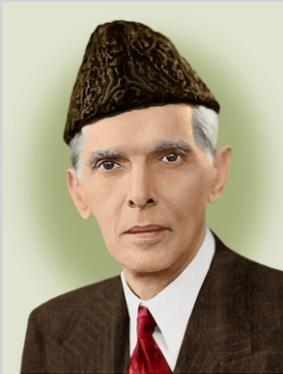


Our Vision

A democratic and just society that guarantees rights, respect and dignity of all individuals.

Our Mission

TDEA-FAFEN strives to strengthen public accountabilitys by enhancing capability of citizens' associations to work for civil liberties, improved governance, democracy and peace in Pakistan.



**Father of the Nation,
Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah
left us on Sept 11, 1948**

“No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you.”

“With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve.”

FAFEN NEWS ALERT

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Demarcated Barriers to Women's Political Participation

Zartasha Niazi

Women's segregation in the formal arena of politics is a historic and global phenomenon. Despite several International conventions, covenants and commitments to gender equality, the gender gap with only few percentage of women in the world parliaments is stark and abysmal. The gender imbalance in democracies around the world is a continuing challenge for the International community as well.

In Pakistan, there is no constitutional bar on political participation of women as voters or candidates. However, women's representation in the national legislature has never moved beyond 10-20 % until 2001 when the gender quota was restored at the local, provincial and national level. Through a legislative provision, 33 percent seats were reserved for women in local government and 17 percent in the National and Provincial Assemblies and Senate.

Despite being a country where a woman has twice been elected as Prime Minister, gender equality in the political arena is still a distant dream for a vast majority of women, who are often not even allowed to cast their votes in certain parts of the country.

According to Social Institution and Gender Index Survey, there were 67 women legislators in the National Assembly (20.7%), and 17 (16%) women in the Upper House in 2014. However, despite legal quotas that make it easier for women to participate in public life, their participation in political arena is still severely low due to some structural, institutional and functional obstacles.

Women voters face a number of key

challenges in Pakistan. A less number of females have been registered in the voters' list as

compared to males. Even if

they are registered and possess Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), they still cannot exercise their free will to cast votes according to their own choice because customarily they are directed by their male family members to vote for a particular person. Reaching the polling stations can also be a problem for women because of restrictions on their mobility, as women in remote rural and tribal areas depend on their men for transportation and may not be permitted to venture out on their own, even if public transport is available. Even the male domination of polling staff can also negatively impact the turnout of women voters.

There are instances where women, individually and collectively, are prevented from exercising their right to vote by their families, tribes, clans and local and religious leaders, and sometimes by threats to their physical well-being. Candidates from contesting parties allegedly support these restrictions and sign agreements, pledging that they will not allow their women voters to cast their votes. And this issue was identified by most of the women in Upper Dir who were restricted to cast their vote in the election because the contesting candidates allegedly didn't want them to come out and vote.



ECP needs to gain trust of stakeholders

Azhar Ali

Democracy gets strengthened when voters have confidence over the conduct of elections that are held in a free, fair and transparent manner. Election, therefore, is a process by which people choose the instrument of government to conduct the nation's future. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan to conduct elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, which have the trust and confidence of all political parties and the voters as well.

If we compare the Election Commission of Pakistan with the Election Commission of India, we find out that the citizens of our neighbouring country have greater confidence over their electoral machinery as compared to ours. India is considered to be one of the largest democracies in the world and, therefore, its Election Commission has vast experience of holding elections which have confidence of its political parties as well as its citizens.

Both the Election Commission of Pakistan and Election Commission of India are authoritative bodies and are bound to conduct the elections under similar Acts. In Pakistan, it is the Representative of People Act 1976 while in India it is the Representative of People Act 1951, while both have the same constitutional powers.



The ECP, somehow, has not come up to the expectations of the stakeholders in conducting all types of elections, be they General Elections, By-Elections, elections for Upper House or Local Government. It has to be seen as how the Election Commission of Pakistan will be able to gain trust of its stakeholders, including the political parties and citizens of Pakistan?

Vote is power – use it wisely

Sumara Dinar

Active citizenship in a democratic society needs pro-activeness and long term thinking. A citizen is an indirect decision maker by choosing policy makers through the voting process. The idea of using our voting power carefully & wisely is the true democratic approach. Since democracy bestows us a unique power to choose a person to lead us and deliver our best interest.

I usually call it a seventh sense because “political sense” at least defines my interest in country's prospects of progress. I strongly agree with Aristotle as he uttered these beautiful words “not participating in politics will end up being led by inferior people”. When I try to compare different countries from the perspective of economic growth, the basic reason is strong policies and favorable conditions for progress.

Unfortunately the big dilemma is keeping us apart from the process of choosing representative and end up complaining about poor performance and seeking alternatives (private schools for children) from established systems. We either do not participate at all or some power seekers buy our vote for their benefits.

It is a state of mind that makes us see in a long term rather short term and immediate benefits. The question here is why we are unable to understand that the power lies in the small piece of paper called vote. What we need to do is to feel the



ownership and work for ourselves. Our vote will ultimately bring opportunities back because we have invested in true leadership. Things will change once we feel this power and use it effectively because there is no quick fix. Let's please understand that the system is not something out there; we are system and we need to own it. Why blame others for the decisions taken unwisely. There is a need to learn to actively participate in the process of electing future leaders. Each vote counts and could make a big difference, cast it for a cause rather to waste it.

Survival trends at primary level

Sajjad Khattak

Primary education is in dire straits as a result of Pakistan's decades-long negligence and poor investment in the social sector in general and in education in particular. Almost seven million primary school-age children are out of schools, among them are mostly girls. According to UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report (2011), roughly one in 10 of the world's primary-age children who are not in school live in Pakistan, placing it second in the global ranking of out-of-school children, behind Nigeria. Pakistan's gross and net enrolment rates together with primary education completion rates are the lowest in the South Asia region.

For Pakistan, achieving the Millennium Development Goals for education by 2015 does not seem possible. At the current rate of progress, no person today will see universal education as defined in the country's constitution—some parts of Pakistan, e.g., Balochistan, would reach it in 2100 or later. FAFEN trained 45 district coordinators to conduct monitoring visits of government schools all over the country. They monitored 2,583 schools, including 113 in five districts of Balochistan, 519 in 12 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1,338 in 26 districts of Punjab and 613 in 16 districts of Sindh.



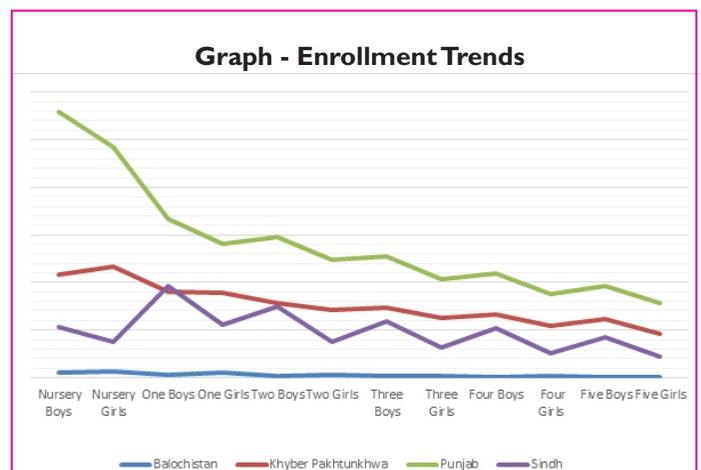
Enrollment trends

The following graph shows the grade-wise enrollment in all 2,583 schools. Maximum enrollment is taking place in the nursery class for both males and females. The graph then follows a downward trend for all the classes. The total enrollment however, becomes steadier for the grades 3, 4 and 5 at the national level. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces see steadier positions in terms of all grade enrollments as there is slide decrease in enrollment trend as compared to Punjab, as a sudden change is noted as the grade increase from Nursery to five.



Sindh sees variant trends as high enrollment is noted in grade one as compared to nursery and then downward trends were observed as the grade increases. However, if we look at the rate of gender-wise enrollment, the enrollment of girls decreases exponentially as the grade levels increase. Whereas, on the other hand, the enrollment of boys decrease till grade 3 and then there is a slight rise in the total enrollment. The decrease in enrollment of girls is what was expected as more adults do not prefer their daughters to continue studies after a certain period.

However, there is a certain anomaly found in the grade-wise enrollment of boys. The increase in the enrollment at grade 5 is evident from the general downward trend. One plausible reason behind this could be the absence of secondary schools in the region, as parents and children prefer to stay back in the primary schools due to lack of other options. Since a child cannot continue his studies further, the school retains a child in grade 5. Other than this, it should be the responsibility of all stakeholders to look for plausible solution to turn the downward trend or at least slow down the deceleration rate.



Trainings get started in three provinces

Rukhsana Shama

Citizens Action for Democratic Governance in Pakistan (CADGP) has rolled out 30 grants to TDEA/FAFEN's implementing partners across Pakistan. These organizations will implement the project in 48 districts of the country. In order to kick start field activities, the CADGP staff has been busy in organizing orientation meetings with the Executive Directors (ED) and Project Management Trainings for the key project staff of all the implementing partners.

Three ED orientation meetings have been organized till September 14, 2015. The first such meeting was conducted for the EDs of Sindh and Punjab in Islamabad, on August 29, 2015, which was attended by 14 participants.

A similar orientation was arranged for the implementing

partners in Balochistan. The orientation was held in Quetta on 12th September, 2015, which was attended by nine participants.

The CADGP also organized three Project Management Trainings for implementing partners in Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan. These include:

Project Management Trainings	No. of Participants
Lahore	30
Karachi	19
Quetta	14

However, the ED's orientation and Project Management Training for the key staff of our implementing partners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is being conducted on September 15 and 16, 2015.

FAFEN seeks parliamentary info through FOI/RTI

Shehzad Anwer

FAFEN has lodged three information requests with different legislatures since September 01, 2015 under Right to Information Act/Freedom of Information Act. The first information request was sent to Ms Abeeda Haroon - Public Information Officer in Punjab Assembly on September 04, 2015, under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. The information sought in the request was about the "Foreign Tours of Punjab Assembly MPAs (371 members) along with purpose and cost". During the follow up call, FAFEN was informed by the Public Information Officer that the required information was being compiled and the same would be intimated next week.

Another information request was sent to the Secretariat of Sindh Assembly. The information sought was regarding the "attendance record of MPAs of Sindh Assembly from 1st session to 21st session" and the request was sent to Mr. G.M. Umar Farooq – Secretary Provincial Assembly of Sindh, under Sindh Freedom of Information Act 2006 (XX of 2006). However, the required information is still awaited.

The third and last information request was sent to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Secretariat seeking the attendance of Members of KPK Assembly from 1st session to-date; documents of bills/amendments (government and private) introduced/passed during the 2nd parliamentary year; documents of resolutions passed/not taken up during the 2nd parliamentary year; calling attention notice(s) taken up/not



taken up during the 2nd parliamentary year and privilege motion(s) taken up/not taken up during the 2nd parliamentary year.

One of the officials of KP Assembly Secretariat called FAFEN office and informed about the progress of the request and promised to communicate it to FAFEN as soon as the information is collected.

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR

Syed Abul Ahad

Manager, Communications
Email: abdul.ahad@tdea.pk

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Zartasha Niazi

Program Officer, Media & Advocacy
Email: zartasha.niazi@tdea.pk

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Hammad Hussain

Email: hammad.hussain@tdea.pk

Address:

House 145, Street 37, F-10/1
Islamabad-44000
Phone: 051-8466232
Email: news@tdea.pk

www.fafen.org