



OBSERVATION REPORT

PS - 86 - Dadu IV

DADU-IV BY-ELECTION WITNESSES DECLINE IN VOTER TURNOUT

- Low Incidence of Electoral Irregularities Observed

ISLAMABAD, November 8, 2019: Low turnout of voters marked the peaceful by-election for Sindh Assembly constituency PS-86 Dadu-IV. Observers deployed by Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) recorded a relatively lesser incidence of procedural irregularities in comparison to a recent by-election for PS-11 Larkana-II, says FAFEN's observation report.

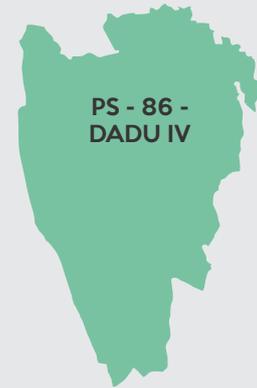
The report is based on the observation of 68 polling stations recorded by 24 observers who used a standardized methodology based on the Elections Act, 2017, Election Rules 2017, ECP Codes of Conduct and Handbooks for election officials. Each of these trained, nonpartisan and duly accredited observers visited up to four polling stations on Election Day to directly observe and report on the election environment inside and outside polling stations, instances of electoral and political violence, pre-voting preparations at polling stations, and voting and counting processes inside polling stations. Each observer spent nearly one hour at each polling station to observe polling processes.

Despite a competitive campaign, the voter turnout witnessed a substantial decline. The by-election recorded a turnout of 36.2 percent of registered voters- dropping from 51.4 percent recorded for the constituency during GE-2018. The turnout of men voters decreased from 51.06 percent in GE-2018 to 36.25 percent while the women turnout fell from 51.84 percent to 36.19 percent.

For Thursday's by-election, as many as 72,392 registered voters- 40,004 men and 32,388 women- exercised their right to vote. A total of 199,858 voters were registered- 110,365 men and 89,493 women- for the by-election. The constituency went to by-election with 20,188 more voters- an addition of 9,847 men and 10,341 women voters- than those registered for GE-2018.

Pir Syed Saleh Shah Jilani, the candidate for Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) won the by-election by securing 40,595 votes (56 percent of total polled votes) with Imdad Hussain Leghari, the runner-up candidate of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) getting 25,406 votes (35 percent of polled votes). According to the Provisional Consolidated Statement of the Result of the Count (Form-47), a total of 3,013 (four percent) votes

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...



REGISTERED VOTERS

There are 199,858 registered voters in the PS - 86 - Dadu IV, including 110,365 male voters and 89,493 female voters.

General ELECTION 2018

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
100,518	79,152	179,670

BY-ELECTION 2019

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
110,365	89,493	199,858

CHANGE

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
10%	13%	11%

POLLING STATIONS (PS)

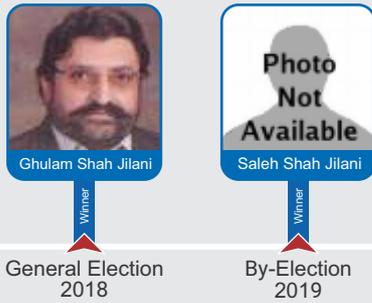
Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) set up 158 polling stations – 32 male, 28 female and 98 combined for the by-election. Overall, 486 polling booths – 265 male and 221 female – were established.

MALE PS	FEMALE PS	COMBINED PS
32	28	98
486 POLLING BOOTHS		

were excluded from the count.

During GE 2018, the constituency had witnessed a relatively closer contest when the returned candidate from PPPP had secured 43,720 votes- 47.3 percent of total polled votes- against a PTI runner-up's 38,794 votes- 42 percent of total polled votes. The by-election was warranted due to death of the member representing the constituency Syed Ghulam Shah Jilani. PTI has tried a different candidate for the constituency for by-election.

TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



Statically Improbable Voting Patterns

FAFEN observation recorded the statistically improbable voting patterns at 14 booths of nine polling stations in Dadu by-election where voting speed exceeded the probable facilitation of 33 ballots an hour at a polling booth. PPPP candidate won five of polling stations reporting improbable voting patterns while remaining four polling stations were won by PTI candidate.

An hourly turnout of more than 33 voters at a polling booth is considered to be statistically improbable. The vote-casting process involves several steps from identifying a voter to inserting the ballot paper into the ballot box. A conservative estimate of the time required to complete all these processes suggests that polling staff at one polling booth can facilitate a maximum of 33 voters in an hour. Moreover, Section 59 (3) of the Elections Act, 2017 requires the Returning officers to allocate, as far as practicable, not more than 1,200 voters per polling station and not more than 300 voters per booth. This legal provision also averages the polling rate per hour at 33. Any rate higher than 33 per hour raises questions about the quality of the voting process and needs to be scrutinized by the ECP to see whether election officials have fulfilled all legal formalities before issuing a ballot to the voter.

Voting Process

As many as 177 procedural irregularities averaging 2.4 irregularities per polling station were recorded by FAFEN observers during the observation of voting processes at PS-86 by-election. The incidence is considerably lower than the one witnessed for PS-11 by-election in Larkana held on October 17, 2019 where FAFEN observers had recorded 4.5 irregularities per polling station.

FAFEN observers observed secrecy screens to have been placed in a manner that protected the privacy of voters at 189 (96 percent) of the 196 observed polling booths, whereas the placement of these screens at seven (four percent) polling booths allowed the persons present inside the booths to see the voters marking their ballots.

Of the observed polling booths, CCTV cameras installed in 42 (21 percent) booths were directed towards the voting screens, and may have compromised the voters' secrecy. Authorized polling agents,

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS

MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as six candidates including representatives of PTI, PPPP and four independents contested the by-poll.



TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

GENERAL ELECTION 2018

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
14	0	14

BY-ELECTION 2019

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
6	0	6

ELECTION HISTORY

Reason of By-Election

The seat fell vacant due to the death of PPPP's MPA Syed Ghulam Shah Jilani.

General Election 2018

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
87,360	5,043	51.42%

By-Election 2019

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
69,379	3,013	36.25%

ELECTION OBSERVERS TRAINED

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
31	5	36

BY-ELECTION OBSERVED BY

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
23	1	24

candidates' representatives who are allowed to witness the polling process and object to any irregularity as defined under the law, were seated appropriately at most (192 or 98 percent) polling booths and were able to see the entire polling process first-hand. However, the seating arrangement for the polling agents at the remaining four (two percent) polling booths did not enable them to see the polling process clearly.

Moreover, instances of voters being allowed to cast votes upon showing documents other than original National Identity Cards (NIC) were witnessed at one polling station. The observers also reported two incidents of polling staff disallowing voters with disabilities to seek assistance from a person of their choice for casting vote at two polling stations.

At two polling stations, four instances of people accompanying voters behind the secrecy screen were observed. The reports of eight instances of polling staff inquiring voters about their voting choices were also received from a polling station.

Counting Process and Result Transmission System

FAFEN observed the counting process at 18 polling stations. At one polling station, the polling agents refused to sign the Result of the Count (Form-45). The observers reported that the Presiding Officers (PrOs) pasted the copies of Form-45 and the Ballot Paper Account (Form-46) outside 16 and 14 polling stations, respectively. Moreover, only five of 18 PrOs interviewed after the completion of the counting process said that they had transmitted Form-45 to the Returning Officer (RO) through Result Transmission System (RTS) while 13 PrOs were reportedly unable to transmit the result through RTS.

FAFEN also interviewed the PrOs during the polling process. Only six of 68 PrOs said that they were given mobile phones by the ECP to electronically transmit the election result after completion of counting while 58 of the remaining 62 PrOs stated that they would use their own phones to transmit the result whereas three PrOs said they would transmit the result manually and one expressed reservations on use of RTS. Moreover, 48 (71 percent) of 68 PrOs expressed dissatisfaction with the training provided by the ECP on using RTS while 20 (29 percent) PrOs were satisfied with the training on RTS.

Conduct of Security Staff

Security personnel were observed inside and outside all the polling stations observed on Election Day. They were also deployed inside 166 (85 percent) of the 196 observed polling booths. Security personnel present outside polling stations were found checking voters' NICs at all 68 observed polling stations and checking voter chits (perchees) at 67 polling stations. The ECP's Code of Conduct for Security Officials for GE-2018 prohibited security officials from barring any voter for not carrying NIC or voter-chit as it is the duty of the polling staff to ascertain the identity of the voter and process his or her credentials. Moreover, the observers reported from five polling stations that the security officials were allowing voters to carry their mobile phones inside the polling stations. The Code of Conduct for Security Officials prohibits permission to voters for carrying mobile phones inside. The observers reported from 60 polling stations that security officials were not allowing media persons to carry the cameras inside the polling stations.

Campaigning and Canvassing

FAFEN observers noted the presence of party camps in the surroundings of 59 of the 68 polling stations observed on Election Day. In two camps around these 59 polling stations, the observers witnessed the presence of armed persons. The ECP's Code of Conduct for Contesting Candidates and Political Parties prohibits candidates and their supporters from providing transport services to voters on Election Day. However, FAFEN observers witnessed contesting candidates providing transportation to voters outside 55 (81 percent) of the observed polling stations. Moreover, the observers reported the presence of campaigning material of candidates or political parties inside one polling station.

Contesting Parties and Candidates

As many as six male candidates contested the by election in PS-86. PTI and PPPP had nominated their candidate for this by-election, while the remaining four contested as independent candidates. During GE-2018, a total of 14 candidates contested the election from this constituency. Six parties including PPPP, PTI, MMAP, TLP, SUP and PML-N fielded their candidates while remaining eight contested election as independent candidates.

Setting Up of Polling Stations

ECP set up a total of 158 polling stations – 32 male, 28 female and 98 combined – for 199,858 registered voters of the constituency, averaging 1,265 voters per polling station. During the General Elections 2018, the number of total polling stations – gender wise or combined – were same for a 179,670 voters, averaging 1,137 voters per polling stations.

The Elections Act, 2017 highlights a limit of 1,200 voters to be assigned to a polling station and 300 to a polling booth 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 Stations (Form-28), the election authorities assigned up to 1,200 voters to 88 (56 percent) polling stations.

Independent Observation

Section 238 of the Elections Act, 2017 permits duly verified and accredited election observers to observe polling proceedings, including the voting and counting processes. In compliance with the legal provision, FAFEN's trained, nonpartisan and accredited 24 observers were allowed to observe the polling process at 68 polling stations without any restriction. However, five observers at as many polling stations were disallowed by the election staff to observe polling processes. Similarly, FAFEN observers were allowed to observe the counting process at 18 polling stations while one was barred altogether from observing the counting process.