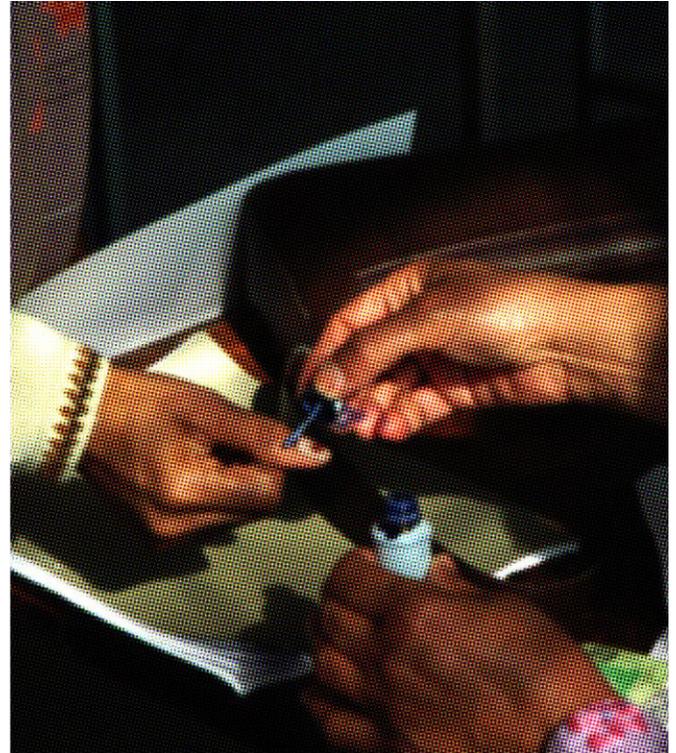


LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS-2021 IN CANTONMENT BOARDS



FREE & FAIR ELECTION NETWORK - FAFEN

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Orderly and peaceful Cantonment Boards LG elections register low turnout, fewer women candidates and electoral irregularities

Controversy-free electoral outcome a positive sign for democratic traditions

1. Executive Summary

Around one-third of the registered voters in Pakistan's cantonment boards went to vote on September 12, 2021 in an election that remained largely peaceful, orderly and free of controversy in an otherwise competitive but highly fragmented political environment. The acceptability of election outcome by all major political contenders without any major reservations is a positive first that will help strengthen democratic traditions in the country.

Although the elections were due in April 2020, the cantonment boards have taken lead among the four provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to have elected the local governments for the second term under the new LG laws after the passage of the eighteenth constitutional amendment in 2010. This will also set an example for the provinces to hold the long overdue LG elections, which they have been delaying over one pretext or the other.

Elections were held in 205 wards of 39 (of a total of 42) cantonment boards as election were decided unopposed in Cherat, Murree Gallis and Kamra. Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) deployed 120 trained, non-partisan and duly accredited observers to observe electoral processes at 392 polling stations in an effort to generate independent information

DI KHAN		BANNU		ABBOTTABAD		HAVELIAN	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
560		1,490		17,238		5,262	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
1,144	561	2,970	1,417	37,957	18,259	10,522	4,909
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES						
2	5	2	5	10	53	2	7

and analysis about the quality of the electoral processes. According to these observers, the Election Day was efficiently managed and remained largely peaceful and by law, although the incidences of procedural irregularities could have been minimized through greater investments in training of election officials and measures for their effective enforcement. Observers reported an average of seven violations of law, rules and codes of the conduct from each polling station on the Election Day. Although many of these violations were minor in nature, some were serious violations such as illegal campaigning and canvassing around polling stations, bar on legally-accredited observers, instances of breaches of secrecy of voters and few incidents of minor violence.

According to the provisional results released by the Returning Officers (ROs), out of 2,197,441 registered voters in 39 cantonment boards, as many as 699,298 (32 percent) exercised their right to vote. The voter turnout was particularly low in cantonment boards in Sindh (21 percent), while it remained the highest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (43 percent). The Election Commission oversaw the deployment of government employees on election duties. The Commission deployed 30 District Returning Officers (DROs), 51 Returning Officers (ROs) and 81 Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) for the polls in cantonment boards. As many as 11,650 personnel including Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers were deputed for Election Day duties at 1,648 polling stations with 5,001 polling booths.

Though in the recent past, proactive measures have been taken up by the Parliament to encourage greater participation of women in electoral politics, their participation as candidates remained disconcertingly low with only 19 women (one percent) out of 1,499 contesting the cantonment board elections. Of these 19 women candidates, nine contested independently, while three were awarded tickets by Pakistan People's Party (PPP), two by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and one each by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Despite Section 206 of the Elections Act, 2017 warranting political parties to ensure a minimum five percent quota for women on elective seats including candidates for the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies, it remains unclear whether and how it may be applied upon for the local government elections.

A little less than two-third of the 1,499 candidates that contested elections on 205 general wards represented 20 political parties, while around one-third of the candidates ran independently. On an average, seven candidates contested in every ward within the cantonment boards of Punjab. This ratio was eight each for Sindh and Balochistan, and five for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to data collected by FAFEN observers from the respective ROs, PMLN bagged the largest vote share of approximately 27.7 percent of the polled votes, which was closely followed by PTI with 26.9 percent votes, independents with 20.9 percent, PPP with 6.3 percent and TLP with 6.1 percent of the votes polled.

PTI emerged as largest party in 13 cantonment boards, followed by PMLN in 10, PPP in three, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in two and Awami National Party (ANP) in one. In two cantonment boards, the mandate is equally split between PTI and PMLN, while in the remaining eight cantonment boards, independent candidates figured as the largest party. According to the Cantonments (Amendment) Act, 2015, the directly elected members of the ward will serve as electoral college for election on reserved seats of women, peasants, workers, youth and non-Muslims.



The party camps were established for campaigning and canvassing outside or around 321 polling stations and distributing voter chits (parchee) with party or candidates' symbols. FAFEN observers also noted at 181 polling stations that transport services were provided by the contesting candidates to voters. ECP-accredited FAFEN observers were barred from entering at least seven polling stations. Similarly, they were not allowed to observe the counting processes at an additional three polling stations.

FAFEN observers reported 125 instances at 82 polling stations where the voting process was partially disorganized due to overcrowding of voters. As many as 112 instances from 50 polling stations were recorded where voters were turned away as their votes were not registered at the station. In 13 instances from five polling stations, voters were allowed to vote without the possession of an original National Identity Card (NIC), and instead they produced other identity documents. In 18 instances at seven polling stations, contrary to Section 26 of the Elections Act, 2017, the polling staff did not allow the voters to vote because they had an expired NIC. In breach of voters' privacy, FAFEN observers witnessed at 41 instances that unauthorized persons were accompanying voters behind the secrecy screens, and stamping their ballots on their behalf. At 13 polling stations in six cantonment boards, the polling agents were not provided the copies of statements of the count.

Almost half of the observed polling stations were accessible for the persons with disabilities (PWDs), while 198 polling stations were not wheel-chair friendly as they were either not established on the ground floor or did not have ramps. At 198 polling stations, the election and security staff extended preferential treatment to PWDs by allowing them to enter first. However, there were a few cases reported from 12 polling stations where PWDs were not given any preferential treatment. At 56 polling stations, the Presiding Officers allowed PWD voters to accompany with a person of their choice to facilitate them in marking their ballot; however, at 29 polling stations, the Presiding Officers allowed either the candidate, polling agents, election or security staff to facilitate them.

As part of its observation methodology, FAFEN observers interviewed three voters who came out of the polling stations after casting their ballots to inquire about their satisfaction with the polling process. Observers interviewed a total of 1,197 voters, of which, 1,039 voters in 38 cantonment boards expressed their satisfaction with the polling process, while voters 158 were either indifferent or dissatisfied. Similarly, during the campaign period, FAFEN representatives interviewed a total of 51 contesting candidates in 13 cantonment boards to gauge their level of satisfaction with the electoral operations undertaken by the ECP. With an exception of a few candidates, a majority of them expressed their satisfaction with the process. PTI candidates or its allies in federal and provincial governments were generally satisfied with the overall electoral environment. On the contrary, nine candidates belonging the opposition parties including PMLN and JI complained about the attitude of the ECP, which they termed as lethargic. As many as three candidates – JI, PPP and an independent – claimed to have filed complaints over the delimitation process, transferring votes from one area to another, and the alleged misuse of administrative and official resources by the treasury lawmakers and ministers of federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments during the election campaign. A majority of the interviewed candidates (45) shared that their opponents were spending beyond the permissible limit of Rs. 200,000 during campaign period. None of the interviewed candidates, however, mentioned any incident of intimidation.

CHERAT		RAWALPINDI		KOHAT		ATTOCK	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
UNCONTESTED		52,059		3,452		10,937	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
UNCONTESTED		279,531		8,358		10,936	
		134,806  144,725		3,971  4,387		5,488  5,448	
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES
2	UNCONTESTED	10	86  86	3	8  8	2	4  4

2. Context

2.1. Legal Framework

The ECP has the mandate to conduct the LG elections in accordance with Article 104-A (2) of the Constitution of Pakistan and Section 219 (4) of the Elections Act, 2017. After the completion of LGs' tenures in cantonment areas on December 10, 2019, the elections were due to be held within 120 days. However, under Section 67 of the Cantonments (Amendment) Act 2015, the federal government allowed the Ministry of Defence to extend the tenure of members of all boards until fresh elections.

On January 30, 2020, the ECP announced the delimitation of wards in 42 cantonment boards, and listed March 27, 2020 as the completion date for the exercise. However, due to the rise of COVID-19 cases, the polls were delayed. On July 9, 2021, the ECP announced the conduct of elections to be held in 42 cantonment boards under Article 140-A (2) of the Constitution, Section 219 of the Elections Act, 2017 and Section 58 of the Cantonment (Amendment) Act 2015. The ECP also issued codes of conduct on July 12, 2021, and also a directive on July 27, 2021 to regulate the election campaign.

According to the Cantonment (Amendment) Act 2015, voters will elect their representatives on general seats termed as "wards". The elected members serve as the electoral college for the election on reserved seats – peasants, workers, women, youth and non-Muslims. As many as 219 wards had been delimited for 42 cantonments. A total of 13 cantonment boards host 10 wards each, while the remaining boards range between two to five wards.

2.2. FAFEN's Observation: Scope and Methodology

FAFEN's observation methodology is based on the processes and requirements laid out in the Elections Act, 2017, its rules and regulations, and the codes of conduct notified under the law. On September 7, 2021, FAFEN initiated its observation of the political environment and implementation of election-related laws, rules, and regulations as part of its multi-phased observation of elections. FAFEN observed the campaign period during its last phase, and the ECP's preparations by deploying a total of seven trained, non-partisan FAFEN representatives.

For election day, FAFEN trained and deployed 120 non-partisan election observers to observe the polling and counting processes at 392 of 1,499 polling stations (26 percent) in the 39 cantonment boards – 19 in Punjab, nine in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eight in Sindh and three in Balochistan. Elections in three cantonment boards were decided uncontested. FAFEN observers – 74 men and 46 women – recorded their observations on a standardized checklist based on the provisions of the Elections Act, 2017, Elections Rules 2017, codes of conduct, and the handbooks for training of election officials.

2.3. Contesting Parties and Candidates

A total of 20 political parties contested the elections including PMLN, PTI, PPP, PML, JIP, TLP, ANP Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek (AAT), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam – Fazal (JUI-F), Qaumi Watan Party – Sherpao (QWP), Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), Tehreek Jawanan Pakistan (TJP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Nazriati (PTIN), Barabri Party Pakistan (BPP), Majlis-e-

MURREE HILLS		CHAKLALA		TAXILA		SANJWAL	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
1,431		54,384		NOT AVAILABLE		966	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
1,767	791  976	170,203	83,824  86,379	15,976	NA  NA	1,670	798  872
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES
2	7  7	10	77  76	5	20  20	2	2  2

Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan (MWMP), Pakistan Aman Tehreek (PAT), Pakistan Muslim League – Functional (PML-F), Muttahidda Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQMP), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP).

As many as 1,499 candidates contested the LG elections in the cantonment boards. Of these, 898 candidates represented 20 political parties, while the remaining 601 contested these elections independently. Among major political parties, PTI fielded 178 candidates, followed by PMLN 140 and PPP 111. Besides these parties, JIP awarded tickets to 105, TLP to 84, MQM to 41 and JUI-F to 25 candidates.

In Punjab, 859 candidates were in the run for 119 seats, followed by 422 in Sindh for 54 seats, 171 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 37 seats and 47 in Balochistan for nine seats.

2.4. Women Candidates in Elections

The Elections Act, 2017 facilitates women to actively participate in election related activities. According to Section 206 of the Elections Act 2017, “a political party shall make the selection of candidates for elective offices, including membership of the *Majlis-e-Shoora* (Parliament) and Provincial Assemblies, through a transparent and democratic procedure while making the selection of candidates on general seats shall ensure at least five per cent representation of women candidates”. Only 19 women (one percent) contested these LG elections – three women were awarded tickets by PPP, two by PTI and one each from PML-N, PSP, TLP, JIP and PML. As many as nine women candidates contested the elections as independents. Though the application of Section 206 is clearly defined for the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies’ elections, it remains unclear for LGs. FAFEN urges the Parliament to define the applicability of this provision in the case of LG elections to ensure greater participation of women as candidates.

2.5. Establishment of Polling Stations

The ECP had setup a total of 1,648 polling stations comprising 5,001 polling booths to facilitate 2,197,441 registered voters – averaging one polling station for 1,333 voters and one polling booth for 439 voters. The Elections Act, 2017 stipulates a limit of 1,200 voters per polling station, and 300 per polling booth to be followed as far as practicable. As many as 1,155 polling stations were set up in Punjab, followed by 325 in Sindh, 131 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 35 in Balochistan.

As many as 30 DROs, 51 ROs and 81 AROs were notified for the purpose of conducting LG elections in the cantonment boards under Section 58 of the Cantonments (Amendment) Act, 2015.

2.6. Perceptions of Contesting Candidates

FAFEN representatives interviewed a total of 51 contesting candidates in 13 cantonment boards – Peshawar, Risalpur, Nowshera, Mardan, Hyderabad, Faisal, Abbottabad, Hevellian, Multan, Shorkot, Bahawalpur, Sargodha and Quetta. These candidates were asked about their access to election-related information including nomination papers, lists of polling stations and electoral rolls. A majority of these candidates expressed satisfaction over availability of such information.



PTI candidates or its allies in federal and provincial governments were generally satisfied with the overall electoral environment. On the contrary, nine candidates belonging to the opposition parties including PMLN and JIP complained about the attitude of the ECP, which they termed as lethargic. As many as three candidates – JIP, PPP and an independent – claimed to have filed complaints over the delimitation process, transferring votes from one area to another, and the alleged misuse of administrative and official resources by the treasury lawmakers and ministers of federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments during the election campaign.

A majority of the interviewed candidates (45) shared that their opponents were spending beyond the permissible limit of Rs. 200,000 during the campaign period. None of the interviewed candidates, however, mentioned any incident of intimidation.

3. Results Consolidation

3.1. Turnout Analysis

Elections were held in 39 of the total 42 cantonments on 205 general wards. Polling was not conducted in nine wards of Kamra, Cherat and Murree Gallis cantonments as the candidates were elected uncontested. Similarly, polling was not held at one ward each in Sanjwal and Loralai, where candidates returned unopposed. Elections at two other wards – one each in Rawalpindi and Walton – were postponed due to death of contesting candidates. Polling in one ward of Pano Aqil was not held as it did not appear on the polling scheme, despite the fact that the delimitation notification mentioned two wards in the cantonment board.

Based on the Provisional Results released by the ROs, FAFEN estimates the overall voter turnout remained at 32.37 percent. Provincially, the highest voter turnout was recorded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (42.98 percent), and was followed by Punjab (35.53 percent), Balochistan (30.71 percent), and Sindh (20.90 percent).

Although the gender disaggregated data of polled votes is only partially available at this point of time, FAFEN did not find any ward registering less than ten percent women turnout. In 19 wards – eleven in Punjab, six in Sindh, and two in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – the number of invalid votes remained greater than the margins of victory.

The cantonment LG elections reinforced the need for strategies for a more gender-responsive electoral system. Women's participation during these elections was low, both as voters and as candidates. As mentioned earlier, only 19 women candidates contested the elections across the country. This gender disparity persisted in votes polled as well. Women candidates bagged only 2,681 (0.4 percent) of the polled votes, while men candidates received a total of 686,784 (99.6 percent) votes polled.

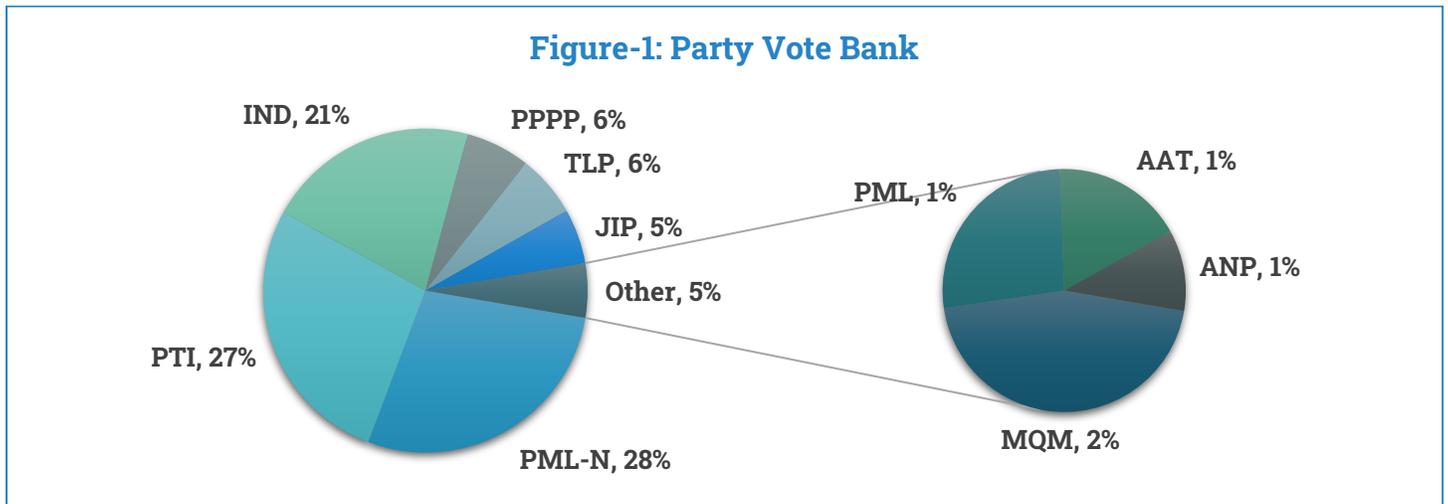
3.2. Party Vote Bank and Seats

3.2.1. National Aggregation

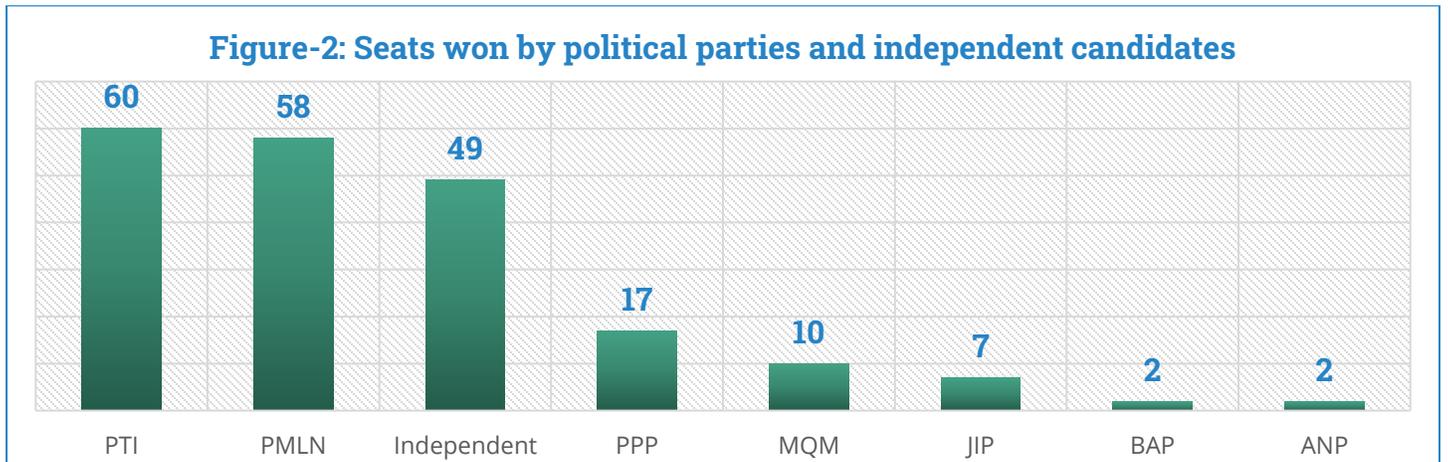
In terms of votes obtained, PMLN, PTI, PPP, and TLP emerged the largest four parties across the country. As many as 699,298 voters exercised their right to vote in 39 cantonment boards. PMLN bagged the largest vote share of

SIALKOT		MANGLA		WALTON		JHELMUM	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
12,461		1,660		85,729		1,302	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
28,530	13,784  14,746	4,795	2,326  2,469	390,023	183,299  206,724	3,743	1,902  1,841
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES
5	25  0  25	2	38  2  36	10	136  0  136	2	6  0  6

approximately 27.7 percent of the polled votes, closely followed by PTI with 26.9 percent votes, PPP with 6.3 percent and TLP with 6.1 percent of the votes polled. Independent candidates managed to secure 20.9 percent votes.



While the PTI ranked second in terms of the total votes obtained, it bagged the highest number of seats (60 or 29 percent), followed by PML-N (58 seats or 28 percent), PPP (17 or six percent) and JIP (seven or three percent). Independent candidates emerged as winners on 49 seats (21 percent). TLP did not win any seat despite being the fourth largest vote-getter. The following figure shows the national aggregation of number of seats won by political parties/political parties:



3.2.2. Regional Aggregation

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PTI won a majority of seats (15 seats), followed by independent candidates claiming nine seats. However, these independents secured the largest vote share (32 percent) in the province. PPP and ANP secured two seats each.

GUJRANWALA		KHARIAN		MULTAN		SHORKOT	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
34,147		3,241		9,816		7,258	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
59,280	27,775	7,231	3,513	17,825	8,492	14,278	6,684
No. of CONTESTING CANDIDATES		No. of CONTESTING CANDIDATES		No. of CONTESTING CANDIDATES		No. of CONTESTING CANDIDATES	
10	95	2	10	10	38	2	18

In Punjab, PMLN emerged as the majority party claiming 51 seats, whereas independent candidates won 30 seats. PTI was able to secure 28 seats, while JIP won two seats.

In Sindh, PPP and PTI won 14 seats each, while MQM came in second securing ten seats. JIP was able to secure five seats.

In Balochistan, PTI and independent candidates shared won three seats each, while BAP candidates were able to secure two seats.

4. Observation of Election Day

4.1. Independent Observers

At almost all observed polling stations (392 or 98 percent) in all cantonment boards, duly-accredited FAFEN observers were allowed to observe the polling process. However, at seven polling stations (two percent) in four cantonment boards including Faisal, Karachi Cantonment, Sanjwal, and Walton, accredited observers were not allowed to observe the polling process. Moreover, at three polling stations of Karachi, Multan, and Wah Cantonment Boards, FAFEN observers were not allowed to observe the counting process.

4.2. Opening of Polling Stations

The election day remained generally peaceful and orderly with voting continuing uninterrupted during the polling hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) designated by the ECP. Most of the polling stations were open for voters to cast their vote at the assigned hour, with a few exceptions reported by FAFEN observers. The observers noted the opening and pre-voting proceedings at 108 polling stations – 47 (34 percent) male, 28 (21 percent) female and 33 (26 percent) combined. The polling staff was prepared to start the voting process at 8:00 am in 86 (80 percent) polling stations. However, 22 (20 percent) polling stations witnessed a slight delay in the start of proceedings. Observers reported that voters were waiting in organized queues inside and outside of a majority of the polling stations in all cantonments.

The polling agents of contesting candidates were present at 101 (94 percent) polling stations before the start of the voting process. Similarly, at 99 (92 percent) polling stations, the Presiding Officers (PrOs) showed the empty ballot boxes to the polling agents before the commencement of the polls. Observers noted that the PrOs did not show the empty ballot boxes to the polling agents of the candidates at nine (eight percent) polling stations.

FAFEN observers reported that the PrOs sealed the ballot boxes in the presence of polling agents at 98 (91 percent) polling stations, but were observed to be doing so in the absence of polling agents at 10 (nine percent) polling stations.

4.3. Polling Officials' Preparation

Considering the elections were being held under the Elections Act, 2017 and the Cantonment (Amendment) Act, 2015, the ECP appeared to have adequately invested in the training of PrOs to conduct the voting and counting processes at the polling stations. Most PrOs had received a day-long training that detailed their responsibilities on the election

MALIR		MANORA		FAISAL		KARACHI	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
13,712		1,478		23,056		NOT AVAILABLE	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
36,474	16,635  19,839	2,212	938  1,274	167,781	81,732  86,049	36,970	16,735  20,235
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES
10	62  62	2	6  6	10	88  84	5	40  38

day, and had received a handbook. However, on an average seven electoral violations were reported by FAFEN observers at each polling station. A majority of these pertained to illegal campaigning and canvassing in and around polling stations and procedural irregularities. Similarly, FAFEN observers reported on an average six violations of COVID-19's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from the observed polling stations.

Of the total 392 PrOs interviewed on polling day, 302 (77 percent) told FAFEN observers that they had performed the duties as a PrO in the past, whereas 90 (23 percent) had either not worked as election officials or did not respond to the question. Similarly, as many as 384 (98 percent) PrOs told FAFEN observers that they participated in training sessions conducted by the ECP, while the remaining eight (two percent) responded that they did not attend training. Overall, a majority of the interviewed PrOs (361 or 94 percent) were satisfied with the training sessions, while the remaining 23 (six percent) were not satisfied.

PrOs were observed to be wearing badges provided by the ECP at 344 (88 percent) polling stations. Similarly, FAFEN observers reported that PrOs were wearing face masks at 339 (86 percent) polling stations. A total of 372 PrOs (95 percent) told FAFEN observers that they will go to the Returning Officers' office to submit the result, while 94 (24 percent) mentioned that they will also send the result via WhatsApp.

4.4. Election Environment: Campaigning and Canvassing

According to the Section 177 of the Elections Act, 2017, canvassing inside or nearby the polling station is prohibited. The party camps were established outside or around 321 polling stations - 121 or 88 percent male, 103 or 79 percent female polling stations and 97 or 78 percent combined polling stations. Similarly, FAFEN observers reported election posters, banners, flags or other canvassing materials pasted on the wall or building of 100 (26 percent) polling stations.

Armed personnel were observed to be present at 32 (10 percent) election camps. These cases were reported from Faisal, Malir and Kharian cantonment boards. Voter chits with markings of names and symbols of contesting candidates and parties were being handed out at 235 (73 percent) of the observed camps.

Another irregularity observed by FAFEN observers was the provision of transport to voters. At 181 (46 percent) polling station, transport services were provided by the contesting candidates and parties.

4.5. Observation of Voting Processes

FAFEN observers reported 125 instances at 82 polling stations where the voting process was partially disorganized due to overcrowding of voters. Similarly, the observers reported 24 instances of short breaks in the voting process on the account of lunch or prayers from 22 polling stations. As many as 112 instances from 50 polling stations were recorded where voters were turned away as their votes were not registered at the station. In 13 instances from five polling stations, voters were allowed to vote without the possession of an original National Identity Card (NIC), and instead they produced other identity documents. In 18 instances at seven polling station, contrary to Section 26 of the Elections Act, 2017, the polling staff did not allow the voters to vote because they had an expired NIC. Moreover, at seven polling stations, the polling agents were observed to have challenged the voters' identity.



Of the total 1,145 polling booths observed, 819 (72 percent) were set up in separate rooms of polling stations, while 326 (28 percent) were established in a room with at least one other booth.

Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) were present at 1,083 (94 percent) polling booths, while APOs were not present at 62 (five percent) booths at the time of observation. At 94 booths, these APOs were observed to be not guiding voters on how to properly fold their ballot papers after stamping them. FAFEN observers reported that APOs at 882 (81 percent) booths were wearing face masks, but at 56 (five percent) booths, they were not wearing them. Similarly, security officials were present inside 81 percent of the observed polling booths. FAFEN observers reported that security officials in 619 (66 percent) booths were wearing face masks, but in 122 (13 percent) they were not wearing them. Polling staff was seated in a manner to maintain social distance at 730 (64 percent) polling booths, but they were not observing any social distancing at 113 (10 percent) booths.

Of the 1,145 polling booths observed, CCTV cameras were installed at 222 (19 percent) polling booths. CCTV cameras at seven polling booths were installed in a manner that may have breached the privacy of voters. Similarly, in 41 instances, unauthorized persons were observed to be accompanying voters behind the secrecy screens, and stamping their ballots on their behalf. Moreover, polling agents at six polling booths were observed to be influencing the voters' choice by indicating towards a specific party or candidate symbol. FAFEN observed at 10 polling stations, the election agents or the contesting candidates were influencing the election officials.

4.6. Electoral Violence

Though the LG elections were largely peaceful, there were a few instances of minor brawls and clashes among political parties' workers inside and outside polling stations. FAFEN observers reported exchange of harsh words between workers of PTI, PMLN, TLP and independent candidates within the premises of 16 polling stations. Similarly, such instances were also reported outside three polling stations. A majority of these cases were reported from Walton, Sialkot, Multan and Chaklala.

4.7. Observation of Counting Process

The observation report includes data of the counting process observed at 90 polling stations. At three polling stations in Karachi, Multan and Wah Cantonment Boards, FAFEN observers were not allowed to observe the counting process.

The voters present inside the premises of polling stations after 5:00 pm were allowed to cast their vote at all of the observed polling stations. The PrOs at 77 (86 percent) polling stations – 26 male and female each and 25 combined – allowed the polling agents to observe the counting process. The PrOs were observed to be complying with the legal requirements during the counting process at a majority of the polling stations. They were observed to gather all ballot boxes from all polling booths at one place at 78 (87 percent) polling stations. Similarly, PrOs ensured that independent observers were seated at a place where they could easily observe the counting process at 81 (90 percent) polling stations. Polling agents were also seated at a place from where they could witness the entire counting process at 77 (86 percent) polling stations.

PANOQIL		HYDERABAD		KORANGI CREEK		QUETTA	
VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED		VOTES POLLED	
224		16,525		8,048		8,666	
REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
426	141  285	48,965	21,892  27,073	21,424	9,383  12,041	28,945	13,599  15,346
No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES	No. of WARDS	CONTESTING CANDIDATES
2	2  2	10	77  74	5	49  48	5	35  35

Proper lighting arrangements were lacking at 32 (36 percent) polling stations during the counting process. Polling staff checked the official code mark and signature of the APO on the back of each ballot paper at 69 (77 percent) polling stations.

At 64 (83 percent) observed polling stations in 29 cantonment boards, the PrOs provided copies of Form-XII (Statement of the Count) to the polling agents. However, at 13 polling stations (17 percent) in six cantonment boards, the polling agents were not provided the copies of Form-XII. Similarly, the PrOs provided the Form-XIII (Ballot Paper Account) to the polling agents at 51 polling stations (66 percent) of the observed polling stations in 29 cantonment boards, while the polling agents were not provided the Form-XIII at 26 (34 percent) polling stations in 10 cantonment boards.

FAFEN observers did not get copies of Form-XII at 22 (24 percent) polling stations in seven cantonment boards. The PrOs at 31 (34 percent) polling stations in 10 cantonment boards did not affix Form-XII and Form-XIII at 38 (42 percent) polling stations in 14 cantonment boards.

4.8. Accessibility to Polling Stations

Almost half of the observed polling stations were accessible by the persons with disabilities (PWDs), while 198 polling stations were not wheel-chair friendly as they were either not established on the ground floor or did not have ramps. At 198 polling stations, the security staff extended preferential treatment to PWDs by allowing them to enter first. However, there were a few cases reported from 12 polling stations where PWDs were not given preferential treatment.

Similarly, the election officials gave preference to the entry of transgender voters at 69 polling stations, while at 26 they were not provided any preferential treatment.

FAFEN observers reported that the security personnel did not extend extra support to pregnant voters at 12 polling stations. At 56 polling stations, the PrOs allowed PWD voters to accompany with a person of their choice to facilitate them in marking their ballot; however, at 29 polling stations, the PrOs allowed either the candidate, polling agents, election or security staff to facilitate them.

4.9. Conduct of Security Personnel

Security staff was present at 292 polling stations, while they were not present at 100. These personnel were observed to checking voters' identification cards and allowing them to enter at 224 polling stations. Overall, the security personnel were largely observed to be treating voters courteously at 95 percent of the observed polling stations, while there were a few instances reported from 16 (five percent) stations of their misbehavior with voters.

The security personnel allowed voters to take their mobile phones with them at 67 (23 percent) polling stations. In majority of the polling stations (162 or 55 percent) security staff allowed voters to enter without a mask thereby raising concerns about compliance of SOPs during the electoral process.



4.10. Voter Satisfaction

As part of its observation methodology, FAFEN observers interviewed three voters who came out of the polling stations after casting their ballots to inquire about their satisfaction with the polling process. Observers interviewed a total of 1,197 voters outside the polling stations in 39 cantonment boards. A total of 1,039 voters (87 percent) in 38 cantonment boards expressed their satisfaction with the polling process, while voters outside 158 observed were either indifferent or dissatisfied.

