

General Election 2024 Brief Series

Women's Voting Choices: Significance & Impact on Electoral Outcomes

January 2025



This publication is a part of Free and Fair Election Network's (FAFEN) General Election 2024 Brief series offering a comprehensive overview of electoral engagement, participation trends, etc. that can inform future electoral reforms and policy decisions aimed at enhancing inclusivity and representation.

Executive Summary

Women's voting choice is a significant aspect of General Elections 2024 results for National Assembly (NA) constituencies. To understand this phenomenon and measure its significance in determining electoral outcomes, this brief examines female voters' choices from two distinct perspectives – firstly, it assesses the scale of variance in male and female choices, and secondly it explores the impact of female voters' support in determining the constituency winners.

Since election results of combined polling stations do not provide a gender-wise breakdown of how male and female voters' vote, this analysis could only compare the results of male and female polling stations. Furthermore, the assessment has limited its scope to male and female polling stations where men and women from the same electoral areas voted.

Given these limitations, the scale of variance in male and female voters' choices could be determined for 21,188 communities. The results of male and female polling stations established in those communities were assessed to gauge the similarity and divergence in the choice of winner by male and female voters.

- In 82 percent (17,304) of the communities, male and female voters' choice of winner was aligned as they returned the same winner from their respective polling stations. In 18 percent (3,884) of the communities, male and female voters diverged in their choice of winner as they returned different winners from their respective polling stations.

Within the overall pattern of aligned and divergent choices between men and women lies significant demographic and regional variations.

- Compared to rural areas, communities in urban areas showed more divergent choices among male and female voters. Among regions, Islamabad had the highest proportion (37%) of electoral communities with different winners in male and female polling stations. Balochistan had the second-highest proportion (32%) followed by Sindh (19%) and Punjab (18%), while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had the lowest proportion (13%) of such electoral communities.
- Of the 3,884 communities where women's choice of winner for National Assembly seats was different, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won more support from women in 1,260 communities, followed by Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) in 1,027 and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) in 694 communities. Regional trends showed that while PTI performed well across the country in terms of women voters' choice, PML-N remained strong in Punjab, and PPPP dominated in Sindh.

The second section assesses the significance of women's choices in determining constituency results. Notwithstanding the limitations of the assessment noted above, the findings show that:

- In 37 NA constituencies, the largest proportion of voters in female polling stations did not vote for the winning candidates.
- In 226 NA constituencies, the largest proportion of voters in female polling stations voted for the constituency winner. In 166 of those NA constituencies, compared to voters in male polling stations, a larger proportion of voters in female polling stations polled for the winner.
- In seven constituencies – NA-43 Tank-cum-Dera Ismail Khan, NA-49 Attock-I, NA-55 Rawalpindi-IV, NA-87 Khushab-I, NA-94 Chiniot-II, NA-128 Lahore-XII and NA-163 Bahawalnagar-IV – the lead at female polling stations determined the winner. For example, in NA-43 Tank-cum-Dera Ismail Khan, PTI narrowly won edging out Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF) by 555 votes. PTI-supported candidate garnered a lead of 1,430 votes at female polling stations alone – a margin that decisively affected the overall outcome.

The overall findings of this brief establish the significance of women's voting choices from polling stations at the community level to the constituency result. Availability of gender-wise data of combined polling station is crucial to fully explore the dynamics of women's voting choices and their impact on electoral outcomes.

1. Introduction

This brief explores the dynamics of women's voting choices in the General Elections of 2024, emphasizing their critical role in shaping electoral outcomes. It examines gender-based voting patterns, identifies cross-gender areas of alignment and divergence, and assesses the significance of women's votes in determining constituency results. It also covers regional and demographic variations and shifts in gender-based political preferences compared with the 2018 elections.

The findings aim to inform policymakers, politicians, and researchers about the distinct voting choices of women, encouraging gender-sensitive strategies to enhance inclusivity and representation in Pakistan's democratic process.

1.1. Determining Comparability of Male and Female Voters' Choices

A five-step methodology was adopted to assess the variations in male and female voter choices. The assessment was not possible for all male and female voters who voted at the 90,315 polling stations. Of these polling stations, 41,055 were combined: 25,310 were male and 23,950 were female.

In step one, combined polling stations were excluded from the analytical framework of this study. Combined polling stations (where both male and female voters vote) were excluded, given the lack of gender-disaggregated result data that rendered the effort to determine variance in male and female choices redundant.

| Region | Total PS ECP Polling Scheme | | | Listed from Form-28 | | Comparable Polling stations | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| | Combined | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | 6,258 | 4,798 | 4,277 | 4,798 | 4,276 | 3,346 | 3,346 |
| ICT | 158 | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 | 416 |
| Punjab | 22,194 | 14,141 | 13,621 | 14,117 | 13,600 | 12,592 | 12,592 |
| Sindh | 10,252 | 4,441 | 4,317 | 4,441 | 4,317 | 4,116 | 4,116 |
| Balochistan | 2,193 | 1,514 | 1,319 | 1,509 | 1,312 | 932 | 932 |
| Total | 41,055 | 25,310 | 23,950 | 25,281 | 23,921 | 21,402 | 21,402 |
| Grant Total | | 49,260 | | 49,202 | | 42,804 | |

In step two, the details of 25,310 male and 23,950 female polling stations in Form-28 were entered. Due to blurred print and incomplete forms, details of 29 male and 29 female polling stations could not be determined from Form-28. This process yielded a list of 25,281 male and 23,921 female polling stations.

In step three, the comparability of male and female polling stations was determined. In this step, pairs of male and female polling stations were selected based on the common electoral areas. The process involved identifying male and female polling stations that catered to male and female voters of the **same electoral areas/ communities**.

The process yielded a list of 42,804 (21,402 male and 21,402 female) polling stations where male and female voters of 75,257 census blocs voted. Simply put, we identified 21,402 electoral communities where results of male and female polling stations could be compared to determine how men and women of those communities voted.

In step four, the results of 21,402 electoral communities were compared and assessed to determine the following.

| Region | Comparable Communities | Results of some polling stations not determined* | Compared Communities |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | 3,346 | 104 | 3,242 |
| ICT | 416 | - | - |
| Punjab | 12,592 | 14 | 12,578 |
| Sindh | 4,116 | 4 | 4,112 |
| Balochistan | 932 | 92 | 840 |
| Total | 21,402 | 214 | 21,188 |

*Analysis in 214 communities could not be determined either because the winner could not be determined at the male and female polling stations, or because zero votes were cast at these male/female polling stations.

- In 214 electoral communities, the results of at least one polling station could not be determined and were therefore not assessed any further.
- In the remaining 21,188 communities, the results of male and female polling stations were assessed to categorize electoral communities where:
 - o Male and female voters' choice of winner aligned (the same candidate/party was returned as the winner by the male and female voters of the electoral areas)
 - o Male and female voters' choice of winner did not align, that is, the winner of the female polling station was different from the winner of the comparable male polling station.
- Once identified, various aspects of the results of these polling stations were assessed. These include,
 - o Urban-rural differences in patterns of alignment or divergence of choices
 - o A comparative assessment of gender-based voting trends from the 2018 elections was conducted to highlight shifts over time.

1.2. Determining the Impact of Female Voters' Choices on Constituency Results

The second section examines the impact of women's support on the outcomes of constituency elections. To assess the potential impact,

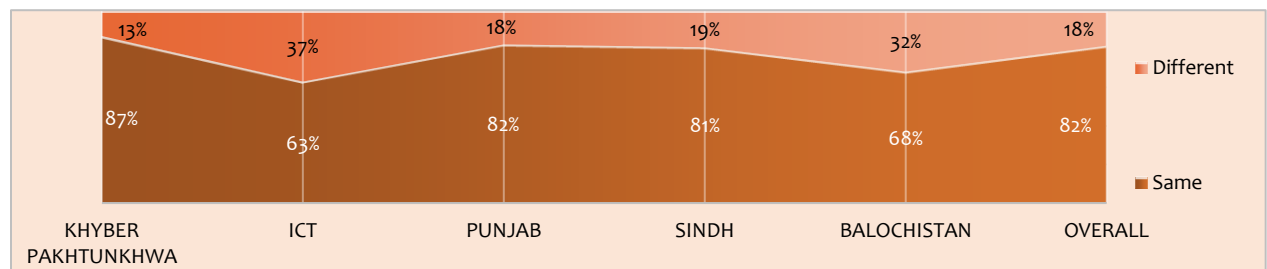
- Patterns of women's support for candidates were assessed.
- The number of votes cast for the winner and runner-up candidates at the female polling stations was contrasted and the lead was determined.
- The lead was compared with the overall Margin of Victory (MoV). The process rendered a list of seven constituencies where the winner's lead at female polling stations exceeded the margin of victory.

2. Gender-Based Voting Patterns: Overall, Regional, and Demographic Dynamics

The analysis reveals regional variations in gender-based voting choices across Pakistan, highlighting areas of alignment and divergence in party/candidate choices between male and female voters.

Out of the 21,188 communities analyzed, women and men in the majority – 17,304 (82%)- voted to return the same candidate/party. In the remaining 3,884 (18%), women chose a different winner than men in their community.

Figure 1: Proportion of communities by Status of male and female voters' choice of winners at comparative polling stations



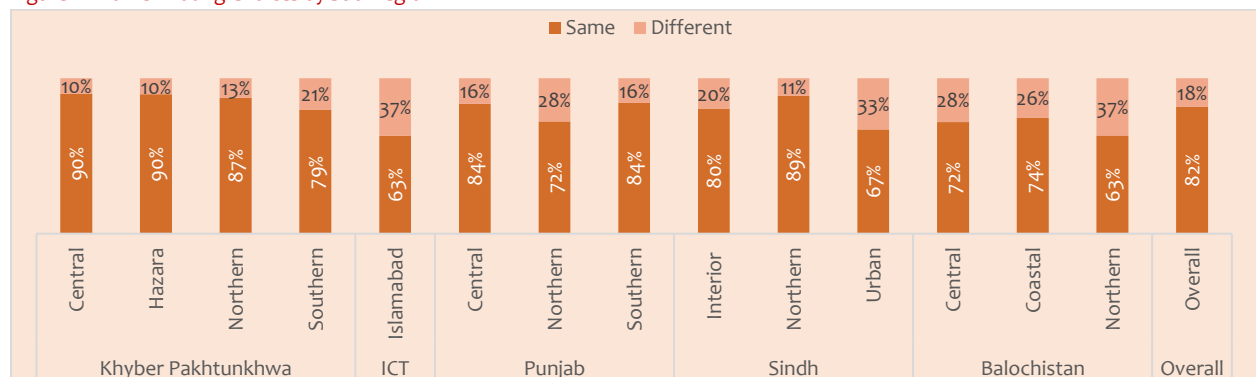
A look at the region shows a strong alignment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with 2,805 (87%) communities matching choices and 437 (13%) differing choices. Punjab also shows significant alignment, with 10,343 (82%) communities showing similar choices, the choices vary in 2,235 (18%) communities. In Sindh, 3,322 (81%) communities aligned in their choices, with 790 (19%) indicating differences. ICT displays a balanced distribution, with 262 (63%) showing alignment and 154 (37%) differences. Balochistan reflects a smaller but notable contrast, with 572 (68%) communities aligned in choices and 268 (32%) differing in choices.

This data suggests that while women's voting choices often align with men's across regions, certain areas exhibit significant gender-based differences, warranting further exploration into the underlying factors influencing these regional and gender-specific voting patterns.

2.1. Women Voting Choices by Sub-Region: Key Trends

Key trends in women's voting choices across the sub-regions of the 21,188 electoral communities reveal significant deviations in alignment and gender-based differences.

Figure 2: Women Voting Choices by Sub-Region



In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Southern areas show the highest divergence, with 21 percent of the communities showing gender-based differences, compared to Central, Northern, and Hazara regions, where alignment exceeds 80 percent suggesting greater gender consensus in Central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northern, and Hazara regions.

In ICT, the divergence rate is notable, with only 63 percent alignment, reflecting one of the highest gender-based differences across regions at 37 percent. In Punjab, Northern Punjab shows substantial divergence (28%) compared to the higher alignment in Central and Southern Punjab, indicating more unified gender choices in these areas.

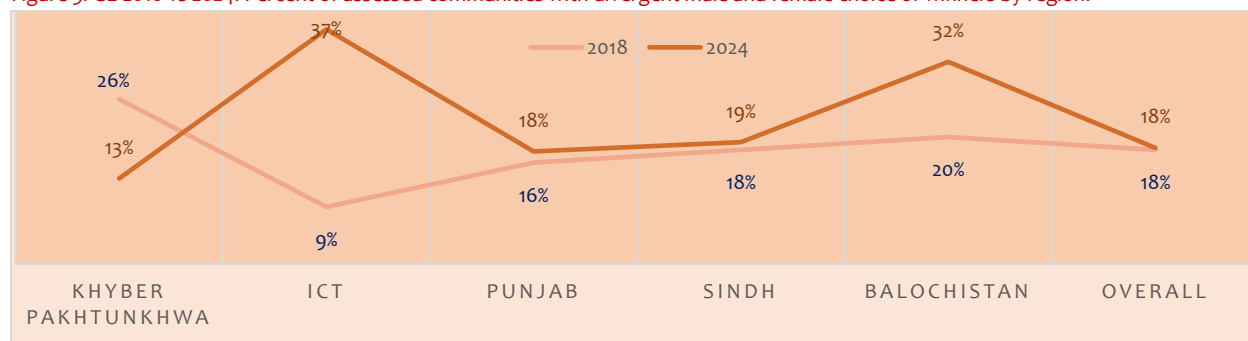
Sindh shows a distinct urban-rural split: while Northern Sindh has a high alignment of 89 percent, Urban Sindh has a significant divergence at 33 percent, suggesting varied gender-based voting preferences in urban areas.

Lastly, Balochistan displays a wide range in gender-based alignment, from 74 percent in Central Balochistan to just 63 percent in Northern Balochistan, where divergence reaches 37 percent. Coastal Balochistan lies between these extremes, showing a 26 percent divergence. These trends show that urban centers and certain sub-regions, particularly ICT, Northern Punjab, Urban Sindh, and Northern Balochistan, experience higher gender-based voting differences, while more rural or cohesive areas within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh show stronger gender alignment.

2.2. Gender-Based Voting Trends: Comparing Women's Choices in GE-2024 & 2018

A comparison of women's voting choices in GE- 2024 and 2018 reveals both stability and notable shifts in gender-based voting alignment across Pakistan's regions. Nationally, in the 21,188 communities, women's choices remained broadly aligned with those of men, with 81.7 percent similarity in 2024, close to the 81.9 percent seen in 2018, indicating steady nationwide trends. However, specific regions exhibit distinctive changes in alignment and deviation.

Figure 3: GE-2018 vs 2024: Percent of assessed communities with divergent male and female choice of winners by region.



In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, alignment between men's and women's choices rose significantly from 74 percent in 2018 to 87 percent in 2024, reflecting a 13 percent increase in the alignment of choices, while their gender-based differences in choice dropped from 26 percent in 2018 to 13 percent in 2024.

In contrast, ICT showed the largest shift towards divergent choices, where alignment dropped sharply from 91 percent in 2018 to 63 percent in 2024, showing a 28 percent increase in gender-based voting differences.

Punjab remained largely consistent, with a slight dip in alignment from 84 percent to 82 percent, reflecting relatively stable voting behavior between genders. Similarly, Sindh showed a small decrease in alignment from 82 percent to 81 percent, suggesting a marginal increase in gender differences from 18 percent in 2018 to 19 percent in 2024, reflecting a subtle shift in women's voting preferences.

Balochistan presented the most pronounced regional shift in terms of growing deviation, with alignment falling from 80 percent in 2018 to 68 percent in 2024, signifying a 12 percent increase in different choices from 20 percent in 2018 to 32 percent in 2024. This change may reflect unique regional challenges or gender-specific issues influencing women voters distinctly, suggesting that gendered political priorities may be becoming more prominent in this region.

Overall, these shifts highlight regional nuances in gender-based voting behavior, where certain regions, particularly ICT and Balochistan, show increasing divergence, while others such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tend towards alignment. This evolving landscape underscores the need for a deeper examination of the socio-political factors shaping these patterns, especially where gender-based choices diverge as they may reflect shifts in women's political agency, regional issues, or emerging policy priorities specific to female voters.

2.3. Urban vs. Rural Dynamics in Women's Voting Choices

The breakdown of women's voting choices by urban and rural areas across regions reveals distinct patterns of alignment and divergence, highlighting both urban-rural variations and regional differences. Nationally, rural areas show a higher level of alignment between men's and women's choices, with 84 percent (9,548) similarity compared with 79 percent (7,756) in urban areas. Divergence is thus more pronounced in urban areas, where 21 percent (2,042) of the electoral communities show different choices by gender compared to 16 percent (1,842) in rural settings.

| Region | Urban | | Rural | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Same | Different | Same | Different |
| Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | 595 | 65 | 2,210 | 372 |
| ICT | 153 | 87 | 109 | 67 |
| Punjab | 5,226 | 1,291 | 5,117 | 944 |
| Sindh | 1,571 | 526 | 1,751 | 264 |
| Balochistan | 211 | 73 | 361 | 195 |
| Overall | 7,756 | 2,042 | 9,548 | 1,842 |

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rural areas exhibit an alignment of 86 percent (2,210) and a divergence of 14 percent (372), while urban areas show a slightly higher alignment at 90 percent (595), with only a 10 percent (65) divergence. This consistency may reflect more unified preferences within urban and rural populations, with urban areas showing a marginally stronger alignment.

ICT reflects a balanced urban-rural distribution, although with a notable divergence. Urban communities in ICT show a 64 percent (153) alignment and 36 percent (87) divergence, while rural areas exhibit similar figures, with 62 percent (109) alignment and 38 percent (67) divergence. This shows a higher level of gender-based differences in choices compared to other regions, both urban and rural.

Punjab presents a unique trend: while urban areas have an alignment of 80 percent (5,226) and a divergence of 20 percent (1,291), rural areas show a higher alignment of 84 percent (5,117) with

only a 16 percent (944) divergence. This rural-urban difference may be driven by the influence of traditional voting patterns in rural areas versus potentially more varied influences in urban areas.

In Sindh, rural areas display an 87 percent (1,751) alignment, which is significantly higher than that in urban areas, which shows only 75 percent (1,571) alignment and 25 percent (526) divergence. This difference may indicate that female voters in rural Sindh are more aligned with men in their choices, reflecting local or community-driven consensus, while urban female voters demonstrate more diverse preferences.

Balochistan diverges from other regions, showing the highest rural divergence (after ICT) at 35 percent (195) and only 65 percent (361) alignment, while urban areas show a similar trend as other regions with a 74 percent (211) alignment and 26 percent (73) divergence. This suggests significant gender-based differences in voting preferences, with Balochistan's rural areas, in particular, highlighting distinct patterns.

These findings underscore the complexity of gender-based voting preferences in both urban and rural settings. Regions such as Punjab and Sindh show greater alignment in rural areas, whereas Balochistan stands out for its higher rural divergence. Overall, urban areas tend to show more gender-based differences in voting choices, reflecting the diverse socio-political influences in city settings. These patterns call for further investigation into the factors driving urban-rural and gender-based distinctions across regions.

2.4. Party Support Patterns in Assessed Communities

As stated above, in the bulk of communities (82%), male and female voters favored the same party. A breakdown of the electoral areas where the voting trends among women and men voters remained the same is given below:

2.4.1. Party Choice of Communities Voting for The Same Winner Across Genders

Of the 17,304 electoral communities where the choices of male and female voters aligned, PTI emerged as the dominant party, winning in 9,394 electoral communities. Of these, in 8,134, the voting preferences of female voters aligned with those of the men in their communities.

| Winning Party at Female PS | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | ICT | Punjab | Sindh | Balochistan | Grand Total |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| PTI | 2,270 | 77 | 5,487 | 247 | 53 | 8,134 |
| PML-N | 77 | 137 | 3,567 | 25 | 69 | 3,875 |
| PPPP | 55 | 2 | 295 | 2,278 | 60 | 2690 |
| JUIP | 201 | - | - | 78 | 125 | 404 |
| MQMP | - | - | 1 | 265 | - | 266 |
| GDA | - | - | - | 263 | - | 263 |
| TLP | 7 | 1 | 45 | 53 | 2 | 108 |
| Others | 99 | 0 | 160 | 8 | 217 | 484 |
| IND | 96 | 45 | 788 | 105 | 46 | 1,080 |
| Total | 2,805 | 262 | 10,343 | 3,322 | 572 | 17,304 |

The PML-N followed as the second most successful party, winning in 4,902 electoral communities. Female and male voter preferences aligned in 3,875 of these communities, indicating a significant overlap in gendered voting patterns within their strongholds, particularly in Punjab.

The PPPP secured 3,384 electoral communities, predominantly in Sindh, where the party's support among female voters remains strong. In 2,690 of these communities, female and male voter preferences were aligned.

JUI-P had a notable presence in 555 electoral communities, with 404 communities showing an alignment between male and female voter preferences. This support was concentrated primarily in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

MQM-P won 403 electoral communities, with 266 communities displaying alignment between the choices of male and female voters. Its support remains regionally focused, primarily in Sindh.

GDA won 274 electoral communities, with male and female voter preferences aligning in 263 of these communities, again reflecting the party's regional focus in Sindh. Trends for TLP, other parties, and independent candidates can also be seen above.

Overall, the data shows that while PTI led in terms of overall victories, patterns of voter alignment between genders vary significantly by party and region, with some parties showing higher degrees of alignment within communities than others.

2.4.2. Communities with Divergent Choices: Who Did Women Choose as Their Winner?

The performance of political parties among female voters in electoral communities reflects the significant regional and demographic patterns. As elaborated above, in 3,884(18%) electoral communities, women chose a different winner from men in their community. The table provides a breakdown of the winners in communities where their choices diverged from those of the male voters of their electoral areas.

| Party Name | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | ICT | Punjab | Sindh | Balochistan | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| PTI | 146 | 75 | 840 | 171 | 28 | 1,260 |
| PML-N | 35 | 51 | 895 | 3 | 43 | 1,027 |
| PPPP | 69 | 2 | 164 | 413 | 46 | 694 |
| JUIP | 101 | - | 3 | 9 | 38 | 151 |
| MQMP | - | - | - | 137 | - | 137 |
| Others | 64 | 2 | 169 | 38 | 79 | 352 |
| IND | 22 | 24 | 164 | 19 | 34 | 263 |
| Total | 437 | 154 | 2, 235 | 790 | 268 | 3,884 |

Of the 3,884 communities, women returned PTI candidates as winners in 1,260 (32%). PML-N followed closely, winning the largest share of women voters in 1,027(26%) communities. PPPP followed winning 694(18%) communities. JUI-P, MQM-P, other parties, and independent candidates also featured as choice among the women voters in several communities.

Most of the communities where PTI remained dominant were in Punjab and Sindh, reflecting the party's appeal among female voters across these regions. In Punjab alone, the party won 840 electoral communities where female preferences differed from male voting patterns. PML-N won 895 such communities, the bulk in Punjab, underscoring its historical voter base and sustained support from female voters in the province.

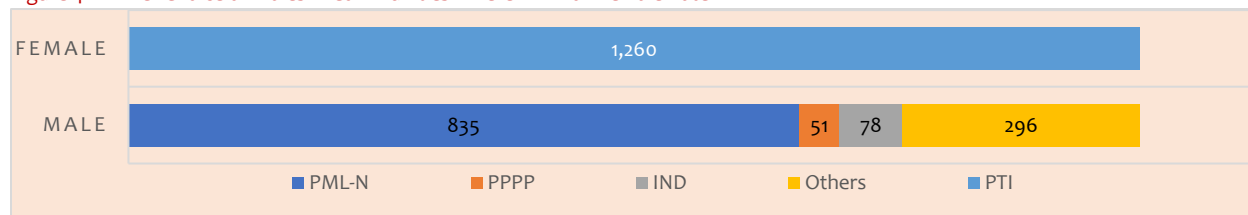
PPPP showed a distinct regional pattern, winning female polling stations in 694 diverging electoral communities, with the majority (413 communities) in Sindh. Finally, JUI-P demonstrated concentrated support in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where female voters in 101 electoral communities broke rank with male voters to support the party. Independent candidates were also successful in getting support from women voters in 263 communities.

Overall, the data highlights that female voters' preferences vary significantly across regions, with each party receiving varying levels of support among women who returned a different winner than the men in their community. This variation underscores the importance of localized and gender-sensitive strategies for political parties aiming to effectively engage female voters across Pakistan.

2.4.3. Comparison of Male and Female Choices at their Respective Polling Stations

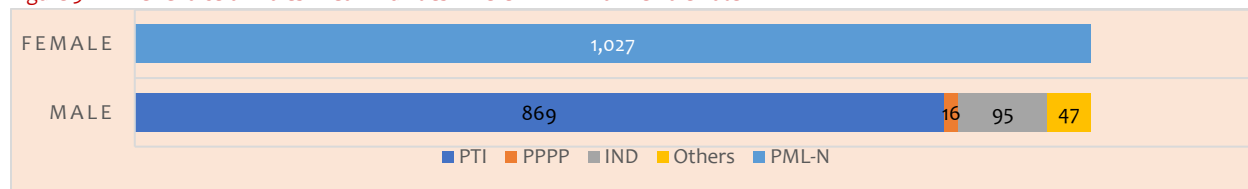
This section compares the results of 7,768 polling stations (3,884 male and 3,884 female polling stations) in the 3,884 communities to determine who won the male polling stations where female polling stations returned a specific party.

Figure 4: Winner Choice of Males in Communities Where PTI Won Female Vote



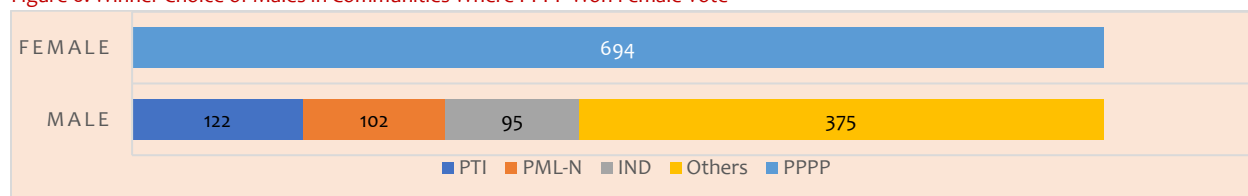
Of the 1,260 communities where PTI won the female polling station, voters at male polling stations in 835 returned PML-N as the winner. Among the rest, male voters returned PPPP candidates as winners in 51 communities, independent candidates in 78, and other parties in 296 communities.

Figure 5: Winner Choice of Males in Communities Where PML-N Won Female Vote



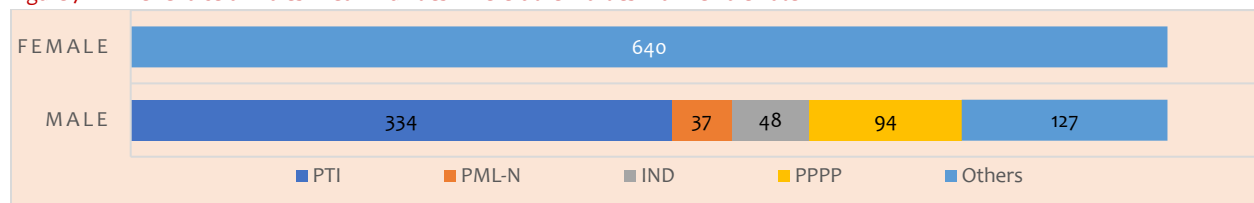
Of the 1,027 communities where PML-N won the female polling station, voters at male polling stations in 869 returned PTI as the winner. Among the rest, male voters returned independent candidates as winners in 95 communities, other parties in 47, and PPPP in 16 communities.

Figure 6: Winner Choice of Males in Communities Where PPPP Won Female Vote



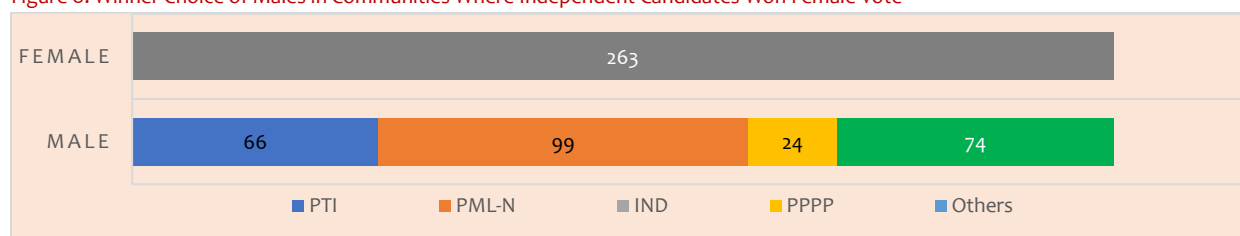
Of the 694 communities where PPPP won at the female polling stations, male voters in 375 communities chose candidates from other parties. Of the remaining communities, male voters elected PTI candidates in 122, PML-N candidates in 102, and independent candidates in 95.

Figure 7: Winner Choice of Males in Communities Where Other Parties Won Female Vote



Of the 640 communities where other parties won the female polling station, voters at male polling stations in 334 returned PTI as winners. Among the rest, male voters returned candidates from other parties¹ as winners in 127 communities, PPPP in 94, independent candidates in 48 communities, and PML-N in 37 communities.

Figure 8: Winner Choice of Males in Communities Where Independent Candidates Won Female Vote



Of the 263 communities where the independent candidates won at the female polling stations, male voters in 99 communities chose candidates from PML-N. Of the remaining communities, male voters elected other parties in 74, PTI candidates in 66, and PPPP in 24.

3. Women’s Voting Choices and Constituency Election Outcomes

Beyond community-level assessment, it is important to examine the impact of women's voting choices on constituency results. This section provides a brief assessment of the varying levels of influence of women’s voting preferences in shaping and even determining the results of national assembly constituencies.

| Region | Winner | Runner-up | Others (combined) | Not Applicable* | Total |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Balochistan | 7 | 2 | 7 | | 16 |
| ICT | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | 41 | 2 | | 1 | 44 |
| Punjab | 120 | 17 | 4 | | 141 |
| Sindh | 55 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 61 |
| Total | 226 | 25 | 12 | 2 | 265 |

*All polling stations in the constituencies were combined and gender-disaggregated results of combined polling stations are not recorded.

¹ Other parties shown as winners of male polling stations denote parties that are not listed and are different from the parties that won the female polling station(s) as shown in the graph.

As shown in the table above, women's support for candidates and parties has distinct patterns and dynamics. These include:

- a. **The difference in preferred candidates** between male voters who voted in male polling stations and female voters who voted in female polling stations is established from the results of 25 constituencies. Reflecting a break from the broader result patterns in these constituencies, the largest proportion of voters at female polling stations voted for runner-up candidates/parties. Among the 12 other constituencies, the largest proportion of female polling station votes went to candidates other than winners and runner-ups.
- b. **Varying Support levels** for winning candidates in female and male polling stations. For instance, the largest proportion of voters at female polling stations voted for the winner of 226 constituencies. In 166 of those constituencies, compared to male polling stations, a larger proportion of voters in female polling stations voted for the winning candidate/party.

In the case of seven National Assembly constituencies, the support in female polling stations determined the winner of the constituencies. As shown in the table below, the difference in support at female polling stations alone determines the winners of these constituencies.

| Constituency | Winner Party Name | Runner-up Party Name | Margin of Victory | Difference in Vote at female PS |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| NA-43 Tank-cum-Dera Ismail Khan | PTI | JUIP | 555 | 1,430 |
| NA-49 Attock-I | PML-N | PTI | 9,696 | 34,302 |
| NA-55 Rawalpindi-IV | PML-N | PTI | 15,546 | 16,394 |
| NA-87 Khushab-I | PML-N | PTI | 9,461 | 10,057 |
| NA-94 Chiniot-II | PML-N | PTI | 7,147 | 7,777 |
| NA-128 Lahore-XII | IPP | PTI | 13,552 | 21,395 |
| NA-163 Bahawalnagar-IV | PML-Z | Independent | 9,145 | 11,267 |

As shown in the last column, constituency winners' lead in female polling stations in all seven constituencies exceeded the margin of victory. In other words, the lead at female polling stations not only bridged the deficit in votes from male and combined polling stations but also helped establish the margin of victory for the constituency winner.

Below is the constituency-by-constituency breakdown.

- **NA-43 Tank-cum-Dera Ismail Khan:** PTI narrowly won edging out JUIF by 555 votes. PTI-supported candidate garnered a lead of 1,430 votes at female polling stations alone, a margin that decisively affected the overall outcome.
- **NA-49 Attock-I:** PML-N won against PTI by a margin of 9,696 votes. The party could only win because of the substantial 34,302 votes lead in female polling stations.
- **NA-55 Rawalpindi-IV:** The PML-N candidate triumphed over the PTI-backed contender with a MoV of 15,546 votes. At female polling stations alone, the PML-N candidate had a lead of 16,394 votes.
- **NA-87 Khushab-I:** The PML-N candidate narrowly defeated the PTI-backed candidate with a margin of 9,461 votes, driven by a lead of 10,057 votes in female polling areas. This highlights the crucial role of female support in securing the win.

- **NA-94 Chiniot-II:** In this constituency, the PML-N candidate won by a MoV of 7,147 votes against the PTI-supported candidate. A lead of 7,777 at female polling stations was decisive for the winning candidate.
- **NA-128 Lahore-XII:** The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidate won with an MoV of 13,552 votes over a PTI-supported candidate, with a lead of 21,395 votes at female polling stations, showing the decisive impact of female voters.
- **NA-163 Bahawalnagar-IV:** The Pakistan Muslim League (Zia-Ul-Haq Shaheed) candidate won against the independent candidate by 9,145 votes. At female polling stations, the lead was 11,267 votes, exceeding the overall margin and highlighting the decisive role of female voters in the victory.

4. Conclusion

Women voters in GE-2024 played a pivotal role in shaping electoral outcomes, particularly in keenly contested constituencies. While alignment with male voting patterns stays strong nationally, regional, and urban-rural variations highlight evolving gender-based preferences. The findings emphasize the growing importance of female voters in Pakistan's electoral politics and underscore the need for more inclusive and gender-sensitive political strategies.

The significance of women's voting patterns is becoming increasingly clear with a notable shift in the number of votes polled. There has been a reduction in the gender gap in the votes polled, falling from 11,193,695 votes (20.4%) in GE-2018 to 10,119,543 votes (16.5%) in GE-2024, underscoring the growing influence of women at the polls. In constituencies where gendered voting patterns could be identified through the available data, it became clear that women do not necessarily vote in the same patterns as men.

The significance of women voters is clearer in constituencies where their votes were pivotal in determining the outcome. Regions such as ICT and Balochistan have shown increasing gender divergence. Women's votes are becoming a decisive factor in tight races, highlighting their emerging electoral power.

Gender-wise documentation of the results at combined polling stations would be valuable for a more comprehensive understanding of these voting trends. This would reveal a broader and more nuanced view of women's voting behavior. Such data would provide political parties with insights to identify regional and demographic patterns, allowing them to create more tailored, inclusive, and gender-sensitive strategies that address the specific needs of women voters. This approach would enable parties and candidates to engage women more effectively, fostering policies that reflect their concerns and priorities.

To remain competitive, political parties must prioritize the development of gender-sensitive strategies and programs aimed at engaging women voters. This focus on women's issues and voting behavior is not only important for electoral success but is also crucial for fostering a more inclusive and responsive political landscape.

ABOUT FAFEN

The Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) is the first-ever network of civil society organizations in Pakistan dedicated to strengthening democracy through observation and oversight of electoral, parliamentary, and governance processes. As many as 20 regional networks with over 500 tehsil-level civil society organizations. FAFEN is one of the most credible voices in the country for responsive, transparent, accountable, and efficient electoral, legislative, and local governance.

FAFEN's objectives are to a) educate citizens, communities, and their groups about civil liberties and political rights for effective democratic accountabilities through oversight of elections, elected assemblies, governments, and political parties; b) nurture, support, and strengthen pro-democracy civil society through investments in building capacities, developing institutions; and improving linkages; and c) strengthen voices for evidence-based and inclusive reforms to yield citizen-centered governance, free elections, effective representation, and greater enjoyment of fundamental rights, freedom, and liberties.

FAFEN has developed the capacity of over 100,000 citizens on elections and democracy, enabling them to observe General Elections in 2008, 2013, and 2018, local government elections in 2015 and 2021-2022, Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Election in 2009, 2015, and 2020 as well as the by-elections to National and Provincial Assembly. The observations by these trained and legally accredited observers are carefully analyzed to provide continuous feedback to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Parliament, and political parties for improvements in the administrative, regulatory, and legal frameworks governing elections. FAFEN's contributions to electoral reforms have been acknowledged by the ECP, political parties, parliamentary committees, and national and international media. FAFEN was the only civil society voice to have been invited by the Supreme Court Judicial Commission, formed in 2015, to investigate the irregularities in General Election 2013 as a witness.

