

# ELECTION GUIDEBOOK

Electoral process and election reporting  
A handbook for journalists



wmc

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# INTRODUCTION

Elections are essential for peaceful transfer of power from one government to another in a democratic system. At the start of any election campaign political parties and candidates make public their programs and try to win over voters' support. Media has a vital role in informing the citizens about different aspects of these programs and in forming voters' opinion. Media play the role of a bridge between the political parties and electorate informing people about what the candidates and their parties are promising and telling political leaders about people aspirations – what they want or do not want. Media also ensures that elections are conducted according to the law and in a fair and free environment. This role of the media becomes more important in countries like Pakistan where democratic systems have not solid base.

To play this role effectively, journalists should report Elections in a non-partisan way and on the basis of what the various political parties and their candidates are offering. Media should ensure just allocation of broadcasting time (space in print media) to all the competing parties and candidates. Media can create forum for debates between parties and candidates. For performing this vital role, journalists need to have knowledge of the country's electoral system and laws and to have to be equipped with all the necessary skills for election reporting. This handbook offers journalists basic knowledge and skills needed in covering election. The handbook also looks at the various stages of the electoral process in Pakistan.

**Fauzia Shaheen**  
CEO & Founder

# Pre-Election





# Electoral System in Pakistan

Pakistan is a federal republic with three- tiers of government at federal, provincial and local level (District, tehsil and union council). The Election Commission of Pakistan is constitutionally charged with the duty of organizing and conducting elections and related matters.

## Federal Government:

The Parliament of Pakistan, according to the Constitution of 1973, is bicameral. Article 50 of the Constitution clearly states that the Parliament of Pakistan consists of the President and two Houses known as the National Assembly and the Senate. The President of Pakistan is the head of the state, who is directly elected by an electoral college that includes all members of the senate, the National Assembly and all the four Provincial Assemblies. The 100 members of the senate are indirectly elected by the Provincial Assemblies; however, senators from Islamabad Capital territory are elected by their respective members in the National Assembly. Provinces have equal representation in the Senate. The senate is made up of 14 open seats, four women's seats, four technocrat seats and one seat is reserved for non- Muslims, indirectly elected by each of the Provincial Assemblies; four seats indirectly elected from the federal capital Islamabad including two general seats and one woman and one technocrat.



# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly is the lower house of Parliament partnering with the Senate as the upper house. The National Assembly represents federating units on the basis of the population in contrast to the Senate which ensures equality in representation, regardless of the population size of any federating unit. This arrangement ensures a balanced representation and distribution of power. The National Assembly's most important function is legislation which it shares with the Senate. The National Assembly elects the Prime Minister of Pakistan from its own members. The term of the National Assembly is five years and the elections to all of its direct seats are held on the same day across Pakistan.

The National Assembly has 342 seats allocated to provinces on the basis of their respective population. Of the 342 members of the National Assembly, 272 are directly elected from single member constituencies in a first-past-the-post system, 60 are reserved for women and allocated proportionally to the parties; and 10 are reserved for religious minorities.

The prime minister is from the National Assembly and is usually the leader of the largest party in the National Assembly. The Prime Minister is head of the government. Ministers in the federal cabinet are taken from members of the National Assembly and the Senate.





# COMPOSITION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly has a total of 342 members, including 60 seats reserved for women and 10 for non-Muslims, as per Article 51. The seats in the National Assembly are allocated to each Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Federal Capital on the basis of population, as officially published in the last preceding census. The present allocation of seats is as under:

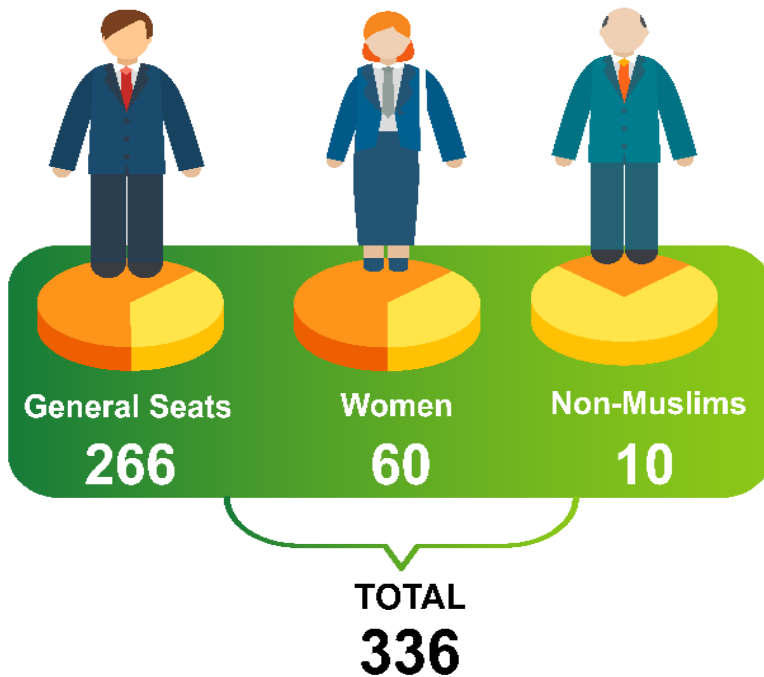
Province	General Seats	Women	Non-Muslims	Total
Balochistan	14	03		17
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35	08		43
Punjab	148	35		183
Sindh	61	14		75
FATA	12			12
Federal Capital	02			02
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>342</b>

Article 51 of the Constitution deals with the composition of the National Assembly. The Constitution was amended in May 2018 just before the General Election to merge the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The provincial number of seats in the National Assembly have been changed due to the new census, but the FATA merger has

The new composition of the National Assembly in the Constitution after the 25<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment in May 2018 is:

also changed the KP share.

Provinces	Balochistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh	Federal Capital	Total
General seats	16	45	141	61	3	266
Women	04	10	32	14	---	60
Non-Muslims	---	---	---	---	---	10
Total	20	55	173	75	3	366

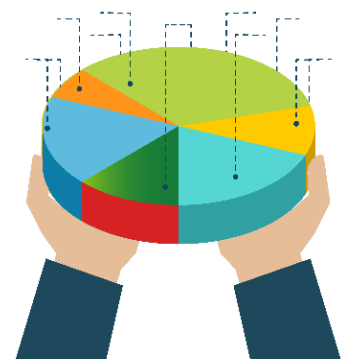


## PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES:

The number of seats in each Provincial Assembly is based on the Population of the respective province and explained in the Constitution. In addition to the general seats, there are reserved seats for women and non-Muslims.

Province	General Seats	Women	Non-Muslims	Total
Balochistan	51	11	03	65
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	115	26	04	145
Punjab	297	66	08	371
Sindh	130	29	09	168

(The number of provincial seats for KP was increased as a result of its merger with FATA after the 25th constitutional amendment was passed by the Parliament in May, 2018.)



# Local Governments

The Constitution of Pakistan provides for establishment of a third tier of government at local government. The local government is further divided into three tiers – district, tehsil and union council. The local government is a provincial subject and every Provincial Assembly has the power to legislate about the structure and powers of local government in their respective legislative domains.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



# Election Laws & Rules

Election process is conducted by the Election Commission of Pakistan through a set of laws and rules. The laws are made by the parliament keeping in view the provisions of constitution. In 2017 the parliament passed a new election law that is called 'The Elections Act 2017'. This new law consolidates 8 old laws that were previously used to govern different sections of electoral process. Below are the key highlights of the new election laws.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ELECTIONS ACT, 2017





# Structure and Powers of the Election Commission of Pakistan

## THE CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN



Article 218 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the ECP. Clause (1) reads “For the purpose of election to both Houses of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), Provincial Assemblies and for election to such other public offices as may be specified by a law, a permanent Election Commission shall be constituted in accordance with this Article.”

The Article further elaborates in Clause (2) that the Election Commission shall consist of:

1. The Chief Election Commissioner and
2. Four members, one from each province



## QUALIFICATION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Article 218 (2) of the Constitution also sets qualification for the commissioners of the ECP. It states that each of the commissioners shall be a person:

1. Who has been a judge of a High Court or
2. Has been a senior civil servant or
3. Is a technocrat and
4. Is not more than 65 years of age.

The President appoints the ECP Commissioners in the manner provided for appointment in Clauses (2A) And (2B) of Article 213.

## DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION (ECP)



Clause (3) of Article 218 of the Constitution elaborates the overall responsibility of the Commission. It states that it is the duty of the Commission to organize and conduct the election and to make arrangements as necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with the law, and that corrupt practices are Guarded against.

Article 219 of the Constitution further segregates the duties in following terms:

The Commission is charged with the duty of:

1. Preparing electoral rolls for elections to the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and local governments, and revising such rolls periodically to keep them up-to-date.
2. Organizing and conducting elections to the Senate or filling casual vacancies in a house or a Provincial Assembly.
3. Appointing election tribunals.
4. Holding General Elections to the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and local governments.

## EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES TO ASSIST THE COMMISSION

Executive authorities are bound to act in aid of the Commission in its discharge of its duties and functions. Article 220 of the Constitution states: "It shall be the duty of all executive authorities in the

1. Has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or
2. Has been a senior civil servant or
3. Is a technocrat and
4. Is not more than 68 years of age



## TERM OF OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS

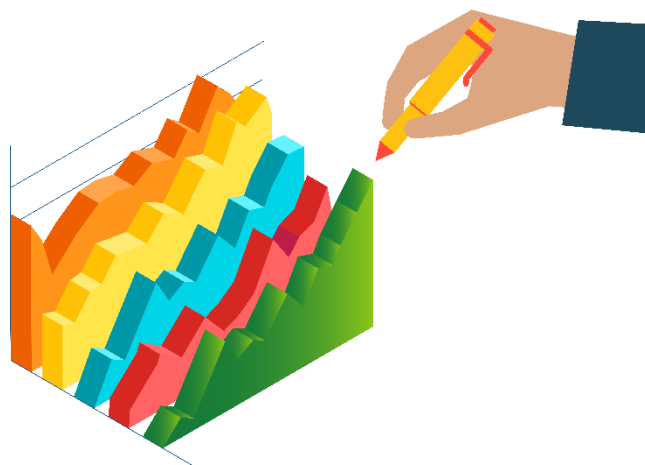
The term of office for the Chief Election Commissioner and the four commissioners is five years. Article 215(1) of the Constitution clearly sets five-year terms for the Commissioner and the members from the day of their entering the office.

## PROTECTION AGAINST REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

To ensure the ECP's independence and sanctity, the Constitution has protected the tenure of office of its Chief Election Commissioner and the four members. According to Article 215(2) of the Constitution, the government or any other body cannot remove a Commissioner, except the Supreme Judicial Council that is empowered under Article 209 to remove judges from the office.

The ECP has been strengthened in the following ways:

1. The ECP has been empowered to issue specific directives for the performance of its duties. These will be enforced throughout Pakistan and have the same effect as a High Court (Chapter II, Section 4).
2. The ECP will have full administrative powers to control the transfer of election officials during elections and take disciplinary action against them for misconduct (Chapter II, Section 5 (4)).
3. The Commissioner will have full financial powers, including power to create posts within approved budgetary allocations (Chapter II, Section 11 (2)). All ECP expenditure will be charged to the Federal Consolidated Fund Within the meaning of Article 81 of the Constitution (Chapter II, Section 11).
4. As per the previous law, the Election Commission Order, 2002, Section 9E, Presidential approval is required to make rules. The ECP has now been empowered to make rules without Presidential or Government approval. Rules will be subject to prior publication, seeking suggestions etc. within 15 days of such publication (Chapter XV, Section 239)
5. The ECP shall prepare a comprehensive action plan four months before the elections, specifying all legal and administrative measures that have been taken or are required to be taken (Chapter III, Section 14). There was no such provision in the previous law.



6. The ECP has been authorized to address complaints/grievances during various stages of the election process (other than challenges to the election itself under Article 225). Its decisions will be appealable in the Supreme Court of Pakistan (Chapter II, Section 15).
7. The ECP shall establish a transparent Results Management System for expeditious counting, compilation and dissemination of election results (Chapter II, Section 13).
8. The ECP has been empowered to delegate its functions to its members and officials (Chapter II, Section 6).
9. The ECP shall conduct training programs for election officials and take measures to promote public awareness regarding laws and best practices (Chapter II, Section 6).
10. The ECP shall upload on its website a list of constituencies, election results and decisions on complaints etc.
11. Some degree of accountability of the ECP has also been built into the Elections Act, 2017. It is now required to submit an annual report within 90 days after the end of every calendar year that will be laid in each house of the Parliament and each Provincial Assembly (Chapter II, Section 16). A post-election review of the implementation of the action plan shall be included in the next annual report (Chapter II, Section 14 (2) and (3)). There was no such provision in the previous law.

## Delimitation

1. The ECP shall delimit constituencies after every census (Chapter III, Section 17 (2)).
2. Variation of population amongst constituencies in the same Assembly from the same Province or territory has been restricted to ten percent (Chapter III, Section 20 (3)). There was no such provision in the previous law.

## Electoral Rolls

1. NADRA shall transmit relevant data of every CNIC issued by it to the ECP so that every citizen who obtains a CNIC from NADRA can automatically be enrolled as a voter at their permanent or temporary address on the basis of their option in the application for CNIC issuance (Chapter IV, Section 25).
2. On the application of a candidate or their election agent, the District Election Commissioner or any officer authorized in this regard by the ECP shall provide to a candidate or an election agent a hard and searchable soft copy on a universal serial bus (USB) in portable document format (PDF) or any other tamper-proof format of the final electoral roll with photographs of the voters and shall ensure that the copy is the same as that provided to the Returning Officer and Presiding Officers (Chapter V, Section 79 (3)). This is a new and more pro-candidates provision

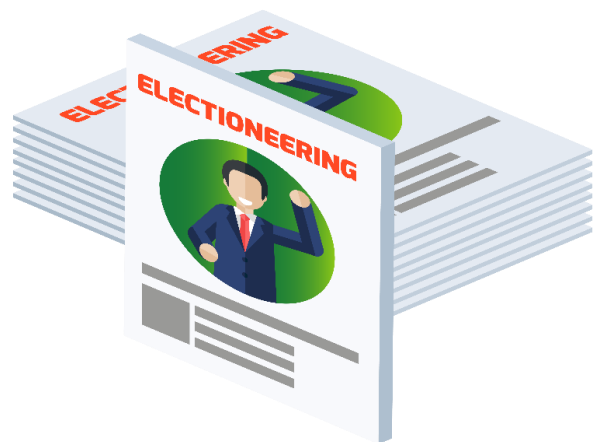
# Conduct of Election

1. All election officials are required to take an oath before the commencement of their election duty that they shall act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Elections Act, 2017 and the rules and directions of the ECP (Chapter V, Section 56).
2. As far as possible, the distance between a polling station and voters assigned to, it will not exceed one kilometer (Chapter V, Section 59 (2)). There was no such provision in the previous law.
3. Nomination forms have been consolidated and the same form has now been prescribed for candidates for all seats.
4. The deposit with nomination papers for the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies (Chapter V, Section 61(1)) and Senate (Chapter VII, Section 111(1a)) have been changed.
5. While scrutinizing nomination papers, Returning Officers shall not ask questions that have no nexus to the information supplied or received or objections raised by any person, or tangible material on record (Chapter V, Section 62 (7) (8)).



In case of any default on the payment of taxes, loans, utility expenses or other Government duties, candidates may clear the default at the time of the scrutiny of their nomination papers, except in cases of willful concealment (Chapter V, Section 62(10)).

6. A person with any physical disability who is unable to travel and holds a CNIC with a logo depicting physical disability issued by NADRA, may be able to cast their votes now by postal ballot (Chapter V, Section 93 (c)). There was no such provision for disabled persons in the previous law.
7. Deletions in the declaration and oath by the person nominated in the nomination form: The declarations which were a part of the nomination forms in the previous law have now been omitted:





8. Declaration on outstanding loans from any bank, financial institution, cooperative society or corporate body in the candidate's name or in the name of his/her spouse or any dependents
9. Declaration on default in payment of government dues or utility charges
10. List containing names of spouse(s) and dependents
11. Declaration about companies owned by the candidate or his/her spouse and dependents
12. Declaration of pending cases of criminal offences
13. Declaration of educational qualification
14. Declaration of present occupation
15. National tax number
16. Declaration of income tax paid during the last three years (along with total income and source of income)
17. Declaration of travel abroad during the last three years
18. Declaration of agricultural income tax paid (along with landholding and agricultural income)
19. Declaration of important contributions made by the candidate for the benefit of the candidate's constituency if elected previously
20. Declaration of sums paid to any political party that awarded a ticket to the candidate
21. Declaration to abide by the ECP's code of conduct
22. Declaration of net assets of the current financial year and previous year and the difference in net assets (only current financial year's value of assets and liabilities has to be provided)
23. Declaration of foreign passport details from statement of assets
24. Declaration of personal expenditure detail from statement of liabilities
25. Statement on oath that the candidate is a citizen of Pakistan and does not carry any other nationality
26. The ECP may conduct pilot projects for the utilization of **electronic voting machines (EVMs)** and **biometric voters' identification systems** in bye-elections in addition to the existing manual procedures for voter verification, casting and counting of votes to assess their technical efficacy, secrecy, security and financial feasibility (Chapter V, Section 103).

27. Declaration of net assets of the current financial year and previous year and the difference in net assets (only current financial year's value of assets and liabilities has to be provided)
28. Declaration of foreign passport details from statement of assets
29. Declaration of personal expenditure detail from statement of liabilities
30. Statement on oath that the candidate is a citizen of Pakistan and does not carry any other nationality
31. The ECP may conduct pilot projects for the utilization of **electronic voting machines (EVMs)** and **biometric voters' identification systems** in bye-elections in addition to the existing manual procedures for voter verification, casting and counting of votes to assess their technical efficacy, secrecy, security and financial feasibility (Chapter V, Section 103).
32. The ECP may also undertake pilot projects for **voting by overseas Pakistanis** (Chapter V, Section 94).
33. All election-related documents, including statements of count and ballot paper accounts, except the ballot papers, shall be public documents and may be inspected or copies thereof obtained (Chapter V, Section 100).
34. The ECP shall retain election-related documents in tamper-evident sealed bags in storage space under its control at appropriate places (Chapter V, Section 99). This is a new provision.
35. If the victory margin between the returned candidate and runner-up candidate is less than five percent of the total votes polled or 10,000 votes, whichever is less, the Returning Officer shall recount all the votes on the request of a contesting candidate before the commencement of results consolidation (Chapter V, Section 95 (5)). This is a modified provision of the previous law (The Representation of the People Act, 1976).
36. In case of equality of votes between two candidates, both will be declared returned candidates and each shall become a member for half of the term of the Assembly. The candidate who will be member for the first half of the term will be determined by drawing lots. In case of equality of votes between three or more candidates, there shall be a re-election in the constituency (Chapter V, Section 97). As per the previous law (the Representation of the People Act, 1976), in case of equality of votes, drawing of lots was to take place to decide which candidate would be elected as a member of the Assembly.
37. The ECP shall prepare a gender-disaggregated statement of voters showing the total number of votes cast by women and men voters at the polling station. (Chapter V, Section 91)  
If a candidate, not being the returned candidate, obtains less than one-fourth of the total votes polled in the constituency, the sum deposited by them or on their behalf shall stand forfeited in
38. favor of the Government (Chapter V, Section 61(4)). The threshold was previously one-eighth.



# Political Parties

Article 17 of constitution of Pakistan gives freedom of forming association. This article included in the fundamental rights given in the constitution. From Article 8 to article 28, total 21 articles included in the section of fundamental rights. The first article of the section announces that all laws in consistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights will be null and void.

These articles provide guarantee about security of person, safeguards from arrest and detention, prohibition of slavery and forced labor, protection against retrospective punishment, protection against double punishment and self-incrimination, inviolability of dignity of man, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of trade, business and profession, freedom of speech, freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions, safeguard against taxation for purposes of any particular religion, safeguards as to educational institutions in respect of religion, provision as to property, protection of property rights, equality of citizens, non-discrimination in respect of access to public places, protection against discrimination in services, preservation of language, script and culture. In sub-article 1 of Article 17, it is mentioned that every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, public order or morality.

Article 17 (2) says that every citizen, not being in the service of Pakistan, shall have the right to form or be a member of a political party, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan. In the same article it is also been said that when the Federal Government declares that any political party has been formed or is operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, the Federal Government shall, within fifteen days of such

declaration, refer the matter to the Supreme Court whose decision on such reference shall be final.

There are many political parties in Pakistan and but only a few political parties enjoy country-wide support and recognition. These major political parties are present in every provincially and federally administered areas of the country, in some form.

**Some of the major political parties are:**

1. Pakistan People's Party.
2. Pakistan Muslim League (N)
3. Pakistan Muslim League(Q)
4. Muttahida Qaumi Movement
5. Awami National Party
6. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf
7. Jamaat-e-Islami
8. Jamait-e-Ulama-e-Islam (F)
9. Pakistan Muslim League- Functional
10. National People's Party
11. Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam (S)
12. Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Pakistan
13. Balochistan National Party(Awami)
14. Balochistan National Party (Mengal)
15. Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) previously  
Pakistan People's Party (Sherpao)
16. Pakistan National Party
17. Jamhuri Watan Party
18. Balochistan National Movement
19. Pashtoon khwa Milli Awami Party



Apart from the above mentioned, there are many other political parties present in the country which represents different parts of the country as well as religious sects and different stratum of the population.

Political parties who desire to take part in election are bond to meet some requirements set by of election laws and rules, and the Constitution and corresponding rules. Pakistan has a multi-party system. In past, the major parties were divided into left leaning and right wing parties. Political parties with religious ideologies, supporters of establishment and backed by state's strong institutions are called right wing parties. On the other hand, progressive, liberal, socialist and those who believe that people are main source of power are called left wing political parties. However, these days there is little distinction between the two as political parties are having identical positions on many issues like liberalism, modernism, industrialization, investment, privatization, and globalization and on many other issues. Bhutto factor and anti-Bhutto factor since 1970 shad played an important role in politics and elections of Pakistan. Both of these factors even are present today and will likely play an important role in the next elections and for some more time.

## Special Measures for Women

The following are some of the special measures included in the Elections Act, 2017 to encourage women's participation in the electoral process, including the registration of women voters and actual voting on polling day:

1. The ECP shall conduct awareness/media campaigns for the registration of women voters and their participation in the elections (Chapter II, Section 12 c).
2. If the variation in the number of women and men voters in a constituency is more than ten percent, special measures will be taken by the ECP to reduce such variation (Chapter IV, Section 47 (2)).
3. The ECP shall annually publish disaggregated data of registered women and men voters in National Assembly and each Provincial Assembly constituency highlighting the difference in the numbers (Chapter IV, Section 47 (1)).
4. If the turnout of women voters is less than ten percent of the total votes polled in the constituency, the ECP may presume that women have been restrained through an agreement from casting their votes and may declare polling at one or more polling stations, or election in the whole constituency, void (Chapter II, Section 9).
5. Political parties shall encourage women membership (Chapter XI, Section 203 (4)) and award at least five percent party tickets to women candidates on general seats (Chapter XI, Section 206).

## Women as Voters:

Under the election Act 2017, the participation of women as a voter in elections is more simplified and enhanced.

The ECP is now empowered to nullify results in constituencies where women's turnout is equal to or less than 10%, and to take necessary action against agreements that forcibly ban women from voting. This is a significant and wholly welcome measure to improve women's participation in elections.

Apart from that, the voter registration process is now simplified so that anyone who applies for a computerized national identity card (CNIC) from NADRA can opt to register to vote at the same time. They can also choose to be registered at their "current" or "permanent" address.

## Following sections of Election Act 2017 deals with the women voters

**Power of the Commission to declare a poll void.**— (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, if, from facts apparent on the face of the record and after such enquiry as it may deem necessary, the Commission is satisfied that by reason of grave illegalities or such violations of the provisions of this Act or the Rules as have materially affected the result of the poll at one or more polling stations or in the whole constituency including implementation of an agreement restraining women from casting their votes, it shall make a declaration accordingly and call upon the voters in the concerned polling station or stations or in the whole constituency as the case may be, to recast their votes in the manner provided for bye-elections.

**Explanation.** If the turnout of women voters is less than ten percent of the total votes polled in a constituency, the Commission may presume that the women voters have been restrained through an agreement from casting their votes.

## Special measures for enrolment of women voters

- (1) The Commission shall annually publish disaggregated data of registered men and women voters in National Assembly and each Provincial Assembly constituency
- (2) High-lighting the difference in number of registered men and women voters. Where the variation in the disaggregated data under sub-section (1) is more than ten percent in a constituency, the Commission shall take special measures to reduce such variation.
- (3) The measures referred to in sub-section (2) shall include action to expedite the issuance of National Identity Cards for women of such constituency by National Database and Registration Authority and for their enrolment as voters in the relevant electoral rolls by the Commission.

## Statement about turnout of women voters

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall prepare a gender disaggregated statement of voters showing total number of men and women voters at the polling station and the total votes cast by men and women voters.
- (2) The Presiding Officer shall send the gender disaggregated statement of voters to the Returning Officer and to the Commission at the time of communication of result to the Returning Officer and the Commission.
- (3) The Presiding Officer may, at any stage on the polling day during or after the polling, prepare and send a special report to the Returning Officer and to the Commission if he has reason to believe that women voters have been restrained from exercising their right to vote based on any express or implied agreement.





## Manifestos of Political Parties

The manifestos of political parties are those plans, programs and broad policy directions of a political party where they commit to implement them in order to get the votes to get into power during generalelections.

The manifestos are released during the election year in Pakistan. It is a benchmark document that would eventually provide a basis for evaluating the party's performance in the government. The electorates in democratic politics naturally expect a political party would present its manifesto to the people because they would like to look at the future programs and policies, that the party plans to implement if it is voted into power. People need to look into a formal plan and commitment through which they can look into for voting and which is not rhetoric but based on a formal commitment that a manifesto can bring. The way it is articulated by a manifesto committee of a political party and presented as a formal document would grant it status of a party document that the party presents as its elections pledges.

Political parties in Pakistan participate in elections on the basis of their manifestos. Every party publishes its manifesto before election. However, people were never given an opportunity to vote on the basis of party manifesto except in 1953 provincial elections and 1970's general elections. For the last 55 years, political parties in the country write and rewrite their manifestos but for election results these manifestos hardly play any decisive role. After 1977, elections were held in 1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, 2013 and 2018. However, state intuitions and security agencies

manipulated election results according to their whims and wishes. The upcoming elections in the country are going to be held in very challenging circumstances. The next election will be held in a totally new environment. Very soon political parties will come-up with new manifestos and programs. General Elections of 2023 will be very interesting. Election results may be surprising, provided elections are held in a free, fair and neutral environment. This election may trigger and will promote new trends in national politics.

As soon as the election date is announced, political parties and their candidates for the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies start their election campaign.

**Election campaign is run by following methods:**

## Electoral Mass Meetings

Political parties and electoral candidates take out election rallies in small and big cities of the country. Voters are influenced in such rallies through public participation. Every candidate desires for taking out the biggest rally of his party and hoisting of party flags everywhere in his constituency.

Every electoral candidate wishes to hold more than one mass meeting in his/her constituency. They also wish that central leadership of their party must attend these mass meetings for an impression on the workers that the candidate of their constituency is very close to central leadership of the party. Apart from these election gatherings, mass meetings are organized in all big cities, provincial capitals, at central places in districts and at Tehsil level to influence public opinion.

## Corner Meetings

Initial election campaign begins with corner meetings of the candidates of political parties. Every party endeavors to organize corner meetings by inviting influential personalities of the locality, leaders of different groups, people belonging to different social organizations, influential religious personalities of different sects, Ulema and few prominent personalities of constituency.

## Posters, Banners, Hoardings

Political parties and their candidates make efforts to influence voters through their leaders' pictures and messages on hoardings everywhere in the country. Separate banners are made for candidates with his/her name, his party's name and election symbol. Along with banners, posters are also made which provide information about candidate and appeal for vote.

## Door to Door Electoral Campaign

Every electoral candidate and their supporters go door to door and ask for votes in their constituency. All candidates, their supporters and party activists along with party manifesto and candidate's personal election



agenda go door to door in their constituency, make election promises and appeal to voters to cast votes in favor of their candidate.

## Mobile Electoral Campaign

Supporters of electoral candidate and activists of political party promote their electoral manifesto through mobile loudspeakers in every nook and corner of the country and appeal to people to vote for their candidates.

## Electronic Media

Candidates run their promotion campaign through electronic media for their electoral campaign. Different TV channels broadcast paid political advertisements of different political parties and their candidates in which they appeal for vote.

## Print Media

Political parties also run their election campaign in news- papers, magazines and other publications as well. They publish paid advertisements in newspapers which contains their past's success stories, opponent's failures, future promises and appeal for votes. Electoral candidates also publish their advertisements with voting appeal.

## Usage of Social Media by Leading Political Parties.

Pakistan General Elections of 2018 was the first time that the voters had the ability to engage in a two-way communication with those who sought their votes. As a result, a tremendous surge in the use of social media was observed. Throughout the election process, political parties, individual candidates, and ordinary citizens exploited social media to achieve their desired ends. While social media was a tool for strategic communication by the political parties, it also served as a mouth-piece for the ordinary citizens and an alternative to the mainstream media for the expression of dissent.

Facebook has millions of users in Pakistan, the most frequented website/app are YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, Instagram, Twitter etc., are other popular messaging platforms.

With 64 percent of its population aged under 30 years and a voting age of 18 years, it was evident that Pakistan's young voters held the key to the political future of their country. On the flip side, compared to their older generations, the political views of these young people were less rooted in

the political history of Pakistan and they were more susceptible to political campaigns via social media.

The PTI were the first to tap the resource of social media and employ it in its election campaigns, when Pakistan mounted 3G/4G mobile internet, the real potential of social media was realized. In the 2018 elections, two major parties of Pakistan capitalized on the potential of the electronic and social media. The PTI, PML (N), Pakistan People's Party, Tehrik-e-Labbaik Pakistan, Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam (F), and other national and regional parties joined the race when the trend was already set.

Recently, some mainstream political parties employed social media as a tool of opinion making and mass mobilization. A basic function of their social media cells are the promotion of their respective agendas and criticism of opponents. In order to motivate their workers, these parties organized several social media conventions across the country and social media campaigns. As the elections drew closer, some parties became more organized and strategic in its use of social media from its bases in Pakistan and abroad.

## Social media as an alternative tool for political expression

The expression of public anger through social media in the 2018 elections has cultivated a new image of voters in the eyes of Pakistani politicians. The resourcefulness of ordinary citizens, increased awareness, and their ability to publicly express their opinion has become a consideration for political parties and individual candidates which they can no longer afford to disregard.

What the mainstream Pakistani media was unwilling or unable to show made its way to social media. **All political parties in Pakistan use social media to build narratives.**

Social media is being used by political parties to build narratives. PTI do it successfully even if that narrative may not be grounded in fact and reality. In the absence of any counter-narrative, the narrative, even if it's biased, will dominate.

Although, fake news is a major negative consequence of the increasing use of digital and social media in Pakistan especially on political issues. However, **Social media will play a crucial role in the next general election because it has empowered individuals and given them a voice.**

Social media has also empowered supporters of political parties as they can now communicate directly with the leadership. But it is reality that the use of social media has increased polarization in society along political lines.

# The common citizens and social media

For the common citizens, social media served as a mouthpiece to voice their opinion. It enhanced their awareness of rights and enabled the underprivileged voters to confront and question those they voted for. Pakistani society has evolved as a more informed and politically participative culture. This defies a fundamental tenet of the conventional wisdom that had guided Pakistan's electoral politics for decades: voters have a short-lived memory. This time the voters had much more than conventional memory at their disposal. They had a mobile phone and social media and they made good use of it.



## Social Media

In the elections of 2013 and 2018, the use of social media for election campaign was limited but there are chances of large scale use of social media in the up-coming elections. There are definite chances that Face-book, Twitter and other social websites will be used for electoral campaigns in the next elections.

### Security and Safety of Journalists

Election Day violence is not uncommon and journalists like voters and political workers remain at risk.

The government should take solid measures to ensure safety of voters and security of journalists as media organizations in general do not invest in safety and security of journalists.

Safety trainings for election reporters should be arranged in areas where security situation is not good and where there are more chances of electoral violence



# ELECTION NEWS



All TV channels, newspapers and magazines endeavor for full fledged coverage of electoral campaign. All the coverage of channels and newspapers depend on the outreach and resources of their network. The channel or newspaper that has experienced and hardworking team of journalists with relevant education and professional expertise would do a much better coverage and professional of the campaign.

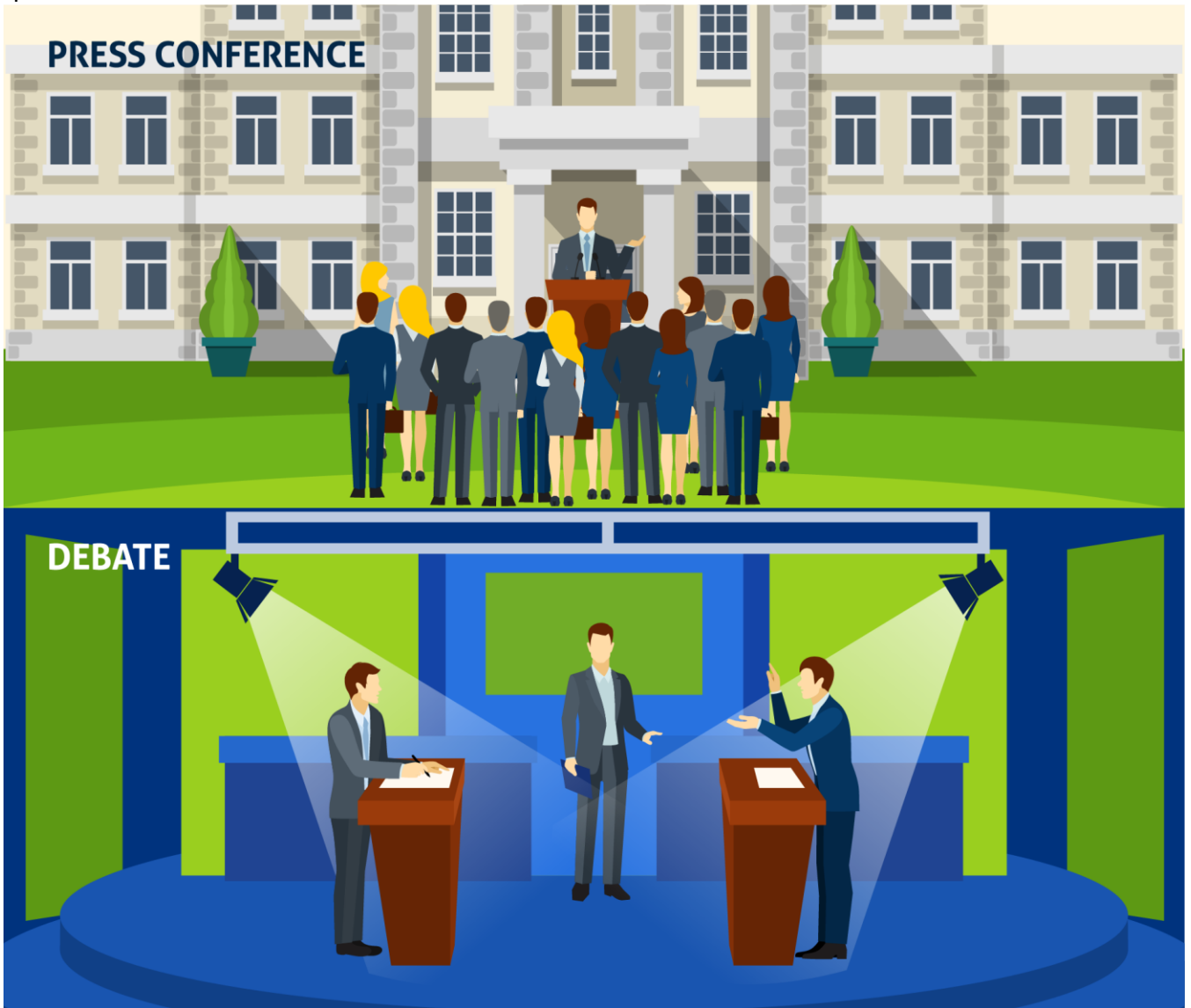
## Election Commission's rules pertaining to Electoral Campaign

Election Commission frames rules and regulations for electoral campaigns called the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates. Political parties and their candidates have to follow the ECP code of conduct. The code is allied to theory as well as practical matters. In theoretical rules, people are generally restrained to use negative words about theory of state and its geography. Election Commission makes such rules and regulations during elections and from time to time make amendments and changes in it.

Being a journalist it is your responsibility to observe that candidates in your city, district, estate, tehsil and election constituency abide by ECP's code, electoral laws and rules or not. If you're constantly worried about material of electoral campaign and violation of rules and regulations then being a reporter it is your responsibility to highlight such violations.

## Code of Ethics for Coverage of Election Campaign

A journalist wishing to cover election campaigns of different political parties need to be careful about a few things. Being an aware and informed citizen a reporter may have his/her own political ideology and may support or oppose some political parties. But a journalist should be non-partisan in his reporting. A journalist has to report facts with integrity and must be biased in the coverage of political parties.



Similarly, reporters don't need to be a spokesperson of any political parties or candidates. Apart from this basic obligation a journalist must consider the basic prerequisites of evolution of society. Election process is considered as the soul of democracy. If you are an opponent of election process and democracy then why are you reporting election process? For evolution of society you must believe in election process. Apart from a small section of Pakistan's society all political, religious and secular parties believe in election process and participate enthusiastically in it. The despot-ism,

monarchy and autocracy forms of government are now destabilized worldwide as people are exhausted of Dictatorship.

Media has a very vital responsibility of informing people about programs, party activism, political views administrative infrastructure and effects of political parties on public particularly. A reporter must have knowledge about political parties, political leadership, and manifestos and past performance in government.

While covering elections a journalist must be careful about following things:

If there is tense situation and there are possibilities of violence then journalists have to make arrangements for their safety first.

A journalist must be well prepared for reporting and election event. For print media's reporter it is necessary to have pen and a writing pad whereas electronic media's reporter must have communication link with the cameraman. For news reporting electronic media's reporter should have DSNB, camera and mike in good condition.

Being a reporter one must be well informed about your surroundings. At times there are more than one event happening so one has to keep an eye on every unfolding event and any extraordinary news in normal routine activity may become an exclusive story.

### Role of a Journalist:

A journalist has to answer 5Ws and H Who is the candidate for Which party and Where?

- What promises is the candidate making?
- When does the candidate expect to honor his or her promises
- How does the candidate intend to keep his promises?



## Guidelines of Election Coverage

- Knowing the constitution of the state is the first step towards election reporting because it will allow the reporter to identify the minutest chance of mishandling in elections.
- Journalists must be balanced and impartial during election coverage. They must not be biased in favor of or against any candidate or political party.
- Media have a duty to ensure that public is informed about relevant electoral matters such as political parties, candidates, campaign issues and voting process.
- Media should grant all political parties or candidates airtime for direct access programs on a fair and non-discriminatory basis.
- Journalists are not supposed to put their own opinion into election reporting.
- Journalists are not supposed to color their reports with inflammatory language.
- Journalists should not take sides in political arguments.
- Journalists should not promise any politician that a report or story will appear in the paper.







## POLLING DAY

Voting is conducted on the fixed date for polling. Election Commission appoints Returning Officer for every constituency of National and Provincial assemblies. Returning Officer has got all the administrative and judicial powers on Election Day. He is responsible for all the polling stations in his constituency. At times the number of polling stations exceed from 150. Presiding Officer is the in charge of polling stations.

Every presiding officer is responsible for all the matters of his polling station. In every polling station there is more than one Polling Booth in different rooms and a Polling Officer is in charge of each polling booth. Usually, the ECP conduct election to the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies on the same day. Election Day procedure is as follows:

- There are total 272 constituencies of National Assemblies in all over the country.
  - Returning Officers in the country shall be appointed according to the election constituencies.
  - In every constituency the number of Presiding Officers will be equal to the number of Polling Stations.
  - The number of Polling Officers will be equal to the number of Polling Booths.

- In every polling booth there will be different queues of voters and polling will start on fixed time.
- There will be separate polling stations and polling booths for male and female.
- There will be more than one boxes in each polling stations where voters will cast vote to their favorite candidate.

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- There will be more than one boxes in each polling stations where voters will cast vote to their favorite candidate.
- In the process of voting first of all polling officer will check the name of voter from the voters' list and the polling agents of electoral candidates confirm that he is an eligible voter then election staff mark on his thumb with permanent ink and give him polling paper. Every polling paper consists of names and symbols of all electoral candidates. Voter will mark a stamp on his favorite candidate's name and symbol
- There will be a lunch break of an hour in the afternoon after which the polling will start once again and it will continue till the fixed time in the evening.
- After polling, there will be counting of votes of polling stations in the presence of polling agents of electoral candidates.
- After this process, the results of all polling stations will be submitted to the Presiding Officer which will eventually be submitted to the Returning Officer. Returning Officer will notify the results to Central Election Office and media.

### *Key Challenges*

*A disconnection between the editorial and reporting team.*

*Electoral reporting not considered a special subject.*

*Lack of incentive for journalists to become experts on electoral issues.*

*Poor information sharing mechanisms between media and other electoral stakeholders.*

*Various forms of censure, including physical attacks which are at times backed by the government.*

Being a journalist, it is your responsibility to keep an eye on whole polling process. It is your duty to verify if voting staff is unbiased or not or if they are inspiring voters in favor or against of any candidate. You have to consider the stance of political parties and electoral candidates as well. Your basic responsibility will be scrutinizing the electoral process that if it is completely transparent and free or polling staff is filling the ballot boxes in favor of one particular candidate. You have to keep record of what you see as you must have documented proofs of every kind of electoral fraud.

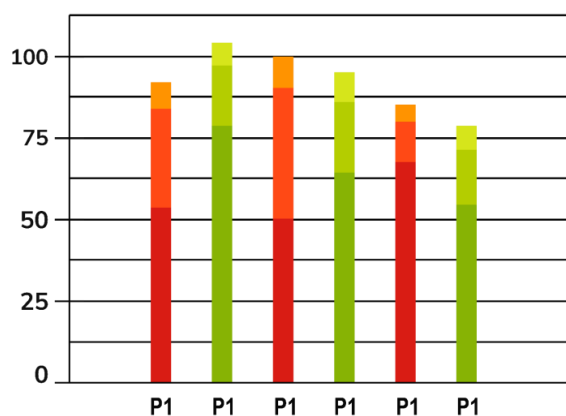
In Pakistan, separate elections held for provincial and national assembly but electoral procedure is same. At times, elections for national and provincial assemblies held in a same day but in that case chances of electoral fraud and irregularities elevates because work-load increases. It is your journalistic responsibility to keep an eye on each and every electoral fraud and irregularity.



## NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Election results of several urban constituencies are prepared early. In densely populated areas polling stations situated closely therefore it is easy for election staff to gather all results whereas in rural areas particularly in deserted and mountainous areas it is quite difficult to compile election results due to lack of communication resources. Unofficial election results are declared within 24 hours of polling.

However results of few constituencies may take more time. In case of a clash among supporters of electoral candidates, election results may be delayed or electoral process may be suspended. In that situation election result of such constituency may not only be stopped but there also chance of re-election in the whole constituency or in some disputed polling stations. During election campaign if any candidate of any constituency dies so there will be no polling in that constituency. Election Commission will announce new date for the elections in that constituency. However if any candidate boycotts the elections so there will be no legal obstacle in holding elections and due to candidate's boycott the election process will not be suspended.



Election Commission will announce the election results of all constituencies within few days of unofficial announcement. After official announcement a new assembly will be formed. Similarly, there will be

Provincial assemblies' elections after national assembly and likewise there will be unofficial and unclear result announcement prior to official announcement of Election Commission. In this way electoral process will be completed in the country. National and Provincial assemblies of the country will have been selected and successful candidates will have been announced. Now with new assemblies the formation process of government will be started.

## Electoral Complaints

After completion of electoral process, if a candidate of any constituency of provincial or national assembly has any complaint about electoral fraud, irregularity, ambiguity or mistake in vote counting process on any level so s/he can register a complain officially to an Election Tribunal formed by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The Election Tribunal hears election cases according to its legal procedure and will give its ruling against or in favor of the petitioner on the basis of facts and proofs. Judges of the Election Tribunal are justices of the high courts. Before Constitution of the Election Tribunal, an aggrieved person/party does have a right to file a petition under Article 199 in a high

# Post-Election



# POST ELECTION

## Meeting of National Assembly

The President of Pakistan, with the advice of care-taker prime minister and Election Commission will call upon a meeting of national assembly. All the newly elected members of the house will be gathered at the Parliament House Islamabad on a fixed time and date. This meeting will be presided over by the speaker of the former assembly.

First of all, newly elected members will take oath of responsibilities as member of National Assembly. Prior to this elected members will mark their attendance in attendance register. Before oath taking ceremony there will be no point of order or any other business. If any irrelevant person will be found in the meeting who is not a member of national assembly, he will be identified and speaker of the assembly will ask him to leave the meeting. If irrelevant person will not leave, speaker of the assembly will ask sergeant to take him out of the house. Former speaker will now take oath from all members and after this speaker and deputy speaker will be selected.

## Selection of Speaker and Deputy Speaker

After oath taking ceremony, now speaker and speaker will be selected. In this regard political party with absolute majority or alliance of different political parties will nominate the candidates. In this way second major party or alliance with fewer majorities can also nominate candidates for speaker and deputy speaker. Within due time all the nominees for the post of speaker and deputy speaker will submit their nomination papers to the speaker of assembly who will scrutinize the papers and announce the name of final nominees. After the final announcement all the members of national assembly will select the speaker and deputy speaker through secret opinion. Secretary of national assembly will announce the successful candidates' name for the post of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

## Role of Pakistani Media

- Media has to provide information about election to citizens.
- Media has to educate about basic facts, election process, rights and responsibilities of voters.
- Media can serve as a link between political parties and voters by carrying political advertisements and organizing debates between candidates.
- Media has to work as a watchdog on keeping close tab on the election campaign and the voting process
- Provide forum for the voices of ordinary voters who has some- thing to say on public matters.

## **financing of political life is a necessity – and a problem.**

Democracy needs to control money or money will control democracy!

In the long run improper and illegal funds contribute to de-legitimize parties in particular and undermine democratic system in general.

A strong democracy requires healthy political life. Political parties need healthy funding to fulfill their core functions, both during and between election periods. Funding of political parties through private contributions is a form of political participation.

The regulation of political finance is essential to guarantee politicians independence from undue influence and to ensure the principle of equal opportunity.

## **Who Regulate Money in Politics?**

State Agencies/ State owned enterprises.

Public Contracts in excess of regular price/privatization.

Politically controlled companies or narrow business groups.

Donations in form of money/bribes to individual politicians.

## **Gender Sensitization on Electoral Issues**

Women perspectives on political and electoral issues are uncommon in media.

Most of the perspectives that get reported are limited to statements from women politicians.

Through a greater number of women in reporting and editing positions as opposed to anchoring shows or newsreaders, the profile of women in the media can be raised.

Orientation workshops and journalism trainings for women on reporting politics and electoral issues should be organized.

After the selection of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Secretary of National Assembly will call them on dice. Former Speaker will take oath from newly elected Speaker.

After oath taking of Speaker, Deputy speaker will be called on dice.

Newly elected Speaker will take oath from Deputy Speaker.

In this way a new house will be formed and first of all it has to select its new leader of the house.

## Selection of Leader of the House

After selection of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, house will now select Leader of the House. Party with absolute majority and parties with fewer Majorities will nominate the name of their candidates for the leader of the house.

Occasionally political parties announce their candidate's name just before the election or during the elections. Nomination papers for this post are submitted to the Speaker of National Assembly.

After scrutiny of nomination papers, final names of Candidates are announced.

National Assembly performs the duties of Election Commission for the selection of leader of the house.

After the final announcement of nomination papers, leader of the house is selected. Speaker announces the name of the successful candidate newly elected leader of the house is become the Prime Minister of the country and address the house after its selection.

After the selection, government and opposition benches congratulate the new Prime Minister and Leader of the House. Members of the house, with the permission of Speaker congratulate the addressing Prime Minister.

## Oath Taking Ceremony of Prime Minister and Federal Cabinet

After the selection of leader of the house, oath taking Ceremony of Prime Minister is held. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, newly elected members of Leading party and opposition, Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen Senate, members of Senate, leaders of armed forces, representatives of all three armed forces of country, all active bureaucrats and media personnel attend the oath taking ceremony.

President and Prime Minister sit on the dais in the President House.

Establishment division asks for President's approval for beginning the oath taking ceremony. Ceremony commence with reciting Quran.

Later, President takes oath from newly elected Prime Minister. After this oath taking of federal cabinet took place. In this regard, name of federal ministers are decided earlier. After Prime Minister's oath, dais and chairs are arranged for oath taking of federal ministers. Federal

Ministers are then invited on those chairs after which President is requested to take oath from ministers of federal cabinet After oath taking Prime Minister takes vote of confidence from the house.

### Political Finance Disclosure

Who gives, how much, to whom, and for what, and when?

- Disclosure is based on comprehensive and regular exposure of the financial details of parties, candidates, MPs.
- Timing of disclosure and access to information (newspapers, web sites)
- Promoted by the UN Convention Against Corruption Art. 7 (3): Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures to enhance transparency in the funding of candidates for elected public office and, where applicable the funding of political parties.



## Meetings of Provincial Assemblies, Selection of Speaker and Deputy Speaker

After entrusting powers in federation, session of newly elected assemblies of all provinces called on. All assemblies in their meetings select their Speaker and Deputy Speaker as they are selected in National Assembly. Speaker and Deputy Speakers of provincial assemblies, after their selection take oaths of their responsibilities and in this way, new provincial assemblies substitute the old assemblies.

## Selection of Provincial Leader of the House

Likewise National assembly, all four provincial assemblies also elect their respective leaders of the house. Election process of provincial leader of the house is identical to that of the National Assembly. The elected leader of a provincial assembly is Chief Minister of the province.

## Oath taking ceremony of Chief Ministers

After election of the chief minister, his/her oath taking Ceremony is held in the Governor's House where the Provincial Governor House

## Historical Context

Money is mother milk for politics. The 1985's non-party based elections introduced use of excessive money in politics. This odd reality was internalized by many political parties and they started awarding tickets to wealthy electable who can spend lavishly on election campaigns

Most of the legislators start their parliamentary career with a big lie that they spent within the prescribed ceiling during the election campaign. (Presently, PKR. 1.5 million for a National and PKR 1 million for a provincial constituency). Our conservative estimate is that a modest campaign cost in the range of PKR 20-25 million for a national and PKR 12-15 million for a provincial Constituency.

The hidden hands also started doling out millions for their political favorites. Air Marshal Asghar Khan's petition in the Supreme Court amply testifies this practice. Earlier as well there was a tradition of abusing incumbency and using official funds for political purposes.



## About WMC

The Women Media Centre Pakistan (WMC) is a non-profit organization and its core function is to carry out research, training and education of media women. The WMC is a unique body in its conception and functions. Diverse factors contributed to establish such body primarily due to feeble democratic structure in Pakistan and in significant number of women in mainstream media. Another objective of the WMC is to promote new and creative ways of thinking among the Pakistani women so that their valuable suggestions may be included in the country policies. The WMC is currently involved in organizing projects, which promotes women organizations and work of strengthening democracy and other vital societal issues. The Women Media Center's mission is four-dimensional: Firstly, we aim to provide professional environment to women journalist. Secondly, we want to raise awareness of democratic and civic issues from the perspective of Pakistani women journalist. Thirdly, we endeavor to increase women's participation in the mainstream media through training, research and education. In addition, final mission of WMC is to address the entry barriers confronted by women journalist and maintain liaison with media industry to facilitate against women journalist.



## About NED


The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, non-profit organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through non-governmental efforts. The Endowment is governed by an independent, nonpartisan board of directors. With its annual congressional appropriation, it makes hundreds of grants each year to support pro-democracy groups in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. The Endowment is guided by the belief that freedom is a universal human aspiration that can be realized through the development of democratic institutions, procedures, and values. Democracy cannot be achieved through a single election and need not be based upon the model of the United States or any other particular country. Rather, it evolves according to the needs and traditions of diverse political cultures.







# wmc

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