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Youth in elections: Voting for our future

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Youth in Elections

Voting for our Future

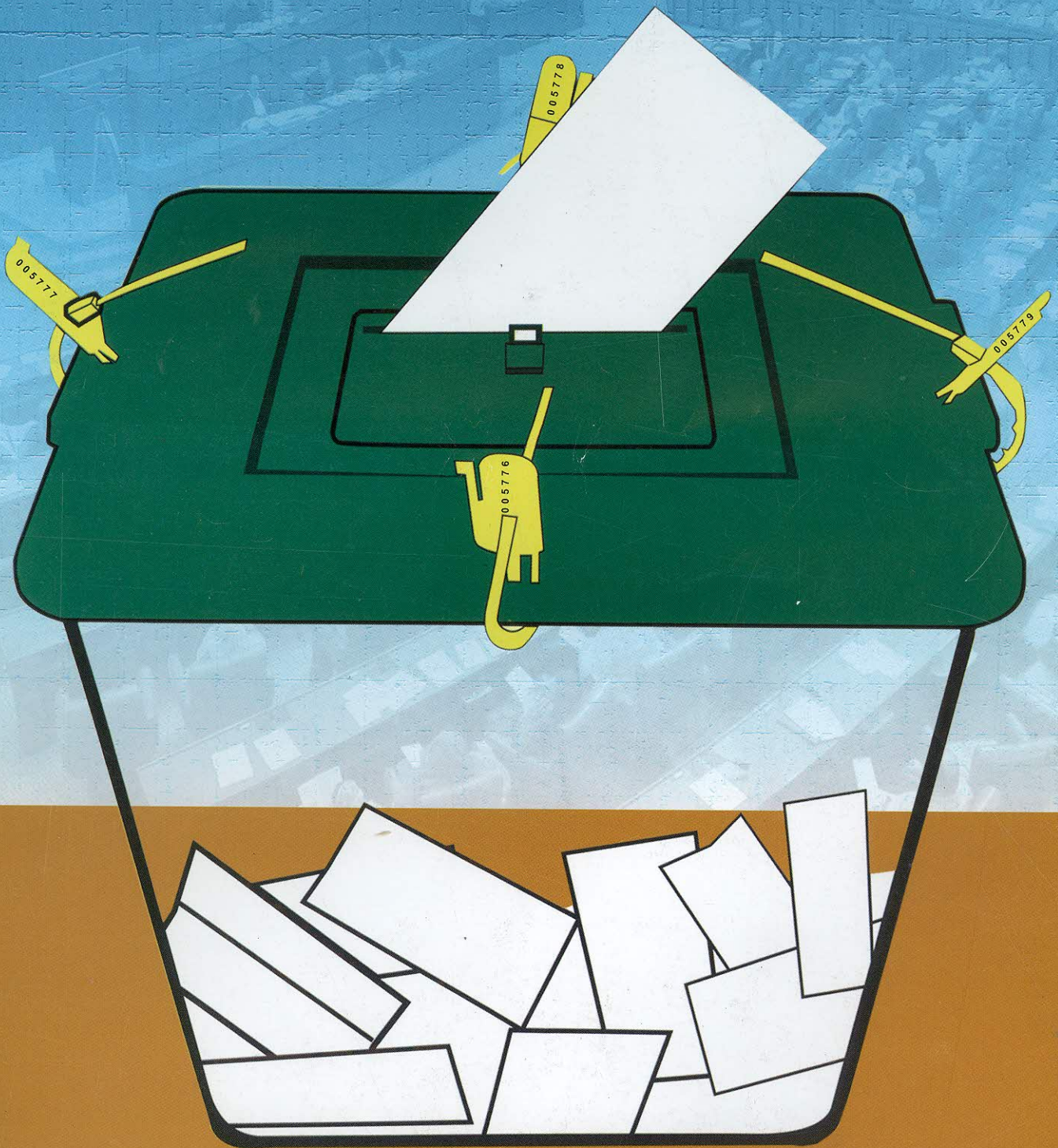


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	
I. CITIZENSHIP	2
<i>Rights and Responsibilities</i>	
<i>Valuing Diversity</i>	
<i>Equality</i>	
II. DEMOCRACY AS A POLITICAL SYSTEM	6
<i>Sovereignty of the people</i>	
<i>Free and fair elections</i>	
<i>Majority rule coupled with minority rights</i>	
<i>Equality before the law</i>	
III. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN	9
<i>Legislative Branch</i>	
<i>The Executive Branch</i>	
<i>The Judicial Branch</i>	
IV. NON-STATE INSTITUTIONS	12
<i>Civil Society</i>	
<i>Political Parties</i>	
<i>Media</i>	
<i>Tool 1: Information Gathering and Processing</i>	
<i>Tool 2: Critical Thinking</i>	
V. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	18
<i>Who, Why, and How to Become a Voter?</i>	
<i>Becoming an Informed Voter</i>	
<i>Casting a Vote</i>	
<i>Becoming an Independent and Impartial Election Observer</i>	
<i>Standing for an Election</i>	
<i>Continuing active citizenship after the elections</i>	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	

INTRODUCTION

No one is born with the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for democratic citizenship. Therefore, people must be educated for citizenship. In Pakistan, citizenship education has been narrowly interpreted to include learning about the structure and functions of government and citizen rights and responsibilities so as to prepare loyal and patriotic citizens. However, *democratic citizenship* requires that young people be prepared with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for informed, responsible and active participation in creating and sustaining a democratic society. The competencies to be developed for this democratic citizenship are summarized in Figure 1.

<p>Civic Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the political system, institutions and processes • The rights and responsibilities of citizens • Human rights and responsibilities • The local, national and international context 	<p>Civic Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical-thinking • Problem-solving and decision-making • Social or interpersonal skills • Conflict resolution skills • Information gathering and communication skills
<p>Civic Dispositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in the dignity and equality of every human being • Determination to act justly • Commitment to equality • Respect for freedom • Willingness to work with and for others • Value diversity • Take personal and civic responsibility • Respect for the rule of law • Concern for human rights • Practice of tolerance 	<p>Civic Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote • Engage in community service • Become a member of civil society group(s) • Advocate for change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sign petitions, ◦ Write letters to government representatives. ◦ Advertise your cause ◦ Participate in walks, demonstrations • Refuse to buy certain things (e.g. plastic bags as they pollute the environment)

Figure 1: Competencies required for Democratic Citizenship

The focus of this booklet is on the preparation of first time voters, therefore only some of the competencies highlighted in Figure 1 will be developed.

I. CITIZENSHIP

The idea of citizenship emerged in Greece, when the polis (city-state) replaced the kingdom and tribe as the political community. The best-known example is of the relatively small and cohesive community of the city-state of Athens (461-322 BC). In Athens, members of the community participated in its governance by attending the public assembly and making decisions about common affairs. They were, in short, 'citizens'. In this early example citizenship was limited to male members of the community. Women, slaves and foreigners were not citizens.

Although the idea of citizenship originated in Greece, its contemporary form can be traced back to the 18th Century American and French Revolutions which advocated liberty and human equality and insisted that "the people" have the right and authority to govern themselves. Even at this time citizenship excluded women, slaves and the poor. It was only after a long struggle that slavery ended and women were recognized as citizens.

Since the 19th century the term citizenship has been understood as a legal status given to those who belong to a political community (usually the nation-state). Citizenship gives one a sense of identity with the community and creates a social bond between individuals sharing that identity. All members of the community are entitled to a set of rights such as the right to vote and a corresponding set of responsibilities such as obedience to the law. Besides being a legal status, citizenship is also a social practice whereby citizens work with and for each other to create a better society. In order to play their social role effectively citizens require some competencies. Education aims to develop these competencies so as to enable young people to play their citizenship role effectively.

As mentioned earlier, citizenship is a legal status derived from the constitution of the country. What is a constitution? The constitution is the supreme law of the land (see the constitution of Pakistan at www.gov.pk). It

- Outlines the structure of the government of the country;
- Defines the powers and limits of each branch (legislative, executive, judiciary) of the government;
- Defines the relationship between the federal and provincial governments;
- Lists the rights and responsibilities of the citizens.

Rights and Responsibilities

Each community assigns different rights and responsibilities to its citizens. In Pakistan, you have certain rights and freedoms, guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan (see Figure 2). Our rights and freedoms are also guaranteed by international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), because Pakistan is a signatory to both.

With rights we also have responsibilities. Often responsibilities are directly related to our rights. For example, as citizens of Pakistan we have the right to vote and the responsibility to vote in elections. We have the right to freedom of expression and the responsibility to express our views in a way that is respectful of others. While most of our responsibilities are based on morality and social conscience, some are written into laws. Only a few responsibilities are written into laws of Pakistan such as the responsibility to obey the law and to pay taxes (see Figure 3 for citizenship responsibilities in other countries).

Fundamental Rights of Citizens in the Constitution of Pakistan

- Security of Person
- Freedom of movement
- Preservation of language, script and culture.
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions
- Equality before the law
- Non discrimination in respect of access to public places
- Right to vote
- Freedom of trade, business or profession
- Provision as to property.
- Protection of the property rights
- Safeguard against discrimination in services.

Figure 2: Fundamental Rights of Citizens of Pakistan.

The responsibilities of citizens vary depending on one's country, and may include:

- paying taxes
- serving in the country's armed forces (when required)
- obeying laws enacted by one's government
- demonstrating commitment and loyalty to the democratic political community and state
- constructively criticizing the conditions of political and civic life
- participating to improve the quality of political and civic life
- respecting the rights of others
- defending one's own rights and the rights of others against those who would abuse them
- exercising one's rights

Figure 3: Responsibilities of Citizens

Activity:

Imagine that you have just struggled for and won a new country. List the rights and responsibilities (civic, social, economic, political, cultural) all citizens would have in this country. Explain why these rights and responsibilities are important.

Valuing Diversity

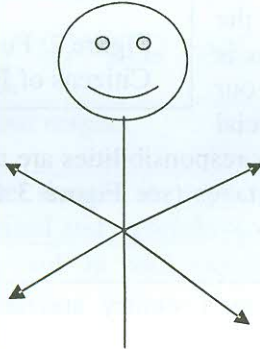
Pakistan has a population of 160 million people. Pakistani citizens vary in terms of class gender, economic status, ethnicity, religion, cultural traditions, experiences and values. Such diversity brings with it possibilities and challenges. On the one hand, diversity enriches us as it helps us recognize and value all sorts of differences. On the other hand, many conflicts are rooted in issues of diversity. In order for us to enlarge the benefits of diversity we have to learn to value diversity. Research shows that people are more likely to value diversity:

- if they are understanding and appreciative of their own culture
- if they live in an environment that values diversity
- if they have cognitive understanding of concepts like stereotyping, prejudice discrimination and scapegoating
- if they have conflict resolutions skills.

The following activities are aimed at preparing you to value diversity.

Activity 1: Everyone is different

- Copy the worksheet given below and fill it in,
 - Share the grid with group members and identify similarities and differences.
 - Reflect
- a) Are we all alike? If not then why do we want everyone to behave, think and act as we do?
 - b) What did you learn about the diverse nature of human beings through this activity?
 - c) How can you contribute to promoting respect for diversity in society?

<p>Who I am? (List aspects of self that are not changeable such colour, sex)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.		<p>What is my culture? (List values, beliefs, ways of living)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
<p>Who I am? (List unique aspects of self such as personality traits, personal preferences)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.		<p>Who do I identify myself with and relate to? (List individual and group affiliation and status and power of them)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.

Activity 2:

- 1a. Complete the statement All young people arewith frequently heard statements about young people.
- 1b. These are examples of stereotype. "Stereotype is a mental image of a group based on opinion without regard to individual difference."
- 2a. Prejudice is a negative judgement or opinion formed about a group without knowing the facts.
- 2b. Read the following scenarios and identify the prejudice and harm caused by it to each person in the situation.
 - Raheela fell on the sidewalk. Her ankle really hurt. A black woman stopped to help her up. "I'm a doctor," she said. "Sit on this bench and let me look at that." Raheela didn't trust the woman and said, "No thanks. I'm fine." She limped away.
 - Sajjad's family doesn't have much money and lives in a different neighbourhood from Aslam's. When Sajjad invited Aslam to a birthday party, Sajjad assumed the house would be messy and dirty. He didn't go, and everyone told him later how nice the house was, and how good the food was.

Equality

Equality is a concept closely related to valuing diversity. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, it is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Many inequalities exist in Pakistan society. These inequalities are based on socio-economic class, age gender, ethnicity, religion and disability.

The following activities are aimed at developing the value of equality.

Activity 1:

- Suppose there are 40 students in a class; In one group there are 4 students, in another 8 student and in the third 28 students (this distribution of students is a reflection of economic differences in society. The size of the group reflects the size of different economic classes in the society). Now suppose each group was given one chocolate bar. How much chocolate would members in each group receive?
- Reflect
 - In which group did each member receive the most/least chocolate?
 - How would you feel if you were in the group that got the least/most chocolate?
 - What could you do in order to enable each one to get an equal part?
- Write a paragraph on the importance of equity.

Activity 2: Understanding inequality in Pakistani society

Conduct an inquiry to find out more about one inequality in Pakistani society. You should

- Frame a question.
- Identify appropriate sources of information
- Gather information from each source
- Interpret the information
- Draw conclusions
- Prepare a small report on your findings. Your report should include:
 - A brief introduction
 - Your inquiry questions
 - The data collection process
 - The findings
 - Ideas for making the situation more fair.
 - Conclusion

Present the report to your colleagues in class and put a copy in the college library to educate others.

II. DEMOCRACY AS A POLITICAL SYSTEM

A Political System is a complete set of institutions, political organizations, interest groups the relationships between these institutions and political norms and rules that govern their functions. There are a number of political systems, the major ones are shown in Figure 4.

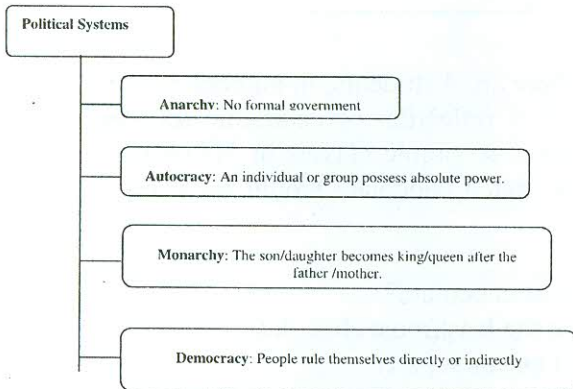
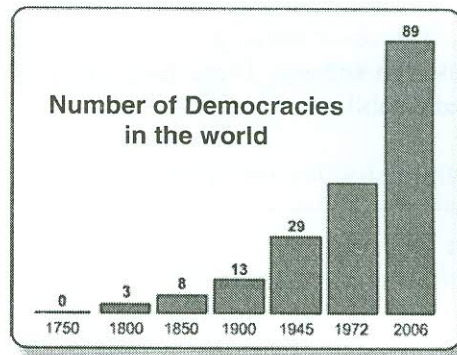


Figure 4: Political Systems



Democracy is one of the most popular political systems in the world today. The word “democracy” comes from the Greek *dēmokratia*, which means “rule of the people”, that is, government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their representatives elected under a free electoral system. The major characteristics of democracy include tolerance towards minorities, freedom of expression, and respect for the essential dignity and worth of the human individual with equal opportunity for each to develop freely in a cooperative community (Webster, 1993).

The concept of democracy rests on several principles and attributes to be operationalised in the society. Figure 5 illustrates a few major principles depicted as *pillars* and some attributes that support the pillars to sustain democracy.

Sovereignty of the people

The core principle of democracy is the belief that the people possess the capacity and wisdom to rule on their own. In other words, authority rests with the people to make decisions about how to order their lives in the community. In other words people *rule themselves* directly or indirectly. Generally, in a democracy people make decisions through their elected representatives. Generally political parties are also independent. This highlights the importance of political parties which recruit, nominate and campaign for *candidate to represent people*. These representatives are either elected through plurality *vote* (the candidate with the most votes in an *election* wins), or proportional representation, (cast ballots for political parties, not for individual candidates). Party representation in the national legislature is determined by the percentage, or proportion, of votes received *by each party in the election*.

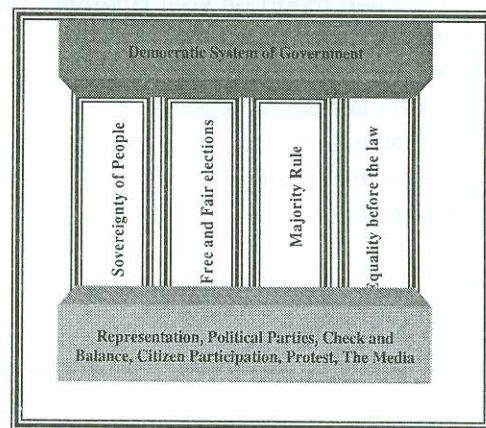


Figure 5: Democratic System of Government

As modern societies grow in size and complexity, the arena for communication and public debate is increasingly dominated by the media: radio and television, newspapers, magazines, books, even computerized data bases. The media in a democracy inform and educate people to enable them make

intelligent decisions as citizens. This role is especially important during election campaigns, when few voters will have the opportunity to see, much less *talk with, candidates in person*.

Free and fair elections

In order to elect true representatives, people's active and meaningful participation in election is important. This is only possible in **free and fair elections**. Voting in elections is the most fundamental, visible and common form of participation in modern democracies. The ability to conduct free and fair elections is at the core of what it means to call a society democratic and depends on the active participation of **citizens** and the provisions of **free expression**. Through freedom of expression citizens organize themselves and use non-violent means and ways to raise their voice against injustices. Elections also contribute to democratic practice, as a **system of checks and balances** to ensure that political power is dispersed and decentralized and to ensure no institution, group or individual becomes too powerful. **Media also** serve as a watchdog over government and other powerful institutions in the society. By holding to a standard of independence and objectivity, however imperfectly, the media can expose the truth behind the claims of governments and hold public officials accountable for their actions.

Majority rule coupled with minority rights

All democracies are systems in which political decisions are made by majority vote. No one, however, would call a system fair or just that permitted 51 percent of the population to oppress the remaining 49 percent in the name of majority rule. Therefore, in a democratic society, **majority rule must be coupled with guarantees of individual human rights** that, serve to protect the rights of minorities--whether ethnic, religious, or political. The rights of minorities do not depend upon the goodwill of the majority but are protected by laws and institutions and cannot be eliminated by majority vote.

Equality before the law

Democracy declares that **all are equal before the law** and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. In simple language, the law is the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all. The principle of equality before the law is especially important for minority groups or groups with less economy and political power. **Justice and rule of law** is best achieved when the laws are established by the very people who must obey them. In democracies citizens willingly obey the laws of their society, because they are submitting to their own rules and regulations. To ensure justice and rule of law, a system of strong, independent courts should have the powers and authority, resources, and the prestige to hold government officials, even top leaders, accountable to the nation's laws and regulations.

Activity: Measuring Democracy

The following index offers indicators to measure state of democracy in a county. Use this index to measure degree of democracy in Pakistan based on your own assessment.

1. Are elections for the national assembly free?

- 1. Essentially unrestricted conditions for presentation of candidates
- 0.5. there are some restrictions on the electoral process
- 0. a single party system or major impediments exist like ban on a major party or individual

2. Is there universal suffrage for all adults

1. Yes 0. No

3. Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state and non state bodies?

1. Yes 0.No

4. Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?

- 1. Yes
- 0.5. there is a dominate role of two parties, other political forces never have any effective chance of taking part in national government
- 0. No

5. Following election, are the constitutional mechanisms for transfer of power from one government to another clear, established, and accepted?

- 1. all three criteria are fulfilled
- 0.5. two of the three criteria are fulfilled
- 0. only one or none of the criteria is fulfilled

6. Is there a free electronic media?

- 1. Yes
- 0.5. pluralistic, but state-controlled media
- 0. No

7. Is there freedom of expression and protest?

- 1. Yes
- 0.5. Minority viewpoints are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws restrict heavily scope for free expression
- 0. No

8. The degree to which the judiciary is independent of government influence

1. High 0.5. Moderate 0. Low

9. The degree of religious tolerance and freedom of religious expression

1. High 0.5. Moderate 0. Low

10. The degree to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms. Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study

1. High 0.5. Moderate 0. Low

Results: Total Score = 10

Acquired Score =

Criteria: below 3=poor; between 4 and 6=good; above 7=excellent

[Adopted from The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy]

III. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

The Constitution of Pakistan 1973 provides for a Federal Parliamentary System of government. Federal means that there are two levels of government with decision making powers divided between them: the federal government based in Islamabad and the provincial government, based in the capital city of each province. Parliamentary means that the Prime Minister is the head of government. Under the Local Government Ordinance 2001 district governments were created to devolve power to and increase citizen's participation in government (The Local government will not be discussed in this booklet).

A democratic government has three branches: legislative, executive and judiciary.

Legislative Branch

The legislative branch of government or parliament has the power to make and change laws. At the federal level, Pakistan has a bicameral Parliament which consists of the National Assembly (NA) and the Senate. At the provincial level it has a unicameral parliament with each province having a Provincial Assembly.

The National Assembly

The total membership of the NA is 342 elected members. 272 are elected on the basis of adult franchise and 'one person one vote'. The other 70 seats 60 for women and 10 for minority religious groups are special seats reserved to enable disadvantaged groups to have representation in the National Assembly.

Membership to the NA is open to all citizens of Pakistan who are 25 years of age and above, are registered voters and are graduates. Members of the NA (MNAs) are elected for a five-year term. The member who gains the confidence of the majority of the MNAs is invited by the President to be the Prime Minister and form the Government.

The main function of the NA is to make the laws for the country. The NA has the power to make laws with respect to any matter in the Federal Legislative List and enjoys exclusive powers to consider Money bills including the annual budget.

The NA must meet for at least 130 days in at least three sessions a year. A session of the NA is summoned by the President of Pakistan under Article 54(1) of the Constitution. It can also be summoned by the Speaker on a request made by at least 25% of the MNAs.

At the first session of the NA the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are elected. The office of the Speaker is the highest office in the NA of Pakistan. The Speaker presides over the NA. The Speaker decides who may speak, moderates debate, makes rulings on procedure, announces the results of votes and disciplines members who break the procedures of the house. The Speaker must show complete impartiality in the discharge of functions. The Speaker often represents the NA in ceremonial and other situations.

When the NA is dissolved the Speaker continues in the office, till a new Speaker is elected. The NA can be dissolved by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Senate of Pakistan

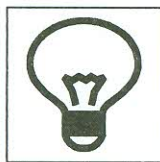
The role of the Senate is to promote harmony and to alleviate the fears of smaller provinces, therefore equal representation is given to all the provinces. The Senate has 100 members, 22 from each province which include 14 general, 4 technocrats/Ulema and 4 women. In addition there are 4 members from the Federal Capital territory and 8 from FATA. Members are elected for a 6 year term. Members must be graduates, 30 years and above and be registered voters.

Unlike the National Assembly, the Senate cannot be dissolved by the President rather it is a permanent legislative body which symbolizes a process of continuity in the national affairs. After the Senate has been duly constituted, at its first meeting, it elects from amongst its members a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for a 3-year term.

The main function of the Senate is to make the laws for the country. In order to function effectively, the Senate has a Committee System. Senate Committees comprising specialists and experts in the field give in-depth consideration to the legislative bills before approving them to become law. Senate Committees also

deal with issues of national importance and public interest (such as problems of less developed areas and human rights). The proceedings are shared with the general public so as to create awareness among them.

How a bill becomes a law at the federal level.



1. An idea is put forth by cabinet Minister or private member, or other source¹



2. Idea is explained to cabinet and cabinet approves the idea



3. The bill is prepared.



4. Bill is introduced in the National Assembly by the concerned Minister.



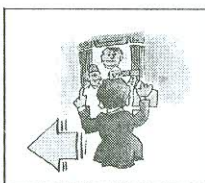
5. Examined by a concerned standing committee.



6. Debated on the floor of the National Assembly



7. The bill is voted on. If it passes, the bill is ...



8. Sent to the Senate



9. Examined by a standing committee.



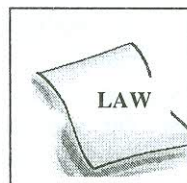
10. Debated on the floor of the Senate.



11. The bill is voted on. If it passes, the bill is ...



12. Sent to the President. The President can sign the bill or not. If it's signed...



13. The bill is now law.

Activity: Simulate the law making process

1. Have students agree on an issue that requires a law in the country.
2. Set up your class to represent the legislature: Divide the class into three groups. Make one group members of the Senate. Make the other two groups members of the National Assembly, with one group representing the government and the other group representing the opposition.
3. Have the Senate elect a Chairperson and the National Assembly elect a Speaker (Remind the Speaker of his/her role in the National Assembly, especially the fact that he/she must not take sides).
4. Follow the steps of making a law
 - Government/opposition present the bill
 - MNAs debate the bill
 - MNAs vote on the bill (If over 50% of the vote is in favour of the bill, send it to the Senate)
 - Present the Bill, select committee review discussion, and voting on the bill (If the bill gets the majority vote, send it to the President (the teacher) for assent).
5. If the President gives assent to the bill, the bill becomes an Act of Parliament and a law for the country.

¹ On special days in NA and Senate, opposition members can present bills.

Executive Branch

The Executive Branch of the government carries out the policies and runs the daily affairs of the government. At the federal level the executive branch comprises of the President, Prime Minister, a cabinet (Ministers with special responsibilities) and the civil bureaucracy. At the provincial level the executive consists of the Governor, the Chief Minister and the provincial civil service.

*The President is elected for a five-year term by members of the Senate, MNAs and MPAs. The President is eligible for re-election but cannot hold office for more than two consecutive terms. The President may be removed from office for incapacity or gross misconduct by two thirds vote of the members of the Parliament.

The Prime Minister is responsible for implementing the policy of the government. The PM is assisted by the Federal Cabinet which comprises the federal ministers and ministers of state, each responsible for one government ministry. Federal Ministers must be elected members of Parliament.

Members of the civil service are not elected representatives but government employees. They perform the thousands of tasks necessary for a government to run effectively. Some might research information to help in making new policies or write details for new laws whereas others might collect taxes, process passports, deliver mail or check health regulations.

Because civil servants carry out the daily business of the country, they have the ability to influence how the government responds to the needs of citizens. In fact, civil servants are often the only direct contact that most citizens have with the government.

Activity:

Set up the class to represent the Ministry responsible for implementing the law made in the above activity. Have one student act as the Minister, one student act as the Secretary and the rest of the class members of the Ministry. Ask the Minister to chair the meeting and discuss what actions to take to implement the law.

Judicial Branch

The core function of the judicial branch is to interpret the law. The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court, the High court in each province and other lesser courts. Figure 5 shows the hierarchical relationship between the courts that are part of the judicial branch of the government of Pakistan.

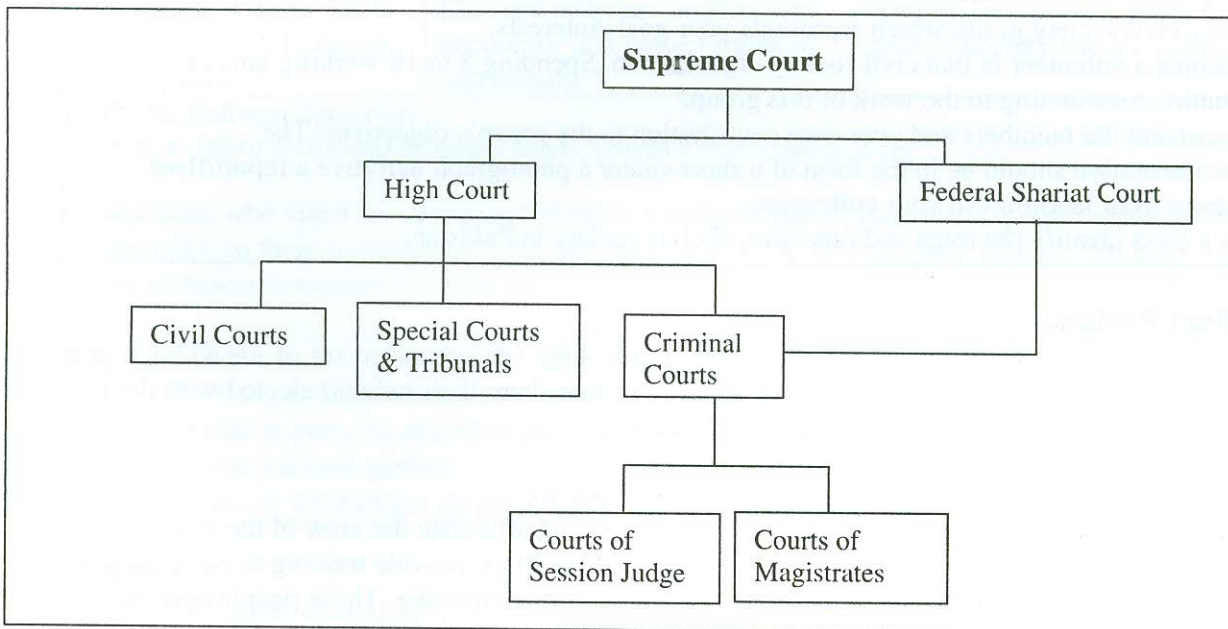


Figure 5: The Court System of Pakistan

IV. NON-STATE INSTITUTIONS

Civil Society

There are many definitions of civil society but the more commonly used definition is that of groups/associations organized by individuals around common interests. These groups/associations are independent from government (civic bureaucracy, courts) and businesses. Civil society groups/associations are considered to be democratic as individuals come together voluntarily and decisions are shared and agreed by the members. Thus, a strong civil society engaged in a diverse range of public activities is an essential element of a healthy democracy as it enables all citizens to articulate their concerns to all levels of the government.

In a society there are competing interests, these interests must be clearly articulated, heard and responded by the governments. Different civil society groups/associations compete against each other to demand their interests from the government, the government then balances the pressures from different interests groups and responds accordingly, usually with the motivation to gain the votes in the election. In order to influence government decisions civil society groups/associations sometimes hire professional lobbyists. The lobbyists help them in identifying influential people, arranging meetings with them and showing and employing their best suited strategies to influence decisions.

In democratic and pluralist societies, governments encourage and require the existence of active civil society groups/associations as they serve as a source of information and knowledge for government which can then make policies compliant with the major interests of the people.

One of your basic constitutional as well as human rights is freedom to form associations and groups, which means that you can come together with others to form a civil society organization. There are many civil society organizations in Pakistan. In Pakistan they are commonly known as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). While many of the organizations do work to promote the public good civil society have been criticized for not reflecting the true purpose of civil society and/or being funded by external sources.

Activity

Choose a civil society group which represents your goals/interests.

- Become a volunteer in that civil society organization. Spending 8 to 10 working hours two-months, contributing to the work of this group.
- Document the members and your own contribution to the group's objectives. The documentation should be in the form of a short video/ a photograph narrative a report/flyer.
- Present your learnings to your colleagues.
- As a class identify the roles and functions of civic society in Pakistan.

Political Parties

A political party is a group of people who share an ideology (an organized set of ideas). Each political party works to get candidates from their party (or those that share their beliefs) elected with the purpose of winning and obtaining power (form the government)

There are many functions of political parties. The functions are

- **Representation:** The capacity of parties to respond to and articulate the view of the voters.
- **Elite formation and recruitment:** Recruit people into politics, provide training to equip them with the knowledge, skills and experience and offer them a career structure. These people become political elites.
- **Goal formulation:** Their programme of government provide basis of coherent sets of policy options which give the electorate opportunity to choose among those realistic and achievable goals.

- **Interest articulation and aggregation:** Act as a means for articulation and aggregation of the different interests in the society (business, labour, religious, ethnic groups).
- **Socialization and mobilization:** Encourage electorate to participate in the political processes through their awareness raising campaigns and other activities for citizens.
- **Organization of government:** Help in the formation of the government, provide the degree of stability and coherence and foster unity and agreements, facilitate cooperation between governmental processes and institutional relationships.

[Adapted from Heyword, A. (2002). Politics. New York: Palgrave Macmillan].

The complex interrelationships between and among parties, structure the way the political system works in practice. The organization and structure of the political system influences the distribution of power within the society. Power can either be widely dispersed among parties or concentrated in the hands of the elected party. The kind of party system a country has affects the range and choice available to the electorate and contributes to the stability and cohesion of the government. Common party systems are:

- One party system enjoys monopoly of power by excluding other parties and functions as permanent government.
- Two-party system enjoys more power in the government but has a roughly equal share in it and power alternates between these parties.
- Multiparty system creates internal checks and balances within government and all the parties have some share of power in a ‘coalition government’.

Different political parties, politicians and civil movements have different beliefs and ideological positions. A political spectrum is used to explain these positions.

LEFT-WING	CENTRE	RIGHT-WING
Support change in order to improve the welfare of all citizens.	Tradition is important, but change must be supported if most people want it.	Tradition is important; change should be treated with caution.
Governments should play a larger role in people's lives, especially in providing social services.	Governments should play a role only so that it improves the lives of citizens.	Governments should play a small role. Private businesses should ensure needs of citizens are met.
Law and order are important to protect the rights of all citizens fairly and equally.	Law and order are important to encourage and protect rights of individuals.	Emphasizes law and order to protect society and its traditions.

Figure 6: The Political Spectrum

[Evans, M. et. al. (2000). Citizenship Issues and Action. Toronto: Prentice Hall (p.127).]

Most candidates who stand for elections belong to a political party. Thus elected representatives are not only responsible to their constituencies but they also need to be loyal to their parties. The party expects its elected members to support its goals and policies.

Activity

Discuss the following and summarize your points:

- There is a decline in party membership globally. In your opinion, what criteria of judgment should be used to assess the political parties?
- In what ways and to what extent do parties in Pakistan promote democracy?

The Media

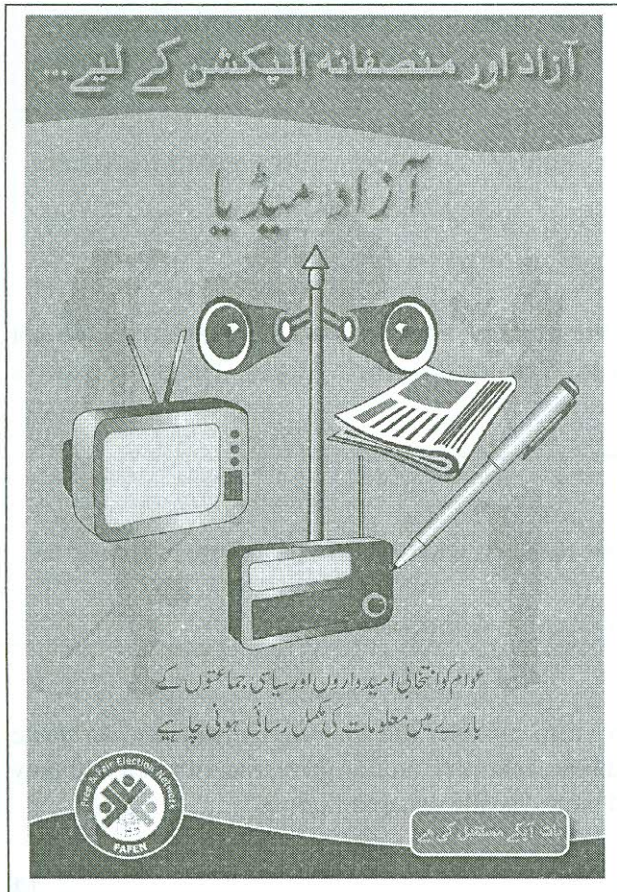
Access to information is vital in a democracy as it provides citizens the knowledge required to make informed decisions and to keep ‘checks’ on their elected representative and/or government to ensure they carry out the wishes of the people who elected them and work for the common good.

In democratic societies, the media is identified as a fourth 'power' after the three state 'powers' executive, legislature and judiciary, as it has the power to keep the general public informed, promotes respect for the freedom of speech of citizens as it allows diversity of views (including criticisms about the government) to be heard and shapes public opinion affecting the political decision making process. Because of this important role the media plays it must be free and independent and must ensure factually correct information is provided to the public as the public uses the information to make its views and concerns known to the government which then facilitates the government in dealing with and responding to the public views and concerns more directly and effectively. Sometimes the media presents as truth information that is taken out of context or exaggerated widening the scope of manipulation and dishonesty and weakening the role of representative institutions such as parliaments. In addition to being free and independent, the media must also be responsible.

The kind of information presented to the public through the media is often determined by the government, owners of the media and businesses. They shape the news agenda by controlling the dissemination of information. This is called 'news management' or 'political marketing' or 'spin'.

'A spin' is a presentation of information so as to elicit a desired response or being 'economical with the truth'. It is usually used to promote one issue or aspect, to highlight a specific section or to minimize a contentious section.

In autocratic societies the government controls the media with the view of shaping opinion in their favour. Media barons and business can also influence the information provided by biasing it towards their own political and economic ideologies and interests. Sometimes the government allows private media but controls them by using the 'carrot and stick' approach in which sympathetic coverage about government is rewarded but the criticism about it is penalized. In Pakistan struggle for freedom of the media led to the promulgation of the Information Ordinance Pakistan in 2002. However, the ordinance on freedom of information and its implementation needs to be continuously assessed to ensure free and responsible media in the society.



One of the key attributes of free elections is the development of an informed citizenry. The role of the media is to not only provide information but also to educate the public. Prior to elections the media can educate about the electoral system, the election laws and the voting process. It can also provide information about candidates' ideas and views on issues of interest to the public. The information shared should be authentic, unbiased and balanced to enable the electorate to make sound decisions regarding who to vote for. Following the elections the media can inform the electorate whether the electoral process was free and fair.

Two tools necessary in a democracy both for the media and for citizens are [1] Information Gathering and Processing, and [2] Critical Thinking. These tools are discussed below.

Tool 1: INFORMATION GATHERING AND PROCESSING

The ability to acquire information from different sources, interpret the meaning and significance of the information and make sound decisions on the basis of the processed information are key skills for democratic citizenship. The steps in gathering and processing information are given below.

Formulate Question(s)

The first step is to formulate question(s) about the issue/problem/event which you want to find out more about. Your question could be: How can we assess the process of transparent, fair and free election in Pakistan?

Locate Information

Since your question regards elections the best sources might be:

- Election experts (Election Commission staff, constitutional lawyers);
- Books on Democratic Elections;
- Newspaper reports;
- Reviews and reports by election observers.

Acquire Information

Once you have identified the relevant sources, you need to decide how you can acquire information from them. You can acquire information through

- conducting interviews from relevant people: experts, general public, the target group;
- reading the texts: books, journals, newspaper, sites;
- observing events, behaviour of people, and pictorial/graphic/statistical images: election campaign advertisement, daily media coverage.

Use Organizers to Record Information

You can record your information using organizers:

- Timeline-order chronologically the development of an issue/problem/event: For example, development of election process;
- Fishbone-identify two different positions to the issue/problem/event: For example, different positions about election process;
- Venn diagram-compare ideas/arguments/characteristics: For example, the actual election process against the ideal;
- Spider map-identify key ideas/concepts/arguments with supporting evidences/sub-themes: For example, arguments about the actual election process;
- Storyboard-summarize answers to questions: Who, what, when, where, why and how: For example, political party campaigns.

To record your information you need to take notes by using short forms, abbreviations and symbols or write short information in bullet points.

Abbreviations/symbols/pictures	Words
Devt	Development
?	Question
😊	Happy
*	Important

Interpret Information

After you have recorded information from different sources you need to interpret the information using the critical thinking skills. (Refer to page....). You need to evaluate whether you have answered your questions about the issue/problem/event and need to make sense of and assess all the information you have gathered. Use the following questions to analyze and synthesize the information:

- Is the information collected relevant to my question?
- Have I got sufficient information or do I need more to answer my question accurately and thoroughly?
- Do I have facts, statistics, opinions, value judgments, arguments? What balance do I need to ensure that I answer my question with statement and facts?
- What trends are there in my information? Have I got a number of facts and statements that support each other? What kind of groups of ideas and things can I make? Or can I compare different statements from sources?
- Do different parts of my information widely differ? If so, are they accurate or simply different points of view? Are there any discrepancies in my information?

Draw Conclusions

From the information, draw conclusions and ensure they are based on and supported by facts and statements.

Tool 2: CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is making a judgment about what would be sensible or reasonable to believe or do in any situation. There are a lot of situations that call for critical thinking: problem solving, decision making, issue analysis, inquiry, and even reading, writing, listening to someone and speaking. However simply engaging in these processes is not critical thinking. Critical thinking is not an activity but a quality. Critical thinking is a thoughtful response to a particular situation by making appropriate use of intellectual resources. The intellectual tools required for critical thinking are background knowledge, criteria for judgment, critical thinking vocabulary, thinking strategies and habits of mind.

- **Background knowledge:** You need to possess relevant background knowledge from different sources for thoughtful reflection about the topic and make well-informed judgments on the matter before you.
- **Criteria for judgment:** You need to understand and apply appropriate criteria for judgment. Criteria like accuracy, reliability, logical coherence, weight of evidence, clarity, precision and relevancy must be developed. These criteria can be used in judging and monitoring the reasoning and actions of oneself and others.
- **Critical thinking vocabulary:** You need to understand meanings of some vocabulary or set of concepts that permits you to make important distinctions among the different kinds of issues and thinking tasks facing you.
- **Thinking strategies:** Strategies that guide thinking can be making lists of reasons for and against value positions, talking through a problem, using models (metaphors, drawings, symbols) to simplify problems and various graphic organizers to represent information.
- **Habits of mind:** Open-mindedness, an inquiring attitude, an intellectual work ethic, respect for quality are habits of mind required to apply relevant criteria and strategies in promoting critical thinking.

Activity

Choose an issue/problem/event related to democracy in Pakistan and gather information from a) a newspaper source, b) TV news channel and c) relevant news agency website. Read and judge the information from these sources using the criteria. Record your analysis in the following grid.

Criteria	Sources	A news article from newspaper	A TV news information	An online news text
What is the purpose of the information? Who is presenting this information? What are the political/ideological views of the author?				
Are the ideas relevant to the argument/claim? What supporting and disconfirming ideas are presented?				
On what evidence is the claim based? Where do these evidences come? Who produced these evidences? Are the evidences sufficient to support the claim?				
Are facts and opinions clearly defined? Are there any distortions or errors or omissions? Whose point of view is being expressed? Are different voices included?				
Are ideas clear? Is the purpose of the author clear? Are the conclusions clear? Are implications clear?				
What similarities and differences are there in the way the information was presented by each source?				

Draw conclusions regarding the information. Avoid being unduly influenced by what others say and decide what you think and why, defend your position with strong and worthy evidences.

V. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

A strong democratic society requires informed, active and responsible citizens to participate in the political processes. Thus, now that you have developed knowledge and understanding about democratic citizenship and have some skills and dispositions you need to learn how to use them to participate in an informed and responsible way in the forthcoming elections by voting, joining civil society groups to become independent election observer or standing for office yourself.

Who, Why, and How to Become a Voter?

In a democracy the participation of the people in decision making about issues that affect them is very important. Voting is the method by which the electorate in a democracy appoint representatives to government. Free and fair elections allow people to select from among candidates standing for office those who will form the government.

Why Vote?

- Those who are elected will form the government and make decisions about things important to you – such as education, health care, taxes. These decisions will affect you now and have repercussion for the future as well. Voting is your chance to choose decision makers who you think will make the best decisions. Your vote represents your participation in all these decisions. The decisions, taken by a government which has been elected by a large number of the people in free and fair elections, are considered more legitimate and acceptable. In some countries, voting is seen to be so important that it has been made compulsory and penalties are imposed on the citizens who do not cast their votes.
- The quality of our life is influenced by issues and problems at the local, national and global levels. Candidates standing for elections indicate their positions on these issues. Through voting you indicate how the issues and problems should be addressed and thus you can bring a positive change in the society.
- In the process of election and voting a relationship is established between voters and elected representative. Elected representatives strive to satisfy their voters. If they fail to keep the confidence of voters, chances are that they would not be elected again. Your vote gives people power but also takes it away from them when they do not use the power for the improvement of the people.

Even though yours is only a single vote, it is very important as it has both a direct and indirect impact on the elections process.

Level of election	Type of the elections	Electoral relation of seat	Number of seats	Direct or indirectly
National assembly	General Elections (and by elections for a seat in your constituency that becomes vacant due to any reason)	National assembly election constituency from where you belong.	1	Direct
National assembly	Special elections	Reserved seats for women	60	Indirect
National assembly	Special elections	Reserved seats for minorities	10	Indirect
Provincial assembly	General Elections (and by elections)	Provincial assembly election constituency from where you belong	1	Direct
Provincial assembly	Special elections	Reserved seats for women	128	Indirect
Provincial assembly	Special elections	Reserved seats for minorities	23	Indirect
Senate	Term elections	Federal capital, tribal areas, and reserved seats for provinces	100	Indirect
Election of president	Term election	Through the voting of members of the Senate, National assembly and provincial assemblies of all four provinces.	1	Indirect
Referendum	Referendum	National issue		Direct

Votes cast directly are counted and have a direct influence on the outcome of an election. However, where instead of voting, directly, your representative casts his/her vote for an election your vote has latent importance. Let us look at an example of voting in the 2002 elections in a provincial constituency. In this area registered voters were 101,443. Total votes cast were 47,682. Correct votes were 45,846, whereas 1836 votes were rejected. The average voting rate was 47%. Five candidates participated in the election and received the following number of votes

First candidate	Second candidate	Third candidate	Fourth candidate	Fifth candidate
14470	156	21	31015	185

In this constituency the fourth candidate Ms Najma was elected as a member of the provincial assembly. Her vote value is $1/31015$ or 0003. When she will give her opinion on an issue, the power of her voters in the shape of the number of votes will be included in it.

Who can vote?

All Pakistani citizens who are at least eighteen years of age before January 1 of the year the election date is announced, who are residents in an electoral area and whose names appear on the electoral rolls, can vote.

Do you know?

In the past voting was restricted to those who owned property, were educated, or of a certain gender or racial origin. Today, these restrictions have been abandoned with the only limitation being age. Even though entitled, many people do not vote. Therefore in some countries such as Australia, Belgium and Italy voting is compulsory.

How to become a voter?

You can become a voter by getting registered in the electoral rolls. To be registered in the electoral rolls you must provide proof of your identity. The best way to do this is by providing a national identity card (NIC).

How to get a computerized NIC?

1. Obtain an application form from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). If you live in a city go to the District Registration Office (DRO) or NADRA swift Registration offices. In rural areas go to the NADRA swift registration office or obtain an application form from a mobile van.
2. Fill in the application form.
3. Take the filled in application form and following documents to NADRA office.
 - i. Birth Certificate
 - ii. Educational Certificate
 - iii. Parents ID cards
 - iv. Children registration certificate or B. Form

(Note: If you do not have the above documents you can submit the National Identity Card (NIC) Number of any family member or relative)

At the NADRA office the information on the application form is transferred to a computer and your photographs and finger prints are taken. A copy of the information form is given to you for verification. Check the copy carefully to ensure there are no mistakes. The computerized application form and all the documents is given to you for attestation.

4. Take the application form to a gazetted officer or appointed candidate for attestation.
5. Submit the attested form with the requisite fees (75 Rs. 30 days, 150 Rs 15 days) in NADRA's registration office, where you will get a token.
6. If you live in a city, your CNIC card will be sent to your home. If you live in a town or village you must take the token and obtain your CNIC from the NADRA registration offices.

(Note: If your CNIC is lost submit your CNIC number with Rs. 140. A duplicate card will be given to you).

Now that your CNIC is acquired you must register yourself in the electoral rolls.

How to get registered in the Electoral Rolls (Voters list)

1. In 2006, enumerators from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) visited each household to collect data of eligible voters. Electoral forms containing data from each household were computerized and a draft voters list was prepared in 2007. During a 21-day public display of the draft list in June-July 2007, eligible voters could add their names to this list, correct their details on the list, or object to names on the list. The 2007 Final Electoral Roll (FER) was published in October 2007 for the general elections in 2008.
2. Eligible voters can continue to add their names to the voters' list by visiting the district offices of the ECP and filling out the appropriate form.
3. Voter registration closes when the ECP announces the schedule for the next elections.

What is an Electoral Area/ Constituency?

The electoral rolls are prepared based on the electoral area in which the voters reside.

- a) in rural areas,
 - i) a village or a census block;
- b) in urban areas, -
 - i) where there is a municipal ward or a census block, such ward or census block;
 - ii) where there is no municipal ward or a census block, a well-defined Mohallah or a street, and
 - iii) where the ward or census block, Mohallah or street is too big, a well-defined part thereof;
- c) such other areas as may be determined by the Chief Election Commissioner.

Adapted from First Time Voters 2007 Asia Foundation

Becoming an Informed Voter

To become an informed voter you need to find out which political parties are taking part in the elections and what is each manifesto of the political party. The manifesto tells you what the party will do, how they will get it done and why what they plan to do is important. You will also want to choose a candidate that you agree with on important issues and that you feel would be a good person for the job of representing the citizens voice in government. Both are important.

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for in a candidate.

Your first step in picking a candidate is to decide what issues you care about and the character of the leader you want. Begin by making a list of issues (leadership qualities). These might come up in the news and in polls. Then make a list of that are important to you. A list of issues and qualities that you might consider is given in Figure 7.

Issues:	Leadership Qualities and skills:
Access to education	Connection with and concern for the people
Access to health care	Experience
Women's rights	Honesty & Integrity
Employment	Leadership ability
Children's rights	Taking responsibility
Disparity between rich and poor	Vision
Environment	Effective communicator
Spiraling prices	Effective decision-maker
Relations with other countries	Knowledge and understanding of current issues
Corruption in government	

Figure 7: List of possible issues and leadership qualities

Step 2: Create a Candidate Report Card like the one below. Grade each candidate in your constituency using a five point scale with 1 being the worst grade and 5 being the best grade.

Candidates Report Card					
Issues	Names of Candidates				
Leadership qualities and skills					

Step 3: Do an inquiry to find the information you need?

You could find the information needed by:

- Evaluating each political parties election manifesto;
- Analysing election campaign advertisements (ads);
- Reading your local newspaper and/or listening to the news on television or radio critically on daily basis to understand the election process and candidates; and
- Talking to your friends about the election

Other ways to learn about candidates

- Organize or attend a "Meet the Candidates" forum at your school with all candidates from your constituency invited to present their plans if elected
- Attend political rallies and other events to learn more about candidates

Evaluating a Manifesto

A party's election manifesto is a formal written statement of its principles, policies, and goals for the next five years. This includes the party's stance and policy considerations for particular issues and commitments to special interests groups. It offers clues to future politics should the party come to power. It is important to evaluate a political party's manifesto as studies by political scientists have shown that the winning party's manifesto is acted upon in some way or another, either through executive order, budgetary and policy proposals or successfully enacted legislation.

The following method is recommended for evaluating a party manifesto. Create a grid like the one given below for each party manifesto. Read the manifesto and fill in the grid. Remember that most important policy commitment to the public or interests groups/influential individuals are always at the beginning of the manifesto and less important ones further down the bottom.

	Commitment to Public	Commitments to Interest Groups/ Influential individuals
Important		
Somewhat Important		
Trivial		

After you have completed the grid look at it carefully. If the parties are seeking to be responsive to the public, the top left cell should have many entries, while the top right cell should be empty; the middle left cell should have several entries and the middle right cell should have few or no entries. If the party is going to be responsive to interest groups and influential individuals the top right cell should be full of entries while the top left cell should be empty.

Analysing a Campaign Advertisement

It's important for citizens to look carefully at political advertisements in newspapers and on television to identify the truth, falsity or deceptiveness of the advertisements. There are two main features of any

advertisement: the content and the structural features. You can get help in analysing the political content of advertisement by reading newspapers and listening to television programmes. These programmes generally ignore the structural features which are used to influence and persuade you need to be aware of them. Below are some tools to help you analyze these structural features of campaign advertising.

Candidates Mythologies

Often mythological features are attributed to candidates in campaign ads.

View of candidate	Mythological features	Perception created
Saviour	Larger than life figure of person	He/she will save you
Hero	People trying to touch him	You feel pride/you feel safe.
Friend of the people	Shaking hands of people	He/she is a friend
Father/mother	Kissing babies, supporting laws that favour children.	You can trust him/her. He/she will care for you.

Props

Props are generally objects shown in the scenes. Sometimes other people can serve as props.

Emotion-communicating faces

All of the faces and their expressions are carefully planted in ads. A most common approach is to show an opponent's face at its most unattractive and show that face as background for words written on the screen to indicate what awful things she/he has done. Faces are probably a candidate's most direct means to creating feelings in viewers.

Appeals

Every ad, political or otherwise, has at its center an appeal. Insurance ads appeal to fears of disasters; cosmetics ads appeal to personal ego; ads for candidates appeal to positive feelings such as patriotism or pride and attack ads to fears like war or unemployment.

Music and background sounds

Both the nature of and volume of music is important. Inspiring music is used for candidates' ads and music from horror movies in attack ads.


Film editing and camera use

Slow-motion is commonly used to increase the importance of an image. Extreme close-ups increase our perceptions of importance. They also emphasize emotion, evil, and truthfulness. Shooting from above the candidate when greeting a crowd provides an impression of warmth and bonding. Black and white pictures usually mean the topic is serious and, most likely, negative.

Clothes

Clothes are chosen to show the viewer something "important" about the candidate. For example, expensive clothing shows power and authority and regular clothes show hard work and empathy with ordinary people.


آزاد اور منصفانہ الیکشن کے لیے...



اچھے لیڈر کی خصوصیات

1. عوام اور ملتان کی ضروریات سے باخبر ہو۔
2. عوام سے ہر وقت رابطے میں رہے۔
3. عوام کے سامنے جاوے ہو۔
4. انکشافی کامیابیوں کے سطر کر کے مضامین طلاق کا پابند ہو۔
5. دولت حاصل کرنے کے لیے غیر قانونی ذرائع استعمال نہ کرے۔
6. عوام کے مسائل حل کرنے کے لیے عملی اقدامات کرے۔

اچھی قیادت کے لیے سوچیں سمجھ کر ووٹ دیں



بات آپکے مستقبل کی ہے

Depicted Actions

What the candidate is doing in a support ad and what the opponent is doing in an attack ad are important. For example, getting off a plane shows international expertise or care for the whole country. Signing papers shows ability to get important things done. Greeting ordinary people shows popularity and caring. Speaking from a podium emphasizes power and good ideas.

Supers and Code Words

Supers are words written in large letters. A super says, "Pay attention to this factoid or claim." Supers can use code words which are words that sound simple but carry significant unconscious meaning for viewers. A code word like "values" makes a candidate appear upright and moral even though exact values are not clearly stated. It also indicates the opponent does not have values.

Step 3: Choose a candidate

Now that you have the information you need make an informed choice.

Step 4: Promote your candidate

Having made an informed choice, do not just sit back, promote the candidate you believe in

- Talk to friends and co-workers about your candidate
- Attend candidate meetings and ask tough questions and listen to answers.
- Write letters to editors on key issues
- Praise fair and criticize unfair campaign ads.

[Adapted from: <http://www.washingtonvoter.org/documents/htpac04.pdf>]

Educate others

- Put up neutral voter education posters in your school or community
- Organize or attend a voter education mela or other event at your school and ask an NGO for assistance and information
- Write a thoughtful Letter to the Editor or "OpEd" for your school or community newspaper about the election

Casting a Vote

Preparing for Election Day

Find out the name and number of the Polling Station (PS) where you have to vote. It will usually be a government school or another government building. Find out where it is located and decide how you will go from your home to the PS. Commonly both males and females can vote at the same PS allowing family members to travel together to cast their votes. Remember the law forbids candidates from providing transport to the voter to go to the PS as it may pressurize the voter to vote for the candidate rather than the voters own choice.

When you reach the PS you will see that political parties have set up their camps outside the PS to guide and help voters. These camps must be at least 400 metres from the PS. The parties usually have a copy of the electoral list (the voters' list), which they use to tell voters their serial number on the electoral list and which booth in the PS they must go to in order to vote.

Each PS is divided into 2 or more booths. Every booth is an independent unit. For National/ Provincial Assembly election, the PS is headed by a Presiding Officer who is assisted by three officers in each booth. Once you enter the PS you stand in the queue according to your gender out side your assigned polling booth. At your turn you will enter in the room or hall of the polling booth.

Identification of the voter

The polling officer will call you before the first table and check your NIC/CNIC and confirm that your name

Voting by post

Voters such as Government employees and members of Armed forces and their families posted out of their constituency, people who are in jail or legal custody, polling staff, and police staff who cannot cast their votes because they are on duty on Election Day can vote by mail.

To vote by mail you must send an application to the returning officer of your constituency and obtain ballot paper by post. After marking the ballot papers for the candidates of choice, the ballots are sent to the returning officer who counts these votes when the ballots are being consolidated.

is in the electoral list. He/she will call your name loudly so that polling agents of candidates can hear it. Then he/she will cross through your name on the voters list and mark the thumb of your left hand with inerasable ink. Crossing you name on the list and applying the ink are methods to prevent any voter from casting a ballot more than once. It also prevents any other person from trying to vote using your name.

Issuance of national assembly ballot paper

Then you go to the Assistant Presiding Officer 1 (APO1) who will give you a green ballot paper for national assembly vote. Each ballot has two parts -- the ballot paper and its counterfoil. The ballot paper has the name and election symbols of all the candidates. The counterfoil has blank spaces where the APO1 writes the details of the voter such as your name, NIC number, serial number in electoral list, gender, and electoral area. The voter also puts his or her thumbprint on the counterfoil. (The ballot paper does not contain this personal information so your vote is not associated in any way with your name. Therefore, your vote is secret.). The ballot paper is torn off and given to you while the lower counterfoil remains fixed in the ballot paper book. The APO1 will affix the official seal on the back of the ballot paper and put his/her signature on it. Later, when ballots are counted, each ballot must have this seal and signature from the APO in order to be a valid ballot. The number of ballot counted must also match the number of counterfoils remaining with the APO.

Issuance of provincial assembly ballot paper

The APO 2 will give you the ballot paper for the provincial assembly vote, which is white in color. The APO 2 follows the same procedure as APO 1. He/she will also give you a stamp with nine blocks which you will use to mark one election symbol on each ballot paper for your chosen national and provincial candidates.

Secret voting in screened-off compartment

Now the voter takes the stamp and goes behind a cardboard screen to mark his or her ballots. Each voter should mark only one name or symbol on each ballot paper. If a voter makes two marks on a ballot, the ballot will be invalid and it will not be counted. The voter must then fold each ballot correctly first from top to bottom (vertically) and then across (horizontally).

Place the ballot paper in ballot box

On returning from the screened area insert the folded green ballot paper in the green ballot box (national assembly) and white folded ballot paper in white box (provincial assembly).

Becoming an Independent and Impartial Election Observer

Civil society organizations often observe elections either individually or by forming a network for a short term. These groups recruit citizens to act as non-partisan and impartial observers voluntarily and without any monetary incentives. As an impartial observer, you can help ensure election integrity and help citizens to know whether the basic electoral rights are being protected and basic procedures are being followed. Your presence may discourage voters, candidates and officials from breaking the law.

Did you know?

You can also volunteer as a "Polling Agent" for a political party or independent candidate on Election Day

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN)

FAFEN is a network of 30 leading civil society groups in Pakistan that formed in 2006. The purposes of FAFEN are to observe the preparation and administration of elections, provide voter education, and advocate for improvements in the election process.

You can find out more about FAFEN at their web site www.fafen.org

You can volunteer as an election observer with FAFEN by writing to P.O. Box No. 1345, Islamabad or contact@fafen.org

The Stages of Election Observation

a) Pre-election observation focuses on the implementation of the election legislation, the performance of the election administration, the conduct of the election campaign, and the role of the media. Pre-election observers:

- Assess whether election legislation is broadly supported among political factions in the country. Read other laws which have implications for the election process such as the law on political parties, citizenship, voter-registration, campaign-financing, criminal and administrative code, laws about human rights, and the law of freedom of information/mass

media. Examine procedures and timeline for complaints and appeals, access the adequacy of facilities for filing complaints in the election law and whether the right to appeal to election bodies and courts is established with an understandable, singular and hierarchical complaint process that defines roles of each level of the election complaint resolution system.

- Assess the extent to which the election commission and the judiciary are prepared to oversee the election process and whether they are independent, non-partisan and transparent. Evaluate the roles of ministries and local authorities in the administration of the election process. Understand whether the election administration has a realistic understanding of, and adequate material and human resources to meet the requirements of an efficient election process. (E.g. *material resources*: sufficient polling-station facilities; *human resources*: a sufficient number of adequately trained election staff).
- Assess whether voter registration has a timetable and whether there are criteria for voters to establish the evidence of eligibility and voter lists are posted in advance to permit complaints about incorrect inclusions or exclusions or other inaccuracies. Evaluate effectiveness of voter/civic education and if voters are receiving objective, impartial, and timely information. Meet with candidates/parties, observe rallies and review campaign materials to gain an understanding of the political issues dominating the campaign. Find out if women, youth, and minority groups are active in the political process and seek to understand any reasons for a lack of active involvement. Enquire about the funding sources and expenditure of the political parties as well as how government spending is done and through which monitoring structures. Assess whether all contestants have an adequate and equal period of time for campaigning and for effective organization. Monitor whether political parties and candidates violate the Election Commission Code of Conduct for Parties and Candidates.
- Evaluate the extent to which private and public media is allowed to gather and report information freely without intimidation and censorship. See whether media takes responsibility to provide sufficient and balanced information to make a well-informed choice and cost and conditions of media are reasonable and equally applied to all candidates. Assess whether media covers election campaigns quantitatively and qualitatively such as amount of time and space devoted to each contestant and if this coverage is positive, negative or neutral and whether the media laws permit freedom of the media during the campaign.

b) Election Day Observation: Assessment should be done of the activities in the polling stations as well as, during the counting and tabulation process. As an election observer, you would:

- Get official accreditation from the Election Commission of Pakistan in advance of the election and through a registered observer organization or network, such as the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN).
- Arrive at the Polling Station more than one hour in advance of the opening of the polling and continue the observation process through voting, counting, and consolidation and announcement of results. Remain all day in one Polling Station or travel around to many Stations, depending upon the instructions of your sponsoring organization.
- Introduce yourself and briefly explain your visit. If the official objects to you as an accredited observer or your activities, calmly explain that you are officially accredited to observe and present your accreditation upon request. Assess election-day procedures at polling stations and at intermediate levels of the election administration. Collect qualitative and quantitative information such as filling in forms at each polling station and count centre visited to provide detailed information on the voting process.
- Fill out checklists and forms provided by your observer organization on particular incidents that you witnessed or were reported to you by others. Assess whether voting and counting are implemented in accordance with electoral regulations and universal principles and how and whether election officials address any reported irregularities. Note whether opening procedures of the polling station commences efficiently and according to regulations, whether ballot boxes are empty and properly sealed at the start of the process, whether the polling station has received

necessary materials including blank ballots. Record whether party-affiliated “Polling Agents” and non-partisan civic observers are permitted in polling stations.

- Observe the counting process in relation to whether ballots are counted accurately and check for any evidences of electoral fraud. Note whether the polling officials complete forms accounting for all ballot papers and other polling materials and verify the match number of ballots distributed to voters with the number of voters recorded as having voted. Take notice whether this material is sealed separately and unused ballot papers are invalidated before the opening of the ballot box. Accompany the election results as they are transported from the polling station to the tabulation centre (the Returning Officer’s office) and then assess whether the results from the polling station are properly included in the tabulation. Monitor each level of the tabulation process and follow the results of individual polling stations up to the national level.

Observer “Do”s and “Don’t”s

Aspects	DO	DONT
Entry to the polling station	Identify yourself and organization you represent. If refused entry, the simply write down your observations and go to the next polling station	Argue with election officials
Witnessing the empty ballot box	Witness the moment when empty ballot box is shown to all present in one polling station	Miss the opening of the polling station as it is when the empty ballot box is shown
Request for advice	Provide a copy of the election law if you are approached for advice.	Give advice
Observed or reported irregularities	Record the complaint or observation	Take any action on the observation or complaint
Approached by media	Refer to the Head Office for information	Make any comment on what you have observed
Voter and polling station staff privacy	Extend your respect	Take photographs without seeking permission
Risk avoidance	Leave the station if your role is compromised and misunderstood	Take any unnecessary and undue risks
Observation	Move around in and outside the polling station	Stay on one particular point
Record observation	Train yourself to use the data sheets for observation	Include your personal judgments without any facts and evidences
Time management	Make a timetable so you can visit more than one polling station	Try to go to another polling stations if time and distance does not allow
Safety of data	Submit your checklists and forms promptly to your supervisor	Destroy the checklists or forget to send them in

c) Post election Observation

- Enquire whether and how complaints and appeals are dealt within the due process of law and also whether any interference was done to the complainant and assess the extent to which the process was/is transparent and independent.
- Monitor political parties’ and candidates’ acceptance of the results of the elections.
- Monitor the transition, if any, from the previous government to the newly-elected government.

[Adapted from Election Observation Handbook 5th Edition (2005) Warsaw: OSCE- ODIHR]

Standing as a Candidate for an Election

Getting nominated and registered

If you want to stand for election to the National or Provincial Assembly, you need to acquaint yourself with the Election Laws 2002 of Pakistan (<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/docs/volume1.pdf>). Ensure that you fulfil the requirements to stand for election as an MNA or MPA, which include:

- Be a citizen of Pakistan.
- Be not less than 25 years of age
- Be enrolled as a voter in the electoral list.
- Be a graduate.

The President of Pakistan makes an announcement of the election date(s). The Election Commission then sets dates for start of candidate registration and nomination, and announces important dates in election process. Nomination packs are available from the election office shortly before the notice period. You can stand as an independent candidate, but if you want to stand as a party candidate you'll need to fill out an authorization form and get permission from the (leadership) of the political party. Before seeking allotment of prescribed symbol, you must file a declaration before the Presiding Officer regarding party affiliation along with a certificate from the political party showing that you are a party candidate from the constituency.

You must be proposed by one voter and seconded by one voter from the constituency and they must sign your nomination form. You need to provide the following documents and complete the following forms:

- A prescribed nomination form with the details of the constituency, your full name, home address in full and, if required, a description;
- A declaration of consent to the nomination and fulfilling qualifications to be a member of National or Provincial Assembly;
- A financial declaration that there is no loan for an amount of two million rupees or more in your own name or in the name of the spouse/your dependents;
- A statement specifying your educational qualifications, occupation;
- National Identity Card number;
- National Tax Number
- A statement of your own, spouse/dependents' assets and liabilities on the prescribed form;
- The security deposit required by law for filing nomination papers.
- Security deposit for election to is Rs. 4,000. The security deposit for election to is Rs. 2,000. The security deposit is refundable within six month.

All these documents should be submitted to the Presiding Officer on or before the withdrawal date fixed by the Election Commission. After scrutiny of the nomination papers, the Presiding Officer prepares and publishes a list of validly nominated candidates. If your nomination papers are accepted, your name will appear on the ballot paper on the Election Day and you will be known as a 'contesting candidate'.

Running election campaigns

You can act as your own election agent or appoint an election agent if you prefer. In case you appoint an election agent, you need to submit your agent's details to the Presiding Officer by the statutory deadline. The major tasks of an election agent to be legally responsible for your political campaign, maintain the accuracy of expenses and submit relevant documents to the Presiding Officer and oversee the polling and counting of votes to ensure the accuracy and impartiality of the election. Before the commencement of the poll, appoint and notify the Presiding Officer about polling agents for each polling station. Follow the electoral codes for you campaign and for polling day. To run an effective election campaign, you need to have a campaign plan which includes campaign's goals, message, target audience and resources. Key ingredients of effective political campaigns are **manifesto**, **money** and **machine**.

- **Manifesto** is a concise document that sets down all the views and opinions that a political party or a candidate has on certain issues and it will tell the electorate the ways that the party or candidate would change these issues if they are elected to the government. To share your manifestos with voters prepare few easily understood short messages or slogans that sum up your manifesto and use the media to ensure widespread coverage
- **The machine** of the campaign is the election team. These are the people who are loyal supporters and volunteers of your political campaign. Have campaign managers work with the staff members to make and carry out strategic decisions and plans.
- **The money** is the means to attract voters to your own side using available resources and create a favourable public image to get elected. You also need to ensure that you raise and account for funds for your campaign through a transparent process.

Polling Day and Election Results

Your polling agent should be present when the polling officials show the empty ballot box and the Presiding Officer should record your polling agents' statements in the prescribed form and obtain their signatures on them. Your polling agents should observe whether any irregularities occur during polling day and, if any do, report them to the election officials or other election related people.

If you are elected as a member of the National or Provincial Assembly, CONGRATULATIONS! You now have to learn how to become an effective legislator and to serve the interests of the public in general. If you are not elected and you believe that there has been election fraud or other violation of the law, you can file an election petition with the Provincial Election Commissioner or other relevant authority. The election petition will be decided by the Election Tribunals.

Continuing Active Citizenship After the Elections

You can continue to be an active citizen after the election through engaging in the following activities.

- Organize or attend "Meet the MNA/MPA" forums at your school every quarter so that your elected representative can update you on their actions in the Assembly and receive ideas from constituents about community needs
- Organize or attend a civic education mela or other event at your school to focus on citizens' rights and responsibilities. Ask an NGO for assistance and information.
- Write a thoughtful Letter to the Editor or "OpEd" for your school or community newspaper about your elected representatives and community needs
- Watch television news and read newspapers on a daily basis to evaluate how elected representatives are performing
- Be an active member of a political party
- Be an active member of a civil society organization (NGO or other)

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This book is a result of many people's efforts and commitment for furthering education for democratic citizenship in Pakistan. Since 2002, citizens from the age of eighteen are eligible to vote in election in Pakistan. For many of these young people the general election in 2008 would be their first opportunity to vote. Most of these young citizens require to be educated to understand the democratic electoral process and their role in it. Hence Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities Pakistan (CRRP) Programme team at the Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development developed this book to develop the political literacy of these young citizens. The idea originated from Bernadette L. Dean who is a leader of the CRRP Programme team and was further actualized by all the members of the team including Bernadette Dean, Rahat Joldoshalieva, Karim Panah, Cassandra Faria, Ummeleila Amin, Shazia Solangi and Jamal Papieva.

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The team has made every effort to give credit to the sources in the book. However, we may have been unsuccessful in some instances. To these we offer sincere apologies and hope they will take our liberty in good faith. We would appreciate any information that would enable us to acknowledge the copyright holders in future editions.