

Going to the Polls

Handbook for Free Independent and Responsible Media



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Handbook for Free Independent and Responsible Media

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Dedicated to citizens of Pakistan...

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Preface

Elections have the purpose of representing political preferences of citizens, while also providing legitimacy to governments and strengthening relationships with a populace that is already established in a constitution. This is stated in the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as:

“Wherein the State shall exercise its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people.”¹

The Constitution describes the will of the people to establish a system and exercise their authority. In other words, through the process of elections citizens do not elect rulers rather they choose managers for the effective running of the system. The adoption of this process can be traced back to ancient Greeks hence the term coined “Psephology”², for the study of elections. In the Indian subcontinent elections were introduced by the British in 1884 for local bodies, while in 1909 and 1919 at provincial level.³ In the history of Pakistan there have been six general elections, while the first general election on the basis of adult franchise was held in 1970.

After the completion of the five year tenure of the incumbent government, the elections are set to be held in early 2013. There is the aspect of a youth bulge, which has been unprecedented in previous elections. Out of the 84 million voters on the electoral list 47 per cent are below the age of 35. There is also the incorporation of 36 million voters to the list through the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).⁴ And finally: One of the aspects which make these elections significant is the presence of an independent and vibrant print, electronic and social media in Pakistan.

Pakistan is at a juncture where the country is trying to develop and maintain a nascent democratic process. Frequent and prolonged years of dictatorship have dealt a hard blow to democratic practices and institutions. For more than 32 years Pakistan has been governed by military dictators at different periods. The apex law of the country has often been suspended at the behest of the leaders ruling the country. Despite democratically elected governments being in office in the past, only one was able to complete its tenure of five years under quasi dictatorship, after the elections of 2002, while the present setup is the second. Elections are

¹ The constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Preamble. April 12, 1973. Accessed online from: http://www.nrb.gov.pk/constitutional_and_legal/constitution_1/preamble.html. Date of access: October 23, 2012.

² Psephos is a Greek word meaning pebble, a mode through which election were held by Ancient Athenians.

³ Akhtar, M. J., Awan, S. M. & Haq, S. 2010. Elections of Pakistan and Response of Social Scientists: A Study of Theoretical Understandings. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS) Vol. 30, No. 2. December 2010.

⁴ Lodhi, M. 2012. Politics of the youth bulge. The News International. July 24, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-122487-Politics-of-the-youth-bulge>.

part of a transitional period, also relating to intensified media coverage and monitoring. In a democratic system media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state,⁵ the first three being legislature, executive and judiciary. The role of the media during elections is to assist citizens in developing informed opinions on whom to select as their manager. The authority and legitimacy of the governance system cannot be established if the citizens are unable to make free and informed choices at the ballot box.⁶ In the backdrop of difference in viewpoints, rising tensions and political violence leading to violent conflict, journalists and reporters have a very important role to play during elections. From a gender perspective the elections held in Pakistan have been unable to enfranchise women. Even during by-polls held in Mianwali and Mardan, women were prevented from voting.⁷ In addition, the ratio of female voters as a percentage of male has been declining at 12 percent since 2002, while the number of women voters in the current draft electoral list has declined by five percent as compared to 2008.⁸ In such a situation, the media not only has to provide objectivity, in depth and balanced information to its consumers, but also discourage factors such as hate speech and violence, which create hurdles in the process.

In Pakistan, during the last decade media and especially electronic media has witnessed independence and growth at an unprecedented scale, with approximately 90 TV channels, 106 FM radio stations, TV viewership of 86 million, 945 print media publications with a daily distribution of 6.2 million and 17,000 reporters and journalists, that will be covering the upcoming elections.⁹ As mentioned earlier, the next general elections are around the corner and while the preparations are being made by media outlets for its coverage, it has also to realize its role in the current dynamics of Pakistan. For this purpose, we have developed this handbook for journalists and reporters, on coverage and monitoring of the election process, from a consumer's perspective. This handbook has been developed on the basis of our stance regarding Free, Independent and Responsible Media (FIRM), analyzing media's freedom with responsibility and its accountability to the consumers of information.

Media has always considered itself as an institution trying to provide voice to the citizens who are not otherwise heard. If this is the case then media should echo that voice. When it comes to elections, it is expected of media to shed light on the issues which are directly affecting the citizens. For instance is the majority of the country familiar with manifestos and constitutions of various political parties of the country? Are they aware whether any party has provided their

⁵ Individualland Pakistan. 2010. Handbook for and on FIRM. Islamabad: Individualland Pakistan.

⁶ Merloe, P. and Norris, R. 2002. Media Monitoring to Promote Democratic Elections. Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

⁷ The Express Tribune. 2012. By-polls: Inquiry into barring of women from casting vote sought. February 28, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/342670/by-polls-inquiry-into-barring-of-women-from-casting-vote-sought/>.

⁸ Daily Times. 2012. Millions of women missing from draft electoral rolls. March 09, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012per cent5C03per cent5C09per cent5Cstory_9-3-2012_pg7_15.

⁹ Individualland Pakistan. 2012. Journalism in Conflict Areas of Pakistan. Retrieved from: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rockdownloads&view=file&Itemid=157.

economic or education draft policy if they were to form a government? Has the media actually posed questions towards the potential candidates running in elections regarding their manifestos? Has the media ever tried to sensitize the citizens about what a manifesto is? Has the media ever questioned or held special transmission to sensitize the citizens about the rules of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding contesting elections or highlighted the eligibility criteria of candidates taking part in the polls? Posing such questions will lead to an increased awareness level of the citizens which will in turn increase the pressure and accountability of these politicians.

We as consumers of the media are directly affected by what the media reports and do not report. We expect the media to report keeping in view internationally accepted standards of authenticity, credibility, impartiality and truthfulness. We demand that media's election coverage be citizen centric. This handbook is an attempt to articulate our stance on the issue. The handbook not only focuses on the print or electronic media journalists but also incorporates a new breed of journalists who function at even a much rapid pace i.e. the 'citizen journalists'.

The handbook also caters to the youth of this country. According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates out of the total population there are 103.698 million¹⁰ people under 25 years of age currently living in the country. A sensitized and a well aware youth vote could really make a difference in the upcoming elections.

It is not claimed that this handbook contains in depth details on every aspect of the general elections or provides answers to all the predicaments faced by the media during the coverage, but issues such as ethical dilemmas, balanced reporting, prevention of hate speech and gender concerns regarding the election process are encompassed.

It is most important to highlight the non-inclusion of women in elections or denial of their right to participate in every sphere of national life. It has been mentioned earlier that during by-elections in Mianwali and Mardan women were not allowed to vote at a number of polling stations.

It is not only denial of Article 34 of the 1973 Constitution, but denial of one of the very basic rights granted by the constitution, i.e. freedom of expression. A FIRM media can help highlight such issues and can contribute towards real democracy.

¹⁰UNDP. United Nations Development Programme Empowered lives. Resilient nation. Accessed from: <http://undp.org.pk/undp-and-the-youth.html>. Accessed on 17th September 2012.

Uniqueness of the Upcoming Elections

The upcoming elections in Pakistan are set to be held probably in 2013. There are a number of factors, which will set these elections apart:

- One of the significant aspects of these elections is the expectedly overwhelming participation by the youth. In March 2012, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) launched voter list verification through Short Message Service (SMS) for 83.2 million voters. The voters confirmed their registration by texting Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) number to 8,300. The voters received details of their electoral area through SMS. The voter could then file any objection or claim regarding any discrepancy.¹¹ According to figures present with NADRA, 39 million out of 83 million or 47 per cent of the electoral list consists of individuals between the age of 18 and 35. While around 20 per cent are in the age bracket of 18 to 25 years. From this figure of 39 million, approximately 30 million youth were not part of the electoral list before, who will be voting for the first time in the next general elections.¹² These youth are also actively engaged on social media websites, having the potential to influence the outcome of the election. In the six months during the final quarter of 2010 to first quarter of 2011, the number of Facebook users in Pakistan doubled from 1.8 to 3.6 million, out of which 52 percent are between the ages of 18 and 24.¹³
- There is also the factor of judicial activism becoming more common in recent years. Especially after the restoration of judges in March 2009, the apex court has been taking up *Suo moto* actions to initiate public interest litigations. These powers were established by Supreme Court of Pakistan under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution, in 1997.¹⁴ Judicial activism has included cases regarding abuse of power by state functionaries, manipulation of legal procedure and corruption. Related to the election procedure, the most recent case has been the manhandling of polling staff by a political candidate in interior Sindh, of which the apex court took notice after it was highlighted by the media.¹⁵ It can be expected that the apex court will have an important role to fulfil in the upcoming general elections.
- The factor which is our main focus in this publication is the unprecedented presence of print, electronic and social media in monitoring and coverage of elections. Within the

¹¹ Dawn. 2012. Over 1.67m people used SMS service to verify voter list. March 02, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://dawn.com/2012/03/02/over-1-67m-voters-used-sms-service-to-verify-voter-list/>.

¹² Shahid, A. 2012. Elections 2013: the youth factor. Dawn. May 16, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://dawn.com/2012/05/16/elections-2013-the-youth-factor-2/>.

¹³ Warraich, H. 2011. Pakistan's social media landscape. March 18, 2011. Retrieved from: http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/03/18/pakistans_social_media_landscape.

¹⁴ Blue, R., Hoffman, R. & Berg, L.A. 2008. Pakistan Rule of Law Assessment – Final Report. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Retrieved from: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADO130.pdf.

¹⁵ The Express Tribune. 2012. ECP Disqualification: Court to hear all Waheeda Shah's pleas as one. July 10, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/405939/ecp-disqualification-court-to-hear-all-waheeda-shahs-pleas-as-one/>.

past decade, the media landscape in Pakistan has gone through considerable reform, which has been no short of a revolution. The airwaves which were once ruled by the state machinery and the print media was also subject to restrictions, achieved its freedom in 2002 after a long and hard struggle. As of 2010, there were approximately 90 TV channels and 106 FM radio stations operating in Pakistan.¹⁶ According to a Gallup survey in 2009, the TV viewership in Pakistan was 86 million, consisting of 38 million cable and satellite viewers, while 48 million were of terrestrial viewership.¹⁷ In 2003, there were 945 print media publications and a daily distribution of 6.2 million, while according to Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) the current number of reporters within Pakistan is 17,000.¹⁸ Evidently this will become the most televised and media monitored election.

- Another aspect, which has surfaced during recent years in Pakistan, is the role of citizen journalism. People equipped with web-based telecommunication technology, post multimedia content on social websites and communicate their views across the globe. The media outlets have utilized this facet to highlight issues and support their analysis. Citizen journalism also involves comments and views posted by citizens on news media websites, while also adding content to news stories. A pertinent and prominent example of citizen journalism can be witnessed in the mobile video of Swat Taliban flogging, which emerged in April 2009 leading to public outrage and became one of the leading causes of support for the later military operation.¹⁹ According to 'Freedom on the Net' Annual report 2011, the internet users in Pakistan have crossed 20 million, while there are more than 100 million mobile phone subscribers.²⁰ This outreach points to the potential role and contribution of citizen journalists in the upcoming elections.

It is important that the media remains accountable towards the consumers, while providing accurate and complete information. It is imperative that citizens and media together should devise a comprehensive code of conduct, to strengthen the element of responsibility in their reporting and coverage. In this regard, initiative has been taken by the name of "GEO Asool", whereby listing down their responsibilities.²¹ It is important that the media remains free of prejudice, bigotry and bias. The election period requires for the media not only to remain balanced, but also to educate the citizens through their in-depth reporting on electoral politics.

¹⁶ Hassan, R. 2010. Media Boom: 90 Channels, 106 FM Stations in 10 Years. Retrieved on: July 11, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.viewpointonline.net/media-boom-90-channels-106-fm-stations-in-10-years.html>.

¹⁷ Gallup. 2009. Notable Changes in Viewership Landscape. Retrieved on: July 11, 2012. Retrieved from:

[http://www.gallup.com.pk/News/Mediapercent20Cyberletterpercent20Junepercent2009percent20\(2ndpercent20version\).pdf](http://www.gallup.com.pk/News/Mediapercent20Cyberletterpercent20Junepercent2009percent20(2ndpercent20version).pdf).

¹⁸ Individualland Pakistan. 2012. Journalism in Conflict Areas of Pakistan. Retrieved from:

http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&Itemid=157.

¹⁹ Walsh, D. 2009. Video of girl's flogging as Taliban hand out justice. The Guardian. April 02, 2009. Retrieved from:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/02/taliban-pakistan-justice-women-flogging>.

²⁰ Freedom House. 2011. Freedom on the Net 2011. Retrieved on: July 12, 2012. Retrieved from:

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4dad51b92.pdf>.

²¹ Geo Asool. Retrieved on: July 30, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.geo.tv/asool/>.

In our opinion, we the consumers are direct stakeholders in this process of media accountability. Therefore, through this handbook we would like to share the Consumers' code of conduct for media during elections on the basis of Free Independent and Responsible Media (FIRM) perspective.

Introduction to Electoral Politics

Election and Democracy complement one another. Likewise, no doubt elections remained central to broader strategies for promoting democracy, and genuine democracy definitely requires substantially more than democratic elections.²² Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755) in his book: *The Spirit of Laws*, states that

“in the case of elections in either a republic or a democracy, voters alternate between being the rulers of the country and being the subjects of the government. By the act of voting, the people operate in a sovereign (or ruling) capacity, acting as ‘masters’ to select their government’s servants.”²³

Elections have had a chequered history in Pakistan. In Pakistan's 65 years history, political parties and military dictatorships have ruled the country almost equally.

The electoral process has often been manipulated, compromised and undermined by the various state-actors of the country, military being the foremost. “Military dictators have used and manipulated elections to consolidate and legitimize, executive power and their own position as well as to embrace a return, periodically, to civilian rule.”²⁴ Consequently, polarization of the population takes place as result of such elections. Although there is already a demarcation of citizens who vote for a specific political leader irrespective of their will, another creed of citizens is emerging who believe that these elections are somewhat meaningless. Nevertheless the 2008 polls saw an increase in voters' turnout which was up to 45 percent as compared to 2002 elections when it was 42 percent.²⁵ However the increase by two percent might be encouraging but the remaining 55 percent of the registered voters not voting. This reiterates the fact that most of the citizens consider this a meaningless activity.

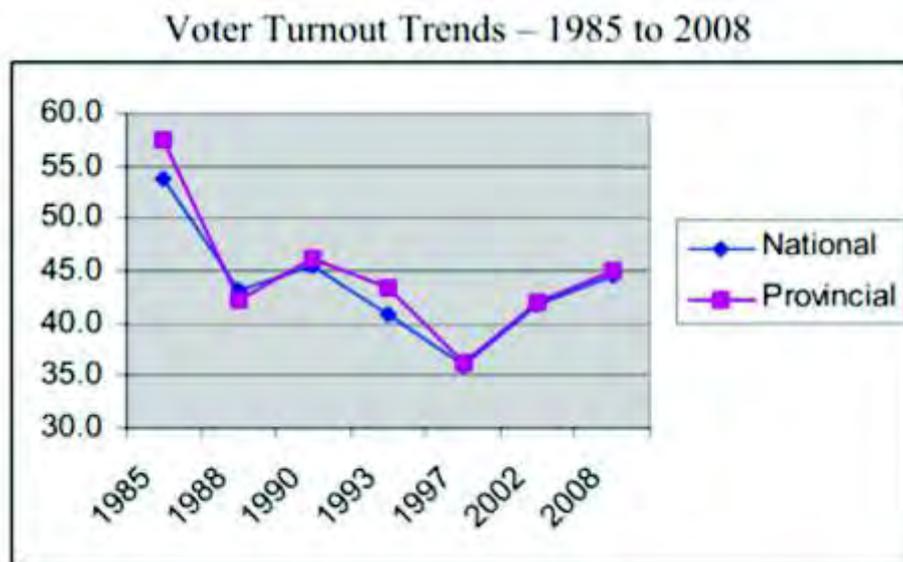
²²Aliyu, Nasiru Adamu. 2009. Concept of Democratic Elections Under International Law. Retrieved on: July 04, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.eurojournals.com/rjis_10_02.pdf.

²³Montesquieu. Spirit of the Laws. 1989. Accessed online from: <http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Election.html>. Date of Access: October 23, 2012.

²⁴UKaid from the Department of International Development. Background: Elections in Pakistan 2008. P. 1. Accessed online from: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/elections/elections-pk-2008.pdf>. Date of Access: October 23, 2012. Adapted from: 'Elections in Pakistan: The Role of the UK and the International Community 2000-2008' by Mohammad Waseem, Fauzia Yazdani and Susan Loughhead, October 2008.

²⁵Cheema, A., Gazdar, H., Farooq Naseer, M., and Sayeed, A., Herald March, 2008 “TURNOUT: Upbeat and on the Upswing” accessed from http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Herald_March_2008_Article_1.pdf. Accessed on 24th July 2012.

The following table shows the trend in the turnout rates in general elections since 1985.



Source: Dawn election cell data²⁶.

The Pakistani magazine ‘Herald’ sums this up perfectly: “The general picture up to 1997 was one of declining turnout rates. The massive decline between 1985 and 1988 was attributed to the disqualification of registered voters who did not possess national identity cards. Apart from the small recovery between 1988 and 1990 the turnout rate continued to decline until it reached a historic low of 36 per cent in the 1997 elections. Pakistan’s trend was in line with a majority of the countries that had experienced falling turnout rates in the 1990s.”²⁷

Since 1997 Pakistan has experienced rising turnout rates. However, Pakistan still has a long way to go before it catches up with Bangladesh and India where turnout rates were in the 70 and 60 per cent ranges respectively. The 2002 general elections saw an increase in the voters’ turnout because these elections were different from the previous ones due to the number of legislations. Convicted individuals were prevented from taking part in elections under the Representation of the People’s Act 1976. Several others could not contest the elections, as they did not have the required Bachelor’s Degree, which was mandatory at that time. Pakistan’s leading political personalities Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group (PML-N) were barred from standing in the elections under the new electoral laws. For the first time since 1977, non-Muslim Pakistanis that included Christians, Hindus and Zoroastrians/Parsees contested and voted for all general seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies. The age limit of voting in these elections was also lowered from 21 to 18 years. Therefore 2002 elections saw an increase in voters’ turnout.²⁸

²⁶ Cheema, A., Gazdar, H., Farooq Naseer, M., and Sayeed, A., Herald March. “TURNOUT: Upbeat and on the Upswing.” 2008. P. 1. Accessed online from: http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Herald_March_2008_Article_1.pdf. Accessed on 24th July 2012

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Story of Pakistan. 2004. General elections 2002. February 21st 2004. Accessed from <http://storyofpakistan.com/general-elections-2002/>. Accessed on 4th September 2012.

Several factors affected the turnout in 2008 elections. Even before the martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto it was expected that the return from exile of the leaders of the two mainstream opposition parties would invigorate the electoral process. The 27 December 2008 tragedy effectively put an end to the election campaign but it was thought to lead to a higher turnout through a sympathy wave for the PPP.²⁹

²⁹ Cheema, A., Gazdar, H., FarooqNaseer, M., and Sayeed, A., Herald March, 2008 "TURNOUT: Upbeat and on the Upswing" accessed from http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Herald_March_2008_Article_1.pdf. Accessed on 24th July 2012.

Form of Governance

In accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Pakistan has a federal and a parliamentary form of government with a president as head of state and Prime Minister as the head of government. It has a bicameral system of legislature. There are two houses, Upper and Lower house. The upper house is called Senate and the lower house the National Assembly. The provincial assemblies elect the Senate on the basis of equal representation from all provinces. Members of the National Assembly are elected directly by the people. All provinces have their own elected assemblies. In the federal set up of the country, both the federation and the federating units (provinces) derive their authority from the constitution and the provinces enjoy autonomy in the areas of activities assigned by the constitution. There are some functions that are the exclusive responsibility of the federal government while others can be performed either by the federal or provincial governments. All provinces have equal seats in the Senate, with the total strength of hundred and four senators. The National Assembly has 340 seats while the four provincial assemblies have 728 seats in total.³⁰

Senate

- The Senate consists of 104 members
- Out of 104, 14 are elected by each provincial assembly
- 8 members are elected from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- 2 members - a woman and a technocrat - are elected from the Federal Capital by the National Assembly members
- 4 women and 4 technocrats are elected by the members of each Provincial Assembly.

Province	General Seats	Women	Technocrat	Total
Baluchistan	14	4	4	22
FATA	8	-	-	8
Islamabad	2	1	1	4
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	14	4	4	22
Punjab	14	4	4	22
Sindh	14	4	4	22
Non Muslims	4	-	-	4
Total	66	17	17	104

³⁰UNESCAP country profile "Country Reports on Local Government Systems: Pakistan". Retrieved on: July 16, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.unescap.org/huset/lgstudy/new-countrypaper/Pakistan/Pakistan.pdf>.

National Assembly

- Members of the National Assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage
- Seats are allocated to each of the four provinces, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Islamabad Capital Territory on the basis of population
- National Assembly members serve for the parliamentary term, which is five years, unless they die or resign sooner, or unless the National Assembly is dissolved
- Although the vast majority of the members are Muslim, about five per cent of the seats are reserved for minorities
- Elections for the minority seats are held on the basis of separate electorates at the same time as the polls for Muslim seats during the general elections
- There are also 50-plus special seats for women , and women are selected (i.e. not directly elected in the general election but given representation accordingly as their parties performed in the general election) on these seat by their party head

Province	General Seats	Non- Muslim	Women	Total
Baluchistan	14		3	17
FATA	12		-	12
Islamabad	2		-	2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35		8	43
Punjab	146		35	181
Sindh	61		14	75
Total	270	10	60	340

Source: <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/composition.php>

Provincial Assembly

Province	General Seats	Non- Muslim	Women	Total
Baluchistan	51	3	11	65
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	99	3	22	124
Punjab	297	8	66	371
Sindh	130	9	29	168
Total	577	23	128	728

Qualification for a Membership of Parliament

“A person who is a citizen of Pakistan, is enrolled as a voter in any electoral roll and in case of National/Provincial Assemblies is not less than 25 years of age and in case of Senate not less than 30 years of age, is of good character and is not commonly known as one who violates Islamic injunctions, has adequate knowledge of Islamic teachings and practices, performs obligatory duties prescribed by Islam as well as abstains from major sin, is sagacious, righteous and non-profligate, honest and ameen (custodian), has not been convicted for a crime involving moral turpitude or for giving false evidence, and has not, after establishment of Pakistan, worked against the integrity of the country or opposed the ideology of Pakistan and is a graduate (has a graduate/bachelor’s degree) can contest the elections and become a member of Parliament or a Provincial Assembly.”³¹

Qualification of a Voter

“A person, who is a citizen of Pakistan, is not less than 18 years of age on the first day of January of the year in which the rolls are prepared or revised, is not declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind and is, or is, deemed to be a resident of an electoral area, can get himself enrolled as a voter in that electoral area. The citizens registered on the electoral rolls are only eligible to cast their votes.”³²

Media’s Role

Despite their different ideological backgrounds, all politicians are keen on being featured in the media. Every time they receive coverage in an article, have their face on television or their voice on radio, they assume they have increased their standing among potential voters.³³ This depicts the importance of media in today’s elections. In a country like Pakistan where democratic elections are less about political choices and more about popularity contest, media’s role is accentuated for both the groups -the journalists for getting fresh material to write about and the politicians who have a platform through which they can connect to potential voters. Hence this would be appropriate for the Pakistani politicians that, “If you don’t exist in the media, you don’t exist”.³⁴ In this situation the media can play an important role by conducting in-depth coverage of functioning of the political process with a comparison of the existing and desired situation. By raising constant questions pertaining to the functioning and the developing of a political party it can create awareness and educate potential voters about the parties.

³¹ Electoral system in Pakistan: A Brief. Election Commission of Pakistan. Accessed online from: http://php.ecp.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=121. Date of Access: October 23, 2012.

³² Ibid.

³³ Meinardus, R. “Political parties and the Media”, The Korea Times: April 18, 2003, Accessed from: <http://www.fnf.org.ph/liberalopinion/political-parties-and-the-media.htm> accessed on: July 24th 2012.

³⁴ Meinardus, R. “Political parties and the Media.” The Korea Times: April 18, 2003, Accessed online from: <http://www.fnf.org.ph/liberalopinion/political-parties-and-the-media.htm>. Accessed on: July 24, 2012.

Party Manifestos

The various political parties of Pakistan presented their party manifestos before the 2008 general elections. Since fresh manifestos have not been announced by the parties as yet, for this handbook manifestos of 2008 of four major political parties are being used. It is necessary that the journalists ask questions pertaining to party manifestos or party policies so that the citizens become aware of the actual position of the party.

Pakistan People's Party, PPP Manifesto 2008

The first principle of the Party is: Islam is our Faith. Islam teaches brotherhood, love and peace. Our Faith places a responsibility on each citizen to reach out in a spirit of accommodation and tolerance to all religions and sects and to treat people of all faiths with respect, enabling them to enjoy religious freedom and equality before the law.

The PPP commits itself to religious tolerance. Religious beliefs of individual citizens have little to do with the business of the state, as the Founder of the Nation declared in his inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947.

The second principle of the PPP is: Democracy is our Politics. The PPP's commitment to freedom and fundamental rights, including freedom from hunger and want, is written in the blood of its martyrs and in the red marks of lashes on the back of its workers. It is written in the suffering and sacrifice of Quaid-e-Awam, who faced the gallows refusing to bow before tyranny, defending the human rights of our citizens to the last breath. In every age, including today, the PPP leaders and office bearers have been behind bars, in exile, facing political persecution, defending their Party at great personal cost to their families and themselves.

The third PPP principle is: Social Democracy is our Economy. The PPP aims at creating a just and equitable society with equal opportunity for all its citizens. The growing gap between the rich and the poor must be bridged by supporting the underprivileged, the downtrodden and the discriminated. The PPP is proud of being the voice of the poor, the working classes and the middle classes. Our policies while dedicated to the underprivileged have created conditions that enabled the business and trading classes to compete in the open market.

The PPP reiterates its firm commitment to provide Food, Clothing and Shelter (Roti, Kapra Aur Makaan) to every poor family in Pakistan through our unique emphasis on full employment. The PPP is the only party with a coherent vision of a welfare state for Pakistan where market forces are balanced with safety nets for the underprivileged and the poor.

The final principle of the PPP is All Power to the People. Only the people have the right on earth to determine their destiny and chart the course of their Nation. All organs of State must be answerable to the Court of the people in an election or through their legitimately elected representatives in Parliament.

Sample questions from the citizen's perspective

- Has there been any revision in the party manifesto, after its conception?
- If it has changed what are the new elements which have been addressed by the party?
- The manifesto has persistently emphasized on “Roti, Kapra Aur Makan”, while the issues faced by the citizens have increased manifold; shouldn't the manifesto also accommodate the other issues as well?
- What is meant by ‘social democracy is our economy’ (the third principle)?
- ‘The PPP is the only party with a coherent vision of a welfare state for Pakistan where market forces are balanced with safety nets for the underprivileged and the poor’. What is this coherent vision of welfare state? Elaborate.
- The manifesto mentions the phrase “full employment”. What does it mean and how will the party achieve it?
- How does the party's manifesto specifically address the fundamental issues pertaining to non-Muslim Pakistanis?

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, PML-N Manifesto 2008

The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz focuses on 18 major points in its manifesto. They are:

1. Revival of Genuine Democracy
2. Independent Judiciary and the Rule of Law
3. Good Governance
4. Civil Military Relations
5. Tolerant and Pluralistic Society
6. Extremism and Terrorism
7. Education
8. Health
9. Science & Technology
10. Reducing Poverty
11. Employment
12. Controlling Inflation
13. Industrial Development
14. Women
15. Youth
16. Labor
17. Minorities
18. National Security and Foreign Policy

Apart from the above mentioned areas, below is a brief explanation of the manifesto of the PML-N party.

PML (N) solemnly pledges to take effective steps to protect the independence of the dignity of the judicial system. Judicial information system shall be put in place for the efficient functioning of judiciary. The press and electronic media will be allowed its independence. Access to information laws will be further improved.

In order to depoliticize bureaucracy, government servants shall be given security of service through constitutional amendments. All discretionary power at all levels will be withdrawn and all government decisions will be governed by law and merit. Reforming the system of administration to ensure that merit prevails over contacts and there are generous rewards for efficiency and honesty.

The administrative system will be further streamlined to reduce discretion and misuse of power. Supremacy of the Constitution and Parliament shall be restored through making parliamentary institutions effective, accountable, and responsive to the people.

The 1973 Constitution as on 12 October 1999 before the military coup shall be restored with the provisions of joint electorates, minorities, and women reserved seats. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcing agencies to detect and control terrorist groups and their supporters; Influencing the groups which directly or indirectly support terrorism, through political intermediaries and civil society organizations to adhere to basic Islamic principles of peace, moderation and justice.

Sample questions from the citizen's perspective

- You have mentioned judicial information system in your party manifesto. Does this mean that the judicial system will be automated, i.e. something similar to NADRA? Will the citizens be able to access case information via internet?
- 'All governing decisions will be governed by law and merit.' What does this mean? Does this mean that legislators, government officials who are incompetent will be removed from their positions?
- 'The administrative system will be further streamlined to reduce discretion and misuse of power.' Does this mean there will be more ministries?
- Is there any research study conducted by the party which shows that new provinces are effective or not?
- What does the term 'Genuine Democracy' in the party's manifesto imply?
- Is there any draft policy formulated by the party which ensures citizens of their active involvement in programs for improvement of education and employment opportunities?

Muttahida Quami Movement, MQM Manifesto 2008

MQM is the only political party of Pakistan which represents and comprises of working, middle class and poor masses of the country that are presently down trodden, disadvantaged and exploited by the two percent ruling elite.

MQM has revolutionized politics in Pakistan its elected representatives and office bearers are chosen by ordinary party workers and people on merit not by virtue of being born in a feudal family or political dynasty

Below are the areas which are broadly discussed in the party manifesto:

1. Provincial autonomy
2. Education
3. Health
4. Agrarian reforms
5. Poverty alleviation and unemployment
6. Urban development
7. Industries and labor sector
8. Financial and fiscal measures
9. Good governance
10. Human rights
11. Media and freedom of expression
12. Judiciary
13. Environment
14. Culture and sports
15. Family welfare
16. Foreign affairs

Sample questions from the citizen's perspective

- Since the party workers of MQM are chosen on merit, does this mean that the party leadership will also be judged on the same criteria?

- Apart from the introductory remarks on provincial autonomy, is there a detailed draft policy regarding the subject? Has it been presented for scrutiny and debate at any forum?
- Law and order has always remained a major concern, especially in the party's dominant constituencies. What stand does the party have on the law and order situation?

Pakistan Muslim League, PML-Q Manifesto 2008

Our vision is shaped by Pakistan and Pakistan alone, and the interests of Pakistan and its people always come first. Pakistan is paramount for us all, as the country created by the Muslim League under the great leadership of the Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. As inheritors of this legacy of the freedom struggle, we have to promote the vision of our founding fathers, Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Promoting pride in Pakistan, projecting history of its Freedom Movement and respect for its Founding Fathers is the corner stone of our vision.

1. Decency, tolerance and harmony
2. Ensuring justice and freedom of expression
3. Family values
4. Dignity of the common citizen
5. Protection and promotion of the rights of the female population and providing freedom from fear and oppression
6. Opposing hypocrisy and double standards
7. Protection of the rights of minorities
8. Promoting human rights and respect for the rule of law
9. Stating 'Kalima-e-Haq' (Truth)

Sample questions from the citizen's perspective

- Does Jinnah's vision include forming a government under a military dictator?
- What does decency means in its manifesto? How does the party ensure justice and freedom of expression? Does this mean the party will address the blasphemy law currently prevailing?
- What does the party mean by hypocrisy and double standards? Does this mean all the hypocrites living in the country will be asked to leave the country or be put in jail?

Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaaf Manifesto

The PTI agenda of resurgence articulates the long neglected aspirations of our people and spells out the vision of a modern Islamic republic that advocates tolerance, moderation and freedom to practice the religion of one's choice. We look to the future with hope and confidence as we set Pakistan on a course to political stability, social harmony, and economic prosperity for all. The PTI is not merely a political party; it is a broad based movement that embraces the interests of all Pakistanis. A people whose cultural and ethnic diversities blend into common goals and aspirations for a just society based on a democratic culture and the rule of law. The PTI is determined to provide a credible new leadership that can restore Pakistan's political and economic sovereignty through building a new bond of trust between the government and the people. Only through the active participation of the people can we collectively mobilize our human and material resources to forge ahead on the road to a confident and self-reliant nation.

Pakistanis crave dignity and self-respect. Any hope of recovery from the multifaceted crisis engulfing the nation remains illusory without reviving the self-esteem of the people and restoring their confidence in the political leadership. We can achieve this by following the Principles of "Unity, Faith and Discipline" as expounded by the Quaid-e-Azam. PTI is committed to transparency in government and an across the board accountability. It believes in federalism and functional autonomy of the provinces, based on the spirit and fundamental principles of parliamentary democracy as envisaged in the 1973 Constitution.

PTI is committed to transparency in government and an across the board accountability. It believes in federalism and functional autonomy of the provinces, based on the spirit and fundamental principles of parliamentary democracy as envisaged in the 1973 Constitution.

Mission

Whilst establishing the rule of law and ensuring protection of human rights through an independent and honest judiciary, strive for the social development and economic prosperity of our citizens, especially the poor and underprivileged masses.

Goals

- Establish Pakistan as a truly independent and sovereign state that becomes a source of pride for our people.
- Strengthen state institutions to promote democracy and complete political, economic and religious freedom for the people.
- Provide an accountable and efficient government that ensures the protection of life and property of its citizens.

- Launch an Education Revolution to promote universal literacy and raise the standard of education in our schools, colleges and universities.
- Ensure the availability of adequate Healthcare services for all citizens.
- Highest priority to poverty alleviation through policies aimed at creating more job opportunities and enabling ownership of assets to the poor.
- A merit based system that provides equal opportunity for employment and upward social mobility for all, specially the working classes
- Create an environment which encourages the private sector to grow and create greater wealth and employment opportunities.
- End the VIP culture by setting an example in simple living and an austere lifestyle.
- Eliminate draconian laws that give unchecked power to Police and the Agencies or which limit the rights of Citizens.
- A self-reliant economy which is free of dependence on foreign aid.

Promote regional peace and strengthen our relationships with friendly countries.

Sample questions from the citizen's perspective

- 'Modern Islamic Republic.' what does the term modern Islamic republic signify? Does this mean that new form of Islam will be introduced? Will this republic follow the proper Economic system of Islam?
- Will the *zakat* system be regularized? How will it be regularized?
- 'Building a new bond of trust between the government and the people' what does this mean? Will this bond be created by eliminating corruption in 90 days?
- 'Credible new leadership' what does the word credible signify?
- What is meant by 'functional autonomy'? Is this different from provincial autonomy? How?
- 'Truly independent state'? Does this mean that we will not have any ties with international community? Will we be self-sufficient enough that we don't need any assistance of international community?
- Will the PTI set up a new institution for accountability? How will it ensure its autonomy and independence?
- Does the party have any draft education policy? If there is why do they not publish it in the media so that we are aware how the education revolution will happen ?

Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) Code of Conduct

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on 26 June, 2012 issued a code of conduct for the coming general elections. This code of conduct prescribed punishments that could ultimately lead to disqualification of those violating it. Supreme Court has played an important role in empowering the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Giving verdict on a petition against widespread corruption in the electioneering process on June 8, 2012, the Supreme Court allowed ECP to enact its rules and oversee their implementation.³⁵

The amended code of conduct defines new rules that are being considered tougher than before. For instance, ECP has only allowed a sum of rupees 1.5 million to be spent on electioneering campaign, kept in a separate bank account notified to the ECP.³⁶

The new code suggests deputation of a three-member team consisting of one professional cameraman. This team will be answerable to the provincial election commission and the local administration in each constituency will be responsible for the security of each team. ECP, through the new code also prescribed imprisonment of up to three years along with a fine of up to PKR 5,000 in case a participant is accused of violation by the monitoring team. Most important of all, ECP also suggested disqualification for the contestants found guilty of any violation.³⁷

Long distance car rallies, wall chalking and use of loudspeakers have been banned, except at election meetings. Regulations regarding print material prescribe two by three feet for a poster, three by five feet size for hoardings, three by nine feet for banners and nine by six inches for leaflets. Political parties and their candidates have been asked to notify the local administration about meeting schedules at least one week in advance. Candidates and their supporters have been barred from transporting voters, except themselves and members of their families. ECP has accounted that all the activities related to elections i.e. campaigning and polling etc will be monitored by its representatives and no political party will be allowed to establish their party offices within 400 yard distance of a polling station.

Standards for Election Coverage

FIRM is a self-conceived concept of Individualland Pakistan. It signifies a Free, Independent and Responsible Media. It is an approach towards viewing the media through another perspective. Being independent from external as well as internal pressures alongside this the media standing

³⁵ The Election commission issues new, tougher rules. The Express Tribune. June 28, 2012. Accessed online from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/400297/election-commission-issues-new-tougher-rules/>. Date of Access: October 22, 2012.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

firm on its principles for spreading the news with objectivity and honesty etc. and acts responsibly at times where it is needed.

The standards selected and chosen for this concept are the internationally recognized fundamentals of professional journalism and elements of newsworthiness. This may include objectivity, impartiality, fair access etc.

It should be noted that the ultimate users and receivers of news are the citizens, in other words the consumers of the media. Whatever the media prints or publishes has an impact on citizens. Therefore, it is pertinent that the point of view of the consumers should be provided the utmost priority while reporting. The standards discussed in this section are actually the amalgamation of professional journalism, newsworthiness and the point of view of consumers.

In the current section, we are going to discuss the standards which should be kept in mind during the coverage of elections by the media. The objective, as also mentioned earlier should be to inform the citizens through responsible reporting and assist them in making informed choices, while also aiding the monitoring of elections by election observers and civil society. The principles to be adopted during election coverage are similar to, which have already been described in our publication titled “Handbook on and for FIRM”. These include:

- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Public Accountability
- Truthfulness
- Accuracy

We are going to build upon these principles and discuss the monitoring and coverage of elections by the media in the Pakistani context.

Media, Before and After Elections

Before and after coverage of elections by Media



Pre-election Coverage

- Campaign Coverage
- Hate Speech Monitoring
- Voter Education
- Code of Conduct Monitoring
- Fair Access to All Stakeholders

Election Day Coverage

- Monitoring of Election Procedure
- Reporting Results
- Balanced Coverage
- Accuracy and Timeliness
- Monitoring the State Media

Post Election Coverage

- In Depth Analysis of Results
- Highlighting of Issues in Election Process

1. Impartiality

“Even if we are absolutely certain that one side is right and the other one is wrong, we must be open and honest about what’s happening.”

John Simpson, the BBC’s World Affairs editor³⁸

Journalists are expected to report on elections in a non-partisan manner, keeping aside their political views and affiliations.³⁹

- Impartiality is not only important for responsible reporting during elections, but also ensures the personal safety and security of the journalist. In case of Pakistan and especially in the context of conflict areas within the country, journalists have faced security issues and threats to personal safety, by rival parties, as they have been labelled biased.⁴⁰ As sentiments of political sections are also at their peak during the election period and political differences sometimes also transform into violence, so in such a situation objective coverage by the media will not only keep the voters and political parties informed, but will also prevent any violent conflict from arising. An instance which can be quoted here is of Chisti Mujahid a journalist, who was killed by an insurgent group in Baluchistan during 2007. His story on the death of a Baluch leader was published inaccurately, depicting it to be biased against a certain group.⁴¹
- When a reporter’s emphasis is on criticism or glorification of a certain party or candidate, which is not part of the coverage and monitoring of elections, he is said to be biased. It has been observed that the print and electronic media have imposed their own agenda over reporting and coverage during elections, which prevents the journalists from impartial and in-depth reporting.⁴² The news story is twisted in such a manner, which affects certain political quarters. The language, tone and attributions contribute to the balancing of report. Every story has multiple angles and the journalists have to accommodate every aspect, to develop a balanced news story. A pertinent example can be taken from an incident which occurred in a polling station at Larkana, during the 2008 elections. Popular and leading rival candidates of major political parties

³⁸ Simpson, J. Reporting on war in Iraq. Inside BBC Journalism. Retrieved on: September 27, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1536_impartiality/page2.shtml.

³⁹ UNESCO & Reuters Foundation. 2012. The Media and the Election Process. Retrieved from: http://webworld.unesco.org/download/fed/iraq/english/media_elections_en.pdf.

⁴⁰ Individualland Pakistan. 2012. Journalism in Conflict Areas of Pakistan. Retrieved from: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rockdownloads&view=file&Itemid=157.

⁴¹ Individualland Pakistan. 2011. English Media Analysis from a Consumer’s Perspective. Islamabad: Individualland Pakistan.

⁴² Rehmat, A. & Khan, A. 2010. Electing for Reforms: Pakistani Media Identifies Problems and Solutions of Reporting Local Elections. Intermedia. Retrieved from: <http://intermedia.org.pk/pdf/Mappingper cent20Pakistaniper cent20Mediaper cent20Coverageper cent20ofper cent20Electoralper cent20Issues.pdf>.

exchanged harsh words, ensuing in a scuffle and temporary suspension of polling process. However, the media stuck in this case stuck to objective reporting, preventing the tensions from rising.

- The editorial policies and communication gap existing between the news desk and reporters, creates a situation, where the media is labelled as biased and aligned to vested interests. It is imperative that to avoid such circumstances, media should avoid making exaggerated statements during elections, which will unnecessarily overstate the gains, losses or importance of a certain party, candidate or constituency. Sweeping statements such as a humiliating defeat, overwhelming victory, voters have made a decision or the party has secured a mandate etc, must be avoided. Additionally, the journalists or reporters should not be aligned to a political movement or participating in a political campaign, as it may jeopardize their professional credibility.⁴³ The repercussions of such an alignment were evident during the “Media Gate” scandal in June 2012. A leaked off-air video conversation between a business tycoon and leading journalists during a program, while subsequent surfacing of a list containing the names of 19 journalists, who were alleged to be on the payroll of the tycoon, put a dent in the credibility of the media.⁴⁴

2. Fair Access

Equal opportunity to access the electronic and print media is vital during elections. Each party, school of thought or stakeholder should be assigned equal amount of coverage by the media.⁴⁵ Fair access and impartiality are complementary and interlinked, as both are related to providing equal and fair coverage to political parties and issues. The media outlets should be providing parallel reporting regarding party campaigns and their stand on various election issues.

- Assigning a particular section more space and concentrating only on a particular issue, will not only prevent other stakeholders from presenting their point of view, but will also label the media as being biased. Various studies and research have also indicated that the issues most thoroughly covered by the media, attain priority status for the voters.⁴⁶ A pertinent example of how media focuses on certain issue and highlights it can be taken from the Chiniot police torture

⁴³ Howard, R. 2004. Media and Elections: An Elections Reporting Handbook. Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS). Canada: Thunderbird Press.

⁴⁴ Nazir, Z. 2012. I will go to court against Malik Riaz – MeharBukhari. Aaj News. June 15, 2012. <http://www.aaj.tv/2012/06/i-will-go-to-court-against-malik-riaz-mehar-bukhari/>.

⁴⁵ Najeeb, M. 2007. Reporting for Change: A Handbook for Journalists Covering Elections. Islamabad: Intermedia.

⁴⁶ Yaser, N., Mahsud, M. N. & Chaudhry, I. A. 2011. Effects of Exposure to Electronic Media Political Content on Voters' Voting Behavior. Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 1, No. 4. April 2011.

incident, which was brought into limelight by the media and the issue of torture in the criminal justice system became a leading issue at the time. Resulting in a debate over the prevalence of torture and also pressurizing the relevant authorities to take action.⁴⁷

- Pluralism is to be promoted by the media, which can only be accomplished through fair and balanced coverage. As mentioned earlier, the basic responsibility of the media during elections is to assist the voters in making informed choices and this can only be achieved when the media provides the citizens with a holistic picture, by accommodating the views of every political quarter. Not only the allocation of space and airtime should be balanced, but also the quality of coverage should be fair. No particular party or candidate should be extended undue importance, while the language and tone of the coverage should not be biased. For example in South Africa broadcasting time is allocated on the basis of number of candidates, number of seats held in the legislature and opinion polls.⁴⁸ In Pakistan the apex court has taken up a decade old pending case in September 2012, in which the allocation of political parties on state owned television has been questioned. It has been observed that a six member program committee decides the contents, while it is funded from the public exchequer through the government.⁴⁹
- It is also pertinent to mention here that in the case of banned organizations and outfits, they cannot participate in elections nor they are allowed any media coverage under the law. Fair access also accompanies responsibility and this guides the media to avoid covering the activities of such outfits. The coverage of Difa-e Pakistan Council in the media, which include banned militant outfits, is one such example.⁵⁰

3. Timeliness

This is the age of quick and timely information and the public expects the media to deliver it. The private sector electronic media is gaining more outreach as time progresses and timeliness is one of the reason electronic media has gained so much popularity. People expect to acquire quick and accurate information, rather than wait for the print version to come out. It is also an attractive feature of the internet and

⁴⁷The Express Tribune. 2010. SC disposes Chiniot police torture case. April 13, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/6001/sc-disposes-chiniot-police-torture-case/>.

⁴⁸ ACE: The Electoral Knowledge Network. 2012. Equitable (or Fair) Access for Political Parties? Retrieved on: September 04, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://aceproject.org/main/english/me/mec04a03.htm>.

⁴⁹ The News International. 2012. SC seeks statement on policy of state-run TV. September 26, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-17739-SC-seeks-statement-on-policy-of-state-run-TV>.

⁵⁰Tanveer, R. 2012. Hafiz Saeed calls for jihad against America. April 06, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/360667/difa-e-pakistan-activists-protest-us-bounty-on-hafiz-saeed/>.

social media, where the public can acquire and disseminate information even quicker, as well accessing the information of their choice, rather than sitting through an entire bulletin and waiting for a particular news report.

- The media, especially the electronic and social media can report results, present latest developments, highlight challenges and issues, put forth the views of political parties and voters without delay. The reporters can be present at rallies, processions, visit party offices and polling stations, while conducting live reporting of the events. The discrepancies in the polling process during the by-elections of May 2012 at PP 243 and PP 245 in Dera Ghazi Khan, by the political parties was highlighted, due to the media presence.⁵¹
- It is important still that objectivity should not be set aside for the sake of meeting deadlines. The publication or airing of a report before confirming the authenticity, through multiple sources can create misconceptions in an environment of heightened tension. The information should not be disseminated without confirmation and media should also apply self-censorship for sensitive information. Reliability and timeliness should go side by side, while only accurate information should be reported. The Pakistani media in July 2012 reported that the then US Ambassador had predicted the win of a certain political party to the administration, in an apparent confidential letter. No concrete source was apparently given for the information, which was later denied by the diplomat.⁵²

4. Reporting Results

Timeliness in reporting is one of the most important traits of a balanced news report. Commercialization of media sometimes forces news reporters to report on events as early as possible. Similarly, some reporters either due to pressure from their newspaper or TV channel tends to present election results before due time. This sometimes leads to scuffles and even violence.

- This premature reporting of results may lead to complications even leading to violence. If the results are announced before the closing of the poll timings, then this may also influence the voters' choice. To avoid this situation, there have been rules and regulations developed in certain countries for announcement of election results on the media.⁵³ This issue is mainly common in electronic and social media, where the information is being updated without delays. Even if

⁵¹ Pakistan Today. 2012. PML-N, PML-Q win one each in 'rigged' by-polls. May 08, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/05/08/news/national/pml-n-pml-q-win-one-each-in-per-centE2per-cent80per-cent98riggedper-centE2per-cent80per-cent99-by-polls/>.

⁵² Rizwan, M. 2012. General elections: Munter denies predicting PTI's victory. The Express Tribune. July 25, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/412740/general-elections-munter-denies-predicting-ptis-victory/>.

⁵³ Turner, C. 2011. Canadians Protest Election Results Ban Using Social Media Ahead of Monday Polls. TechChange. April 29, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://techchange.org/2011/04/29/canadians-protest-election-results-ban-using-social-media-ahead-of-monday-polls/>.

partial or temporary results have to be announced, they should be cited with proper sources.

- Besides reporting accurate results, the media also has to focus upon conducting detailed analysis of the voting results. The analysis should not only contain the number of seats a party has obtained, but also a comparative examination of the number of votes. A certain party may have acquired more individual votes than its rivals, but this might not have translated into more seats, due to population distribution. A related example of this can be taken from the data compiled by election commission on the elections held in 2008, where Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e Azam (PML-Q) received higher number of votes than Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), but in terms of seats acquired they were far behind PML-N.⁵⁴
- It is important that the citizens are also informed of how the voting was conducted and the various dimensions of the emerging results. The reporting of results should include both qualitative and quantitative analysis, where the exact figure of votes secured by the leading candidate, number of polling stations in a constituency, demographics of the voters, conduct of polling process etc. should be provided.

5. Conduct of the Parties and Candidates

During the coverage of elections, the media should also be monitoring the adherence of the political parties and candidates to the code of conduct devised by the election commission. The comparison between the desired and actual conduct of the parties, should be presented to the voters.

- Any violation regarding the code of conduct, by any party candidate should be highlighted. This as a result will also pressurize the political parties and their candidates to abide by the rules and regulations of the election commission. In the previous general elections of 2008, it was reported that all major political parties had violated the code of conduct. The supporters of political parties had openly displayed arms, the candidates used abusive language in their rallies, also using private buildings and land without prior permission.⁵⁵
- The declaration of the party and individual assets, the financial resources of the party for the campaign, the spending by each party on campaigning and

⁵⁴ Daily Times. 2008. PPP, PML-Q get most votes. February 26, 2008. Retrieved from: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008per cent5C02per cent5C26per cent5Cstory_26-2-2008_pg1_3.

⁵⁵ Wasim, A. 2008. All major parties violating code of conduct: report. Dawn. February 02, 2008. Retrieved from: <http://archives.dawn.com/2008/02/02/nat3.htm>.

abstinence from unethical activities should be monitored by the media. One such example can be witnessed in the case of a political figure from Punjab, after he had acquired an expensive vehicle, while his declared financial statements did not include the source for the expense. The situation was highlighted by the media as an inaccurate declaration of assets.⁵⁶

- As the citizens will be sensitized towards the election code of conduct and its importance, they will eventually also demand for electoral reforms. The presenting of such information will also assist in the work of election commission, other government functionaries and courts associated with the election procedure. A relevant example in this regard is the incident where a political candidate from interior Sindh slapped a polling official, which was highlighted by the media and notice was taken by the election commission and apex court.⁵⁷

6. Multiple Sources

It is not only during elections, but at any given time the media should confirm reports it receives, through different or multiple sources. The sources can be individuals or documents, but these should be reliable and able to confirm or refute the reports. As mentioned earlier, the sentiments of public are at their most sensitive during elections, so any reporting without confirmation and cross checking through multiple sources, may lead to complications and flaring of emotions, even deteriorating the credibility of the media outlet or reporter.

- As mentioned earlier, sources should be cited while announcing temporary or partial results. By acquiring information only through multiple and reliable sources, the report will not only have credibility but will also be balanced, as it will accommodate the views of every faction and party.
- Even the commentary and analysis during elections, on the expected outcome and various other issues, should be supported by verifiable data.

7. Hate Speech

It is important for the media to monitor, discourage and prevent hate speech, while also applying a certain level of self-censorship to avoid flaring of religious, sectarian or ethnic differences.

⁵⁶Cheema, U. 2011. Qadir Gilani could face trouble over buying Land Cruiser. February 22, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/todays-news-13-4145-qadir-gilani>.

⁵⁷The Express Tribune. 2012. ECP Disqualification: Court to hear all Waheeda Shah's pleas as one. July 10, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/405939/ecp-disqualification-court-to-hear-all-waheeda-shahs-pleas-as-one/>.

Media needs to closely monitor the campaign period and highlight any inappropriate remarks or hate speech by any candidate towards any community or group, so the election authorities could take the appropriate action. The voters should be sensitized of the repercussions of hate speech, as this will also create pressure on the candidates to refrain from such adverse expression of opinion and adhere to the code of conduct during campaigns. For instance a group called All-Pakistan Students Khatm-e Nubuwaat Federation handed out vile, hate fuelled pamphlets against the Ahmadiya community in the city of Faisalabad. The pamphlet listed Ahmadi industrialists, doctors and prominent businesses calling upon people “to shoot such people is an act of jihad and to kill such people is an act of sawab (blessing).”⁵⁸ This is an obvious attempt to incite violence against a minority and cannot be ignored under the guise of freedom of speech. Such acts threaten the already marginalized community in the country. Such elements should be channeled out by the media in the election days as already the tensions are high.

8. Gender Perspective

Women have around 17 per cent reserved seats in the national and provincial assemblies, while four (4) reserved seats in the upper house or senate.⁵⁹ Due to social restrictions and conservative mindsets, women are not only discouraged from taking active part in electoral process, but are also forbidden from voting for their representatives. Such an instance was witnessed in a by-election, which was held in Kohistan during November 2011. Women were barred from exercising their voting rights, after an informal agreement among the political parties.⁶⁰ Similar incidents have been witnessed in the recent by-polls of Mardan and Mianwali in February 2012.⁶¹ During the by-elections at Shangla in February 2011, a total of 59,000 women were prevented from voting. In this instance, it was reported that even the election officials helped this ban by neglecting to setup female polling booths.

The declining ratio of female voters as compared to males has also come into the limelight, where the percentage of female voters is decreasing by twelve per cent each election as compared to 2008, the number of females in the draft electoral list of 2012 has declined by five percent.⁶² The media has the responsibility to not only highlight the predicaments faced by women during the election process, but also promote their

⁵⁸ Islam, S. 2011. Targeting minorities: No friend to Ahmadis in Faisalabad. The Express Tribune. June 09, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/185179/targeting-minorities-no-friend-to-ahmadis-in-faisalabad/>.

⁵⁹ Quota Project. 2009. Pakistan. Retrieved on: July 13, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=PK>.

⁶⁰ Rehman, Z. 2011. Sorry, you still can't vote. December 04, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/dec2011-weekly/nos-04-12-2011/dia.htm#2>.

⁶¹ The Express Tribune. 2012. By-polls: Inquiry into barring of women from casting vote sought. February 28, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/342670/by-polls-inquiry-into-barring-of-women-from-casting-vote-sought/>.

⁶² Daily Times. 2012. Millions of women missing from draft electoral rolls. March 09, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012per cent5C03per cent5C09per cent5Cstory_9-3-2012_pg7_15.

participation. The media can play an important role in sensitizing the public, regarding the importance of voting rights of women. In addition, media can highlight the issues of gender based violence and gender equity, while also informing the public of the steps taken by each party regarding these issues, or the importance given in their manifestos.

9. Assisting Voters

The specific role of the media during the elections is to educate and assist the voters in making informed choices. This includes not only the sensitization of the public regarding the political parties, their manifestos and their undertakings, but also informing them about the entire procedure of elections.

The programs and publications should contain informative contents on:⁶³

- Importance and specifics of the voting process
- Political platforms and candidates
- Duties and responsibilities of elected representatives
- Voter registration, code of conduct etc.
- The electoral campaign and public issues

The citizens have to be presented with the perspective from all the stakeholders, while the media should be avoiding a biased approach in favour or against a certain party or candidate, as this may influence the voter's choice. The reporters, journalists and media outlets should be following the previously mentioned principles and standards of reporting, in order to provide balanced, fair and objective coverage of elections and related political activity to the citizens.

10. Abiding by Rules and Regulations

The media itself has to abide by the rules and regulations prescribed by the election commission and the media regulatory authority. These guidelines may include:

- Informing about election process
- How to monitor election procedure
- When and how to report results
- Prevention of hate speech etc.

The guidelines are devised to ensure a smooth flow of the election procedure without disruption, while also accommodating the media coverage of the pre, during and post-

⁶³ Search for Common Ground (SFCG) & Radio for Peace Building Africa. Responsible Media Coverage of Elections. Retrieved on: July 15, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/assets/texts/pdf/2011-Responsible_Media_Elections_BW_EN.pdf.

election period. It is important that the media should be following these regulations, but also raise concern over any curb to freedom of speech, expression and information.

Examples presented above speak of a positive role by media before, during and after elections coverage, which is also evident of the fact that media is aware of its responsibilities. However, individual reporters and examples do exist that contradict with principles of responsible reporting and bring a bad name to the media.

The aim of compiling this handbook is to allow journalists and reporters that are looking forward to election coverage in 2013, to learn necessary principles of responsible reporting before, during and after elections coverage. These principles are internationally accepted standards, being followed by journalists around the world.

The Role of Social Media and the Youth in the Upcoming elections

The information and communication technology has already transformed the coverage and reporting of elections.¹ This is also commonly termed as the “Social Media”, where many of the conventional assumptions and regulations do not imply. For example, there is no limitation of space on the World Wide Web and the regulation of social media is considerably difficult.¹ The rapidity of social media has been evident in the recent revolutions towards democracy taking place in the Middle East. As per the Arab Social Media Report of 2011 by Dubai School of Government, nine (09) out of ten (10) Egyptians and Tunisians surveyed utilized Facebook for organizing protests.¹ A closer to home and more recent example of the influence of social media can be taken from the outcry over a religious program with a controversial host. The protest over the social media resulted in the actress being dropped from the show. The influence of the social media can also be assessed by the appearance of a video on the internet, containing off-air conversation among leading journalists and a business tycoon, sparking a debate on media accountability.¹

In the coming election days the role of social media in Pakistan cannot be neglected. According to research study conducted by an analytics and audience profiling firm in Pakistan the most frequently used social networking site among Pakistanis is the Facebook followed by YouTube and Twitter. Since every individual has a platform to voice his/her views which at the same time can be read by millions is a tool which will have its own uniqueness in the election days.

These social media sites are mostly used by young people therefore the nexus between the social media and the youth plays an important role to play in the upcoming days. One of the major opposition political parties has already targeted the young citizens by incorporating usage of social media in its election campaign. Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf is heavily using social media and has a strong presence on the social media. As a result of which the young people are being addressed in their campaigns. PTI's banners displaying Facebook page and other various website page addresses have already engaged the youth in reading and presenting feedback on various political issues. Most of the old-school politicians now consider it mandatory to 'tweet' about their activities as well as comments about any important incident.

Consumers' Code of Conduct for Elections

Based on the discussion in the previous sections and through our various endeavours with the journalists, we have developed a FIRM Code of Conduct for Elections. This code of conduct has the purpose of guiding the media in reporting effectively in pre, post and during elections. This code of conduct has mainly been derived keeping in view the international standards of journalism. The Do's and Don'ts have been developed specifically keeping in view the elections and this code broadly provides suggested parameter for any reporter while reporting on the upcoming general elections.

Do's

- The media shall remain impartial and unbiased
- It shall provide fair access to all the stakeholders and political parties
- All the information shall be published or aired after confirming the authenticity of the content
- Where it is realized that the information is incorrect, it shall be immediately rectified
- Every aspect of the issues facing the voters shall be highlighted, while the stance of political circles will also be covered
- Investigative journalism shall be utilized to acquire information in public interest
- Hate speech shall be monitored and discouraged throughout the election period
- The media shall highlight any violation of the election code of conduct by any political party
- The state media shall accommodate all perspectives and resist the pressure to limit to official line
- The issues facing women and other vulnerable segments of the society will be highlighted
- The media shall educate the voters regarding electoral politics, election procedure and implications of elections especially targeting the youth.

Don'ts

- The media shall not be involved in partisan politics and shall not sympathize or become biased towards a certain political quarter
- No information shall be presented without prior confirmation through multiple sources
- The media shall not provide coverage to banned outfits

- No information shall be withheld due to vested interests or internal and external pressures
- The media shall not sensationalize any news story and only present accurate information
- Privacy of an individual shall not be violated
- Unwarranted risks shall not be taken in the pursuit of a story
- The media shall refrain from coverage which is biased towards women or other vulnerable sections of the society
- No bribes or favours shall be solicited to publish, broadcast or suppress information

Annexure A: Constituencies and Electoral Laws

Constituencies

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) all constituencies are required to be delimited having regard to the distribution of population in geographically compact areas, existing boundaries of administrative units , facilities of communication , public convenience and other cognate factors to ensure homogeneity in the creation of constituencies. All constituencies for the general seats are, as far as possible, equal in population.⁶⁴

The constituencies in Pakistan are categorized in to two categories. One is the National assembly constituencies and the other is the provincial assembly constituencies. The national assembly constituencies are represented by a symbol “NA” and provincial constituencies as “PP for Punjab, PS for Sindh, PF for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and PB for Baluchistan”.

For National Assembly there are a total of 272 constituencies. The demarcations of constituencies are as follows:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Islamabad & FATA	Punjab	Sindh	Baluchistan
NA1- NA 35	NA 36- NA 49	NA50-NA197	NA198- NA258	NA 259- NA 272

There are a total of 577 constituencies. The highest number of provincial constituencies is in Punjab which is 297, then in Sindh 130, and then Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 99 and least number of provincial constituencies are in Baluchistan which is 51 in number.

Electoral Laws

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan the following laws pertain to election process in the country⁶⁵. They are:

- Representation of the People Act, 1976 and the Representation of the People (Conduct of Election) Rules, 1977: are the major laws for the conduct of elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies
- Senate (Election) Act, 1975, the Senate (Members from Federal Capital) Order, 1985 and 1988 and the Senate (Election) Rules, 1975: pertains to the Election to the Senate (Upper House)

⁶⁴ Election Commission of Pakistan.

⁶⁵ Election commission of Pakistan accessed from <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/> accessed on 17 July 2012.

- The Electoral Rolls Act, 1974 and the Electoral Rolls Rules, 1974 deal with preparation, annual revision, amendment and maintenance of the lists of voters
- The constituencies of the National and Provincial Assemblies are demarcated in accordance with the provisions of the Delimitation of Constituencies Act, 1974
- The procedure for election to the office of the President is contained in the Second Schedule to the Constitution read with the Presidential Election Rules, 1988
- Elections to the general seats of the National and the Provincial Assemblies are held on the basis of first-past-the-post system. However, elections to the seats reserved for women and technocrats will be on a party list system
- Election to the Senate of Pakistan is conducted on the basis of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote

Annexure B: Registered and Leading Political Parties

There are a total of 193 political parties registered with Election commission of Pakistan. Recognized political parties up to 22nd March, 2012⁶⁶ they are:

1. Awami National Party
2. Awami Qiadat Party
3. Azmat-e-Islam Movement
4. Balochistan National Congress
5. Balochistan National Democratic Party
6. Balochistan National Party
7. Hazara Qaumi Mahaz
8. Islami Siasi Tehreek
9. Jamiat–e-Mushaikh Pakistan
10. Istiqlal Party
11. Ittehad Milli Hazara
12. Jamaat Ahle Hadith Pakistan (R)
13. Jamhoori Wattan Party
14. Markazi Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (FK)
15. Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (Niazi)
16. Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (Nifaz-e-Shariat)
17. JamoteQaumi Movement
18. Kakar Jamhoori Party Pakistan
19. Labour Party Pakistan
20. Markazi Jamaat Ahle Hadieth (Zubair)
21. Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith (Lakhwi Group)
22. Mohajir Qaumi Movement Pakistan
23. Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik
24. Mohajir Kashmir Movement
25. Mohib-e- Wattan Nowjawan Inqilabion Ki Anjuman (MNAKA)
26. Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan
27. National Peoples Party Workers Group
28. National Workers Party
29. Hazara Democratic Party
30. Nizam-e-Mustafa Party
31. Pak Wattan Party
32. Pak Muslim Alliance
33. Pakhtoonkhwa Qaumi Party
34. Pakistan Awami Party
35. Pakistan Awami Quwat Party
36. Pakistan Awami Tehreek
37. Pakistan Awami Tehrik-e-Inqilab
38. Pakistan Brohi Party

⁶⁶ Election commission of Pakistan accessed from <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/ListPolParties.pdf> accessed on 17 July 2012.

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| 39. Pakistan Democratic Party | 62. Punjab National Party |
| 40. Pakistan Freedom Party | 63. Qaum iInqilab Party |
| 41. Pakistan Gharib Party | 64. Qaumi Tahaffaz Party |
| 42. Pakistan Hum Wattan Party | 65. Seraiki Sooba Movement Pakistan |
| 43. Pakistan IttehadTehreek | 66. Shan-e-Pakistan Party |
| 44. Pakistan Jumhuri Aman Party | 67. Sindh Urban-Rural Alliance |
| 45. Pakistan Maqsad Himayet Tehrik | 68. Sunni Tehreek |
| 46. Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party | 69. Tameer-e-Pakistan Party |
| 47. Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 70. Tehreek-e-Hussainia Pakistan |
| 48. Pakistan Muslim League (Qasim) | 71. TehreekJamhoriat Pakistan |
| 49. Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Group) | 72. Tehreek-e-Wafaq Pakistan |
| 50. Pashtoonkhwa MilliAwami Party | 73. GhareebAwam Party |
| 51. Pakistan Peoples Party (Shaheed Bhutto) | 74. Pakistan Fatima Jinnah Muslim League |
| 52. Pakistan People's Party (Sherpao) | 75. National Party |
| 53. Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 76. Balochistan National Democratic Party |
| 54. Pakistan Progressive Party | 77. Balochistan National Movement |
| 55. Pakistan Progressive Party (Suraya Farman Group) | 78. Afghan National Party |
| 56. Pakistan Sariaki Party | 79. Pashtoon Quomi Tehreek |
| 57. Pakistan Shia Political Party | 80. Tehrik-e-Istiqlal Pakistan (Muhammad IkramNagra) |
| 58. Pakistan Social Democratic Party | 81. Tehrik-e-Istiqlal Pakistan (Muhammad IkramNagra) |
| 59. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf | 82. Qaumi Jamhoori Party |
| 60. Pakistan Workers Party | 83. Pakistan Aman Party |
| 61. Punjab National Front | 84. Pakistan Peoples Movement |

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| 85. | General Pervez Musharaf Himayat Tehreek | 107. | Awami Muslim League Pakistan |
| 86. | Jamait Ahle-Hadith Pakistan (ElahiZaheer) | 108. | Awami Party (Pakistan) |
| 87. | Markazi Jamiat Mushaikh Pakistan | 109. | Insaanyat Party (Pakistan) |
| 88. | Pakistan Citizen Movement | 110. | Mustaqbal Pakistan |
| 89. | Pakistan Tehrek-e-Inqalab | 111. | Pakistan National Muslim League |
| 90. | Pakistan Qaumi League | 112. | Lower Middle Party |
| 91. | Roshan Pakistan Party | 113. | Pakistan Meo Ittihad |
| 92. | Bedar Pakistan | 114. | Pakistan Qaumi Tehrik-E-Azadi |
| 93. | Pakistan Tehreek-e-Paigham | 115. | Pakistan Overseas League |
| 94. | Pakistan Social Justice Party | 116. | Jeev-e-Pakistan Party |
| 95. | Pakistan Qaumi Party | 117. | Pakistan Development Party |
| 96. | Azad Pakistan Party | 118. | Karwan-i-Millat Pakistan |
| 97. | Sindh United Party | 119. | Pakistan Democratic League (PDL) |
| 98. | Pakistan Bachao Party | 120. | Pakistan Motherland Party |
| 99. | Pasban | 121. | Hazara Awami Ittehad |
| 100. | Christian Progressive Movement | 122. | Jumiat Ulma-e-Islam (Nazryati), Pakistan |
| 101. | Pakistan Muhafiz Party | 123. | Pakistan Ittehad Yaqeen Tanzeem Party |
| 102. | Masih Awami Party | 124. | Justice and Development Party Pakistan |
| 103. | Pakistan Muslim League (Sher-e-Bangal) | 125. | Pakistan Young Blood Christian League |
| 104. | Salam Pakistan Party | 126. | Pakistan Muslim League "H" Haqiqi |
| 105. | Tehreek Tabdili Nizam Pakistan | | |
| 106. | Pakistan Green Party | | |

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| 127. | Pakistan Dharti Maan Party | 147. | Muttahida Majlis-e Amal Pakistan |
| 128. | Awami Justice Party | 148. | Pakistan Muhajir League |
| 129. | Pakistan Patriotic Movement | 149. | Islami Tehreek Pakistan |
| 130. | Sindh Taraqi Passand Party (STP) | 150. | Bahawalpur National Awami Party |
| 131. | Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek | 151. | Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (S) |
| 132. | Peoples Democratic League | 152. | Muttahida Muslim League |
| 133. | Awami Jamhuri Ittehad Pakistan | 153. | Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (F) |
| 134. | Awami Tehreek Bahali-e Soba Bahawalpur Pakistan | 154. | Ittehad Alam-e-Islam |
| 135. | Pakistan Basic Rights Movement | 155. | Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (N) |
| 136. | Tehreek-e-Suba Hazara | 156. | Muslim movement Pakistan |
| 137. | All Pakistan Muslim League | 157. | Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan |
| 138. | Islamic Republican Party | 158. | Awami Tehreek |
| 139. | Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party | 159. | Markazi Jamiat Al- Hadith (Sajid Mir) |
| 140. | Roshan Pakistan League | 160. | Sindh Dost Ittehad |
| 141. | Pakistan People's Alliance | 161. | National Alliance |
| 142. | Aalay Kalam Ullah Farman Rasool (saw) | 162. | Pakistan Liberation League |
| 143. | Tehrik-e-Istaqlal (Rehmat Khan Wardag) | 163. | Sindh National Front |
| 144. | Jannat Pakistan Party | 164. | Awam ilttehad Party |
| 145. | Tehrik-e-Masawaat | 165. | National Awami Party |
| 146. | Tehreek-e-Istehkaam Pakistan | 166. | Pakistan Muslim League (Muttahida) |
| | | 167. | Balochistan National Party (Awami) |
| | | 168. | Peoples Muslim League Pakistan |

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| 169. | Millat Party | 182. | All Pakistan Youth Working Party |
| 170. | Mutahidda Qabail Party | 183. | Pakistan Muslim League (Q) |
| 171. | National Peoples Party | 184. | Khud Mukhtar Pakistan Party |
| 172. | Pakistan Conservative Party | 185. | Pakistan Muslim League (J) |
| 173. | Awami Himayat Tehreek Pakistan | 186. | Pakistan United Inqalab Party |
| 174. | All Pakistan Minorities Alliance. | 187. | Pakistan Muslim League (Jinnah) |
| 175. | Swabi Qaumi Mahaz | 188. | Pakistan Muslim League Democratic |
| 176. | Pakistan Muslim League Council | 189. | Pakistan Muslim League (F) |
| 177. | Progressive Democratic Party | 190. | Pakistan Muslim League (Safdar) |
| 178. | Sada-e-Pakistan Party | 191. | Pakistan Muslim League(Z) |
| 179. | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (Patriots) | 192. | Wattan National League Pakistan. |
| 180. | Tehreek-e-Ittehad-e-Adam | 193. | Sindh Democratic Alliance |
| 181. | Pakistan Muslim League | | |

Annexure-C: Empowering yourself: Right to Information (RTI)

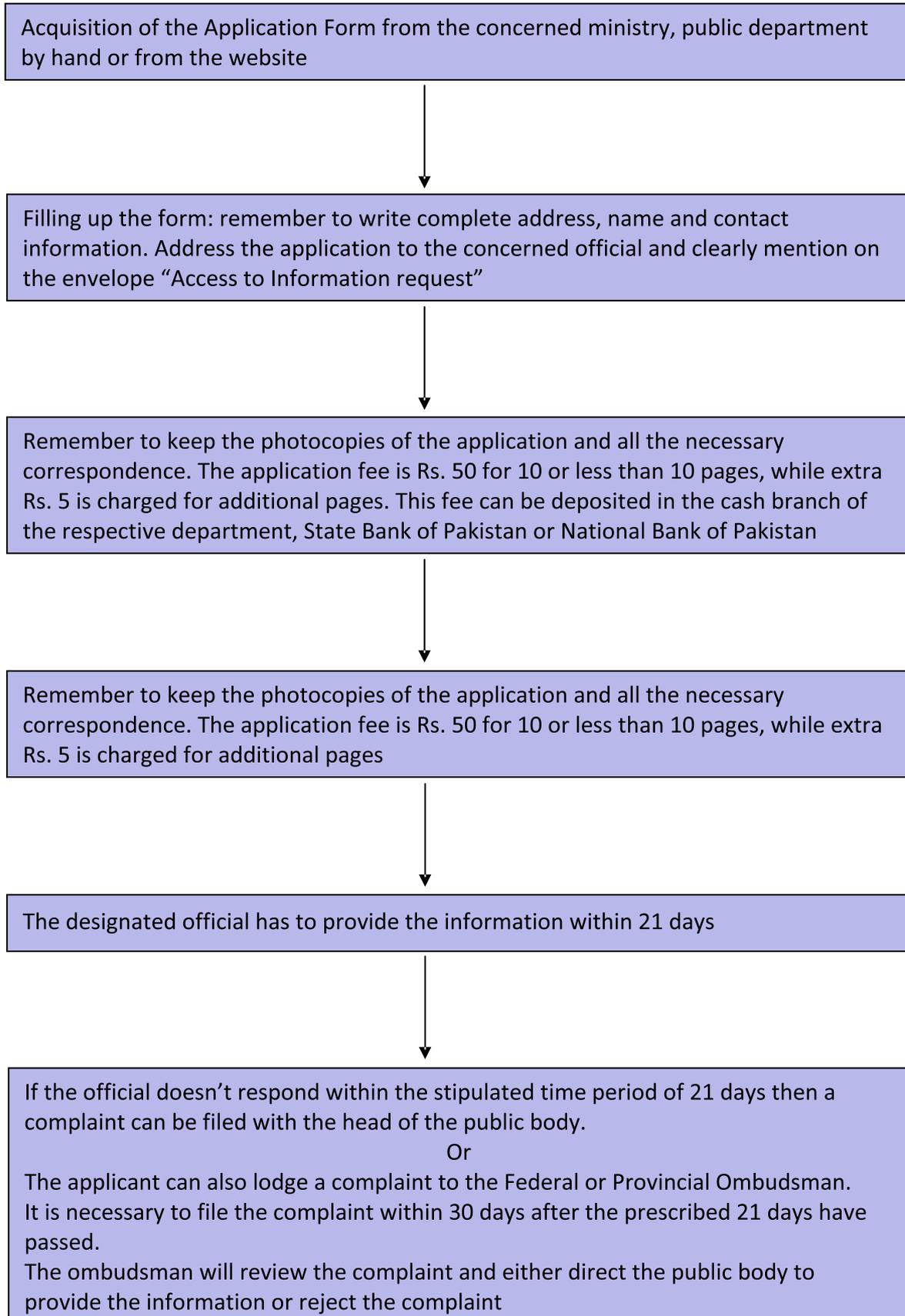
- Do you want to know how your tax money is being utilized by the government?
- Do you have questions regarding Public Sector Development Projects in your locality?
- Do you have questions regarding allocation of funds for research and development (R&D) in your university?
- Or do you want to know the details of energy development projects in the country?

The public service departments and the government hold vital information that can answer these and many other questions that often come into your mind. But the question is how?

Right to Information or the article 19-A of the constitution provides the right to citizens of the state to demand information from government and public departments that is vital to answer these questions. This right also holds the key to practice other rights granted to you by the constitution of this country. Pakistan was the first country in South Asia to introduce “Access to Information” as an ordinance in 2002. After years of advocacy by prominent members of the Parliament and civil society workers, this right was included as integral part of the constitution as Article 19-A, after the eighteenth amendment in 2010.

Apart from the information that has been classified under the Official Secrets Act, all the other information held by public departments and government bodies can be accessed by any citizen of the state. But the question remains how?

The following flow chart will elucidate the process of accessing information held by government ministries and public departments:



**APPLICATION FORM
FOR OBTAINING RECORD UNDER
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ORDINANCE, 2002 (XCVI OF 2002)**

Name of Applicant:	
CNIC No.: (Attach a photocopy)	
Father's Name:	
Address:	
Phone No.:	
Name of Public Body from which information is to be obtained:	
Subject matter of record requested:	
Nature of record requested:	
Purpose of acquisition of the information or record:	

DECLARATION

- (a) Application Fee of Rs. 50/- (non-refundable) has been deposited with the cash branch of the department or in State Bank of Pakistan or National Bank of Pakistan or Treasury _____vide challan or receipt No. _____ dated _____, an original copy of which is attached.
- (b) The information obtained would not be used for any purpose other than specified above.

Signature of Applicant

Individualland creates choices! As an innovative research-based consultancy and advocacy group we open up space for the individual. Our focus is the role of the media and to generate a peaceful discourse in society. We are working to increase the number of responsible journalists, media-literacy among citizens and a greater acceptance for different ways to live.