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About PATTAN-Coalition38

PATTAN is one of the leading civil society organisations of Pakistan and has been working to empower marginalised classes to make state and govt bodies accountable for improving governance of elections, disasters and rights. Currently, PATTAN is the secretariat of Coalition38 - a largest network of CSOs, labour unions, CBOs, and intellectuals.

Coalition38 aims to influence the state institutions for the implementation of Articles 3; 29; 37, and 38 of Pakistan's Constitution in letter and spirit through research, awareness raising, social mobilization, networking of civil society including marginalised people and women.

PRESS RELEASE

Voices of the marginalized people – voting dynamics, behaviour and conduct of election.

A large majority of marginalised voters are likely to vote and wanted to have polling on the scheduled date.

Millions of deceased people seem to be still present on the electoral rolls, which can attract impersonation.

There appears almost a consensus amongst working classes that elites and electables are mainly responsible for causing harm to democracy and the country.

Peoples' Party appears to be the most popular party in Sindh, while PTI is likely to have clear lead at the national level as well as in KP and Punjab. PML-N's popularity amongst poorer classes appears to have declined hugely.

Islamabad, 25 January: Despite believing that general elections have already been made controversial, as many as 87% of working people were found keen to cast their vote on 8th February and wanted general elections to be held on the scheduled date. Moreover, most of them were likely to believe that the election commission and caretaker governments are mainly responsible for making elections controversial due to deliberate denial of level playing field (LPF) to some parties/candidates. In response to 'which institutions are responsible for not providing LPF, 55% blamed ECP and caretaker governments, while 16% named establishment, and 20% said all of them including judiciary. Further on availability of LPF there appears some form of agreement across political divide. For instance, 67% and 58% of the survey respondents belonging to PPP and PMLN respectively appear to believe that LPF is not available to PTI.

These are some of the preliminary findings of PATTAN-Coalition38's nation-wide survey that was conducted in 41 districts across the country during 4-22 January. In total 1,149 individuals and 820 office bearers of 345 unions and associations belonging to poor classes were interviewed face-to-face. About 27% of them were women, which is close to Pakistan's female labour participation rate. Regarding urban-rural background 58% of the respondents were from urban areas, and 30% from rural. This was perhaps the first survey research ever conducted with the marginalised and professional people and their associations on voting dynamics, behaviour and electoral issues including electoral governance in Pakistan.

The survey respondents were also asked to list three top-most issues that they and the country have been facing. The ranking shows price-hike, poverty, and organised exploitation, injustice, corruption and selective implementation of laws and policies by elites as three most serious issues. And more than 90% of marginalised people and office bearers of their associations appear to find elites and so-called electables solely responsible for their problems. About 41% of the respondents were also found blaming PDM, and caretaker govts for the current multi-faceted crises, while 12% charged PTI government, 6% mentioned ECP and 7% judiciary, while about 31% were likely to blame all of them.

As far popularity of parties is concerned about 50% of the survey respondents from Sindh were likely to vote for Pakistan People's Party in the upcoming elections, while at the national level its support dropped to just 17%. Similarly, 23% voters opted for PML-N in Punjab, but

at the national level only 16% responded preferred PML-N. Like many other opinion polls, our survey also found PTI as the most popular party at the national level having 39% favorable respondents. However, in KP and Punjab PTI's popularity surges to 44.5% and 47% respectively.

The survey found a rare phenomenon – popularity gap between some political leaders and their parties. The most glaring examples are of Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In case of Imran Khan, he is 10% more popular than his party at national level, while in case of PPP, Bilawal is likely to be 12% less popular than his own party in Sindh. The survey data shows huge prevalence of resentment against political dynasties and elite capture. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for dwindling support of PPP and PMLN.

Credible electoral roll fundamentally important for every election. To measure accuracy of the roll, we asked the respondents to share information about deceased family members. 28% of the respondents said they had lost some family member in the last few years. 37% of them said they had checked details of the dead relatives through 8300, and 27% of those who checked names of their deceased relatives found the names on the final electoral rolls. Seemingly a huge number, and its impact could undermine credibility of the upcoming elections, should impersonation takes place, especially when photos of voters are not given on the roll.

The survey data also clearly shows that political parties and citizens' associations especially of marginalised people have no organised interaction and relationship with each other. To democratize our polity this relationship must be deepened.

Despite all the setbacks such as rising cost of living, injustice, poverty, poor governance, and lack of level playing field, as many as 82% of the survey respondents were found to be hopeful of Pakistan's future. Therefore, it is essentially vital to channelize their hope into concrete outcome. The best way forward is - First, to understand importance of associations of marginalised people in building democratic polity and governance. Second, to build nationwide coalition of marginalised people and their associations. Third, to build alliances with reform minded intelligentsia.

For data tables and notes please read the attached file

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