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For further information

Email: info@pattan.org

Media Committee [\(show more\)](#)

Pattan-C38 Secretariat

House 5, Street 58, F-10/3
Islamabad, Pakistan.

Cell #: 0333-6110964

Cell #: 0302-8516901

Cell #: 0345-9555438

E-mail: info@pattan.org

URL: www.pattan.org

Pattan Disaster

Preparedness &

Learning Center:

Mauza Bahadurpur,

Bosan Road Multan

Cell #: 0307-7869866

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.

Islamabad 9 February

PRELIMINARY ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT PATTAN-Coalition38

The most controversial and farcical general elections in Pakistan's history concluded yesterday. Despite having the much-touted Election Management System (EMS) at its disposal, the Election Commission of Pakistan failed to complete the count and to release election results 24 hours after closing of the polling. Which is in total violation of the Elections Act 2017.

Denial of election symbol to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) confused a significant number of voters, especially illiterate, which likely increased the percentage of rejected or spoiled ballots in this election. Further, suspension of internet and cellular services throughout the polling day marred the otherwise smooth polling in most districts, as it deprived many voters to find their polling details through the ECP's facility - 8300. Moreover, and it has negatively impacted the turnout. Remember, most pre-poll opinion polls, including ours, showed more than 80% respondents saying that they would go-out to vote. But the system failed them.

These are some of the findings of our exit-poll and participatory election observation.

PATTAN-Coalition38 – one of the largest and independent election observation groups had conducted three opinion polls and observed the polling on February 8, 2024. On polling day our observers and participatory voters randomly observed more than 600 polling stations of 108 national assembly constituencies.

According to our participatory observation and exit-poll nearly 15% voters could not cast their vote due to: (1) Change in polling station without being informed of the change. (2) Fragmentation of votes of family members and communities to different and/or far-flung polling areas and even constituencies. This resulted in benefitting certain party/candidate and damaging others.

About 11% of the respondents of our exit-poll and participatory observers said the following: 1) They faced some kind of difficulty during polling. (2) Level playing field was not available to all candidates during pre-poll period. (3) They were not satisfied with the polling process.

Nearly one-fourth of the participatory observers reported that polling agents of PTI were not present inside the polling booths, while 7% said that someone tried to influence them to vote for a certain party. Our investigation also found vote-buying at 15% of the surveyed locations.

It is worth noting here that Pakistan's electoral system allows victory even by one vote, which encourages contestants to small scale but widespread rigging, such as vote and CNIC buying, ballot spoiling, shifting of votes to far-flung areas, scattering of family votes across polling areas etc. The purpose has always been to make it difficult to trace the culprits.

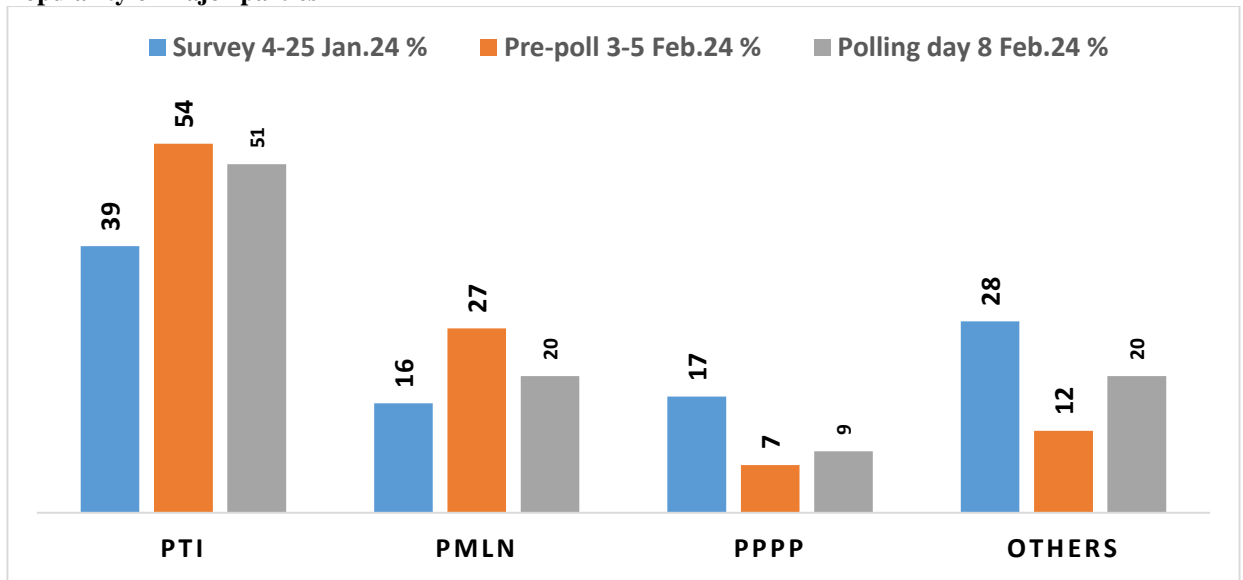
While we warmly welcome arrival and presence of international observers and appreciate the constraints under which they observed the polling, we feel necessary to highlight that mere quick observation of polling, meetings with politicians and some civil society groups are not sufficient to comment on a very complex electoral exercise in Pakistan.

Regarding **popularity of major parties**, PTI appeared to be the most popular party throughout the three surveys (exit poll) that our group had conducted. (See table below).

Popularity of Major Parties

Party	(Survey January 4-25, 2024) Popularity %	(Pre-poll survey February 3-5, 2024) Popularity %	(Polling day survey Feb 8, 2024) Popularity %
PTI	39	54	51
PMLN	16	27	20
PPPP	17	7	9
Others	28	12	20
Total	100	100	100

Popularity of major parties



Number of surveyed locations

	Survey January 4-25, 2024	Pre-poll 3-5 Feb.24	Polling day 8 Feb.24
KPK	344	143	205
ICT	58	19	121
Punjab	1123	745	800
Sindh	444	28	179
Total	1969	935	1305

For further information:

Sarwar Bari: 0300-8545572, Ayaz Wagha: 0333-6110964,
William Pervaiz: 0302-851690