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About C38

The Coalition 38 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 mobilisation, networking of civil society including marginalised people and women.

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PRESS RELEASE

Disturbing trends discovered in current electoral roll. About 13 million eligible men and women are likely to be disenfranchised in next general elections, while many electoral areas are littered with over registration of voters.

Islamabad, 13 October 2023: “Widespread over and under registration of voters across provinces is likely to cause massive disenfranchisement of both men and women, as well as exceptionally high room for rigging and corrupt practices in forthcoming general elections, because Election Commission and NADRA could not register all the eligible persons as voter in 102 of 134 districts of the country, while in 17 districts more than the eligible persons have been registered as voter.

Province wise analysis further reveals gravity of these disturbing trends. In Baluchistan about one-third eligible population is likely to have been excluded in 31 districts and of almost of all constituencies. In Punjab too, where excellent road networks exist low registration is discovered in half of its 40 districts, while in 12 districts it has over or exceptionally over registration.

Interestingly, analysis of ECP's voters' data of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province also reveals that in 21 of 35 districts, a significant percentage of eligible people have been disenfranchised as in five of its districts, registration was found to be low or very low, and in 16 districts it was found low, while five districts are littered with over or exceptionally over registration. Sindh appears to be the only province, where over registration didn't appear to have taken place. However, under registration could be seen in 24 districts.”

PATTAN-Coalition38 released these findings today through a press release. Their research also discovered wild variance in registered voters at district and constituency levels. For instance, 78% and 75% of populations of Muree and Jhelum respectively were registered as voters. In other words, on average about 18% extra (dubious) votes exist in these two districts. In Kohistan the registration was as low as just 18%. Moreover, in eight districts of Baluchistan i.e. Kech, Panjgur, Surab, Shirani, Washuk, Khuzdar, Kohlu etc. only about 25% populations were registered as voters. In other words, about 33% of eligible people of these districts are likely to be excluded from the electoral roll. Both wild swings are extremely troubling.

According to latest census Pakistan's population in 2023 was 241.49 million, while according to ECP website in July, the country had 127 million voters or 52% of the total population. It is worth stating here that about 42% of Pakistan's population is likely to be under the age of 18 years. In other words, 58% or 140 million population was eligible to become voter in 2023. This means six pc or 13 millions of the eligible persons have not been registered as voter.

According to 2023 population census female-male ratio is 49:51, which is further skewed by three points at 46:54 due to poor registration of voters.

The above-stated discrepancies are likely to make a differential impact in most constituencies of the 102 districts on various political parties in future elections. It is worth noting here that in 2018 general elections in 48 NA constituencies the margin of victory was less than 5,000 and in 40 NA constituencies it was between 5,001 and 10,000. Therefore, a small addition or suppression of registration of vote can lead to a huge impact at the national and provincial level as the country has majoritarian electoral system. Hence, it is imperative to measure the impact of under; and over registration of voters as candidates/parties can enhance

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probability of their victory by using these two tools. Therefore, it must be investigated and rectified without any delay.

Recommendations:

- We urge the ECP, NADRA and the caretaker government to use all the available resources to delete names of ineligible voters and make sure no one is disenfranchised from participating in coming elections. This should be completed within couple of weeks so that general elections could be held on time.
- Sufficient evidence is now available to argue that most of the un-registered persons as voters happen to be female, poor, and youth. As provision of CNIC and voter registration under the Pakistan's Constitution and law have been responsibility and need of the State. Therefore, the State should reform policy of issuance of CNIC and vote's registration.
- The State must also make sure that system of birth and death registration is improved as this will help improve electoral roll.

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