REVIEW REPORT OF SEMINAR WITH ACTION AID

‘EMPOWERING DISENFRANCHISED WOMEN IN POLITICAL REALM’

Compiled & Narrated by: Hina Ahmed, R&D Officer-Forum for Human Rights Pakistan
Under Supervision of Mr. Asim Zubair, Executive Director-FHRP
Everyone is born equal. So why divide!

-Anonymous
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This seminar would have not been possible without Action AID’s support and interest, particularly Mr. Shahjehan Baloch’s, who reinforced practical execution of the entire concept of the seminar. There was a pressing need to share findings of FAFEN’s data with concerned government officials that FHRP collated during GE2008’s observation of women-only polling stations in Sindh and Balochistan. We are also thankful to all the members of the political parties who took time out of their busy schedules and shared their invaluable insights with us.
DISCLAIMER

This report is only a compilation of views, opinions and information conveyed by the invited guest speakers. The author and the organizers of the seminar do not accept the responsibility of the claims made and the authenticity of the factual or any other information provided by any party other than staff of Forum for Human Rights Pakistan-FHRP.
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**PREFACE:** Introducing Forum For Human Rights Pakistan and Its Women Rights Relevant Initiatives
Forum for Human Rights Pakistan has been working in the area of human rights in different settings of the region since 2005. However, FHRP’s areas of concern particularly include issues related to women, religious minorities, youth and education.

FHRP has been working towards ensuring women are included in all the walks of life, are informed and empowered to the extent that they become a productive part of the society. However, inclusion of women in the democratic process is one of FHRP’s main concerns. FHRP has been involved in the voter education for women to support the mainstreaming of women’s issues in the political process where policy makers, lawyers, media, educationalists and social activists have been part of our discussions regarding women rights. In this regard, FHRP further conducted 30 national level trainings with media representatives on proper news reporting format to encourage transparent elections in Pakistan and mobilize women voters.

FHRP’s current project with TDEA (Trust for democratic education and accountability), named STAEP (supporting transparency, accountability and electoral process in Pakistan) is another far reaching attempt towards empowering women and including them in electoral process. One of the key objectives of STAEP project is to work in association with NADRA officials and identify pockets where citizens have no CNIC, particularly women. Then sensitizing individuals of the area, getting their CNICs made and requesting MRVs (Mobile registration vans) where NADRA offices are out of people’s reach.

Moreover, FHRP has an extensive experience of mobilizing, organizing and motivating the community to take part in the development and awareness activities and programs with par focus on women rights, governance, education and religious minorities.

This seminar with Action AID is another link to FHRP’s previous efforts regarding highlighting and resolving women related issues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Speakers and participants were called for empowering half of the country’s population in political realm so that women could raise their voice for their rights and justice. Depicting the dismal picture of low turnout ratio of women voter at various polling stations in previous General Election 2008, Speakers of seminar “Empowering disenfranchised women into political Realm” Organized by Forum for Human Rights (FHRP) in collaboration with Action-Aid Pakistan.

After Sadia Shakeel (See Annex 1) introduced FHRP before audience through the official presentation, Zeeshan Chuhtai (See Annex II) from FAFEN shared facts and figures that conveyed the alarming situation of lower turnout rates of female voters from GE2008. As per FGDs the reasons behind lower participation of women are generally unregistered CNICs, bar on women voting and unfavorable environment & regulatory framework. He shared some data of low turn ratio of female in Sindh and Baluchistan documented by Free & Fair Election Network (FAFEN) with the audience unfolding dismal picture of 150 districts in both the provinces where participation of women voters in GE-2008 remained less than 5%. In 2008’s election, the voter turnout rate for women in Baluchistan remained less than 5% in 10 out of 28 districts whereas in Sindh the ratio of low turnout in 16 districts remained below 5 percent.

Rasheed Chauhdry, director programs FAFEN, was of the view that where there are already cultural factors impairing women participation there are also legal factors that hamper women’s participation as combined polling stations and absence of female facilitators in polling stations. Such factors discourage women to take part in political process in areas where they are not encouraged to step out of their homes. Marvi Rashid, member PPP functional league, conveyed that getting CNICs registered is not enough, for it is a complementary important step, what is further important is that women should also be aware of the consequences in result of the choices they make in voting for the person of their choice. Hence, political awareness and education is more important. Sabra Shahid from Jamat-e-Islami said, women need to be provided with proper facilitation for getting the CNICs registered. The process to enroll themselves in voter lists should also be easy and comprehendible for general public who cannot even read if their CNICs get expired. Here, Hina Tabassum, Program Manager FHRP added to her point that votes can be casted even if
the CNIC has been expired. Taj Haider, member PPP, said that they their party has always encouraged women participation, following mandate of Shaheed Benazir Bhuto. Their Benazir Income Support Program is cogent evidence to this fact. The BSIP card requires CNIC for registration thus it provides women a reason to have their CNICs made where they consider it least important being un-functional in role that requires CNIC or any identity confirmatory document. Besides, he conveyed their initiative of running mobile registration vans to facilitate women and also requested that PPP can be contacted in this regard if any area or community requires MRVs to get women voters registered. Shahjehan Baloch, Program Manager Action AID, stressed on the point that democracy although prevails but not in its true sense which is why women have been disenfranchised. Responsible bodies as government officials, political party, ECP and NGOs need to play their role on all levels to make the majority of Pakistan’s population i.e. women effective and encourage them to participate in elections. Tashfeen Niazi declared education to be the only solution of the problems being faced be the nation while Naeem Ahmed was of the view that they are working towards increasing the overall turnout rate of voters which was merely 44% in last election. In upcoming election of 2013 they expect to raise the voter turnout by at least 80%.

Speakers together acceded that there is a need to take firm initiatives to facilitate women in bringing them to the polling stations and solve accessibility, security and facilitation issues. Speakers together yielded that the point agenda that they all need to work on is regarding raising awareness among women about their right to vote and its implications. These reviews ended on the recommendation that ECP and NADRA should ensure gender parity in electoral rolls and CNICs through mass-based campaigns in collaboration with political parties, NGOs, CSOs and media, especially in remote, rural and tribal areas.
Voter turnout is generally regarded as a barometer of political participation. High turnout rates usually signify popular interest and public confidence in the electoral system. The 2008 polls were the second successive elections in Pakistan that saw an increase in voter turnouts – up to 45 per cent compared with 42 per cent in 2002. The recent national and international poll conducted in the country depicts dismal picture of low turnout ratio of women voter in the country. It is very disappointing that the country’s half population comprises of women who are disenfranchised on social, cultural, religious and political grounds.

The observations of Election Commission Pakistan bear testimony to the fact that women voter turnout ratio in all the provinces specially Sindh and Baluchistan remained below par. In 2008’s election, the voter turnout rate for women in Baluchistan remained up to 28% in 10 out of 28 districts; however, in Jaffarabad it was 0%. The same situation was observed in district TandoMohammad Khan of Sindh where again female turnout ratio was 0%. An insight into the women voter turnout in the districts as Shahdadkot, Tharparkarm and Tando Allahyar that are under influence of feudal lords also remained haplessly low i.e. less than 15%. Even in districts located in developed cities as Karachi had no different state, for alarmingly only 9.87% women turned up to cast their votes in Karachi South. According to the election observation data compiled by FAFEN in the selected districts of Sindh and Baluchistan, show the situation being much somber. Their data shows 150 districts in both the provinces where participation of women voters in GE-2008 remained less than 10%. FHRP being partner organization of FAFEN (Free and fair election network) had access to the shared information below. Only limited data is being shared here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Constituency ID</th>
<th>Registered Voters</th>
<th>Vote Polled</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-199, Sukkur cum Sukkur-II)</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-200, Ghotki-I</td>
<td>12670</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-202 Shikarpur (Old Shikarpur-I)</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-204, Larkana</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-204, Larkana</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-204, Larkana</td>
<td>2062</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-208, Jacobabad</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-208, Jacobabad</td>
<td>1377</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-208, Jacobabad</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-209, Jacobabad-cum-Kashmore (Old Jacobabad-III).</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-210, Kashmore (Old Jacobabad-III)</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>NA-216, Khairpur-II</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Despite the fact that ECP has ordered that elements preventing women from participating in elections will be taken to task, yet the majority women have not registered their votes for the upcoming election in 2013.

**Province** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total**
--- | --- | --- | ---
Baluchistan | 18,86,235 | 13,91,929 | 32,78,164
FATA | 11,20,736 | 5,55,231 | 16,75,967
Federal Area | 3,25,795 | 2,79,007 | 6,04,802
Khyber Pakhtun Khuwa | 69,29,105 | 51,35,492 | 1,20,64,597
Punjab | 2,72,97,361 | 2,10,11,283 | 4,83,08,644
Sindh | 1,02,14,460 | 82,18,417 | 1,84,32,877
**Total** | **4,77,73,692** | **3,65,91,359** | **8,43,65,051**
According to these figures from the official website of ECP, the number of registered women voter is yet not encouraging in all the provinces. Even if for sake of discussion, it could be believed that all the registered number of women would vote even then the gap would stay there. Women would still not even be voting in equal numbers to male voters.

Forum for Human Rights Pakistan (FHRP), in such a situation, commends the landmark suggestions recommended by election commission of Pakistan proposing re-poll if women turn out ratio in Polling station is less than ten percent. The proposed bill will ensure the maximum participation of women in the electoral process thus empowering them to cast their vote. FHRP hopes that honorable members of the parliamentarians will table the bill in the national assembly to make it law in order to encourage and empower women politically.

OBJECTIVE OF SEMINAR
The seminar was held to highlight the soberity of the issue about alarmingly less participation of Pakistani women in casting their votes in election in the light of the findings from FAFEN pertinent to General Election 2008 and to engage people from concerned walks of life to spread awareness and influence people in their circle about positive impacts of women participation in democratic decisions by engaging a positive and constructive discussion.

The seminar further, held discussion about contributing factors that are hindering women’s participation in different regions of Pakistan, and the initiatives taken by invited speakers from concerned departments and political parties to resolve the same issue. Reviews of all the guest speakers were concluded upon sharing recommendations about taking necessary initiatives for promoting awareness and encouraging women to participate in the upcoming elections and working towards increasing females’ turnout ratio in the next election.
Mr. Rasheed Charuhdry  Director Programs (FAFEN)
Ms. Marvi Rashdi  Member PML Functional
Ms. Sabra Shahid  Member Jamat e Islami
Mr. Tashfeen Niazi  Member Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
Mr. Ahmed  Deputy director election commission officer, Karachi
Ms. Shazia  ANP-Vice president district Sindh
Mr. Taj Haider  Member Pakistan People’s Party
Mr. Shahjehan Baloch  Program Manager- Action AID

FORMAT OF SEMINAR

- Opening: By verse of Holy Quran.
- Forum for Human Rights Pakistan’s introduction by Ms. Sadia Shakeel.
- FAFEN’s research based presentation about ‘disenfranchising women’ by Mr. Zeeshan Chughtai.
- Views of invited guest speakers.
- Concluding the shared views and presenting recommendations.

SEMINAR REVIEW
MR. RASHEED CHAUDHRY: DIRECTOR PROGRAMS- FAFEN

As far as the issue of disenfranchising women is concerned each person sitting here is concerned about the matter of empowering women and ensuring provision of their right to vote. This right is protected under international laws, as of UDHR (Universal declaration for Human Rights) and ICCPR (international covenant on civil and political rights). More than that it is the responsibility of the state, government and the parliament to protect these rights and implement legislations and laws that encourage and invite meaningful participation of women in electoral and political process.

It’s been unfortunate that the responsible bodies who are liable to ensure provision and protection of citizens’ rights have, too, been indifferent to a certain extent towards the sensitivity and sobriety of the issue regarding disenfranchisement of women. Even our political parties are not that disciplined and steadied down in their areas that they could change the conventional and typical thinking and setup that runs deep in our interior, tribal and feudal areas. This traditional mindset and societal setup disempowers women and keep them from exercising their very basic rights including the right to vote. Even election commission, that is responsible to ensure establishment of such setups that encourages women to vote during election, ended up reinforcing the traditional societal setup of these areas instead of providing a safe, secure and culturally sensitive set up to encourage women to vote. As per the presentation that Zeeshan shared, we could see that for 564 polling stations from GE2008 that were particularly women-only polling stations, even in such setups females’ turnout rate remained 0% in many areas.

In this regard the veritable example of the polling station of Jog that is a sub division of district Sialkot of Punjab can also be considered. During FAFEN’s observation for the recent by-election that there was not a single ‘women-only’ polling station in this area thus women did not come out to vote. In fact what’s more saddening is that fact that the combined polling stations that were established in Jog did not have a separate polling booth or even female facilitators who could facilitate female voters. Now Jog is a conservative area where women are traditionally bound to stay in their homes and cannot exercise their rights. In
such a scenario where it is already a challenge for women to even ask for their basic rights they would certainly avoid such a setup that would be run only by men. Even if there were some women who would have wanted to cast their votes, understandably, they did not come to these polling stations because of the unfavourable environment that denied their societal conventions. The same problem led to proxy voting issues where during by-elections it happened in one of the areas that the members of some political parties came up holding CNICs of their women and asked to cast votes on females’ behalf. Now the presiding officer there refused allowing to carry out any such activity but in some places it might have occurred without being rebuffed due to political pressure or security threat.

This implies that the electoral managers themselves are not quite gender sensitive when it comes to managing elections and this does not end here. Even the political parties that are apparently secular, liberal and left leaning make stupefying invalid agreements among themselves with the parties of the right wing; such illegal and under the table alliances malign transparency and fairness of election process. It happened in Moosakhel’s by-election while one of the candidates of the liberal parties came up with the complaint that the other party has violated their mutual agreement and sent females to cast vote. So it’s not just the government entities that are responsible in disempowering women even political parties that are the representatives of their people are involved in systematic disempowerment. And when the role of parliament is taken into consideration it is also not very encouraging since the same issue has been highlighted a number of times in the parliament but no such strict measure were taken or any legislation was made to subdue such activities.

Now when we talk about enfranchisement of women, providing them enabling environment, facilitating and encouraging them but this all is only possible if their names are mentioned on the electoral rolls. If their names are missing on the voter list clearly they wouldn’t be able to vote.

As per FAFEN’s findings from 2007’s electoral rolls there were grave disparities in the number of female voters when compared to male voters. The ratio of female voters was hardly 70, 60 or even 50 in many areas, against every 100 male voters that was comparatively less on account of gender based population difference (in number of males
and females) of 1998’s census. Now as per speculated estimation of different governmental and non-governmental entities there has been a significant increase in number of female population over time. As per 1998’s census there should have been 82 female voters against every 100 males. This estimation did not appear neither in the voter list of 2007 nor of 2013. Although we do not hold any reservations regarding integrity of the recent voter list however, it is still a serious concern that the ratio of female voters in electoral rolls for 2013’s election, is yet 77 female against every 100 male voters which is a very discouraging situation even after 5 years have passed.

If the question regarding reasons that these women are not included in the voter lists is raised, it can be counter rejected in presence of the automated system that grants right to vote to every individual who has a CNIC that majority of our females, unfortunately, do not hold. But again, what should motivate a person to get CNIC made who doesn’t have enough resources to get education, does not have government employment as he has to work on fields and do his own hard work or do not feel the need to get birth of their children registered. CNIC then becomes least of the concerns of such people who do not have to associate with government on any level. Such people belong to minority and socially excluded classes, downtrodden ones!

As per one of FAFEN’s studies ‘Accurate but incomplete’ that was based on the assessment of voter lists displayed for public scrutiny in March 2012, there are about 104 million adult voters who did not possess CNICs, hence were not registered in electoral rolls. Even if the numbers of female voters are projected on the sex ratio of 1998’s census even then it leaves 7.3 million females unregistered and un-eligible to vote.

These issues call NADRA, parliament, ECP and civil society’s attention so that each one of us can take necessary actions and think of means that can resolve these issues. Moreover, parties that are directly involved in handling the issues of women disenfranchisement as ECP and parliament should make sure that women are not legally kept from casting votes. Legal disenfranchisement hampers all the efforts, as arranged today, at any level and demotivates females, leaving them discouraged and behind.
MS. MARVI RASHIDI: MEMBER PML FUNCTIONAL

There is a dire need that discussions as such be arranged at all levels for it is significant that not just to empower women but inform and aware them of their rights as well. Empowerment does not mean issuing CNIC only although it is the prime step towards empowering them; however, sensitizing them is equally important so women can exercise those rights that everyone talks about granting them. It is females’ constitutional and fundamental right to cast vote and be mainstreamed in electoral and political process since women are in majority of the entire population of Pakistan. If the majority is devoid of their basic rights then it indicates the downfall of civilized societies. I was pleased to learn that NGOs and civil society is playing a keen part in gathering facts and figures to highlight these issues but if only those involved in collecting figures could also play their part in mobilizing and compelling these women to get their CNICs registered then it can guarantee a positive change. It would be a better step then only blaming govt. and state for their negligence and incompetence.

Where many problems are being discussed that disfranchise women, to me the most unfair and distressing point that is also the major reason of women’s disenfranchisement is not having their CNICs made despite of being eligible to vote. This issue can only be resolved when people collectively invest their interest in resolving the issue yet work individually towards it. Another problem that I can think of right now, and that we are also working on is the registration of people’s vote in their native areas although they reside in other location. Votes of many people who have moved from rural to urban areas and urban to rural areas have their votes registered in their villages and native places from where they’ve moved to other cities. This again deprives people from casting their votes. ECP should make such amends that people may get to cast their votes right on the locations where they are currently living so when the time to exercise the right to vote arrives people can make use of it.

While Mr. Rasheed shared a few incidents from Jog where females were kept from casting their votes by unfair agreements and proxy voting, there are also many incidents where
females were forced and coerced to get out of their homes and forcibly cast their votes in favour of feudal or another influential person of the area. When votes are cast under undue influence then ineligible people enter assemblies and exploit power that they are given to serve people. Then it comes down to those who can exercise their right to vote freely and without any influence. They must make sane and informed choice when it comes to voting for the person to represent them in the assemblies. The one they can trust in being that conscientious leader who would remember his duties once elected. It is very important that people must know what power they entail and that power comes from voting.

When we talk about awareness it is important that awareness be raised not only among females but males too. In areas as Tharparkar, Mithi and Umerkot where people are generally unaware, sensitizing females is just as important as sensitizing males. People in these areas are devoid of even the basic facilities of life hence they are least interested in owning a CNIC. Yet, it is important that their say be included in elections which calls for arranging awareness sessions that may motivate them to get their CNICs made and not only that they must be aware of the importance of casting a vote and be involved in electoral affairs. Recognizing the need my party arranged awareness raising sessions among the marginalized population of these areas. Our motive was to inform citizens of their right to vote and its importance; further, that it was only possible if they held CNIC. Likewise, ECP, civil society, govt. and other responsible bodies need to disseminate this awareness from their platforms by taking firm initiatives that bring desired changes that we are talking about today.
MS. SABRA SHAHID: MEMBER JAMAAT’E ISLAMI

She started her review by the following verse of Holly Quran

“O my Lord! Open for me my chest. And ease my task for me; and loosen the knot from my tongue. That they understand my speech”.

(Surah Tua-Ha 20: Verse: 25-28)

I am the member of the political cell and women wing of Jamaat’e Islami. Firstly, I would like to share the implication of a Hadith with you all which stands relevant to today’s discussion. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) always preferred taking counsel with women as happened in the case of the treaty of Hudaibiyah. He took advice of his (PBUH) wife that resulted in a peaceful solution of the problem. This is the teaching of Islam that doesn’t prevent women from taking part in the affairs of the state be it related to elections or politics. Moreover, population wise, women are in majority as compared to men and when majority is hampered from becoming part of the decision making process then it is clearly unfair. Vote gives a person the power to decide and when it comes to deciding over affairs of the state then being an Islamic state, our religion also renders females the right to have their say in all the affairs that concerns them. Besides, it is also the constitutional and fundamental right of women, thus it must be given to her and such provisions should be made that encourages their participation.

Our party mobilized and gathered such females who did not have their CNICs and sent them to the NADRA office with our teams. Every time NADRA officials would point out a new problem. It was a new condition every time, that hindered the process and made it difficult to get the CNIC made. Besides, CNIC was rarely ready on the due time to receive it which is normally a period of 40 days; in some of the cases it took over 3 to 6 months in process which is again unfair. Now this process should be easy and quick instead of being this difficult and time consuming which agitates people and repulse the motivation to hold the
CNIC. And if only it is this lengthy and baffling of a process then the directions and details should be clear and people must not be returned after every visit with new conditions to fulfill. It is obvious that only CNIC holders get registered for voting but what about those who are willing to vote and their ID cards are in process from previous 3 to 6 months.

Another hurdle that we see and that makes the process more inconvenient for females is related to approaching the district election commissioner’s offices for rectification of any incorrect details on their names in the voter lists. Now the condition for females to visit these offices themselves in a scenario where it is already a problem for them to take the first step towards getting their IDs made, seems an illogical step. Further, it is a challenge for females living in culture sensitive areas. In this case, ECP should facilitate women by allowing them to cede this right to the male members of the family to get this verification or make rectification on their behalf. And the functions and working of ECP and NADRA should be convenient for common man to understand and follow.

The third problem that requires sincere attention is the expiry date mentioned on the CNICs. Our literacy rate is not that encouraging to expect females to know when their ID cards would expire. They would stand in long queues on election day and when the time to cast vote would arrive they would be returned because their CNIC was found to be expired.

When we work in field and ask a group of females if they hold CNICs we are not at all amazed to learn that majority does not entail a CNIC first of all. Second of all, those females who do, they are not literate enough to tell if their CNICs require renewal. Now it is our responsibility to work from our platforms and aware women and help them in this regard. Pertinent to that our females have been working on community level towards getting CNICs registered, getting names of females entered in voter lists, getting CNICs made of the females who have come of age and renewal of expired CNICs. Jamat-e-Islami even checks over the progress of their workers in this regard after every three months and makes sure that things are on the right track. We acquire follow up from our female workers who are working on provincial and community levels. Although we are focused and determined towards the cause of mainstreaming females in the political process and get their CNICs made yet when day of election arrives, females are not confident enough to go out due to many other fears that have already been mentioned by the esteemed speakers here. To
facilitate females it should be made sure that there are separate polling stations and security around the polling stations so they do not be intimidated of being forced and influenced by feudal, khans, sardars or any other influential who would temper their votes and kill the purpose of holding free and fair elections by coercing and intimidating them to vote in their favour.

Election is months away yet these speculations about elections’ day to be a day of chaos, fight and troubles is already generating fear among people. Government should make necessary plans to fight all these anticipated discommodes on elections day to make it convenient for not just females but males too, to come out of their homes without any fear and use their right to vote.
MR. TASHFEEN NIAZI: MEMBER PML (N)

If we analyze the issue closely, we would come to know that all these problems arise due to illiteracy. Our people are in dire need of getting education. Democracy can only function to its fullest if people know what powers they hold. In my personal opinion I think Pakistani and Muslim women is quite empowered. In fact if you ask me they are over empowered and a little disempowerment would not hurt, it might render positive results. From the Eve of the ancient times to Benazir Bhutto Shaheed of today, our women are empowered and quite sane. If we see our homes, our females take care of each and everything. They manage, they provide, they take care, they build; it’s similar to managing a small country. They literally are home makers but they lag behind in education from where their disempowerment begins. Besides, when we talk about faults in election process, we must bear in mind we are yet in a learning phase; we need to undergo at least 3 to 4 further elections to have a fault free election. Calling military to intervene every time is not the solution of our problems. Till we continue to go to ‘A'amir’ (dictators) we would keep falling back on account of learning and being able to stop dictators from intervening.

PML (N)’s point agenda is promoting education and we are working towards it seriously. Unless it becomes the prime agenda of our government too, problems like these would continue to arise. Due to illiteracy people are not aware of their rights; the constitution of 1973 empowered everyone but due to unawareness, people do not know their rights thus they cannot exercise them and remain disempowered.
MR. NAEEM AHMED: DEPUTY DIRECTOR ECP-KARACHI

Although we have been called to discuss about disenfranchised women in the entire election process and voting however, it would be interesting for many to know that even in the general election of 2008 the total voter turnout rate including both males and females was merely 44% that is not quite encouraging. It should also be remembered that there is a need of awareness to be disseminated regarding encouraging females to cast their votes and to the males also about the disenfranchisement of women. Regarding ECP’s initiatives he shared that ECP is working to verify and rectify the voter list with due support from NADRA, particularly that of Karachi on direction of the Supreme Court. Moreover, to answer questions regarding providing and increasing security on the polling stations for women, ECP’s Chief election commissioner (CEC) Mr. Fakhruddin G. Ibrahim has met Chief of the Army staff Ashfaq Pervez Kayani. It has been decided that Army would be deployed on the polling stations during elections to tackle security issues. With all these initiatives to be implemented discernible positive changes would be observed in upcoming election and ECP is committed to enhance the voter turnout rate from 44% in previous election to at least to 80% in 2013’s elections. As for women’s disenfranchisement in interior Sindh and particularly the rural areas of Pakistan, he conveyed that the core reason behind it is the unawareness of women regarding the importance of casting vote and it can only be over come if political parties play their expected roles in their own areas and encourage women to come up and cast their votes since it falls out of ECP’s focal responsibilities to work on awareness raising.
**MS. SHAZIA: MEMBER & VICE PRESIDENT ANP-SINDH**

The problem regarding lower turnout rates also exists in Khyber Pakhtoon Khuwa. In KPK, also, women are devoid of many of their fundamental rights including the right to vote. My party has a unique approach towards condemning the same bent of women-suppressing minds. ANP does not have a separate women wing since their female workers are given equal representations and rights in ANP. In fact all our party based designations have joint representations keeping glass ceiling effect. Following our party’s mandate Shahi Syed, senator & president of ANP, has directed the female workers of ANP to approach Pakhtoon women in person and convince them to cast their votes and make them realize the importance of having the right to cast their vote. Besides, we are also sensitizing males in making them understand that females’ participation is important at all levels and they require their support. Since KPK has its own particular culture where females are not encouraged to go out of homes however, with time people are getting aware of the merits of including women in all spheres of life and necessary measures are being taken at all levels particularly on account of education, after Malal’s case was highlighted. ANP further believes in providing equal representation to both males and females thus we are focusing on making females realize through our convincing sessions that it is due to political unawareness that wrong decisions are made and then democratic government fails to complete its tenure. This is for the first time after so long that any democratic government is completing its due period.

Bushra Gohar, central vice president of ANP and Shagufta Malik, provincial president ANP have also directed female ANP workers to encourage and motivate Pakhtoon females to cast their votes. Regarding the problems, I think, females are facing almost the same problems everywhere. Even in KPK, females bear difficulties related to inaccessibility, unawareness, illiteracy and security. But another major problem that I have analysed is regarding the reviews of the critics and guests of the political Talk shows that are spreading terror and anxiety among people regarding the upcoming elections. The stance of senior politicians appearing in on-air discussions expressing their deepest concerns about security issues and claiming the next election to be “khooni (all-fired) elections”, remarks as such are
creating fear among people. However, this fear must not overcome our will to support democracy otherwise we might end up making another mistake and then have to bear it for years.

Women are in majority of Pakistan’s population, they must not only be politically aware but also cast their votes so eligible and deserving persons may represent us in governments.

Just the way we are advocating equality for females, we reflect the same in our party based initiatives and are working towards conveying the same thought to our females in communities. While husband and wife are called the two wheels of a cart then burden must not lie on just one but both must share responsibilities equally, be it of home or of the country. Besides, while women can manage the house hold they can also look after the affairs of the country equally well. The eminent example of which is Benazir Bhutto herself, the ex-president of Pakistan who was assassinated back in 2007. Her exemplary leadership still inspires women not just in Pakistan but all around the world.
MR. TAJ HAIDER: SENATOR PPP

We should be adopting an overall progressive rather than regressive approach. It would be prudent if our discussions and remarks were not based around the facts and figures from the last election of 2008 since that was marked by procedural and technical mistakes and errors regarding voter lists and other data. When we make past election the basis of our analysis and comparison then scenarios appear to be worse that is not the case anymore. Besides, the basis of our data collection and analysis for voter lists has changed thus this comparison technically stands wrong. Now the basis of identification is electronic CNIC. Our next step should be about finding out the limitations of this step and work on functionalizing and improving it with time.

Moreover, as per ECP’s proclamation the new voter lists would entail the picture of the voter himself making the process more transparent and efficient while making identification easier on the other hand. As far as PPP’s initiative is concerned, PPP has lifted the fee that used to incur on getting CNIC registered for the first time which has worked as a relief to the poor. This initiative has rendered practical positive results for 145,000 CNICs were registered after the initiative was implemented. It also mainstreamed the poor population of our country while preserving their right to vote. PPP ensured that whatever the relief program that they offer, be it Benazir income support program, waseela-e-rozgar program or any other public relief program, the basis of enrollment should only be computerized national identity card. Women based relief programs as Benazir shaheed income support program is particularly for women from poor families. This condition motivated and encouraged the females who, before, did not see any reason of getting their CNICs made.

ECP has also taken a great step that they would be updating the voter list just as CNICs get registered. In one of the meetings of Chairman NADRA Mr. Tariq Malik with Government Sindh, we discussed the matter regarding to focus on provision of CNICs to the flood affectees and people in rural areas. PPP recommends people to request for sending Mobile registration van’s facility in their areas where they, particularly females, have difficulties in approaching NADRA offices. However, the only little effort that is required of the people
calling the MRVs would be regarding provision of electricity connection and a place to sit. Communities can then mobilize their own people to get the CNICs registered without any hassle and the cards would be ready within 15 days. I further request cooperation from NGOs and other parties to approach the concerned department if any such area is identified where people do not have CNICs.

Where so many errors, mistakes and mishaps are being highlighted, I would like to mention a remarkable achievement for higher voter turnout rate of women in comparison to men in PS-21 of Naushero Feroze. FAFEN’s findings from by-elections held on December 4th convey that females’ turnout was 68% whereas males’ turnout remained 57% on day of election. Besides, no single complaint was received against suspicious voting in the PS-21.

Talking about suggestions, I see a major technical error in voter registration that sometimes keeps dwellers of the rural area from casting their votes. I am talking about migration that occurs from rural to urban areas of the country, while vote of the migrant remains registered in their native areas as ECP prepares voter lists on account of the permanent address of the voter. As, one of my friends Mr. Raaz Nathan Shahi belongs to Khairpur Nathan and has a family where 5 members are of the age to vote however, they cannot cast it since they moved to Karachi 40 years back. The same happens with our Pakhtoon brothers who move from their native areas to other cities to make living and get devoid of their right to vote.

To bring ECP’s attention on the same, we wrote many letters to ECP on PPP’s behalf. Even the same issue was discussed in our meeting with Chairman NADRA in Chief Minister’s house where we were assured by Chairman NADRA that necessary steps would be taken to implement the idea about voter lists to be prepared on basis of the current address mentioned in the CNIC. Yet all our requests remained unattended until all the political parties together raised the demand in Supreme Court regarding rectifying voter lists of Karachi. However, this objection was raised by certain political parties that the same step should be implemented in all over Pakistan and not just Karachi.

ECP has consistently been conveying that they are only verifying voter lists but not rectifying them which would keep provision of new data to be entered in the lists. For instance my
vote is not registered in the city where I currently reside instead it is registered at my father’s vicinage. The same case is with my wife’s vote for it is registered at the place where she dwelled before marriage.

We presented ECP our memorandum which conveys that a technology based solution should be implemented for solving aforementioned problem. It was easy already! Only the voter lists were supposed to be registered on the current address and without any grave changes we could sought the solution to our problem. Had that been implemented, ECP would have not felt the need to acquire Army’s support. Being a democratic set up we have requested ECP to keep Army’s intervention as less as possible and not more than providing security. Now to rectify errors in the voter lists there is a need to go door-to-door and rectify and update the data if it is found erroneous. Although the same exercise has failed previously as well where wrong data was provided and it became the reason for further confusions, mistrust and delay in election process.

Furthermore, this exercise is vulnerable to many more errors. For instance, besides my vote been registered in my father’s area despite of the previous year’s verification, it would be shocking for people to learn that there is a thumb impression on my data form that affirms that the mentioned data has been provided by me which is not the case. That thumb impression is supposedly from that Govt. teacher who was responsible to collect the data. It would be quite easy to arrest the culprit from getting the thumb impression detected yet no such steps were taken to take the responsible individuals to task for providing false data. Such people would again be recruited for carrying out the same activity that they had conducted dishonestly the previous time and got away with it. Such people should be identified, be fined and must further be kept from assigning any duties this year. I have further confirmed it from the NADRA official in one of our meetings that identifying teachers who provided false data is not a difficult job, it only requires scanning. Just as the thumb impression is inserted in the software it would show NIC and personal details of the person whose thumb impression it is. NADRA even reported 50 such random cases to ECP which again were not taken notice of.

Few of our suggestions included printing information in the newspaper regarding visiting hours and contact information of the data collection team so that people are informed of
their arrival beforehand and they stay at their homes. Moreover, we also suggested that data collection should be conducted after office working hours and on weekends with announcements of the team’s arrival from local mosques. Repeat visits should be conducted in the areas where people were not present at their homes at the time of the first visit of the team. Conversely, visit team should leave a message in form of stickers with date mentioned for their next visit so the family stays homes.

I further request those NGOs whose interest is vested in governance and democracy related issues that we must not, simply, rest on our laurels thinking verification is the solution to all the issues. We need to present more suggestions in different regards so together we can further improve the process and then build positive pressure on ECP to implement those suggested changes. This way the process would become more transparent and fair with involvement of relevant stakeholders.

After all, we can either rely on public or on computer, because computer is unbiased and when people work together that brings out better results with mutual consent and understanding. The process genuinely needs some improvement because billions of rupees were spent previously on the same exercise and the results we acquired were not quite fruitful.

Moreover, while we are discussing about empowering women and involving their say in politics related decisions there women should be given further representation on general seats too, besides reserved seats. In PPP women have earned representation on general seats as well for we think women can manage affairs on union council levels more effectively. This way their political involvement can be restored from grass root level if the same continues. So is recommended to other political parties too, to encourage their female members to compete in local bodies’ election on general seats besides reserved seats.

I also appreciate ECP’s initiative about inviting suggestions from all the political parties and maintaining connection with them. Such steps promote transparency and trust on the decision making entities in government machinery. But again the extended suggestions should be acted upon. Right now, I can recall that announcement made in the ‘all parties’ conference’ held on 27th of September 2012 presided by the esteemed CEC ECP about
bringing electronic voting machines before next elections. The same initiative was promised in the letter that I received from CEC ECP, the same day government announced verification of voter lists in Karachi but it was not mentioned to what extent the implementation of this technology would take place. Had only ECP been able to implement the promised system on the district level in our cities, as an initial step, it would have been a howling success on part of government as well as ECP itself. These machines are quite effective and efficient. Their use could have brought significant changes in the system of voting that we are currently practicing. These machines could also solve the problem of being at a specific polling station to cast person’s vote. For, it is not location-bound and enables voting from any nearby polling station, on union council level. Implementation of electronic voting machines would have cut down costs for ECP’s anticipated initiative of establishing 80,000 polling stations this year so voters may have access to polling stations within every 2km of the population. However, connecting the same point to the previous issue, this initiative would only be questioned if the voter living in Karachi has his vote registered some 800km away from his current location. That would make the effort futile.

Winding up the speech, I again remind and request ECP to publish data collection teams’ visiting hours and contact information in newspaper so it may generate interest in people regarding the process while keeping it transparent on the other hand.
MR. SHEHJEHAN BALOCH: PROGRAM MANAGER ACTION AID

Shehjehan Baloch started expressing his view from bringing audiences’ attention towards our collection vision of democracy that according to him, is, sadly, militarized. He said, ‘as a nation we are more proud on being an atomic power where as we are least developed when it comes to resolving our very basic issues pertinent to democracy as verification of voter lists that still stands being a grieving problem for Pakistan after half of a century has passed. We are yet struggling to get our very basic issues pertaining to democracy resolved as verification and preparation of voter lists. There is a consistent hue and cry regarding democracy being the solution of all our problems and that is just not the shibboleth of East but West too but little are we aware regarding the essence of what democracy is about. The idea of our common man regarding democracy is about processions and meetings that are held in Islamabad secretariats, senates, provincial and national assemblies’.

Being student of democracy, my learnt idea about democracy is that it is entirely about state and society. When we talk about democracy then society and state would be the integral part of that discourse. In prevalence of democracy in any society, vote is considered the prime power to induct change and this thought is valid in all its democratic references. In any society that runs in line with the political process, where parties are professional and government programs entail political process in such societies vote stands as strong power that can bring change. Now I humbly ask our present politicians and government officials here that if this is democracy that we are currently breathing in and electoral process is an obvious part of it which significantly requires participation of all its members that is the common men then the question that rises here is how much is the entire process actually democratic. When the same question is reviewed in reference to females’ participation then it paints a sorry picture of democracy that is practiced in our country.

He then referred to the suggestion raised by one of the speakers that was about holding these discussions and seminars in the areas where there is less than 5% or even 0% female voters’ turnout and replied, ‘the reason that the representatives of the political parties have
been invited here today is that they represent these areas and have strong linkages, networks, units, allies and workers in those areas we are discussing today. You people here, can mobilize and raise awareness in your areas. After all, we pin our hopes on you to bring change and convey our say and demands to the concerned authorities and again carry our message to your people and implement initiatives that resolve highlighted issues in your areas. Here I also think that it is not just the role of the political parties but each one of us to collectively establish a clear vision of democracy where one of our concerns should be to empower the marginalized sections of the society including women. Once this spirit evokes from our households then it can go beyond the agenda of the political parties to the government and then be implemented in all the spheres of life.

Mr. Shahjehan then threw another question to the political parties asking, ‘what kind of choices do our people have as voters and the citizens when our political system, by some means, have been fine-tuned around and inspired by tribal and feudal systems due to which general trends, conducts and systems that run in our government have somehow remained feudal oriented and would die hard. The core reason of arranging this discussion with all the stakeholders is to stimulate a dialogue a process that redresses the issue of disenfranchising women and it’s not just an observation, this seminar is based on the researched hard facts that indicate alarming situation with regard to women’s participation in electoral process. Civil society and political parties here can play their role as has been suggested by the speakers. However, the role Action AID is paying in this regard is quite clear. Action AID just not supports the notion of giving women their political rights but all the rights that empower them and make them further competent’.
CONCLUSIONARY THOUGHT

Mr. Rasheed, director programs-FAFEN, was invited to conclude the entire discussion and provide final reflection for the audience. He expressed that disenfranchisement of women is not the problem specific to FATA and KPK, although the sobriety of this issue prevails in these regions earnestly. Conversely, the same issue consumes rights of females in the other provinces of Pakistan as well, be it Balochistan, Sindh or Punjab. In such a situation it should not be shocking for many to learn that even in city like Karachi there was a polling station in GE2008 where women turnout rate remained 0%. He humbly expressed his opinion that as per his observation the entire system involves so many stakeholders who need to be pushed to play their rightful part. As parliament must implement and enact legislations that prevent legal disenfranchisement of women; in case of any violation of rules there should be some legislative framework as per which any disciplinary act could be initiated against the violators. As Mr. Taj Haider said before that the teacher who provided the wrong data was not penalized that must have encouraged him to continue the ill practice. To implement this action, it is important that the pertinent entities must hold those powers to penalize the violators. ECP does not hold these powers. ECP can only write to the parent department with whom such teachers are employed and then they can take required action. Thus, powers as hiring, training, firing and penalizing the secondment staff should be vested in ECP.

Many of the operational issues were also highlighted as facilitating females, making the environment enabling and accessibility issues as establishing polling stations in access of females. These are the issues that ECP has to ponder over seriously and do something about it. Another point that must be reminded again while concluding the discussion is that ECP should be gender sensitive and must facilitate females on par with males. Those initiatives that are a part of the election schemes must be acted upon. If establishment of female polling stations are mentioned in the scheme then they must be established contrary to the situation that females do not cast votes in those areas. Female staff should be deputed in the polling stations to cater monitoring, over sighting and facilitating female voters. Whatever the measures that have been discussed here indicate that we are going in the right direction however, our initiatives must be more than just words and be executed to
overcome the deficit of 7.7 million females that are missing on the electoral rolls and stand unregistered. ECP, NADRA and Government need to take initiatives on war footing basis to curtail this huge deficit. In Sindh, this deficit is less compared to areas of central Punjab, KPK, Balochistan and FATA. Government needs to take steps that deliver the promise of empowering women and keeping their disenfranchisement from occurring legally. Elections are around the corner and the voter lists are yet not prepared. It’s understandable that this is a huge issue that may take time to be resolved fully but it can only be done if promises are delivered and the walk is walked. The need to take collective initiatives is just as much as the need to take individual initiatives.
Following are the problems identified and the solutions that were recommended by the esteemed speakers in the seminar and have been listed below for a quick review.

- Legal disenfranchisement of females occur when responsible bodies fail to make specific arrangements that encourage female voters’ participation, as: separate polling stations, absence of separate polling booths in combined polling stations, absence of female staff and facilitators.
- Majority females in population do not hold CNICs and neither do they feel motivated towards holding one.
- Less number of females registered in the electoral rolls despite of their increasing number in population.
- Unawareness among females about their right to vote and its implications.
- Process of getting CNIC being arduous and incomprehensible for common man.
- The entire process of holding elections is not gender sensitive thus leaves females from conservative areas behind.
- Under the table illegal alliances as agreements made between political parties to keep females of their area from casting votes.
- Proxy and suspicious voting.
- Political pressure and security threats in areas under particular political party's influence.
- Parliament being indifferent to the issues that are raised regarding females disenfranchisement.
- Votes been registered at the permanent location while voter resides in another location/city.
- Females being forced and coerced to cast vote in favour of influential of the area.
- Females from socially excluded classes and religious minorities do not usually register themselves for CNIC.
- People do not receive their CNICs on the due time that is given after all formalities have been fulfilled.
• Approaching district commissioner’s office for rectification of incorrect information is a challenge for females of the tribal, feudal-led and interior areas of the country.

• Women disenfranchisement is not just the problem of Sindh and Balochistan. It is a problem that prevails all over Pakistan.

• Empowerment means nothing unless females are aware of the significance and use of the rights that are given to them.

• Awareness sessions with both males and females regarding disenfranchisement and voting should be arranged in both rural and urban areas particularly those where female voters turnout rate has been identified being 0%.

• Parties involved in gathering data as FAFEN and NGOs, should take a step ahead and sensitize women about the need to have an ID card and its significance.

• Everyone should be equally responsible at individual as well as collective level towards getting females CNICs registered.

• Providing secure, enabling and cultural sensitive environment which encourages females’ participation.

• Process of getting CNIC registered should be quick, comprehensible, hassle free and effective that encourages people.

• Directions, details and information regarding the process of getting CNIC should be clear and comprehensible for a common man.

• There should be strict security around female polling stations.

• Govt. should pay keen attention to raising literacy rate as illiteracy is the basic cause of the unawareness that prevails in our society regarding our rights.

• MRVs (Mobile registration vans) must be sent in the flood affected and rural areas to get CNICs registered.

• Votes must be registered in the areas of the current address mentioned in the CNICs.

• Voter lists must be verified and rectified all over Pakistan.

• All the relevant stakeholders need to be pushed to play their vital role.

• Parliament and ECP must make sure that women are not being legally disenfranchised.

• Males should also be sensitized in interior, tribal and feudal led areas about including females in the electoral process.
• NADRA and ECP should publish the process of CNIC registration on their websites and in newspapers too, when elections are around the corner.
• NGOs require to work from grass root levels along with government entities to spread awareness and encourage and facilitate females in getting their CNICs made.
• Least support should be acquired from army and government must learn on lines of democracy and find alternate solutions of the problems.
• Teachers found responsible in collation of false data in GE2008's door-to-door exercise should be penalized and not assigned duties this time.
• Contact numbers, visiting hours/days and further pertinent details of the data collection team should be printed in the newspaper so people are informed of their arrival before hand and they may remain in their homes at the time of verification.
• Data should be collated after office hours or on weekends with prior announcement of team's arrival through newspaper.
• There should be separate repeat-visit teams that may conduct second visit at the homes of the people who were not present at their homes on the first visit.
• Civil society and government need to work together for cause of spreading awareness, extending and then implementing the suggested relevant changes and making the entire process comprehendible and easy for common man to follow.
• Women should be given representation on general seats too, besides reserved seats.
• Electronic voting machines should be introduced.
• ECP must be granted all the rights to recruit, train and penalize the secondment staff deputed for data collection.
ANNEX 1: FHRP’s INTRODUCTION

Our Vision
FHRP envisions to engage stakeholders in accelerating a thought process for socioeconomic development of the society by taking initiatives based on the protection of rights, provision of quality education and citizens’ empowerment.

Our Mission
FHRP is dedicated to transform our society into just and peaceful living environment by taking firm initiatives as supporting & engaging stakeholders including youth, media, social activists, volunteer and like-minded organization in ensuring protection of the rights of the marginalized population particularly children, women and religious minorities; by provision of quality education through capacity building of existing human resource and review and implementation of educational policies. Further on, by holding accountable governing bodies answerable before citizens through strengthening their voice in support of their welfare.

Our Geographical Outreach

Interventional approach:

Education

Our achievements
- Conducted trainings on social psycho therapy for flood affected children of 2010-2011, further trained government teachers and Social mobilizers to improve quality of education at ECE-TEC/PLACES. Training modules were prepared according to the MINIMUM standards.
- Conducted trainings with focus on ECC, age appropriate training methodologies, CF approach, developed age appropriate teaching material and provided hygiene education all across Sindh.
- Mainstreaming of the school children through organizing and launching “Welcome back school campaign” for previously enrolled children in TUCs and new children into the formal education system.

Citizens’ Empowerment

Our achievements
- Conducted 8 provincial and 1 national level training courses for capacity building of media representatives and civil society representatives in four provinces of Pakistan.
- Improved responsiveness of the elected representatives of the selected 09 constituencies.
- 18 protests for the revival of Local Govt. System
- 20 Orientation Session on Human Rights with youth
- Community meetings for mobilization in 09 districts 10,000
- In different Signature campaign 4500 signature collected
- Display centers observed in 13 constituencies
- Student Youth Profile 1590 in 05 districts
- 950 Youth of Trade union and Professional association profiled in 05 districts
Our Interventional Approach:

Growing from the same concept FHRP provides a platform to the marginalized population of our society, particularly religious minorities, women and children and stands by them in supporting to raise voice against any form of violation of their rights by conducting advocacy dialogues, discussions, counseling, participant trainings, conducting seminars, awareness raising campaigns and by involving media.

Our Achievements:

* 30 district level trainings were conducted with media representatives and minority groups.
* 2 provincial and national level consultations were arranged with relevant government departments, civil society, teachers and media representatives.
* Provided basic food items to 35 food affected families particularly the deprived communities of Thatta District.
* Conducted 30 training sessions with media representative on the reporting format to encourage transparent elections in Pakistan and mobilizing women voters in targeted 30 districts of Pakistan.

Publications:

* The impact of educational policies on the Religious Minorities of Pakistan 1947-2010
* Religious Minorities in Pakistan
* The non Nonsense Guide to Minority Right
* Living on The Margin Minorities in South Asia
* Shrinking Space Minorities Rights in South Asia

Impact Of FHRP’s Intervention

1) Long-Term Impact:

FHRP Pakistan’s Projects are meant to create a long term impact on communities concerning the protection of the rights. For that purpose, FHRP develops a long term networks of relevant government departments, media and NGO’s through its short term funded projects that help FHRP in achieving its long term objectives. FHRP continuously maintain its linkages with the following groups:

* Government Departments
* Policy Makers
* District as well as National Level Media Personnel
* Youth
* District Based Volunteer Groups
* Other Non-Governmental local, Regional and International Organization

2) Short-Term Impact:

FHRP Pakistan realizes that empowered and sensitized media in Pakistan can ensure short as well as long term positive impact on communities. Therefore, media is always a significant component in all FHRP awareness raising campaign to ensure a short term Impact. FHRP has conducted various trainings to sensitized media on the UDHR, Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, CEDAW and the Fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution of Pakistan. Issues of marginalized communities of Pakistan is always given utmost priority in all FHRP projects that are highlighted through FHRP network of media personnel throughout Pakistan. In short term FHRP Media network is not only trained on reporting the issues of community but also is always prepared to help FHRP in imparting awareness among masses regarding the issues faced by them.

Future Interventions

Elimination of discrimination against religious minorities:

* Mainstreaming religious minority children in formal education
* Promoting non-discriminatory behaviors against religious minorities in schools
* Analysis of educational policies
* Analysis of Curriculum and textbooks
* Mainstreaming Minority Rights through advocacy, Lobbying with the government, community education and media sensitization on the Rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and International Human Rights Instruments.
* Production of resource material on the contribution of religious minority’s Intellectuals in history and literature of Pakistan.
* Separate complain desk and induction of minority staff in existing government shelter homes for Religious minority victims.
ANNEX II: WOMEN DISENFRANCHISEMENT-FAFEN

Disenfranchising Women
Free and Fair Election Network

December 31, 2012

Major Issues Hampering Women Participation in Elections
- Low Vote Registration
- Bar on Women Voting
- Unfavorable Environment and Regulatory Framework

Women on Roll- FER 2007
- Number of women per 100 men

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Women on Roll- FER 2012
- Number of women per 100 men

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<td>FATA</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase/Decrease in FER 2012
- Increase/Decrease in Women Voters in FER 2012 as compared to FER 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>604,923</td>
<td>798,462</td>
<td>1,403,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>134,742</td>
<td>130,899</td>
<td>265,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>64,098</td>
<td>57,903</td>
<td>122,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>2,817,693</td>
<td>1,004,325</td>
<td>3,822,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>[679,715]</td>
<td>[893,880]</td>
<td>[1,773,595]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>[472,786]</td>
<td>[612,710]</td>
<td>[1,085,496]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,469,004</td>
<td>984,999</td>
<td>3,454,003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing Voters by Gender (million)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Population (2013)</td>
<td>54.04</td>
<td>47.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FER-2012</td>
<td>50.67</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>64.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Voters</td>
<td>104.68</td>
<td>94.37</td>
<td>20.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Missing Female Voters*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Missing Female Voters (est.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>4,382,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>1,487,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>773,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>450,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>241,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>7,335,653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1998 sex ratio of districts compared with FER 2012. This is a conservative estimate.

Bar on Women Voting

- No women turned out to vote during 2008 GE in 564 Women-Only Polling Stations
- Women-only polling stations were just 25% of total polling stations established
- FAFEN conducted FGDs with men and women living in 564 polling areas

564 Polling Areas

- 564 location from KP, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan are identified where 0% women voter turnout was registered in 2008 General Election.
- These 564 Polling Stations are identified from almost 16000 women polling stations.

Unfavorable Environment

- Gender blind regulatory framework (no gender disaggregated data on turnout at combined polling stations and inadequate measures for voter education and voter facilitation)

Reasons of Low Turnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>No of Polling Stations with issues</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/tribal or caste coercion</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unregistered women</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unawareness of Vote casting procedure</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance and accessibility</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General security situation</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable environment of polling station</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement among all political parties</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief in democracy and democratic system/religious indifference</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of education</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific threat to voters particularly women voters</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion by religious leaders</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General ban on the mobility of women in area</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Unfair Means</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No work for women welfare</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic boycott</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misallocation of women voters</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement and migration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailability of male members of family to accompany to polling area</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations

- ECP must make special efforts to increase registration of female voters. Currently, there are at least 7.3 million fewer women than men registered as voters on FER 2012.
- The ECP should probe into the incidents of barring women from voting and attempts of proxy voting on behalf of women voters. Even if re-polling is not held in the whole constituency, re-polling must be ordered in polling stations where women were barred from voting.
- ECP should act against all election officials who fail to establish women polling booths in combined polling stations.
- The ECP immediately provide gender-disaggregated data on the number of men and women who have voted at each polling station, recruit and train female polling staff, and respond to women’s non-participation including with declaring results void. An inclusive process takes place for agreement on a suitable minimum level of female voter participation at the polling station/constituency levels. Parties and observer groups recruit, train and support female agents and observers.