



ROAD TO GENERAL ELECTION-2018 (PREPARATIONS)

ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

FOREWORD

Subsequent to the recommendations of the National Coordination & Planning Committees given in its different meetings/deliberations, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is taking concrete steps towards preparation for next General Elections. Goals & targets of the Strategic Plan (2014-2018) and findings of the General Elections Inquiry Commission Report-2015 have provided guidelines for such preparations. The paper in hand is the detail of steps taken in the year 2016. Following is the glossary of the steps:-

- (1) Electoral Reforms;
- (2) Preparation of Electoral Rolls;
- (3) Polling Scheme:-
 - a. Designation of Polling Staff & Training;
 - b. Polling Stations.
- (4) Monitoring;
- (5) Introduction of Technology;
- (6) Consultation with Stakeholders;
- (7) Capacity Building;
- (8) Printing:-
 - a. Provision for printing of ballot papers;
 - b. Election material;
 - c. Training material.
- (9) Gender & Special Persons;
- (10) Out of Country Voting;
- (11) Conduct of Local Government Elections.

It is hoped this paper will assist the officers & staff of the Election Commission in further improving their efforts towards better preparation for future elections. All the ECP staff and the stakeholders are requested to give their valuable suggestions assisting the efforts of the ECP in reforming the system and strengthening its efforts towards free, fair & transparent elections.

(Fida Muhammad)
Additional Secretary

Islamabad, the 6th January 2017

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Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is taking concrete steps for overall improvement in electoral process and preparation for next General Elections in the light of the goals set in the Strategic Plan (2014-2018). Detail of the steps taken in the year 2016, is as follows:-

(1) Electoral Reforms

According to Goal # 1, ECP shall ensure that the laws & rules related to electoral process addresses the issues faced during previous elections and appropriate reforms are introduced strengthening the electoral system.

In order to honour the above goal, ECP formed a Legal Framework Committee (LFC) with the task to revisit the entire laws for appropriate assistance/input to the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms. ECP provided appropriate assistance to the Parliamentary Committee, which finalized and circulated to the public & all the stakeholders the draft of Election Bill-2017 after 70 meetings of the sub-committee and more than a dozen meetings of the main committee. The proposed draft of the election bill is expected to be finalized and passed during the year 2017. It is hoped that promulgation of the Election Act 2017 would simplify the laws and strengthen the electoral process.

In addition, on direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, a Code of Conduct to control expenditure in election has been developed and was discussed in consultative meetings with the political parties held on 26th October 2016 and media & civil society organization on 21st November 2016.

(2) Preparation of Electoral Rolls

(i) Preparation and updation of Electoral Rolls is the prime responsibility of the ECP as per the Constitution further detailed in Goal # 6 of the Strategic Plan. After issuance of fresh CNICs by NADRA upto September 2016, an updation exercise was carried out by ECP, where 4.20 million voters were registered after door to door verification of their CNICs during October-December 2016. Moreover, 140,000 voters were deleted from the rolls due to deaths & other in-eligibilities communicated by NADRA. As a result of this exercise, the number of registered voters in the country reached 97,016,232. Province-wise detail of registered voters is reflected in the following table:-

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Province / Area	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total Voters
Punjab	31,302,765 (56%)	24,519,732 (44%)	55,822,497
Sindh	11,445,705 (55%)	9,200,071 (45%)	20,645,776
KPK	8,006,654 (57%)	6,009,035 (43%)	14,015,689
Balochistan	2,132,647 (58%)	1,562,974 (42%)	3,695,621
FATA	1,333,006 (62%)	809,666 (38%)	2,142,672
Islamabad	373,108 (54%)	320,869 (46%)	693,977
Total	54,593,885 (56%)	42,422,347 (44%)	97,016,232

It was observed during this exercise that registration of female voters is lagging approximately 12 million behind male voters. Moreover, 26,000 census blocks were identified where the ratio of female registered voters was less than 40%.

(ii) In order to motivate women citizens to obtain National Identity Cards & register themselves as voters, ECP prepared a comprehensive civic & voters' education plan. Implementation of the plan started with celebration of National Voters' Day on 7th December 2016. The day was observed in federation with a function graced by the President of Pakistan; in provinces by the Governors and dignitaries/political workers at districts & union levels. District Voters' Education Committees have been activated to carry on the message at the grass-roots level with the help of civil society organizations, media, ulema, bar associations & political activists in line with the Goal # 7 of the Strategic Plan. A commemorative postage stamp was issued to mark the occasion.

(iii) Registration & correction of votes through the Computerized Electoral Rolls System (CERS) has been initiated by the ECP since 1st January 2017 after establishment of its own CERS. Infrastructure at the Secretariat, Provinces & Offices of the District Election Commissioners is being installed; all these offices will be connected through dedicated intra-net service after which applications for registration of fresh votes and/or change will be entertained in the district concerned by the Registration Officer/DEC and forwarded to the system through the dedicated service for updation of the data-bank. 5 servers with 40TB capacity have been installed at the ECP Secretariat for CERS. Moreover, all the field offices are connected with the Secretariat through dedicated intra-net line duly supported by the updated versions of the IT gadgets for the purpose. The data-bank is sufficient to serve the need for fresh registration as well as archives.

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(iv) According to the proposed draft Unified Election Bill 2017, a citizen attaining the eligibility age of 18 years for obtaining National Identity Card from NADRA, an option would be given by him to register as a voter on the address of his choice i.e. permanent or present address. After promulgation of this Act, registration and verification of the voter at a correct address/census block would be simplified & facilitated in the electoral rolls.

(3) Designation of Polling Staff & Training

(i) In order to obtain and train the requisite number of polling staff, all the provincial Chief Secretaries, Secretary Establishment Div: and Heads of the Federal Entities were asked in July 2016 to provide list of officers; (i) who may be available/posted in those departments in January 2018; (ii) are 55 years age or below; (iii) are computer literate & can use smartphone; (iv) having undisputed reputation and (v) are suitable to be appointed as polling staff for the next General Elections. Names of 50,000 officers have been received from the provinces & federal government by 31st December 2016. A data-bank has been created indicating the details & status of the officers, who could be utilized as per plan. ECP would try to get the requisite number of 700,000 officials and start their training by June 2017 onward. Preparation of training material and logistic arrangements are in the process in consultation with the stakeholders.

(ii) Federal Election Academy has started trainings of the regular staff & officers of the ECP in rented premises of Postal Staff College, Islamabad. Following trainings have been imparted during the year:-

(a) BPS-17 – 19	:	86 officers
(b) BPS-8 – 16	:	120 officials
(c) DVECs	:	157 (Regional & District Election Commissioners)
(d) RMS, CERS & GIS	:	164 officers plus 300 Data Entry Operators/Assistants

Two batches of 28 officers each from the field & Secretariat have passed out, whereas training of the third batch is in process. It has been planned that all the 1,649 officials/officers of ECP from BPS-08 to BPS-21 would be trained much before the 2018 General Elections. A dedicated training wing has been actively coordinating with the training institutes in the country & abroad and research in the field would hopefully bring optimum improvement in the capacity building of the staff as envisaged at Goal # 10 of the Strategic Plan. 24 different modules covering the subjects of electoral rolls, delimitation, electoral reforms, preparation of polling schemes, financial management,

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political finance & election dispute resolutions are being taught followed by mock poll exercises. A specific gender module has been prepared & incorporated in the training programs for each tier.

(iii) 48 RECs & PROs were given media training to appropriately interact with media. Training material was also prepared for the purpose.

(4) Polling stations

Approximately 75,000 polling stations were established during the recent Local Government Elections in the country. An exercise to verify existence and status of these polling stations, is in process in collaboration with the concerned provincial & local government departments. As on 31st December 2016, 11,081 polling stations have been verified, their coordinates and locations/maps uploaded to ECP website through GIS for public interest. It is hoped that this exercise would be completed by 30th June 2017. Use of technology in the subject would prove to be a better control minimizing the discretion in respect of change of the polling station by un-authorized officials. Existence of the approved polling station would further be linked with the public information system available on dedicated cell-phone number 8300 as per Goal # 2 of the Strategic Plan.

(5) Monitoring

A dedicated Monitoring Wing has been established in the ECP to monitor the electoral activities. TORs of the wing covers, monitoring of (i) pre-poll, (ii) poll-day & (iii) post poll activities. As the Monitoring Wing has been established within the available resources of the Commission, therefore, the wing is presently headed by the Director General (Admn) in addition to his own job, assisted by the Regional Election Commissioners, District Election Commissioners and officers of the Secretariat in addition to their own assignments. Monitoring of 8 bye-elections for National Assembly seats and 16 bye-elections for Provincial Assemblies seats was carried out during the year 2016. Similarly, all the training sessions were thoroughly monitored watching the attendance & motivation of the participants, methodology & output of mock exercises. Annual report of the monitoring so carried out is being consolidated and would be shared with the stakeholders. Government of Pakistan has been approached for creation of 141 new posts for the Monitoring Wing alongwith financial & logistic allocations. It is hoped that

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the government may allocate resources during the current or the next financial year for functioning/raising of the wing exclusively in line with Goal # 5 of the Strategic Plan.

(6) Technology

(i) Election Commission is conceiving use of multiple electoral technologies during the next elections. Pilot tests of Mobile Apps for efficient & effective communication of poll results under the improved Result Management System (RMS) were used during the bye-elections in the year. A server having a capacity of 200GB is operational for the purpose. Similarly, a pilot test of use of bio-metric verification machines was conducted during bye-elections at NA-19 in 2015.

(ii) A generic Mobile App named as "Click ECP" has been developed with the following features:-

- i. Guidelines - How to cast a vote?
- ii. Finding/verification of name in the voters' list through 8300 SMS;
- iii. Finding the location of polling station via Google map;
- iv. Message of the Honourable Chief Election Commissioner.

(iii) According to the directions of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral Reforms and subsequent approval of the Prime Minister, process for purchase of 400 electronic voting machines and 300 bio-metric verification machines, is in the final stage. These machines would be used for pilot tests during the bye-elections upto 2018. Result of the operation of these machines would be consolidated and reported to the Parliament for informed decision-making in respect of use of technology during the General Elections as envisaged in Goal # 2 of the Strategic Plan. ECP is also in contact with indigenous manufacturers of these machines saving the dependency on foreign suppliers in terms of financial impact & security.

(7) Consultation

In order to establish & strengthen trust amongst the stakeholders and obtain valuable input for improvement in the system as planned at Goal # 11 of the Strategic Plan, 17 consultative sessions were held as follows:-

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S #	Description	Participation	Remarks
1.	Political Parties	Representatives of 16 political parties having representation in the Parliament / Provincial Assemblies attended a consultative session held on 26 th October 2016.	Suggestions of the participants were incorporated in the draft Code of Conduct prepared for General Elections-2018. Moreover, miscellaneous suggestions were kept on record and were communicated as minutes of the session to all concerned.
2.	Media & Civil Society Org:	A similar consultative session was held with media on 21 st November 2016. Representatives of major media organizations/groups attended. Similarly, reps of PILDAT, FAFEN & IFES also attended.	Proposed draft Code of Conduct for media & political parties were discussed. Valuable suggestions in respect of implementation of Codes of Conduct, control over campaign expenditure and SOP for conduct of elections in the light of electoral laws and guidelines of the judgment of Supreme Court in Workers' Party case were discussed.
3.	CSOs	15 more meetings were held during the year with the following:- (i) Youth Parliament Pakistan (ii) National Youth Assembly (iii) PILDAT (iv) NDF (v) IFES (vi) UNDP (vii) EU (viii) Welfare Society for Overseas Pakistani Rights (WSOPR) (ix) M/o Foreign Affairs, OP&HRD, SAFRON (x) Law Enforcement Agencies	Consultative sessions with the partners proved fruitful in respect of improvement in the electoral rolls, political finance, SOP for out of country voting & security arrangements.

(8) Capacity Building

(i) HR Policy- While defining as a pivot pillar of capacity building of the Commission *vide* Goal # 12 of the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive Human Resource Policy was

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approved during 2016. The policy covers appropriate calculation of regional as well as marginalized groups quota in the vacancies and transparent recruitment procedure as per Rules. After the vacant positions are advertised, online applications for recruitment are invited parallel to the traditional physical/paper applications. According to this policy, 92 officers/officials were promoted during the year which are double than the promotions since inception of the ECP. After the promotions, almost all the officers were transferred/dislocated to the field and secretariat assignments for the purpose of their grooming, exposure & diversification in skills in best interest of the Commission. It has been assured that officers are generally posted to the provinces/districts other than their domiciles. The officers who had been enjoying postings, for years, at soft stations / assignments are posted in hard areas / stations with special incentives.

(ii) Office Premises- There are 123 offices of District Election Commissioners, 7 Agency Election Commissioners, 29 Regional Election Commissioners and 4 Provincial Election Commissioners. Out of these 163 offices, only five offices are housed in official buildings whereas rest of all offices is housed in rented buildings. After a survey during the year 2016, it was revealed that 74 offices were located in pathetic buildings having no appropriate locations, parking facility, safe access and security arrangements. 27 offices were, therefore, shifted last year to appropriate locations having the required facilities and rest would be shifted during current year. Moreover, 12 plots were purchased / acquired for construction of office buildings/premises.

(iii) Storages- ECP has to store the election material in district treasuries as per practice. However, it was conceived that ECP should have its own storage facility for safe and appropriate custody of election material. It has been planned that 29 storages would be established before General Election-2018. During the year 2016, 8 storages have been approved for Gujranwala, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Kohat, Bannu, Makran and Nasirabad. PECs are directed to gear-up efforts for identification of the required buildings. The facility would be extended to the entire country before 2018 in compliance of the objectives set at Goal # 13 of the Strategic Plan.

(iv) Communication & Coordination- The District Election Commissioner (DEC) is required to coordinate and communicate with approximately 500 locations (polling stations) at his district besides coordination with the district & provincial government departments, law enforcement agencies and offices of the provincial election

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commissioners as well as secretariat at Islamabad in one day at the occasion of elections. The DEC, therefore, needs appropriate transport facility covering the need for passenger as well as cargo services at the event of election. The survey of the sector revealed that 41 DECs did not have vehicles at all whereas the available 91 pothar jeeps/cultus cars were of more than 20 years old. Moreover, the DECs used to hire vehicles for separate transportation of emergency election material at the election occasion. A case was, therefore, referred which was approved by the government and 64 double cabin pick-ups were purchased and distributed to the districts whereas 77 more vehicles will be purchased during this year.

(9) Printing

Printing capacity of approximately 200 million ballot papers; huge volume of Forms, Posters, Placards, Envelopes & Training Material would be required for General Elections-2018.

(i) In a meeting of the Commission on 26th September 2016, attended by the Cabinet Division, PCP Press, PSPC & Post Office Foundation, it was decided that each printing press may indicate their capacity with latest machines having automatic numbering facility and efficiency in binding minimizing human involvement. PCP Press informed it could cater for printing of 54 million ballot papers within the stipulated time; PSPC informed 75 million whereas Post Office Foundation Press informed 60 million printing capacity of ballot papers with latest and automatic numbering machines. Cabinet Division has now informed, they had submitted a summary to the Prime Minister for grant of Rs. 864.00 million for purchase of new machines enhancing the capacity of PCP Press to print the entire 200 million ballots papers. It is hoped that the Principal Printing Press of the country would be having the capacity of undertaking the job by 2018. However, the ECP has an alternate strategy in place.

(ii) Delegation of financial powers of the ECP was revisited and full powers for procurement & printing of rest of the material i.e. bags, stationary, envelopes, cards and ink & pads were delegated to the Provincial Election Commissioners and field offices for efficiency. In addition, it was decided that special quality Gunny Bags shall be purchased by the PECs for safe storage of polling bags and storage of election material. These offices would be required to form quality control/assurance committees to ensure quality of the procurements as per specifications/standards.

(10) Gender & Special Persons

(i) Gender & Special Persons Electoral Working Group was formed in the ECP to involve all the stakeholders at national level to increase awareness in these communities and to decrease the gap between men & women registered voters. Gender perspective has been incorporated in the proposed Unified Election Bill sensitizing / authorizing the ECP to specifically watch elections in the constituencies where less than 10% of the women cast their votes. Provision for special persons to utilize the facility of postal ballot has been incorporated in the draft law. Establishment of polling stations would be preferred on ground floor(s), facilitating special persons / senior citizens / women as per the newly drafted guidelines as per objectives detailed at Goal # 8 & 9 of the Strategic Plan.

(ii) 9 awareness raising seminars on gender & special persons for inclusive electoral process were held during last year at the ECP Secretariat Islamabad and Provincial HQs. The civil society organizations namely (i) STEPS, (ii) Aurat Foundation, (iii) Insan Foundation, (iv) Da Khwaindo Kor, (v) Paiman, (vi) IFES and (vii) UNDP attended & coordinated the activities on the subject.

(11) Out of Country Voting

The subject of grant of right to the overseas Pakistanis to cast their votes is under consideration and the ECP has established a Directorate for Overseas Voting in its Secretariat at Islamabad to undertake research & coordinate with the stakeholders. Coordination & consultation process is not only confined to the local stakeholders i.e. political parties, civil society organizations, media but is also extended to the associations of overseas Pakistanis and Election Management Bodies. After initial academic studies, ECP conducted Mock Poll exercises in collaboration with Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development and NADRA. Two different methods of voting i.e. Postal Ballot using e-mail and Tele Voting (Interactive Voice Response-IVR), were used during these tests. Initially, the officials/officers who possessed NICOP and Pakistani passports of the following Embassies/Consulates were selected to participate in these Mock Poll exercises:-

- (i) London
- (ii) Glasgow
- (iii) Manchester
- (iv) Bradford
- (v) Dubai
- (vi) Riyadh
- (vii) New York

As a result of these exercises, following postal ballots were received successfully from different Embassies/Consulates via diplomatic bags through M/o Foreign Affairs:-

S #	Stations	No of Postal Ballots Received
1.	New York	15
2.	London	18
3.	Glasgow	6
4.	Bradford	13
5.	Dubai	6
6.	Riyadh	9
Total Ballots received		67

The lifecycle of Mock Poll using Postal Ballot started from re-registration as voter to dispatch of postal ballot in the diplomatic bags after casting by the eligible voter(s) via M/o Foreign Affairs. Time consumed by the activity was recorded as follows:-

- Re-registration took 20 – 30 minutes;
- Email from ECP to Voter, 15 – 30 minutes;
- Casting a vote by the voter, 5 – 10 minutes;
- Time of dispatch of postal ballots from the Mission to the ECP through diplomatic bag via Foreign Office, ranging from 1 – 3 weeks, depending upon the distance, movement of diplomatic bags and SOP being followed.

In addition to the above, UNDP also conducted a study on the subject, compiled and issued the report in February 2016. UNDP reported that there are limited options for Pakistan to consider the out of country voting during 2018 General Elections. The report listed multiple legal, logistical & financial implications. It also apprehended involvement of risks of buying of votes, coercing, impersonation & lack of oversight, prone to rigging of the process. The report intimated that Switzerland conducted 229 pilots for its 132,000 such voters since the year 2000. Still the Federal Council of the country endorsed “security first principle” before launch of internet out of country voting.

ECP is continuously in touch with Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms, which is deliberating on the subject. Recently, during a meeting of the sub-committee of the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms, NADRA presented a solution/proposal on the subject covering the technical aspects of the issue. After detailed deliberations, the sub-committee directed NADRA to prepare & submit a feasible solution on the subject and present it to the ECP for further deliberation. After consideration of the legal, operational and security issues of the proposal, NADRA & ECP would forward the feasibility report to the Parliament.

Conduct of Local Government Elections

ECP was successful to complete conduct of Local Government Elections in all four Provinces, Cantonment Boards and ICT by 31st December 2016. The exercise ended successfully in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces, Cantonment Boards and ICT by formation of the local governments upto 2015 and in Punjab & Sindh provinces in 2016.

In order to strengthen the electoral process in the country, Election Commission believes in continuing reform process in consultation with all the stakeholders. ECP held almost 30 consultative sessions with domestic and international stakeholders, political parties, civil society organizations, media, observers groups & technology experts and carried out multiple tests/exercises introducing technology in the electoral process, keeping in view extension of services to overseas voters and reforms in the result management system.

Successful conduct of Local Government Elections has been acknowledged by all stakeholders and observers. The entire poll process that took place in different phases, times & legal frameworks can be termed as satisfactory despite the diversified challenges.

It is hoped that the experiences faced & challenges met during the local government elections activity, would help ECP staff in assessing its strengths & weaknesses and contribute towards improvement in electoral processes paving way for more transparent and credible elections in future.

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TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNCILS

Name of Province	COUNCILS					
	District Councils	Metropolitan Corporation	Municipal Corporations	Municipal Committees	Town Committees	Town Councils
Punjab	35	01	11	182	-	-
Sindh	24	01	09	36	148	-
KPK	25	-	-	-	-	4
Balochistan	32	01	04	53	-	-
ICT	-	01	-	-	-	-
Cantt: Boards						
Total	116	04	24	271	148	4

Name of Province	COUNCILS					Total	Total No. of Councilors
	Tehsil Councils	Union Committees	Union Councils	Neighbourhood Councils	Village Councils		
Punjab	-	-	4,015	-	-	4,244	58,605
Sindh	-	351	1,175	-	-	1,744	22,478
KPK	73	-	-	504	2,997	3,603	44,693
Balochistan	-	-	653	-	-	743	13,180
ICT	-	-	50	-	-	51	731
Cantt: Boards						42	148
Total	73	351	5,893	504	112,997	10,427	139,835

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