



Report on The Observation of General Elections 2018 By Sindh Commission on the Status of Women

Date & Time: pre-poll, and election Day :25th July 2018, 7 am – 8 pm

Observers: Ms. Nuzhat Shirin, Ms. Mahnaz Rehman Ms. Sumbul Syed, Ms. Malka Khan, Ms. Raheema Panhwar, Ms. Tooba Khalid, Ms. Hani Baloch

Report by **Ms. Mahnaz Rehman,**

Assisted by **Ms. Sumbul Syed**

The Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW), Government of Sindh was established as an autonomous body under the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women Act (2015). Under Chapter III, section 12 (i), the SCSW has the power to lobby and advocate for increased political participation of women and catalyze the building of networks that enable women to participate in the political life of the country. In accordance with its mandate, the Commission arranged for the observation of the election process of General Elections 2018.

Over the last three decades, a global movement of nonpartisan citizen election monitoring has collectively mobilized millions of citizens around the world to participate in their countries' democratic processes as election observers. When citizens come together to observe elections, they may have a number of goals. Depending on the context, civil society might mobilize to observe an election in order to: engage citizens in the election process; deter fraud; expose problems and irregularities; provide an accurate measure of the quality of the election; promote confidence in the process and outcomes; and provide recommendations for improving the process for the next election. In the longer term, citizen election observation helps ensure electoral integrity, and strengthens civil society's capacity to promote citizen participation, engage in policy advocacy and foster governmental accountability within and well beyond the election cycle. In these elections as well many organizations served as non-partisan observes. Sindh Commission on the Status of Women also felt the need to do its part and observe the elections from a gender lens.

The Commission also organized meetings with women candidates who were contesting on general seats. On 10th July 2018, a meeting was held with female candidates from minority communities who were contesting on general seats in Sindh to discuss the challenges that they were facing, their motivation for contesting and how they were running their campaigns. Civil Society was also invited to facilitate the building of networks between them and female political actors. Another large-scale awareness raising dialogue was organized with the support of UN Women on 13th July in Hotel Marriott with women candidates from all political parties and independent female candidates. The women candidates were given information regarding ECP mandate to make elections more inclusive, their rights as candidates, as well as data from FAFEN. Detailed reports of these programs have been made separately.

The observation took place in two phases. First observation took place before the day of the polling. In the pre-polling phase, corner meetings, election posters, speeches, and training sessions were observed. A record was also maintained of the women candidates who contested in the general elections. The second phase was observation done on the day of the voting. Members and staff of the SCSW along with the chairperson visited different polling stations and observed the voter turnout of women, facilitation provided to women at polling stations, and the general process of voting.



Observations:

1. Women's rights issues were not raised in election campaigns. Party posters did not have prominent women leaders. Very few election posters had photos of women.
2. Voters education was lacking. The common woman did not have knowledge about the voting process.
3. Political parties did not take initiative and voters were not informed about where their votes were registered which caused panic and disorganization at the polling stations. Previously political parties used to inform and help voters in determining where they are supposed to vote.
4. Women voters came out in large numbers. Many were first time voters.
5. Police women were not present in most polling stations. Only 3 stations had a police woman out of all the stations observed by SCSW.
6. Female staff at the polling stations felt facilitated. Washrooms were present for females.
7. All Presiding Officers were male.
8. Various polling stations had too few envelopes. Often stationery was not satisfactory e.g. ink pads dried up too quickly.
9. Most polling agents did not have overt displays of party association except one instance in Sachal Goth polling station.
10. The number of Qaddiyani female voters was written separately outside polling booths.
11. In NA 246, polling station no.102 the Presiding Officer refused to talk to observers.
12. In NA 246 polling station no.73 voters and observers were not being allowed to enter the polling station around 3 pm. Police Officer Maosad Amin stopped people from entering.

Recommendations:

1. Political parties must be incentivized and pressurized to support the election campaigns of their female candidates so that they have a better chance of entering the parliament.
2. Political parties need to strengthen their women's wings and make them more organized and active. This includes educating their female candidates about the election campaign processes so that they are more politically savvy and able to run successful election campaigns and improve their chances of reaching the assemblies.
3. Political parties do not have substantial voters education programs. This needs to be rectified and political parties must be more active in this.
4. Candidates are not well informed of their own rights. Political parties should try to disseminate literature that educates the public about the rights of a political candidate and the facilities provided to women and other disenfranchised members who want to contest elections. This will encourage women to participate in elections.
5. Female polling agents need to be trained better as in these elections most were not able to participate as strong agents of the election process.



6. ECP must give some financial leeway to independent candidates as they find it very difficult to pay for the nomination papers fee as well as other campaign expenses.
7. Female Presiding Officers must also be appointed for female polling stations.
8. Media must give equal coverage to female candidates as it does to male candidates.

Some in-depth observations from Ms. Mahnaz Rehman, senior advisor to Sindh Commission on the Status of Women

Observation of Parchi stations:

The situation of party camps at 7.45 am at Abul Hasan Isphani Road, Gulshen.e.Iqbal Karachi:

- PPP camp was empty only one worker was standing there.
- A dozen male and female workers and voters were present at MMA's camp.
- More than a dozen men were gathered at PTI camp and it was not the only camp, they had set up three camps on this road and even their provincial candidate was present there and we could see cars bringing more people to these camps.
- The MQM started setting up their camp at 8.30

At the second round at 10.55am, situation was like this:

- There was rush of people at PPP, MMA and PTI camps.
- Only two or three people were present at PML(N) camp.
- Four or five young boys were standing at MQM camp.
- Eight to nine men and one woman were present.

Casting of Vote in the Morning

My polling station was at Nakhla School, PS 101 at Gulshen.e.Iqbal. There was tranquility in the air. A police man and a military man told me to come at 8.00am. I saw that people especially women had started making queues in front of the closed doors of their polling stations. Soon after a woman with her two years old daughter joined me. The police man came to greet the kid who got scared and stepped back. "Don't be scare of my uniform, I am just like any other person". The mother asked the kid to shake hand with police wala and that was the start of a friendly chat that included his work history. He was in CIA but now had been asked to perform police duty. He was a resident of Lyari and during gang war, his one leg was wounded and his knee cap was replaced by doctors but it still hurts. After few minutes the small gate opened and a nervous looking assistant presiding officer came out and told us to go and get parchi from any party camp otherwise it will be difficult for them to find our name in the voter list. Twelve or thirteen minutes had passed but the polling had not started. Twelve to fifteen women were standing in queue with us, some of them protested lightly that why polling has not started yet. One of the woman added that at the end of the day 15 to 20 extra minutes should be given to compensate this delay. The well mannered police wala also seconded us and sent someone inside to ask the staff to start the polling. At 8.20 am five of us were asked to go inside. The polling staff was visibly nervous. I told them them that my Silsila number is 66, the two ladies at the first table could not find my name and sent me to other table but after nervously reshuffling the papers they again sent me to first table. It was only when one of the lady at the first table told told them assertively that my name will be in the lists with them,



they finally found my name and gave me the ballot paper but she stamped at the back and gave me the ballot paper. I told her that she is supposed to sign it as well. She seemed to be clueless and signed after confirming from the colleague sitting next to her. Then she gave me the stamp of EC but kept the stamp pad with her. I had to press the stamp on the pad and went behind the screen and stamped both ballot papers and put them in the boxes while an army person was standing nearby. I felt that the process was really slow. When I came out, the police wala congratulated me and told other women that I was the first one to cast vote. I thanked him and left.

Details of observation of some Polling Stations

First, Hashmat memorial school was visited. There were five polling stations in this spacious building, numbers were 27, 28, 29, 32 and 33. I asked many women who had cast their vote and they all expressed their satisfaction about voting process and said they do not have any complaints whatsoever. Both men and women were casting votes in different rooms. Polling staff and agents were present in every room.

Two polling stations 09 & 10 were set up in Falcon House Grammar School. Presiding officers Mr. Nadeemuddin and Mr. Ghayouruddin were very courteous and Mr Nadeemuddin accompanied me to take a round of different booths. Female polling agents of different parties were sitting in the corridor without fan and suffered from mosquito bites as well.

The staff assigned by ECP was present in polling booths unlike 2013 elections when some of the Election staff was absent in most of the polling stations that I had visited. Another observation was the presence of MMA's women workers in the camp set outside the polling station at a distance while one could see the rush of male voters/workers at PTI camps.

Next, I visited polling stations 69, 68 and 41. Female voters at polling booths 505 and 506 had to wait little longer as only one ink bottle for stamp was being used in two booths while it was going on smoothly in third booth. Young girls had got information from EC # 8300 and did not face any problem in finding their booth but some aged women had difficulty in finding their booths. Overall polling was going on smoothly wherever I went although the process was a little slow.



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 5



Figure 1 Group photo of speakers at the 13th July Dialogue



Figure 2: Group photo of women candidates from all political parties at 13th July dialogue



Figure 3 Women candidates from minority communities speaking at the 10th July meeting with SCSW.



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 6



Figure 5 Chairperson at the training of Presiding Officers and asst. Presiding Officers



Figure 6 Chairperson and members of SCSW at a meeting with the Provincial Election Commissioner



Figure 7 SCSW observers at polling station on election day



Figure 8 & 9: Women voters coming out on the roads on voting day to participate in elections





Figure 10 Political party flags in Karachi on election day



Figure 11 & 12 Few Election posters with women on them



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 8

Observation Data General Elections 2018

Constituency NA 239, PS 92

Polling Station No.	Time	security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
58	2:45 – 3:10	Only male	yes	Male	2	yes	352 males 262 females	Yes	Yes	no	Male Security person	10 envelopes were given for 40 candidates. Separate list for 4 Qadyani voters. CCTV present. Stationery was sub quality.

Constituency NA 243, PS 102

Polling Station No.	Duration of Observation	Presence of security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
214, 132	2 – 2:30	Only male	yes	Male	2	no	200 males 126 females	No	Yes	no	Male Security person	
134, 216	1:45 – 2:30	Only male	yes	Male	2	no	251 males 202 females	No	Yes	yes	Male Security person	CCTV present. Envelopes 8 less than no. of candidate. PO had grievances. They were made to stay the night without being informed first. Stationery not good. Unsatisfied with RTS training.



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 9

213, 131	1:40 – 2:30	Army & police	1 Female polling officer absent	male	2	yes	173 males 173 females	No	Yes	no	male Security & male asst. PO	CCTV present. IT expert sent from deputy Commissioner office. 2 male asst. PO in female booths
----------	-------------	---------------	---------------------------------	------	---	-----	--------------------------	----	-----	----	-------------------------------	--

Constituency NA 254, PS 125

Polling Station No.	Duration of Observation	Presence of security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Males present in female booths	Remarks
32	7:45 – 8:10	Only male	yes	Male	1	no	Yes	Yes	Yes	Male Security person	Did not have enough space for all agents
31	8:10 – 8:30	rangers	Yes	Male	1	no	Yes	Yes	No	Male Security person	Same ballot box was being used for 2 booths because they were in the same room. Polling officers not trained enough to object.
29	8:30 – 9 am	Rangers	Yes	Male	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes. Priority given	Male Security person	Women voters found the arrangements to be satisfactory.
30	9:10 – 9:50	rangers	yes	male	1	yes	yes	yes	no	Male Security person	

Constituency NA 242, PS 100

Polling Station No.	Time	security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
39	6:45 – 7:10	Only male	yes	Male	2	yes	1730 males 745 females	no	Yes	Yes. No ramp.	Male Security person	Entrance of the station was difficult to find; many voters could not vote because of this.
58	6:15 – 6:45	Only male	yes	male	2	no	-	no	yes	No.	Male Security	



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 10

											person	
50	6:00 – 6:20	male	yes	male	2	no	1525 male 1278 female	no	yes	no	Male Security person	Polling booths not on ground floor. Less envelopes were issued, but later rectified.
49	11:30 – 12:10	Only male	yes	Male	3	no	-	Yes	Yes	no	No	Female Asst. PO were not well trained. Took wrong thumb impressions and forgot to mark thumb of voters.
46	12:55 – 1:10	Male Army & police.	Yes	Male	1	no	--	Yes	Yes	No	Male Security person	
39	12:40 – 12:52	Male Army & police.	Yes	Male	1	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	No.	Male Security person	Polling started on time
56	12:20 – 12:35	rangers	yes	male	1	yes	-	yes	yes	no	Male Security person	

Constituency NA 240, PS 94

Polling Station No.	Time	security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
26	3:30 – 4	Only male	yes	Male	2	yes	227males 84 females	yes	Yes	Yes. ramp.	Male Security person	PO was relieved because of the presence of army. Said that previously people could not vote freely.
19	3:30 – 4	1 police woman	yes	male	2	yes	79 female votes	no	yes	No.	Male Security person	Observers were stopped from going in. Later they were allowed.



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 11

												Envelopes less than needed. Stationery unsatisfactory & incomplete.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Constituency NA 237, PS 89

Polling Station No.	Time	security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
160	3:30 – 4	Police woman present	yes	Male	2	yes	965 males 605 females	no	Yes	Yes. Priority given	Male Security person	Result sheet: PO were told in training that candidates names will be printed but aren't. RTS is glitching.
161/ 99	3 – 3:30	male	yes	male	2	yes	497 males 212 females	no	yes	No. but booth was on ground floor.	No.	Very cooperative police persons.

Constituency NA 246, PS 108

Polling Station No.	Time	security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate room	Votes cast	Separate entrance for Women	Privacy for stamping Ballots	Special voters?	Male present in female booths	Remarks
141	7:30-9	Army & police.	yes	Male	2	yes	Total 480	no	Yes	Yes. No ramp.	No.	Polling agents of other parties were not allowed to leave and enter the station during voting, except one party.
77	4 – 4:30	One police woman	yes	male	2	yes	Total 600	no	yes	Women with disabilities. No ramp.	No.	CCTV present.
162	3:56 – 4:30	Only male	yes	male	2	yes	Total 1000	no	yes	Yes. Booth was not on ground floor.	No.	
137/43	10:30 -	All male	yes	male	2	yes	Total 350	yes	yes	no	no	Voters were



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 12

	12											sitting inside the polling station after voting. Most were women with small children.
--	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

Constituency NA-242/ PS-101

Polling Station No.	Time	Security	All staff present	Presiding Officer	No. of Booths for women	Booths in separate rooms	Vote cast	Separate entrance for women	Privacy for women stamping Ballots	Special Voters	Male present in female booths	Remarks
Nakhla Junior Campus Block -4	07:50 AM-08:30 AM	Only Male	Yes	Male	1	Yes		Yes	Yes (An Army person was standing at a close distance)	No	No	Process was slow and polling staff was visibly nervous.
SEEDS School Gulistan-e-Johar	1:30 PM – 1:40 PM	Only Male	Yes	Male	03	Yes	-	All booths in separate rooms	Yes	No	No	Slow Process in two booths.
Hashmat Memorial Secondary School Block -4	10:55 AM-11:15 AM	Only Male	Yes	Male & Female	Total 5 out of 2 Female	Yes	-	Only one main gate but separate rooms	Yes	No	No	Female voters were very happy and satisfied.
Falcon House Grammar School Block -4	11:20 AM – 11:40 AM	Only Male	Yes	Male	06	Yes	-	All booths in separate rooms	Yes	No	No	Female voters were very happy and satisfied.
Mama pride School Block -4	11:50 AM – 12:10 PM	Only Male	Yes	Male	01	Yes	-	All booths in separate rooms	Yes	No	No	Female voters were very happy and satisfied.
Falconhouse Grammar School Johar Branch	1:00 PM – 1:20 PM	Only Male	Yes	Male	04	Yes	-	All booths in separate rooms	Yes	No	No	Female voters were very happy and satisfied.



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
SINDH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Karachi dated the 31st July 2018

pg. 13