
Chapter 5

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

The first two sections of this chapter describe the balloting and counting processes in general terms. The third section describes the delegation's election-day observations in different regions of the country.

On election day, the delegation separated into teams that deployed to 12 cities across Pakistan's four provinces, and the federal capital. The teams selected the constituencies and polling stations they would visit after meeting with local political representatives of different parties and government officials. In some instances, political party representatives joined the teams. In many cases, government protocol officers accompanied the delegates to provide logistical support. At no time did these government officials choose the sites that the delegates visited or attempt to limit their movement, except in a very few situations where security was a principal concern.

A. Balloting Procedures

The polls, which were scheduled to open at 8 a.m., often opened between 15 and 45 minutes late. In many cases, the delay was due to the late arrival of election officials or party agents. In some cases, though, the delay reflected the election officials' serious approach to pre-election preparations, which took more time than anticipated.

Before the voting began, the presiding officer showed the party agents the sealed bags of blank ballots and the empty ballot boxes. The presiding officer then secured the ballot boxes with a wax seal. Most sites provided a table for party agents, each supplied with their

own copy of the voter registration roll; a table for election officials; and curtained areas for balloting.

Prior to election day, the CEC assigned voters to specific voting booths within a polling station, with men and women assigned to separate stations. Outside the polling station, the political parties set up "locator" tents where party representatives helped voters find their assigned booths. Party representatives at the tent checked the voter's name on the registration list, found his/her registration number and wrote it on a slip of paper that also included the party's symbol. This slip allowed election officials to direct the voter to the correct polling booth.

To enter a polling station, a voter had to display his/her identification card. (See Appendix XVI.) The voter usually presented the slip obtained at the locator tent to party agents who crossed off the voter's name from the registration lists. The voter then presented his/her identification card to the election officials who, after checking the card, placed a mark in the electoral roll next to the voter's name and number.

Delegation members observed that some election officials did not allow certain voters access to the polls until they had provided several forms of identification. Some voters also found that their names had been marked as if they had already voted. Both of these practices may have constituted a form of harassment that may have led to disenfranchisement.

In some cases, a voter's name was marked with a "P," indicating that he/she had cast a postal ballot, which would be counted by the returning officer after the polls closed. This postal ballot procedure, however, had only a limited effect on the process, and according to the CEC only 63,635 postal ballots were cast.

Once a voter's identity was established, a polling officer punched a hole on the voter's identification card and placed an indelible ink mark on the voter's thumb to safeguard against multiple voting. The delegation heard allegations that some presiding officers used water soluble ink. There were also charges that voters had blatantly used

false identification cards. The observers could not, however, corroborate these allegations.

After punching the identification card and marking the voter's thumb, the assistant presiding officer recorded the voter's registration number on the counterfoil (stub) of the ballot; the procedure was used to ensure that all ballots were accounted for and properly used. The voter placed a thumbprint on the back of the counterfoil, the election official then signed and stamped the back of the ballot. No ballot was valid without the stamp and signature.

The voter then took the ballot (see Appendix XVII) and an inked stamp behind a screened booth. The voter stamped the space on the ballot containing the name and symbol of the candidate that he/she supported. Before leaving the booth, the voter folded the ballot and, once outside the booth, placed the ballot in the ballot box. In many polling stations visited, the booth constituted a corner of a room with a curtain suspended from the ceiling or a table behind a temporary partition.

Party agents could challenge the eligibility of individual voters. If the presiding officer accepted the challenge, he/she required the voter to cast a "challenged" ballot. These ballots were kept separately for special treatment during the count. There was also a procedure whereby a voter who claimed that someone had voted in his/her stead could cast a "tendered" ballot, which was also counted separately from the regular ballots.

The delegation witnessed the use of some challenged ballots and saw the employment of almost no tendered ballots. Delegation members heard allegations that presiding officers refused to accept the challenges made by some party agents. This was not a frequent occurrence, however, and it seems unlikely that it could have affected the fairness of the overall process.

The bitter campaign atmosphere held out the possibility of extensive violence on election day. As a result, the government announced extraordinary provisions to maintain law and order. The army was deployed in areas where the authorities had reason to fear disruptions and local police were deployed to most polling stations.

For the most part, these forces kept a relatively low profile. Seeking to balance the need for law and order with voter apprehension about seeing police in polling stations, the CEC announced that police officers would not be allowed into the polling stations. The CEC also hired temporary guards to supplement the regular police.

B. The Counting Process

Most polls closed at 5 p.m. Immediately thereafter, the ballots were counted by the election officials in front of the party agents who were present at the time. After completing the count, the presiding officer prepared tally forms, containing the signatures of the election officials and the party agents. Under the law, copies of these forms were provided to the party agents. The original form was placed in a sealed bag that contained the ballots.

The delegation heard allegations that, in some regions, the police and election officials denied party agents access to the counting process and refused to provide them copies of signed tally sheets. In addition, the delegation members heard credible reports about arrests and detentions of party workers, which would have prevented them from being present during the count. (See Section C.)

Once the requisite forms had been completed, the presiding officer transported the ballot bags and the unused election materials to the returning officer, who consolidated the results from all of the polling stations in the constituency and from the postal ballots received prior to election day. The party agents, meanwhile, were supposed to transmit certified copies of the results to their respective party headquarters.

The returning officers presented the results to the district returning officer only after all polling stations in a constituency had reported their totals. In many constituencies, the returning officers did not receive the results from individual polling stations until several hours after the polls had closed – the amount of time it took the presiding officers to count the ballots, prepare the ballot bags and transport the bags to the returning officers.

The district returning officers relayed the results to the provincial election commission which, in turn, communicated the results to the

CEC in Islamabad. The process of reporting the results through district returning officers and provincial election commissions slowed the process. The CEC did not announce most results until early on the morning of October 25.

Those parties that later alleged fraud, especially members of the PDA, cited delays in the announcement of the election results as evidence of post-election manipulation. However, given past reporting practices and the logistical obstacles involved, the delays did not appear excessive, and were not lengthier than those observed in the 1988 elections or those that occur in other developing countries.

C. Delegation Observations

At most polling stations, delegation members observed an orderly, well-administered election process. Polling stations were organized to provide voters an opportunity to cast a secret ballot; safeguards designed to prevent multiple voting were utilized; and party agents were present. Presiding officers and other election officials appeared to understand the procedures, and vote processing continued at a steady pace.

Election day was a national holiday, and while turnout figures suggest that the majority of people did not use the holiday to vote, the cities and villages appeared festive. Vendors sold food outside polling stations, cars drove through the streets displaying political banners, loudspeakers blared pleas for political support and people congregated to discuss the elections. In many areas, election day appeared to afford the population an opportunity to celebrate the democratic process.

While these positive observations apply to the majority of sites visited, the delegation observed isolated problems in several of the constituencies visited. These problems included violence and intimidation directed against candidates and voters, arrests and detention of party agents, procedural irregularities, mass confusion at polling stations for women and disregard shown by senior election officials when presented with complaints.

Some of these problems appeared to have been representative of incidents that occurred throughout the country. According to

official figures, nine people were killed and nearly a hundred wounded in election-day violence. The government's statistic is probably conservative since many injuries went unreported. The violence was not confined to a single province or directed at one particular party.

Intimidation at some polling stations, such as that reported in NA 158 in Sind, was particularly intense. Polling agents in that constituency were allegedly attacked repeatedly by IJI supporters and expelled from polling locations.

The marked absence of authority in some areas, despite the decision to deploy security forces on a large scale, allowed confrontations at polling sites to escalate into roving gunfights, and created an environment where drive-by shootings and indiscriminate sniper fire went unchallenged. In one of the premeditated attacks, roof-top gunmen allegedly ambushed the entourage of Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi, son of the caretaker prime minister, as it approached the Kora Khan Rind polling station in Nawabshah. These gunmen allegedly wounded a police officer and a private security guard.

Women voters in Pakistan proved vulnerable to intimidation. "Enforcers" of gender segregation sometimes crowded the approach to polling locations, creating a gauntlet of club wielding partisans through which female voters were forced to pass.

While many of these problems appeared localized, some could have reflected a concerted effort to affect certain National Assembly contests. (See Chapter 7 for further discussion of this issue.) The following are summarized versions of reports prepared by the delegation teams that visited the different regions of the country on election day. These reports reflect the diverse experiences of the individual teams. Each team set its own schedule. As a result each witnessed different aspects of the process. Appendix XVIII includes examples of the routine used by observers under two decidedly different conditions. These two reports provide additional details on the election process and the methodologies employed by the observer teams.

D. Team Reports

1. *The Federal Capital and Punjab*

The Punjab is Pakistan's largest, most populous, prosperous and influential province. Approximately 65 percent of Pakistanis speak Punjabi. The province contains nearly half of Pakistan's population and is also home to more than half of the army. Punjab contains 116 of the 207 directly elected National Assembly seats. Its capital, Lahore, has a population of about 3.5 million while the second largest city, Faisalabad, has a population of 2 million.

During Prime Minister Bhutto's tenure in power, Nawaz Sharif served as the province's chief minister. The friction between the PPP central government and Punjab's IJI leadership contributed to political deadlock and economic stalemate during 1989 and 1990.

Observer teams were based in Islamabad, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad. The Islamabad and Lahore teams subdivided on election day.

Islamabad/Rawalpindi - The team assigned to the federal capital area visited 72 polling stations in National Assembly constituencies 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43 and 44. The team covered the cities and towns of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mandra, Chakwal, Talagang, Pindi Gheb, Dhagal, Adiala, Saidan, Tenchbhata and Bhabra Bazaar.

The team was struck with the professionalism and orderliness that characterized the election process. The atmosphere at polling sites was straightforward, serious and often festive. Many presiding officers and others working at the polling sites expressed gratitude for the presence of international observers.

The team found party agents acting as pollwatchers to be ubiquitous and attentive. Nearly every voting table maintained representatives from the two major parties, sometimes from as many as four parties. The team inquired of the presiding officers and the party agents as to whether there had been any difficulties; the universal response was "no problems." Police were present at polling sites, but not in an overbearing or intimidating fashion.

Most of the presiding officers stated that they had not acted as election officials in the past. Those that had served previously as election officials were posted in different locations. No one was posted at the polling station in his/her home.

The team considered the practice of posting officials away from their home neighborhoods as both good and bad. On the one hand, these officials might have been less subject to bribery and intimidation. On the other hand, in unfamiliar territory they would not have first-hand knowledge regarding the identity of local voters. Ironically, many of these presiding officers reported that they were unable to vote in their own districts because of their election-day obligations and because they failed to vote by postal ballot.

Among the problems identified by the team were the following:

1) Many of the presiding officers were vague or confused about how votes were cast by mail. In some stations, the voter lists contained a few red lines through names marked by a "P" as required by the guidelines, but this seemed to be an infrequent occurrence. Similarly, one team member noticed no deletions of the names of deceased voters, as polling officials had indicated would be the case.

2) The team thought that voter turn-out seemed low. In rural areas, the obligations of field workers made it virtually impossible for them to leave their animals and walk perhaps three or four kilometers to vote between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

3) Several members of the team encountered a man who stated that he was a Sansi candidate for a minority seat and had been issued a symbol, but when he reported to vote his name was not on the list of eligible candidates and he had been disenfranchised.

4) The team was made aware of an incident involving an attempt by one party to move a polling station place over the objection of another party. The police brought officials from both parties to police headquarters where an agreement was reached regarding the location of the site.

5) The team investigated a PDA complaint that, at a given polling station, women were being prevented from voting for the PDA and that at another location the registration list was being

falsified. Two members of the team visited these locations where women, PDA party agents and others, all reported no problems.

6) The counting process sometimes seemed chaotic, but party agents appeared attentive, making difficult any possible sleight of hand. The ballots were separated rapidly, tallied, and in some cases retallied two and three times. No effort was made, however, to establish the total number of votes cast in each box before they were divided and counted.

Challenged ballots generally resulted from disputes about smeared thumbprints, double stamps, and blots from the folded paper ballot. The visual likeness between the arrow symbol of the PDA and the pencil symbol of another party may have created confusion for a small number of voters. The team saw ballots that had been stamped lightly on one symbol and then restamped on the other. These ballots were always rejected by the presiding officers. A consensus among the officials and party agents was generally reached before ballots were categorized as challenged.

At the end of the count, the presiding officers brought the results and the other balloting materials to the returning officer. The team was troubled that presiding officers were not escorted to the returning officer by party agents.

Late in the evening of election day, team members visited a somber PDA headquarters. The PDA members complained of fraud and rigging, but offered no facts for investigation. The team went to the IJI's offices, which they found vacant. The team then visited the Election Commission where, reflecting a sense of accomplishment, the atmosphere was almost jubilant.

Lahore - The Lahore team visited approximately 13 rural polling stations and 42 urban polling stations. It selected the constituencies to be visited on the basis of discussions with the major political parties, journalists, election officers and others. The actual polling stations visited were randomly selected. The team made the following summary observations about election day:

1) The fundamental mechanisms of the electoral system were sound and consistent with electoral systems used in established

democracies. The administration of the system was well-organized, especially given the short notice to the CEC.

2) The personnel involved in administering the electoral process at the provisional level, including the presiding officers and their assistants, were generally well versed in the system and appeared to be reasonably impartial. The effectiveness of the polling station appeared enhanced by the quality of the personnel appointed – often lecturers at the high school or college level – and their experience as presiding officers in prior elections.

3) While outbursts of violence occurred in some of the constituencies covered by the team, a peaceful and non-coercive atmosphere prevailed at most of the sites visited. The police were numerous, and sometimes officious and inappropriately intrusive. The army was much less visible than in 1988.

4) The team did not witness substantial opportunities for, or evidence of, systematic or wholesale fraud. This conclusion is based on the team's personal observations, questioning of party agents and others at polling stations, canvassing of candidates and party officials, and interviews with election officials. The team recognized, however, that any system can be open to abuse in the face of an attempt to create fraud, particularly if voters and parties fail to exercise diligence.

5) A critical factor in evaluating the overall process was the significant opportunities afforded by the system for candidates and parties to check for and challenge abuses. Party agents at polling stations appeared conversant with the challenge process, alert and diligent. Other party officials appeared ready to assert their rights with election authorities.

6) The most serious allegations heard or witnessed by the team concerned illegal ballot marking by presiding officers, stolen ballots, illegal additions to the registration lists and the use of false identification cards.

7) Another impairment to a smooth voting process observed by the team concerned disorganization in some, but not most, of the polling stations for women. This disorder rendered the process vulnerable to tampering. The identification card requirement also

may have unnecessarily disqualified a small number of women voters who did not possess identification cards. Finally, the team observed a lack of privacy in some women's polling stations, and were told that some women requested "instructions" from polling officials – both practices that jeopardized ballot integrity.

8) The team noted impediments to reaching definitive conclusions based on limited observations; several team members were concerned, for example, that party agents at polling stations were too quick to provide glib responses that everything was fine. In one instance, two agents from competing parties who initially stated that all was well, later reported that the presiding officer may have tampered with ballots. (See also Chapter 8B.)

(A supplementary report prepared by the three-member group that visited Gujranwalla is included in Appendix XVIII.)

Multan - Multan is a city with a population of approximately 1.5 million. Seven National Assembly seats were contested in Multan District. In 1988, the PPP won six of these seven seats. In 1990, the outcome was reversed; IJI candidates won six of the seven seats. Despite the IJI's victory, team members noted that, with the exception of NA 121, they heard very few voters express support for IJI candidates.

Before the elections, team members heard reports of problems with voter registration lists and bogus ballots, and predictions of ballot fraud. One local observer claimed that voter registration rolls containing 1,600 names from one village – Naurang Shah in Kabirwala Tehsil, Khanewal District – had been destroyed by a flood. He also claimed to know of a situation where 40 voters were registered at one two-room house. It also was alleged that many local government officials were changed in August and September, after the dismissal of the national and provincial governments – the implication being that these new officials would be more sympathetic to the IJI.

The local election commissioner showed the team examples of pre-election charges that he had received in the form of telegrams from candidates or parties. The two telegrams that the team

reviewed made only vague, generalized complaints. One, from NA 138, alleged that the local administration was fully involved in supporting the candidates of Nawaz Sharif, and requested police protection and special arrangements. The other alleged a "threat of terror" against PDA candidates and requested military protection.

The team heard specific allegations that government development money was suddenly directed toward projects in certain areas so as to benefit IJI candidates. One example involved the caretaker government's distribution of land in key constituencies. IJI candidates for the National and provincial assemblies seemed to concede the truth of these allegations. IJI officials countered these complaints, however, by noting the amount of money that Asif Ali Zadari, the husband of Benazir Bhutto, had allegedly transferred from Pakistan to European banks.

The team also heard allegations of bias by the civil administration in favor of IJI candidates. Several people emphasized that local election officials and government administrators could not fail to recognize that their interests would best be protected by the incumbent regime, and thus their objectivity was compromised.

On election day, the team visited 10 polling sites in four National Assembly constituencies — NA 114, 115, 121 and 123 — in Multan and Khanewal districts. These included polling sites and constituencies in urban, suburban and rural areas. The team chose the constituencies based on information provided by local political leaders who outlined the contests and the occurrence of past problems. The polling stations within these constituencies were chosen at random. Most of the sites were located just off the road, but one was several kilometers away from a paved road, barely reachable by automobile.

At these polling sites, team members did not observe any significant irregularities. Polling officials were open and cooperative, and appeared to be complying reasonably well with prescribed procedures. The team, however, did note the following problems:

- 1) Police, and in at least one case army personnel, were present inside several polling stations without any obvious reason and in apparent violation of the rules proscribing such activities. These uni-

formed officials seemed to have a high profile, and their presence might have been considered intimidating by some voters, not to mention polling officials and polling agents.

2) At one polling station (NA 122, combined polling stations 70 and 71), several people claimed that they witnessed polling officials forcing voters to stamp their ballots in front of the officials. At the same polling station, one polling official wore an IJI badge.

Faisalabad - The city of Faisalabad together with the greater Faisalabad District has a population of approximately 2.5 million. The district elected nine members to the National Assembly. The rapidly changing area represents both rural and urban districts, with vast farmlands and numerous textile mills. In the 1988 elections, six of the then-seven seats were won by the PPP.

The 1990 elections included as candidates former Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo, caretaker Minister of the Interior Zahid Sarfaraz, and Chaudhrey Ilyas. A number of murder, perjury and bribery cases are pending against Ilyas, who was released from jail by Prime Minister Bhutto shortly before her dismissal.

Prior to the elections, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), a government official, and his staff provided to the team a list of polling places identified as areas of concern based upon history or current reports of possible trouble. The team relied on this list and suggestions made by political parties when selecting constituencies and polling stations to visit on election day. All told, the team observed the balloting in more than a dozen men's and women's polling stations in five constituencies throughout the Faisalabad District.

The team concluded that the elections, as observed in Faisalabad, were administered with little or no problem. Given the high level of illiteracy and lack of voting experience, the people on the local level demonstrated an impressive commitment to make the process work. Regardless of position or opinion, all organizations involved – including IJI, PDA, police and electoral officials – acted in a neutral and straightforward manner.

At the same time, the team heard allegations of serious irregularities involving kidnapping, massive ID card fraud, armed

harassment, and bribery. Representatives of both major coalitions presented these allegations to the team, with the majority of the complaints originating with the PDA. The team did not receive evidence to substantiate these allegations and therefore had difficulty establishing their veracity.

Investigations into reports of identification card fraud, for example, failed to uncover a single incident or piece of evidence to support the charges. A report of an alleged kidnapping was countered by charges that the supposed victim was a "deranged" man who picked a fight in the middle of opposition territory and was rudely dragged away. The most common charges of "abuse" concerned the interim government's practice of distributing "pork barrel" projects prior to the elections. This practice, if it occurred, could have favored IJI candidates.

The team observed some problems and possible abuses with respect to the polling stations for women. With no pictures on women's identification cards, these problems could be expected. An illiteracy rate of about 75 percent may have contributed to confusion at the polling stations and to manipulation by party workers or election officials.

The role of the police and the army in Pakistan's elections is a longstanding concern. According to the ADC, additional army units were brought into the district to prevent trouble. However, the team did not observe a single soldier at a polling place on election day. The police, rather than presenting a problem, were cooperative in maintaining order at the polling stations.

An area of greater concern involved the use of the so-called "civilian police." In order to cover all of the polling stations, the police hired additional, temporary civilian assistants. These individuals lacked training and professionalism and were the subject of numerous complaints. These included use of excess force, rudeness and other problems that did not appear to be politically motivated.

2. *Sind*

Sind is Pakistan's most polarized and violent province, where the politics of ethnicity dominate. It is home to Sindhis and *muhajirs* who have strong economic and political grievances against each other, and against the central government. Since 1986, violence in Sind has left more than a thousand dead, and the ethnic polarization shows few signs of amelioration in the near future.

The provincial capital, Karachi, is Pakistan's largest city. Its population, estimated at around 10 million, is ethnically mixed, containing about 54 percent *muhajirs*, 13 percent Punjabis, 11 percent Sindhis or Baluch, 11 percent Gujrati speakers (mainly merchant communities), and 10 percent Pakhtuns.

The Bhutto family is from Sind, as are some prominent IJI political figures, including caretaker Prime Minister Ghulam Mustapha Jatoi. In 1988, the PPP fared exceptionally well in the province, winning 31 of the 46 National Assembly seats, and 67 of the 100 provincial assembly seats. To cover Sind on election day, the delegation based teams in Karachi, Nawabshah and Sukkur.

Karachi - During its stay in Karachi, the team assigned to Sind met with the secretary of the provincial election commission; the chief minister and a minister in the provincial government; representatives of the PDA, IJI and MQM; television, radio and print journalists; and representatives of human rights organizations. These meetings occurred before, during and after election day.

On election day, the Karachi team separated into three groups for visits to different polling sites within the city and in rural areas outside of the city. While none of the groups observed any major irregularities, the teams heard allegations of polling site irregularities from all three major parties contesting in the area.

The PDA sent some 20 faxes to the team on election day. In one constituency, the PDA claimed that a PDA candidate had withdrawn due to the level of irregularities, but this could not be corroborated. The PDA also alleged that the police were harassing PDA voters in NA 181. In another constituency, the PDA charged that all PDA polling agents had been arrested. Meanwhile, the

MQM claimed that PDA supporters were preventing voters from entering polling stations in NA 184. Finally, the IJI caretaker chief minister alleged that his son, an IJI candidate, was shot at by PDA supporters.

The following are the team's principal observations and conclusions:

- 1) During the election campaign, all parties were able to communicate their messages. The meetings with television and radio officials, nonetheless, raised questions about government interference in the mass media coverage. In this respect, the caretaker government appeared to have favored the IJI.
- 2) The provincial election officials did not seem willing to address complaints of arrests presented by PDA representatives prior to the elections. On election day, the PDA sent copies of its complaints to the CEC, but it appeared to have received no response.
- 3) The polling went smoothly, although many polling stations opened later than scheduled. Polling agents from at least two parties were present at all booths except for a few polling stations in the countryside where only PDA agents were present. The ballot boxes were properly sealed. In a few cases, challenged and tendered votes were cast. There were some complaints at one polling station that the names on the identification cards did not match the voting list.
- 4) The turnout was lower for women at virtually all polling stations.
- 5) In one rural area, there were armed men, allegedly from the PDA, near a polling station. In the rural areas, there was also a heavy army presence at the polling stations, and a very low turnout.
- 6) Tension was evident among the different parties, and it seemed that most parties had acted abusively at different times. Further, the team was concerned that losses of life were treated almost as a normal part of an election process.
- 7) The PDA headquarters in Karachi sought to obtain direct information regarding the results from polling agents around the country. However, the results arrived sporadically on election night

and was not categorized in a coherent manner, even 24 hours after the elections.

Nawabshah - A two-member team traveled on election day to Nawabshah-I, NA 160. The team met with representatives from the PDA and IJI, and visited five polling sites located in the city of Nawabshah. The delegates found a highly charged political environment due to the contest between prominent figures from both major parties: the son of caretaker Prime Minister Ghulam Mustapha Jatoi (IJI) faced Asif Ali Zardari (PDA), former Prime Minister Bhutto's husband. Although Bhutto's party had prevailed in Nawabshah in the 1988 elections, a close race was expected, in part because constituency boundaries had changed.

Immediately upon arrival in Nawabshah, the delegates heard a series of allegations from both parties about election irregularities. A PDA official made four allegations: 1) that before the election – including on election eve – the police had unjustly arrested and harassed PDA supporters and candidates; 2) that the government had printed and distributed to IJI supporters 20,000 false identification cards for women; 3) that the local police had confiscated identification cards from PDA voters; and 4) that after balloting had begun, several polling stations closed, and others had been temporarily closed.

An IJI representative complained about the relocation of 46 polling stations the night before the elections and the replacement of large numbers of presiding officers. The IJI representative also alleged that PDA supporters were engaging in various forms of misconduct, such as misdirecting women voters to the wrong polling stations.

The delegation's observations at the polling stations confirmed some of these allegations and failed to sustain others. At several places visited, the delegation was told that the stations had opened up to one and a half hours late. At the polling stations that allegedly had been closed, however, polling officials and party agents stated that the stations had been open for voting all day. At most polling stations, the delegation observed polling agents from the principal parties present who reported no major problems in the balloting.

In stark contrast to the relatively orderly process at men's polling stations, chaotic conditions prevailed at many of the women's polling stations. Officials made little attempt to maintain order. Both inside the polling stations and in the immediate vicinity outside the stations, disorder reigned. At one polling station, for example, dozens of women and young children filled the small room where voting was taking place. Several of the women angrily protested the decision by polling officials not to permit them to vote. The women contended that others using false identification cards had voted in their names earlier in the day.

Election day observations did not provide physical evidence to corroborate many kinds of allegations about the election process, including the arrests and harassment of PDA supporters and the confiscation of identification cards. The allegations of vote fraud through the distribution of false identification cards, however, gained credibility from the dozens of women who contended that others had voted in their names. Whether the women who were denied the right to vote were IJI or PDA supporters, however, could not be determined.

The kinds of problems that occurred seemed to have caught the parties by surprise; if this was the case, it was not extraordinary that they could not provide documentation to support their allegations. At the same time, groundless accusations can themselves undermine the election process and it is incumbent upon the political parties to make their allegations credible.

The combination of the serious allegations made by both major political alliances and the conditions observed on election day made the team extremely uneasy about the election process. Consequently, NA 160 was one of the constituencies visited following the elections. The findings of the post-election investigation are described in Chapter 7.

Sukkur - A two-member team observed the elections in Sukkur District, which is a part of Sukkur Division (the division also includes Nawabshah District), on election day. Sukkur District includes three National Assembly constituencies: NA 151 (which includes Sukkur

town), NA 152 and NA 153. Sukkur borders on the Bhuttos' home district of Larkana and is generally considered to be part of the Bhutto-PPP stronghold in rural Sind.

There were a number of hotly contested seats in the areas visited. In NA 151, Islamuddin Shaikh, the popular IJI mayor of Sukkur, ran against Khurshid Shah of the PDA. The MQM had withdrawn its candidate in favor of Islamuddin Shaikh. In NA 152, Sardar Ghulam Mohammed Meher, an independent who was sympathetic to the IJI and one of the largest landlords in Sind, ran against Jam Saifullah, a young, relatively weak PDA candidate. In NA 153 the son of Pir Pagara (a local religious leader), Sadruddin Shah, ran against the PDA's candidate, Sardar Nur Mohammed Khan Lund.

Based on their observations, the team had a strong sense that violence, intimidation and partisan behavior on the part of the political parties and the civil authorities had overwhelmed the election process. Political party leaders, government officials and voters all recounted how the election system had broken down. The delegation heard credible reports concerning the kidnapping of polling officials and party agents, ballot stuffing and the removal of legitimately cast ballots, and the disenfranchisement of voters through violence and false procedural restrictions.

The team did not witness any violent incidents on election day, but it did hear a significant number of reports from a variety of sources it considered credible regarding violence and irregularities. For example, the PDA district chairman and the district commissioner each independently recounted how armed men had taken over polling stations and kidnapped election officers and party agents. They also reported how these acts had, in some cases, been accompanied by ballot stuffing. While the PDA chairman did not hesitate to place blame on the IJI, the district commissioner and the district returning officer were more circumspect. Neither of these men could state definitively who had caused the violence, and the district commissioner pointed out that some of the violence had occurred in a traditional IJI stronghold.

In visiting some of the polling stations where the violence allegedly occurred, the team found that local officials tried to minimize the impact of these incidents. Even when these officials acknowledged that kidnappings or other problems had occurred, they claimed that the events had not been serious and that the polling stations were once again functioning normally.

At other polling stations, however, election officials joined the chorus of criticism directed at the process. The officials described how they had been kidnapped and how the government had provided insufficient security to insure the integrity of the ballot. The team found that the situation was so tense at some polling stations that voters, election officials and party agents were unwilling to discuss the process. Voters complained that other people used false ID cards to vote in their place. These charges originated from supporters of both the major coalitions.

By election night, the situation appeared to have quieted significantly, and by the time the team visited the commissioner of Sukkur Division, the authorities reported very few problems. These authorities also reported that the PDA had won all seats in the district. It thus came as a surprise when the following morning the team learned that Murtaza Jatui had defeated Asif Ali Zardari in Nawabshah.

The team left with a very strong sense that either by design or circumstance the civil authorities had been unable to control violence and intimidation during the election period. The freedom to cast one's vote in a safe, open environment was clearly lacking in these areas. (A detailed description of the team's findings in this area is found in Appendix XVIII.)

3. North West Frontier Province

The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is home to the Pakhtun tribes, many of whom also live across the border in Afghanistan. It has borne the brunt of the Afghan war and continues to harbor most of the Afghan refugees. The NWFP holds 27 seats in the National Assembly.

Based on its election day observations and meetings with local officials and party representatives, the team concluded that despite the backdrop of a violent culture, a particularly strong police presence and a generally volatile society, the overall process was a fair one, and the results reflected the will of the electorate in the region.

Before the elections, PDA leaders expressed concern that there would be planned disruption and violence at polling stations on election day. In addition, the PDA presented the following complaints:

- lack of access to the media;
- polling station locations and staff changed since 1988;
- preparation of false identification cards by the caretaker government;
- collection of female voter ID cards prior to the election on the understanding that they would be returned at the polling place;
- instructions given to men to come to polling places with firearms so as to delay the balloting process through the threat of violence;
- distribution of development funds by IJI candidates in order to influence voters;
- transfer of funds from one administrative budget to another without authority; and
- planned release of results to the chief minister before they were publicly announced by the CEC.

The ANP leader, Wali Khan, stated that the financing of the campaign was the source of electoral corruption as opposed to the irregularities in voting procedure. He said "money for votes" was related to drugs: drug smugglers were investing in politics.

On election day, the team sub-divided into three groups and visited polling sites in different parts of the province: NA 1 in central Peshawar, where Benazir Bhutto was contesting; NA 2 also in Peshawar, where the former PPP chief minister for the territory was a candidate; NA 5 in Charasadda, where Wali Khan, leader of the ANP was running; and NA 6, in Mardan, which is approximately 80

kilometers north of Peshawar, where the caretaker chief minister was the IJI candidate.

At most of the 60 polling places visited, the presiding officers had been moved from their 1988 polling locations, many from rural to urban stations. Despite this change of personnel, however, the conduct of the poll in the men's polling places was efficient and orderly. There appeared to be a large measure of inter-party cooperation and party representatives reported "no problems."

By contrast, the problems at women's polling places highlighted the inherent problem for women when using Western voting procedures in a Muslim culture. It seemed as though the identification card requirement thwarted, rather than encouraged, women's participation in the voting process. In some cases, names on the identification card did not match the names on the register because the registration rolls were in the husbands' names. With no picture on many female identification cards, verification in some polling places caused confusion and heated disputes.

The procedures used in female voting stations varied. In some polling places, large numbers of voters were admitted at the same time, a practice that increased the general level of confusion. In one case, the PDA and the ANP asked the presiding officers to close the polling place for cultural and social reasons; in others, by prior agreement, the female polling place never opened. In yet another case, the team witnessed an attempt by a voter to vote more than once.

The challenge process appeared to be fraught with problems in the female polling places in rural areas. This did not appear to be the case in the urban stations. In all cases, however, party agents appeared well briefed.

The team witnessed the count at polling stations in Peshawar and Mardan. While procedures for the count varied from highly efficient to highly disorganized, the party agents duly accepted the counts and the results.

The team also visited the provincial election commission's office on election night at a time when the commission was relaying polling

reports to the CEC in Islamabad. The provincial commission appeared to handle complaints in the same way it handled the count – as a conduit: it played no significant role in the complaints process, acting simply as a vehicle for receiving the complaint and passing it on to the CEC.

The team visited both IJI and PDA headquarters on election night. A senior PDA representative told the team: "It was a fair election and we lost." The successful IJI candidate, in turn, agreed that the election was fair. He did, however, register a protest regarding the killing of three IJI supporters in Peshawar, accusing the PDA of responsibility for the attacks.

Notwithstanding an overall positive assessment of the process, the team summarized its concerns as follows:

- 1) A clear separation between political and administrative functions in the polling place did not exist.
- 2) Systemic and discriminatory differences prevailed between male and female voting brought about by religious and cultural constraints.
- 3) The legal/bureaucratic framework was inadequate to deal with complaints.

4. *Baluchistan*

Baluchistan is Pakistan's geographically largest and economically most backward province. Despite its enormous size and significant mineral deposits it contains only about 5 percent of Pakistan's total population and is entitled to 11 seats in the National Assembly. Baluchistan is sparsely populated, predominantly by Baluch and Pakhtun tribes. The land is a rugged mixture of mountains and desert, bordering on Iran, Afghanistan, and the Arabian Sea, as well as Pakistan's other three provinces.

During the 1970s, Bhutto and Baluch tribal leaders waged a bloody war over control of the resources, development and politics of the province. At the height of the war, 80,000 Pakistan army troops were stationed in Baluchistan, and thousands of people were killed.

During Benazir Bhutto's tenure, a non-PPP alliance governed the province. An effort, ultimately unsuccessful, was made to dissolve Baluchistan's Provincial Assembly.

Unlike other parts of Pakistan in the 1990 elections, Baluchistan was not polarized politically between the two major coalitions. The greater fragmentation of political forces and the continuing influence of powerful tribal leaders perhaps made for a less tense and confrontational atmosphere in most of the province than in the rest of Pakistan. The two major national alliances – the IJI and PDA – had only a limited presence in Baluchistan, equalled or surpassed by regional or religious parties: the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP, an IJI-affiliate, led by former Chief Minister Nawab Akbar Bugti, leader of the Bugti Baluch tribe); and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam-Fazlur Rahman Group (JUI-F, based in the Pakhtun areas of NWFP and northern Baluchistan). Other regional contenders included the Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), both also based in the Pakhtun areas. Quetta, the provincial capital, is home to additional tribes, most notably the Hazaras, and non-tribal settlers from Punjab and elsewhere.

A two-member team observed the elections in and around Quetta. On the basis of pre-election discussions with party and community leaders, the team selected three constituencies for observation: Quetta (NA 197), Pishin (NA 196), and Mastung (NA 204). By selecting these constituencies, it was possible to observe Pakhtun, Baluch, and settled areas, as well as to observe one area that electoral and provincial officials had designated as a "sensitive" law-and-order situation.

On election day, the team members visited eight polling stations and were able to witness the full-range of voting activities including the opening of the polls, routine voting, poll closing, and the vote count. Polling places were generally orderly and well run. Polling agents in each station reported no difficulties, although in at least one constituency some major parties had no agents present when the observations were made.

During the course of conversations on election day, the team learned of a practice that was in apparent violation of explicit CEC rules against the progressive reporting of election results to anyone other than the returning officers and the CEC. The team obtained a written directive from the chief minister's secretary announcing the establishment of an "election cell" in the chief minister's secretariat and requesting unofficial polling results be reported to the secretariat following the close of voting. (See Appendix XIX.) The team had no way of determining whether this arrangement was used to manipulate vote totals in some polling areas after reports of totals in others had been received, but its existence certainly would have increased the possibility of malpractice.

The counting and tallying of the votes in the stations where those processes were observed appeared to be honest and fair, although the officials did not seem to have a very firm understanding of the procedures. Also, the lackadaisical manner with which the ballots were handled during the counting process provided some opportunities for abuse, although the team had no reason to believe that any occurred.

D. Post-Election Delegation Review

In reviewing the team reports at lengthy delegation debriefing sessions in Karachi, the delegation realized that only in a few cases - predominantly in Sind - had delegation members encountered major irregularities. Nonetheless, by the time the delegation met - one day after the election - the PDA had denounced the election process, citing violence and irregularities throughout the country.

The delegation, therefore, sought to obtain specific information from PDA leaders, including former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, regarding the PDA's allegations. The delegation was particularly concerned about allegations related to the alleged manipulation of vote totals. The PDA could not provide evidence to support its charges, however, claiming that it simply lacked the organizational capability to process information. Following the National Assembly elections and on the day of the provincial assembly elections, delegation members conducted interviews with candidates of the

major parties and, an NDI representative remained in Pakistan until November 19, in order to investigate more thoroughly allegations concerning the election. (See Chapter 6.)