



FAFEN Parliament Monitor

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF BALOCHISTAN

30th Session

(January 26 - February 29, 2012)

Executive Summary

The 30th session of the Balochistan Assembly met for six sittings which lasted nine hours and 12 minutes, with an average duration of an hour and 32 minutes each sitting. Each sitting started late, with an average delay of 44 minutes.

There was a wide variation in the duration of each sitting - the longest spanning three hours and 18 minutes and the shortest lasting only 25 minutes.

The Quorum, visibly lacking throughout the session, was pointed out only once by a PPPP legislator. Since the Balochistan Assembly Secretariat does not provide information to media and public on attendance of Members, FAFEN conducts a headcount of Members at the start and close of each sitting and documents the actual time spent on the floor of the House by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

The attendance of Members was observed to be low during the session, with an average 13 Members present at the outset and 12 at the end of each sitting. The Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the entire session. The Speaker presided over the House for 41% of the total session time, the Deputy Speaker 36% and the Panel of Chairpersons 24%.

As many as 45% of the Members – 29 - participated in the session either by bringing agenda items on the Order of the Day or by actually participating in the debates on the floor of the House.

The PML Members had the highest participation in proportion to their Membership, with 80% of them taking part in the proceedings, followed by Like-Minded Group (54%), BNPA 43%, PPPP 40%, JUI 39% and ANP 33%. A PMLN Member, along with another representing PML (Opted for Opposition Benches), did not participate in the proceedings while among single-Member parties, the JUI and NP Members took part.

A total of 22 Starred questions (requiring oral answers) - 3.4 questions per sitting - was raised during the session. Eighteen Starred questions were taken up by the House and six Supplementary questions were asked.

Fifty-five Points of Orders (an average of nine per sitting) consumed 235 minutes (43%) of the session time.

The session witnessed two walkouts and a boycott. During the 2nd sitting, a PPPP Member staged a five-minute walkout after he

was not allowed to speak on a Point of Order. The Members of BNPA, PPPP and PML boycotted the 4th sitting over the killing of an MPA's family members. During the 6th sitting, a JUI Member walked out to protest the killing of Maulana Abdul Ghani in Chaman.

Introduction

An essential component of democracy is publicly accessible information about the political decision-making processes, such as parliamentary deliberations among elected representatives. Citizens must have information about whether and how their representatives are performing in the Parliament in order to hold those elected leaders accountable.

The Parliament Watch Project (PWP), launched in 2008, aims at generating objective and statistically-sound information about parliamentary performance to foster informed engagement between the constituents and their elected representatives. Universal access to information about national legislative processes is an essential component of democracy. A society cannot be truly democratic until constituents know about the person they are voting for, and whether or not the elected representatives are fulfilling their responsibilities. Since there is a dearth of publicly accessible information about the political decision-making processes, such as parliamentary deliberations, the PWP is an effort to bridge this gap. This report will be a contribution towards creating a more informed citizenry and an increasingly responsible Parliament.

The PWP employs direct observation as one of the tools to evaluate parliamentary proceedings with the following indicators:

Transparency: Government's accountability requires transparency in decision-making and policy implementation. Transparency refers to the amount and quality of information available to the public as well as timely and clear information communicated within legislative bodies themselves. Inclusive and strong decisions can only be made when all legislators are well-informed about parliamentary proceedings.

Participation: Only the active and responsible participation of all the Members can make the business of Parliament meaningful. The participation can be judged through various indicators like attendance of parliamentary leaders and other Members and their active involvement in parliamentary discussion and activities.

Responsiveness: Parliament's responsiveness means Members' collective actions on the issues of public interests which are raised and discussed on the floor of the House through Legislation, Resolutions or any other agenda item. Responsiveness of Government to the public is measured in terms of parliamentary oversight and effective implementation of policy decisions. Parliament's executive oversight function is mainly carried out through Questions and parliamentary committees.

Parliamentary Output: Parliamentary output primarily comes in the form of Legislation and Resolutions. The quantity of such output is indicative of Parliament's efficiency. The quality of output is equally important. Considering Legislation on matters of national significance through careful debate and discussion is arguably a Parliament's chief and most important function.

Order and Institutionalization: Order and institutionalization of Members are important for an efficient and productive Parliament. Order may be measured, for example, by the conduct of Members and the Chair's effective management of parliamentary business. Institutionalization refers to Members' understanding and compliance with rules of procedure for parliamentary business.



This report is based on direct observation of proceedings of Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, conducted by CPD, a member organisation of FAFEN.

1.0 Session Duration and Members' Participation

1.1 Session Time

The 30th session of the Balochistan Assembly comprising six sittings was held from January 26 to February 9, 2012. The total session time was nine hours and 12 minutes – an average of an hour and 32 minutes each day. On average, each sitting was delayed by 44 minutes.

Sitting No	Day and Date	Late Starts(in Minutes)	Hours	Minutes
1 st	Thursday, January 26	45	1	5
2 nd	Saturday, January 28	42	3	18
3 rd	Tuesday, January 31	43	2	10
4 th	Friday, February 03	50	0	25
5 th	Monday, February 06	26	1	44
6 th	Thursday, February 09	60	0	30
Total		44 Minutes (Average)	Nine hours and 12 minutes	

1.2 Members' Participation

Participation has been classified into three categories – legislators who only tabled agenda item(s) on the Orders of the Day; legislators who did not submit any agenda item but took part in discussions and deliberations in the House, and Members who submitted agenda items and also participated in debates.

Only one Member submitted items on the Orders of the Day while 18 participated in on-floor debates. Ten parliamentarians submitted agenda items and actively took part in the House discussions.

Sr. No.	Party	Members Who Only Submitted Agenda Items	Members Who Took Part in Debates	Members Who Participated in Debates as well as Submitted Agenda Items	Percentage of Members Who Only Submitted Agenda Items	Percentage of Members Who Participated in Debates	Percentage of Members Who Submitted Agenda Items And Participated in Debates	Members in Assembly by Party
1	Independent	0	1	1	0%	17%	17%	6
2	PPPP	0	3	3	0%	20%	20%	15
3	BNPA	0	1	2	0%	14%	29%	7
4	PMLN	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	1
5	PML	0	2	2	0%	40%	40%	5
6	ANP	0	1	0	0%	33%	0%	3
7	JUI	0	3	1	0%	30%	10%	10
8	Like- Minded Group	1	5	1	8%	38%	8%	13
9	PML (Opted Opposition Benches)	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	1
10	Independents (Opposition)	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	2
11	JUI (Ideological)	0	1	0	0%	100%	0%	1
12	NP	0	1	0	0%	100%	0%	1
Total		1	18	10	2%	28%	15%	65

1.3 Members' Attendance

The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the session. However, it was only pointed out once by a PPPP Member.

Since the Balochistan Assembly does not make public the attendance of Members, FAFEN conducts a headcount at the start and close of each sitting. During the 30th session, on average, 13 Members were present at the outset and 12 at the end of each sitting.

Minimum attendance was observed in the last sitting (6th) when only seven Members were present at the outset and 11 at the end.

Sitting No.	Members at the Outset	Members at the End	Maximum Members
1 st	11	10	13
2 nd	11	9	14
3 rd	14	9	20
4 th	22	13	22
5 th	15	20	24
6 th	7	11	11
Average	13	12	17

1.4 Key Members' Attendance

The Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the entire session. The Speaker presided over the House for 41% of the total session time, the Deputy Speaker 36% and the Panel of Chairpersons 24%.

The parliamentary leader of the JUI attended the entire session while the NP leader attended one sitting. On the other hand, the leaders of PML, ANP, JUI, BNPA and the Like-Minded Group did not attend any sitting.

Sitting No.	Speaker	Deputy Speaker	Panel of Chairpersons	Chief Minister	Leader of Opposition
1 st	65	0	0	0	0
2 nd	0	198	0	0	0
3 rd	104	0	26	0	0
4 th	25	0	0	0	0
5 th	0	0	104	0	0
6 th	30	0	0	0	0
Total	224 minutes	198 minutes	130 minutes	0	0

2.0 Question Hour

The first hour of the sitting, after the recitation from the Holy Quran and the swearing in of Members, is for asking and answering of questions.

A total of 22 Starred questions (requiring oral answers) - 3.4 questions per sitting - were raised during the session. Eighteen Starred questions were taken up by the House and six Supplementary questions were asked.

Date	Sittings	Starred Questions	Starred Questions taken up by the House	Supplementary Questions
Monday	1st	4	4	1
Thursday	2nd	3	3	0
Saturday	3rd	5	5	5
Tuesday	4th	5	3	0
Friday	5th	5	3	0
Monday	6th	0	0	0
Total		22	18	6

Ten questions were directed to the Balochistan Development Authority, five to Balochistan Water and Sanitation, four to Education and three to the Planning and Development.

Sr. No.	Ministry	Starred	Full Responses	No Responses	Total
1	Balochistan Development Authority	10	6	4	10
2	Education	4	4		4
3	Planning and Development	3	3		3
4	B-WASA	5	5		5
Total		22	18	4	22

3.0 Points of Order

A Point of Order is raised when a perceived breach in the Rules of Parliamentary Procedures has occurred. A Member may raise a Point of Order at any time during the sitting and seek the Chair's ruling on the matter. However, it has been observed that Points of Order are often used erroneously, e.g. to ask a question or matters pertaining to constituencies.

Fifty-five Points of Orders (an average of nine per sitting) consumed 235 minutes (43%) of the session time.

Sitting No	Points of Order	Time Consumed
1st	6	20
2nd	6	90
3rd	20	60
4th	8	25
5th	8	20
6th	7	20
Total	55 POs	235 minutes

Fifty-five Points of Order have been classified into 17 boarder themes. The highest number of Points of Order (25) was raised to call for an inquiry or condemn the killing of an MPA's family members, followed by three each pertaining to the business of the house, energy, members' attendance and requests for *fatehas*.

Sr. No	Issues Raised	Female	Male	Total
1	Killing of an MPA's family Members (<i>Mr. Bakhtiar Dhomki</i>)	2	23	25
2	Business of the House		3	3
3	Energy		3	3
4	Members' Attendance		3	3
5	Request for <i>Fateha</i>		3	3
6	Employment		2	2
7	Killing of <i>Maulana Abdul Ghani</i>		2	2
8	Law and Order		2	2
9	Miscellaneous Affairs		2	2
10	Police	1	1	2
11	Senate Elections		2	2
12	Education		1	1
13	Agriculture		1	1
14	Federal Constabulary		1	1
15	Military Operation in Balochistan		1	1
16	New Provinces		1	1
17	Performance of the Balochistan Assembly	1		1
Total		4	51	55

4.0 Protests, Boycotts and Walkouts

The session witnessed two walkouts and a boycott. During the 2nd sitting, a PPPP Member staged a five-minute walkout after the Chair did not allow him to speak on a Point of Order. The Members of BNPA, PPPP and PML boycotted the 4th sitting over the killing of an MPA's family members. During the 6th sitting, a JUI Member walked out against the killing of Maulana Abdul Ghani in Chaman.

Sitting No	Party	Reason	Time (Mints.)	Protest/Walkout/Boycott
2 nd	A Member of the PPPP	Against the Chair's permission to speak on a Point of Order	5	Walkout
4 th	Members of the BNPA one Member each of the PML and PPPP	Against the killing of family members of Balochistan Assembly Legislator (PB-21 Sibi)	Entire Sitting	Boycott
6 th	A Member of the JUI (Ideological)	Against the killing of Maulana Abdul Ghani in Chaman	5	Walkout
Total				10 minutes

About FAFEN

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), established in 2006, is a coalition of 42 leading civil society organizations, working to strengthen all forms of democratic accountabilities in Pakistan. Governed by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), FAFEN's key achievements are:

- Observed the public display of Pakistan's draft electoral rolls and conducted the country's first statistically-valid voters' list audit in 2007
- Deployed more than 18,829 trained, neutral Election Day observers nationwide to watch the February 18, 2008 polls and 264 long-term observers to monitor the pre-election process
- Fielded long-term observers nationwide and published 19 pre-election reports
- For the February 18, 2008, General Elections, FAFEN conducted 260 simultaneous Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs)- the largest effort in the world
- Conducted its first survey, Constituents Aspirations Survey, in December 2008 with a sample size of 3,124 respondents to get the description of the state of public opinion and also to get a deeper understanding of the values, attitudes and beliefs of people living in the constituencies
- Conducted mapping of organizations working for human rights within Pakistan
- Observed general elections at Gilgit-Baltistan in 2009 and by-elections in various constituencies of the Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010
- Implemented a unique methodology to observe parliamentary proceedings under its Parliament Watch Project
- Monitors public institutions across Pakistan and issues monthly reports on the state and performance of educational, health and other local level institutions. In addition, monthly reports on prices, crimes, incidence of disease, caseload in lower courts and political and electoral violence are issued

FAFEN continues to implement robust programs in-between elections related to monitoring parliamentary affairs, connecting constituents to their elected representatives, monitoring the performance of public and elected institutions and advocating electoral and democratic reforms. FAFEN is also monitoring political and electoral violence, peace activities and promoting active citizenry through ongoing civic education activities across the country. FAFEN is currently implementing Supporting Transparency, Accountability and Electoral Processes in Pakistan in 200 National Assembly constituencies in 119 districts across Pakistan.

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