



FAFEN Parliament Monitor

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF BALOCHISTAN

Twenty Eighth Session

(October 17, 2011 – October 25, 2011)

Executive Summary

After successfully observing proceedings of the National Assembly, FAFEN has started the observation of the provincial assemblies – Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan – and the Senate. This report is based on FAFEN's direct observation of the 28th session of the Balochistan Assembly, which was held between October 17 and October 25, 2011.

The Assembly proceedings are observed using a robust methodology based on the rules of procedures and business. The observers collect information on all major types of parliamentary business on a standardized checklist. The data gathered is analyzed together with that acquired from other parliamentary sources to prepare session-wise reports.

FAFEN will also start releasing daily factsheets on the Assembly's proceedings. Daily factsheets are released on the same day the sittings are held to provide media and other interested stakeholders vital statistics about the proceedings to encourage informed public discourse on Assembly's performance.

During the 28th session the Balochistan Assembly had four sittings, which lasted two hours and 29 minutes, with an average duration of 37 minutes each. These sittings started late, with an average delay of 30 minutes.

The attendance of Members was observed to be low during the session, with an average 14 Members present at the outset, and 15 at the end of the each sitting. The Speaker, the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the entire session. The Deputy Speaker presided over the session proceedings.

Overall 27 Members took part in the four sittings. The role of female parliamentarians remained passive. Women MPAs, who represent 17% of the House, marked their participation only by raising two Points of Order. On the other hand their counterparts, who represent 83% of the House, submitted the entire Agenda for the session and contributed to most of the on-floor debates.

A party-wise analysis shows that 80% of PML Legislators took part in the proceedings, followed by PPP's 53%, ANP's 33%, JUI's 30%, BNPA's 29%, and 15% of the Like Minded Group. All the Independents, along with the single PMLN Member, also attended the session.

Although the agenda of the session was brief, most of it was left unaddressed as the Members raised 31 Points of the Order, which consumed 74% of the session time. None of the Points of Order raised by Members attracted the Chair's formal ruling. Unless the Chair gives a formal ruling on a Point of Order, speeches and rejoinders do not lead to any Assembly output.

Legislation is the key function of a legislature but there were no bills on the Order of the Day for the 28th session.

The provincial Assembly adopted two Resolutions regarding sectarian killings in Quetta and verification of voters' list in Balochistan.

Established in 1970 through a Presidential Order, the regulatory framework of Balochistan Assembly does not allow the Members to raise Calling Attention Notices – a parliamentary intervention to hold the executive accountable. Moreover it is the only Assembly which is working without setting up Standing Committees. It is also important to mention that only one Member is on the Opposition Benches, while the rest are on Treasury Benches.

During the observed session of the Balochistan Assembly, two Questions appeared on the Orders of the Day, which were not taken up by the House. The session also witnessed three walkouts by a PPP Member when the Deputy Speaker did not permit him to speak on a Point of Order.

FAFEN hopes this report will be a valuable contribution to creating a more informed citizenry and an increasingly responsible Parliament.

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 on parliamentary performance to foster informed engagement between the constituents and their elected representatives. Universal access to information on 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 on 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 on 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.

Abbreviations

ANP	Awami National Party	NP	National Party
BA	Balochistan Assembly	PML	Pakistan Muslim League
BNPA	Balochistan National Party (Awami)	PMLN	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
FAFEN	Free and Fair Election Network	PO	Point of Order
JUI	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	PPPP	Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians
JUI (Ideological)	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Ideological)	PWP	Parliament Watch Project
MPA	Member Provincial Assembly		

1.0 Session Duration and Members' Participation

1.1 Session Time

Spread over four sittings, the 28th session of the Balochistan Assembly lasted for only two hours and 29 minutes. On average every sitting met for 37 minutes. Similarly on average each sitting started 30 minutes late.

The shortest sitting lasted only seven minutes (October 22) and the longest lasted an hour and five minutes (October 17).

Date	Sitting No	Delays	Hours	Minutes
17 October	First	30	1	5
20 October	Second	28	0	32
22 October	Third	23	0	7
25 October	Fourth	40	0	45
Total		Average 30 minutes	Two Hours and 29 Minutes	

1.1 Members' Participation by Party

Members' participation has been classified in three categories. The first category comprises Members who only tabled agenda item(s) on the Orders of the Day. The second includes Members who did not table any item on the Orders of the Day, but participated in discussions and deliberations. Members who tabled items on the Orders of the Day and also participated in the debates have been placed in the third category.

During the session, six Members brought items on the Orders of the Day. A total of 17 participated in debates, while six MPAs brought agenda items on the Orders of the Day and actively took part in the parliamentary discussions.

Party	Members Who Participated in the Thirty-Fifth Session						Total Number of Members in Assembly by Party
	Members Who Brought Agenda Items	Members Who Took Part in Debates	Members Who Participated in Debates as well as Brought Agenda Items	Percentage of Members Who Brought Agenda Items	Percentage of Members Who Participated in Debates	Percentage of Members Who Brought Agenda Items And Participated in Debates	
Independent	2	2	2	33%	33%	33%	6
PPPP	1	6	1	7%	40%	7%	15
BNPA	0	2	0	0%	29%	0%	7
PMLN	1	0	0	100%	0%	0%	1
PML	1	2	1	20%	40%	20%	5
ANP	0	1	0	0%	33%	0%	3
JUI	0	3	0	0%	30%	0%	10
Like Minded Group	1	1	0	8%	8%	0%	13
PML (Opted Opposition Benches)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Independents (Opposition)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
JUI (Ideological)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
NP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	6	17	4	9%	26%	6%	65

1.4 Members' Attendance

Attendance of MPAs remained low. On average, 14 Members were present at the outset and 15 at the end of the each sitting. Since the record about Members' attendance is not made public, FAFEN conducts a headcount at the start and end of each sitting. Only active participation and attendance of MPAs can make the business of the House meaningful.

In the first sitting a total of 24 Members were present at the start and 22 at the end. The first sitting also witnessed the highest number of Members' participation – 30.

Sitting No.	Members present at the Outset of the sitting	Members at the End of the sitting
First	24	22
Second	15	18
Third	7	11
Fourth	10	9
Average	14	15

1.4 Key Members' Attendance

Among key Members only the Deputy Speaker attended all the four sittings. The Speaker, the Chief Minister and the Leader of Opposition did not attend any sitting of the session. The Deputy Speaker chaired the session for two hours and 24 minutes or 97% time of the session.

Parliamentary leaders of PMLN, NP and JUI (Ideological) did not attend any of the sittings. The parliamentary leaders of ANP, BNPA, PML (Opted Opposition) and PML attended two sittings each, followed by JUI and Like Minded Group with one sitting each.

2.0 Resolutions

Through Resolutions, the House expresses an opinion, makes recommendations, or conveys a message on a specific and important issue. The House can also commend, condemn, urge or request an action by the Government. Resolutions can be moved by ministers or by Members in their private capacity.

During the 28th session, the Balochistan Assembly adopted two Resolutions that appeared on the Orders of the Day. One Resolution was moved by a single PPPP Member, while the other was moved jointly by two Independent Members, and one each from PML, PMLN and Like Minded Group. Resolutions were about sectarian killings in Quetta and the verification of voters' lists in Balochistan.

Party	Male	Female	Total
PPPP	1	0	1
PMLN	1	0	1
PML	1	0	1
Like Minded Group	1	0	1
Independent	2	0	2
Total	6	0	6

3.0 Points of Orders

Under the Assembly rules, a Member can raise a Point of Order to point out any violation of the rules and procedures or to seek enforcement of certain rules required to regulate the business of the House. The Chair is required to give a ruling on it.

During the session Members continued to use Points of Order to talk about issues of their constituencies and other provincial matters. More than two-thirds of the session time – 74% or one hour and 51 minutes - was consumed by 31 Points of Order. During the first sitting 17 Points of Order were raised.

Sitting No	Points of Order	Time Consumed by Point of Order
First	17	60
Second	6	20
Third	1	1
Fourth	7	30
Total	31	111 minutes

4.0 Themes Raised in Points of Order

The MPAs interrupted the regular proceedings of the House to raise 31 POs during the session on issues, which can be categorized in nine broader themes. The highest number of eight POs was regarding the law and order in Balochistan, followed by six each on sectarian killings and tribute to Nusrat Bhutto.

Sr. No	Theme	Independent	PPPP	BNPA	PML	ANP	JUI	Like Minded Group	Total
1	Law and Order	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	8
2	Sectarianism	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	6
3	Tribute to Nusrat Bhutto	1	2	0	0	2	1	0	6
4	Media	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
5	PPPP - PMLN Relations	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	Business of the House	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
7	NATO attacks	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
8	Smuggling	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total		2	12	3	3	4	6	1	31

5.0 Protests, Boycotts and Walkouts

The House witnessed three walkouts by a PPPP Member as the Deputy Speaker did not permit him to speak on a Point of Order.

Protest/Walkout/Boycott				
Sitting No.	Party	Reason	Time	Protest/Walkout/Boycott
First	No Protest/ Walkout /Boycott			
Second	PPPP	Deputy Speaker's permission to speak on a Point of Order	3 Minutes	Walkout
Third	PPPP	Deputy Speaker's permission to speak on a Point of Order	3 Minutes	Protest
	PPPP	Deputy Speaker's permission to speak on a Point of Order	Till the end	Walkout
Fourth	No Protest/ Walkout/Boycott			



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

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 Parliamentary 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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