

20th July 2019- A Historic Day

On 20th July 2019, it was the first time in history that elections were conducted in FATA. It was a great opportunity for the people to elect their representatives in KPK assembly. This had been possible after the merger of FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province through 25th amendment in the constitution passed in the parliament in May last year. Different political parties were part of these elections that included PTI, PMN, independents and others. There were 16 districts where the polling stations were held that started in the early morning on Saturday.

Before the creation of Pakistan, Fata was directly governed by the British through Federal Crime Law under which the people of tribe were controlled by assigned political agents of the region. After 1947, the seven agencies of the region got included in Pakistan but due to the agencies lying in the conflict region they could not join any province of the country. Hence, they were ruled by the president of the political agents. The political agents used to make rules and laws to implement them on the region and the laws of Pakistan were not applicable on them. All the important decisions were taken through Jirga system, making people of the region deprived of the basic rights. Moreover, the people of region continued to suffer severely after the invasion of Afghanistan by United States of America as militants continued to enter the region due to its proximity with the country. Soon the region was taken over by militants who began exercising control over it, resulting in bloodshed and terrorism. After the year of 2007, Pakistan Army conducted various operations in the region like Zarb-e-Azb and others various operations in order to combat terrorism and restore peace in the region. In 2017 the federal government decided to merge FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by making amendments to the FBR law and introducing certain reforms to complete the procedure of merger. Therefore, on 20th July first ever election took place to give people their rights and responsibilities.

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan, Independent candidates bagged six seats, the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf bagged five seats, and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl three seats, Jamat-e-Islami gained one seat and the JUI-F clinched three seats and the Awami National Party also won a seat. A total 1896 polling stations were created across the tribal districts out of

which 450 polling stations were declared sensitive. Therefore, the Security forces were arranged inside and outside the highly sensitive polling stations in order to avoid any inconvenience.

There were 282 candidates out of 1896 voters that were competing for the 16 general seats that included Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf, JUI-F, Awami National Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan People's Party and Independents. Along with this, two women also contested the provincial elections in the tribal area of the KPK. One was Naheed Afridi competing from the Awami National Party at PK106. There were total 148,470 voters in which 65,652 votes were from women. On the other hand, Malasa Bibi was competing from Jamaat-e-Islami at PK109. There were total 187,844 voters in which 82,569 were women.

In a nut shell, this has been the first time that women and minorities in such large number came out to the polling stations and casted their vote which itself is a huge success. If women also participate in such activities it will lead our country towards progress and development. In addition to this, the security measures were properly taken care of due to which the elections could peacefully occur. The Prime Minister gave this credit to Pakistan Army for ensuring that no fraud or any in appropriate act happened on the day of election.

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