

The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And
Transparency - PILDAT

What Do the Voters Think?

Report of the Pre-Election Countrywide Public Opinion Poll

October 4, 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An independent nation-wide opinion poll has been released today by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency - PILDAT, a non-partisan, independent organisation working to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. The survey was carried out by Pakistan's leading opinion and marketing research company, Gallup Pakistan, affiliated with Gallup International. The research team was supervised by a notable Pakistani pollster Bilal Hassan Khan who also prepared the research design, sampling design and the questionnaire for the study.

The survey reveals that despite a low key political campaign, a large number of Pakistani voters intend to cast their ballot. But a majority of them are still holding their judgment on whether the elections will be conducted fairly. While views on the issue are sharply divided, a simple majority of 47% wishes that exiled politicians, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif should have been part of the electoral contest. On the other hand, a majority supports the power acquired by President Pervez Musharraf to dismiss the future Prime Minister in case of misconduct. Interestingly, 77% of the electorate supports that electoral contest should be restricted to those holding a college degree when only 2.5% of Pakistanis of the adult population are college graduates.

Despite being a male dominated society, a majority of men, 60%, favour the participation of women in electoral contests. The comparable figure is even higher among women, 81% of whom support the participation of their gender in the political arena.

Pakistan is a vastly populated country with a population exceeding 140 million. According to the Election Commission there are over 72 million registered voters in the country. The number of voters has been enhanced by the extension of voting rights to the age of 18 instead of 21 which was the rule in previous elections. However, survey data suggests that nearly half (51%) of the population in the age group 18-21 is either not registered to vote or does not know about their status. Coincidentally, only 53% of the persons in this group say they have a

National Identification Card. These two limitations may come up as an irritant on the election day.

Nearly one quarter of Pakistani adults claim partisan association with a political party, but only 9% say they are formally members of the country's burgeoning count of political organisations. It is ironic, although not surprising in view of similar attitudes across the world, that while most citizens intend to cast their vote for one or another party, they are sceptical about their integrity and competence. Only 30% of those polled said they trusted political parties and barely 15% believe that political parties practice democracy in their internal functioning. In contrast, the military enjoys a higher level of trust as an institution, as 73% of those polled say they have high level of trust in it. This gives an unfair advantage to the armed forces when they decide to deny power to political parties or share it with them.

Placed in this context the voters express a certain sense of resignation with the emerging rules of the game, in which the election of the parliament, the choice of the Prime Minister and their subsequent functioning would be overseen by the civil and military bureaucracy.

Notwithstanding the popular deference to the establishment and the changes in the rules of the game, the popular voting pattern continues to stay along familiar lines. Peoples Party and Muslim League are the two big players. Since Muslim League is divided into two major factions, PML(N) and PML(Q), election 2002 has become a three way race between PPP, PML(N) and PML(Q).

As of late September, 25% of the voters at the national level expressed their preference for PPP followed by PML(N), favoured by 19%, PML(Q), favoured by 14% and MMA, the alliance of religious parties, by 5%. But as any student of Pakistan electoral history would know, the proportions of voter preference at a nation-wide level do not translate into a comparable prospect for share in the legislature. The legislature comprises 272 contests distributed over four provinces. Hence the final outcome especially in a multi-polar race would be determined by alliances and strategic concentration of votes.

As of now, the contests in Sindh are quite predictable since MQM enjoys a clear edge at the city wide level in Karachi and PPP in the interior of Sindh. But the contests in Punjab and NWFP are very unpredictable. PML (N) enjoys an edge over both PPP and PML (Q) in

Urban Punjab. On the other hand the three score neck and neck in rural Punjab. The strategic battleground of Rural Punjab is the single largest turf in the entire game. It accounts for nearly 40% of the entire electorate. The situation in NWFP is equally murky: In addition to PPP and PML (N), MMA, ANP and PML (Q) are strongly poised in the race. Balochistan is a maverick in the elections. The sparsely populated province is spread over more than half of the country's land mass but accounts for less than 5% of the electorate. And yet the electoral contest here is generally more fragmented than anywhere else in the country. Apparently, the PML (Q) has notable presence here in addition to the traditional regional contestants.

Finally, and quite unique to this particular election, a cricket hero and an otherwise success story, Imran Khan, enjoys considerable popular appeal as 7% of those polled wish to see him as their future Prime Minister. But barely 1% say they would vote for his party in the forthcoming elections. Furthermore some 12% believe he might find his way to the top slot. On the other hand a slightly higher number, 17%, believe that Mian Azhar who has been described as the head of the so-called 'Kings party' is more likely to assume that position.

All in all the Election 2002 remains unpredictable in the outcome on the election day on October 10 and the process that unfolds thereafter. But do not be surprised if the Peoples Party emerges ahead of others and achieves a near majority. The polling data bears strong resemblance to this situation on the eve of 1988 elections.

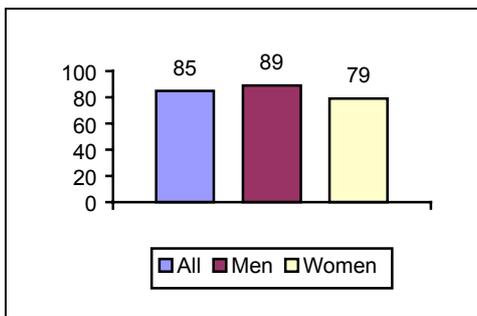
EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT (85%) OF PAKISTANI ADULTS CLAIM THEY INTEND TO VOTE

But past experience suggests that barely half as many actually turn out to vote

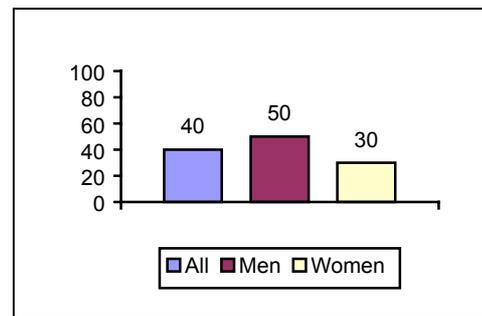
In response to the question: **“Do you intend to vote in the forthcoming elections”**, 85% of the respondents gave a yes answer. But past experience with similar surveys and actual election turnout suggests that barely half as many actually cast their ballot.

The claimed intention to vote was higher among men (89%) compared to women (79%).

Claimed Intention to Vote



Estimated Average Turn-out during the past four elections (1988-97)



ONLY 77% OF THE ELIGIBLE ARE SURE THEY ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE. 10% SAY THEY ARE NOT. 13% DO NOT KNOW

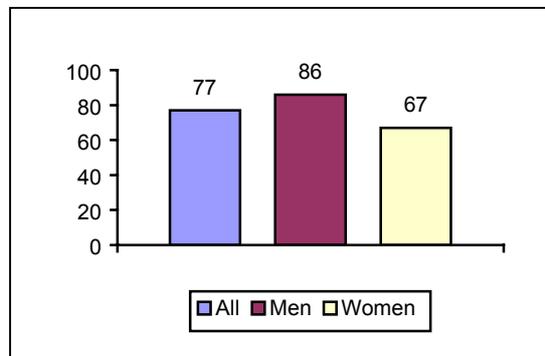
Only 77% of the respondents, all of whom were over the age of 18 years and hence eligible to vote said they were sure they had been registered to vote; 10% said they were not registered; while the remaining 13% were unsure of whether they had been registered.

Notably the ratio of registered voters is only 49% of the respondents in age group 18-21. It is also considerably lower among women (67%) than men (86%).

Question: *Are you registered to vote or is your name included in the electoral list of your area?*

<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	
Yes	77%
No	10%
Don't know/No Response	13%

Ratio of Adults who are Registered to Vote



EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT (85%) CLAIM THEY HAVE A NATIONAL ID CARD.

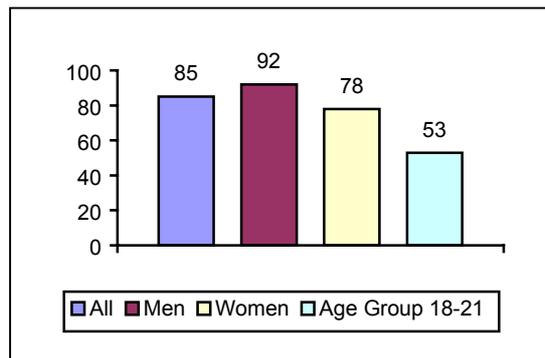
But figure is only 53% among those under the age of 22

According to the survey, nearly 85% of all adults claim they have a national ID Card. The ratio is higher among men among whom 92% claim they have their NID; the comparable figure for women is 78%.

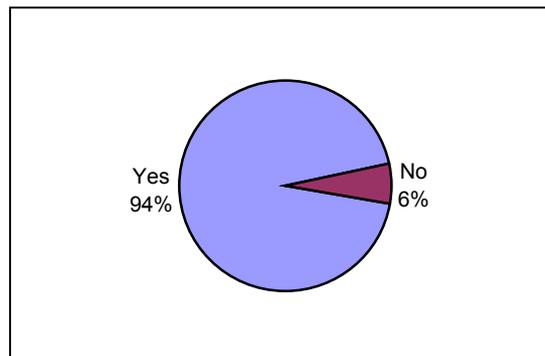
But the proportion of having an NID is notably lower among those between the ages of 18-21. It is only 53% in that group.

However the survey further reveals that among those who are registered to vote nearly 94% also have a national ID card.

Ratio of Adults who claim they have National ID Card



Percent of Registered Voters Who say they have a National ID Card



UNEMPLOYMENT RANKED AS TOP MOST ISSUE BY VOTERS OF ELECTION 2002

Poverty, Inflation and Illiteracy rank as the 2nd, 3rd and 4th most important issues

The respondents were asked to rank the most important current issue in the perspective of upcoming elections. Unemployment was ranked on top (53%) followed by Poverty (12%), Inflation (12%) and Illiteracy (6%).

***Question:** How important are the following in terms of priorities for the incoming National Assembly Elections in October? Rank in order of priority.*

	<i>Percent who rank the following as most important (The list was provided)</i>
Unemployment	53%
Poverty	12%
Inflation	10%
Illiteracy	6%
Corruption	4%
National Development	3%
National Defence	3%
Local Development	2%
Law and Order	2%
Sectarian Violence	2%
Over-population	1%

SHARED IDEOLOGY AND PARTY ARE CLAIMED TO BE KEY DRIVERS FOR VOTERS CHOICE

Personal Acquaintance and Interests are also described as Very Important

The respondents were provided a list of various motivations to vote and asked how much importance they attached to them. Shared ideology and party identification were identified as important by 64% and 49% respectively. Personal acquaintance (52%) and the promise of being helpful in day-to-day affairs (54%) were also seen to be important drivers to vote.

***Question:** How important was each of the following reasons while deciding to vote for a particular candidate in your national assembly constituency in the 1997 National assembly elections?.*

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	
	Important	Not so important
Shared Ideas	64%	36%
Helpful in day to day affairs	44%	54%
Promised to return the favour	39%	61%
Belongs to “my” party	49%	51%
Know him/her personally	52%	48%
Comes from my tribe/community	29%	71%

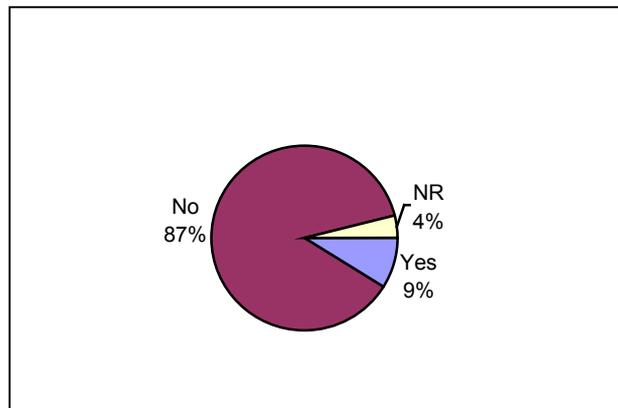
ONLY 9% OF VOTERS CLAIM THEY ARE MEMBERS OF A POLITICAL PARTY

Among the remaining 20% claim strong association whereas 80% do not claim that either

The survey shows that only 9% of the adult population claim membership in a political party. Another 20% of the remaining say even though they are not members they have strong or mild association with a political party. Thus approximately 1 in 4 adults claim a specific party membership or association. These people are generally inclined to vote for that party.

Question: *Are you a member of a political party?*

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Yes	9%
No	87%
No response	4%



SEVENTY PER CENT (70%) SUPPORT PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ELECTIONS

But views of Men and Women are sharply divided along gender lines

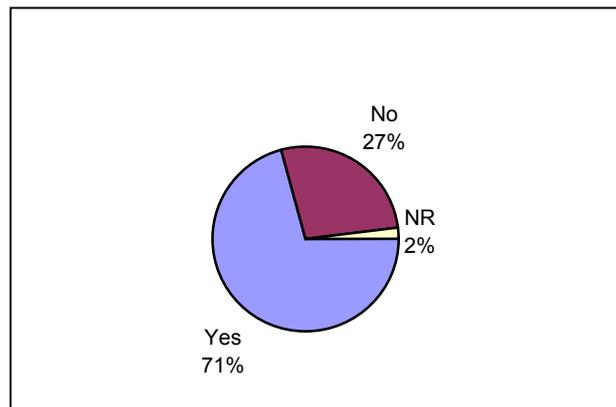
The respondents were asked: **“Do you support that women should run for political office?”** 70% favoured it, 28% opposed and 2% did not give any response.

The favourable view was higher among women (81%) than men (60%).

The respondents were further asked: **“If two candidates were otherwise alike, who would you prefer to vote for: a man, a woman or would you be indifferent?”** Views were sharply divided between men and women as 59% of men and 53% of women said they would vote for their own gender. Nevertheless 14% of men and 19% of women said they would vote for the other gender. The remaining or only one-quarter of sample said they did not care about the gender.

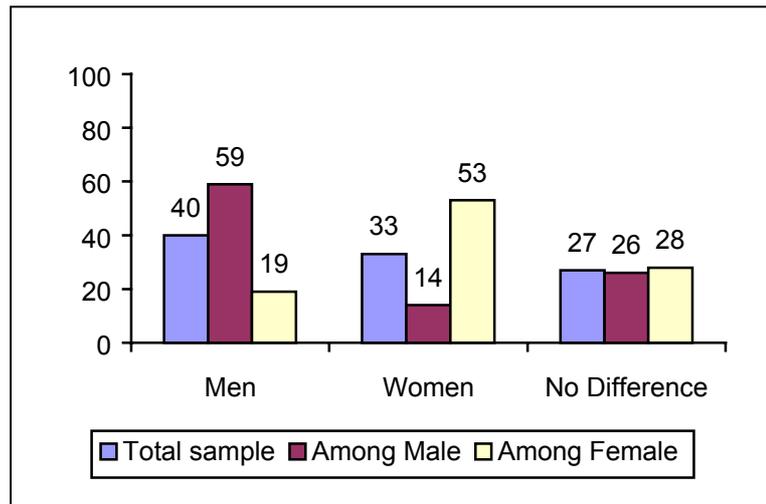
Question: Do you support that women should run for political office?

<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	
Yes	70%
No	27%
No response	2%



Question: *If there are two candidates in an election who are otherwise alike, but one is a man and the other is a woman, which of them would you be more likely to vote for.....or would it make no difference to you?*

	<i>Percent of Respondents among</i>		
	Would vote for a man	Would vote for a woman	Makes no difference
Among Total Sample	40%	33%	27%
Among Male respondents	59%	14%	26%
Among Female respondents	19%	53%	28%



In addition to word of mouth

HANDBILLS AND POSTERS ARE IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Friends/Relatives	58%
Posters/Banners	57%
Handbills	52%
TV	52%
Newspapers	44%
Radio	37%

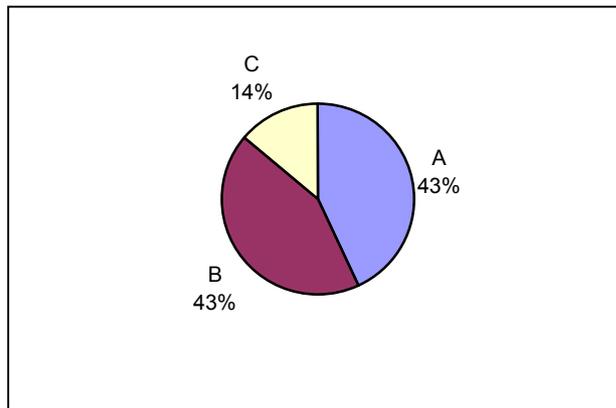
It is a good news for the printing industry that handbills and posters as well as banners are treated by voters as an important source of information on election candidates. Notably television and radio have also appeared as a source of information which, fairness apart, shows higher coverage of the electoral campaign by electronic media. Newspapers are treated as important source of information by 44%, a figure which nearly corresponds with the literacy level in the country.

**21% ARE HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FAIRNESS OF POLLS,
22% ARE MILDLY OPTIMISTIC, 14% ARE PESSIMISTIC. 43% ARE
UNSURE ON THE FAIRNESS ISSUE**

Question: *How fair do you think upcoming October National Assembly elections will be?*

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Very fair	21%
Somewhat fair	22%
Somewhat unfair	8%
Very unfair	6%
Don't know	43%

Views are divided on the fairness of forthcoming polls: 21% are highly optimistic that polls will be fair, 22% are mildly optimistic. 14% hold reservations on the fairness issue. The remaining 43% say they do not yet know. Perhaps they would wait to make their judgment after the event.



- A- Expect complete or some degree of fairness
- B- Can not make a judgment
- C- Expect complete or some degree of unfairness

**MORE THAN HALF FEEL THE PRESSURE OF PERSUASION BY
LANDLORDS AND PARTY ACTIVISTS. BUT FEW FEEL A
PRESSURE FROM THE GOVERNMENT**

Sixty-two percent (62%) of the respondents say they feel a pressure from political parties and their activists to vote in their favour. Similarly 56% say they feel a pressure from landlords, and 19% say they feel a pressure from their employer. But interestingly very few, only 2%, mention any direct pressure from the Government or its institutions.

Question: In your view are there pressures from any of the following to vote for a particular party or candidate?

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	
	Yes	No
Landlord	56%	44%
Political Party or Activist	62%	38%
Employer	19%	81%
Government institution	2%	98%

**ONLY 6% SAY THEY HAVE BEEN PROMISED A “GIFT” IN
RETURN FOR THEIR VOTE. MAJORITY OF 87% DISOWN ANY
SUCH OFFERS**

The respondents were further asked: **“Has anyone promised you a gift or any other benefit in return for your vote?”** Only 6% answered in the affirmative. The majority, 87%, disowned it and 7% did not give an answer.

MAJORITY OF VOTERS DO NOT TRUST POLITICAL PARTIES PRACTICE DEMOCRACY IN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

It is somewhat ironic that while most of the respondents choose to vote for political parties, they do not hold them in high regard. They place low level of trust in them: Only 40% say they have high or mild level of trust in political parties, as opposed to 73% for the military. Furthermore only 15% believe that political parties practice democracy in their own internal functioning. One would hope that political parties would focus on how to redress the rightly or wrongly held mistrust in their integrity and competence to address national issue.

Question: How much trust do you have in the following institutions?

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>		
	High or mild trust	High or mild distrust	No Response
Political Parties	30%	50%	20%
Military	73%	15%	12%
Judiciary	51%	31%	18%
Government Officials	31%	48%	21%
Police	19%	60%	21%

Question: In your opinion, are the majority of political parties internally democratic?

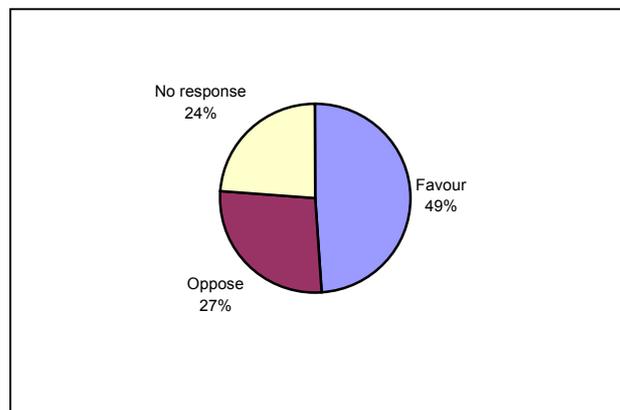
	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Yes	15%
No	38%
Do not know / NR	47%

MAJORITY SUPPORTS PRESIDENTIAL POWER TO DISMISS THE PRIME MINISTER

It appears that voters are by and large reconciled to or favour the presidential power to dismiss the Prime Minister.

Question: *Should the President have or not have the authority to dismiss the Prime Minister?*

<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	
Should have	49%
Should not	27%
No response	24%



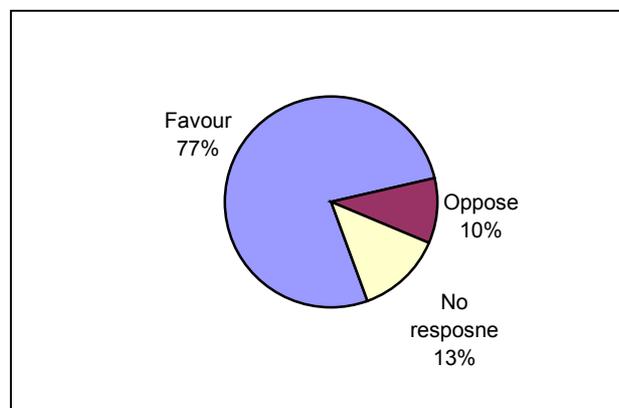
77% FAVOUR “GRADUATION” REQUIREMENT FOR ELECTION CANDIDATES

A majority of respondents (77%) favoured the requirement that candidates in the forthcoming elections should hold a College Degree (BA). It is interesting to find such high level of support for this law a country where only 2.5% of the population over the age of 10 holds a college (Bachelors) degree.

Question: *Do you support or oppose the law that election candidates must hold a college (BA) degree?*

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Favour	77%
Oppose	10%
No Response	13%

Views on the Law that Election Candidates must Hold a College (BA) Degree



SHARPLY DIVIDED VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL ROLE OF EXILED POLITICIANS: 47% FAVOUR A ROLE FOR THEM, 41% OPPOSE, 12% DID NOT GIVE A VIEW

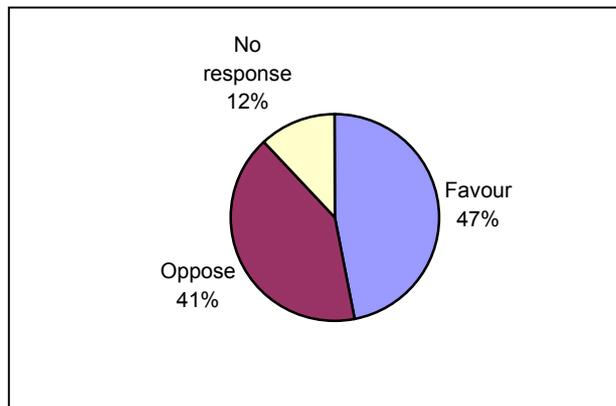
Views are sharply divided on the role of exiled politicians. The respondents were asked: **“Should the exiled politicians be allowed to return to Pakistan and contest the forthcoming elections?”** No names were however mentioned in the question.

47% favoured a role for the exiled politicians, while 41% opposed and the remaining 12% did not give a view.

***Question:** Should the exiled politicians be allowed to return to Pakistan and contest the forthcoming elections?*

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Yes	47%
No	41%
No Response	12%

Views on the Role of Exiled Politicians



**ELECTORAL CONTEST REMAINS UNPREDICTABLE BUT
PEOPLES PARTY EMERGES AS FRONT RUNNER IN VOTER
PREFERENCES FOLLOWED BY PML (N), PML (Q) AND MMA IN
THAT ORDER**

Performance at Elections will however be determined by alliances and strategic
geographic concentration of votes

Responding to a question on voter preferences in the forthcoming elections, 15% said they did not intend to vote. Among those who said they intended to vote, 10% said they had not decided while 12% were unable to name the party for which they would vote. That leaves 78% of the intending voters, who are nationally distributed as below. *Since this is a nationwide distribution of voter preferences, and the actual elections are held at the local constituency level, the national distribution of voter preference is not a predictor of the all Pakistan electoral contest. The readers may please note that while consulting the following table.*

NATION-WIDE VOTER PREFERENCE FOR ELECTION 2002

	<i>Percent of Respondents in a national survey of adults who say they favour the following party in Election 2002</i>	<i>Ratio among the decided voters</i>
Peoples Party	25%	32
PML(N)	19%	24
PML(Q)	14%	18
MMA	5%	6
MQM	2%	3
ANP	2%	3
Millar Party	2%	3
Tehrik-i-Insaf	1%	1
Others	4%	5
Independents	4%	5
Unable to name a party	12%	-
Undecided	10%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%

**NATIONAL VOTER PREFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS
ELECTION OUTCOME PREDICTIONS IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.
THERE IS NO DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATION-WIDE VOTER
PREFERENCE AND PROBABLE SHARE IN SEATS WON IN THE
ELECTORAL CONTEST.**

Note: Imran Khan scores high (7%) in the question on preferences for Prime minister. But his party scores much less on the party preferences question.

PREFERENCE FOR FUTURE PRIME MINISTER SHOWS BENAZIR BHUTTO ON TOP (21%) FOLLOWED BY NAWAZ SHARIF (14%), MIAN AZHAR (8%), IMRAN KHAN (7%) AND QAZI HUSSAIN AHMAD (5%)

However if the Choice is restricted to those contesting the forthcoming elections and the question is worded differently, Main Azhar tops the list

The question on the future Prime Minister was worded in two different ways: “Who would you like to see as the future Prime Minister? and “who do you think will become the next Prime Minister?”. Interestingly there is vast difference in the responses to the two questions. In each case a list of possible contenders was provided.

Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif topped the list of desirable Prime Ministers. But Mian Azhar was seen as the most probable person to make his way to the top slot. Of course both Benazir and Nawaz Sharif are not contesting the forthcoming elections and are hence out of the race.

OPTION A

Question: *Who should be the next Prime Minister of the country?*
(Following list was provided on a round card)

Benazir Bhutto	21%
Nawaz Sharif	14%
Mian Azhar	8%
Imran Khan	7%
Qazi Hussain Ahmed	5%
Ijaz ul Haq	3%
Chaudry Shujaat	1%
Fakar Imam	1%
Others	6%
No Response	34%

OPTION B

Question: *In your opinion who would be elected as the Prime Minister after 2002 Elections?*

(Following list was provided on a round card)

Mian Azhar	17%
Imran Khan	12%
Amin Fahim	12%
Farooq Leghari	6%
Raja Zafar ul Haq	2%
Others	13%
No response	38%

**COMMENTARY ON THE
ELECTORAL PROSPECTS OF IMPORTANT
POLITICAL PARTIES IN
PAKISTAN'S ELECTIONS 2002**

PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP)

PPP appears to be the front runner for the following reasons:

- It does very well in Rural Sindh.
- In Punjab it is neck and neck with PML(N) and PML(Q).
- Although not dominant, it appears to be the single largest voter preference in NWFP, competing with PML(N), MMA, ANP and PML(Q). The effect of PPP (Sherpao) is however uncertain.

PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - PML(N)

PML (N) is the single largest voter preference in Punjab. But it runs neck and neck with PPP and closely followed by PML (Q). Thus most races are likely to be unpredictable. A close three-way distribution of votes can produce unpredictable results. Punjab accounts for more than half of all National Assembly seats and PML (N) fortunes are principally staked here.

PML (N) is also a strong contender in NWFP, although noticeably behind PPP. But the electoral outcome in NWFP remains highly unpredictable because of fragmentation of voters between the two groups of PPP, MMA, PML (N), ANP and PML (Q).

Not many voters have left PML since the last polls in 1997. But its fragmentation into two major factions is likely to critically affect the outcome of this election in both Punjab and NWFP.

PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - PML (Q)

During the last four weeks and as the election date progressed, PML (Q) seems to have gained in terms of voter preference. From being well under 10% it now stands at around 14% and has emerged as the third largest group after PPP and PML (N). The change is possibly explained by the fact that PML (Q) has strong constituency level candidates. If the election campaign had focused around charismatic national leaders and their symbolic appeal, constituency candidates of PML (Q) would be over shadowed. Events did not take that turn. This seems to have provided an advantage to PML (Q). Nevertheless the prospects of its winning any sizeable share in the next parliament is unpredictable due to the three way division of votes between PPP, PML (N) and PML (Q).

MUTTAHIDA MAJLIS-E-AMAL - MMA

MMA, comprising an alliance of religious parties, is the fourth largest voter preference in the country. It is particularly strong in NWFP where it ranks number 3 on a province-wide basis. It is also strong in Balochistan. But once again its prospect of converting voter preference into winning seats to the National Assembly depends on whether and where its support base is sufficiently concentrated to win a seat either on its own strength or through skilful seat adjustments with other contenders. Its prospects outside NWFP and Balochistan are not very strong.

MUTTAHIDDA QAUMI MOVEMENT - MQM

From all appearances and survey findings MQM enjoys a comfortable advantage in Urban Sindh, specifically Karachi. It faces some challenge from MMA, PPP and PML (N) but still the prospects of its overwhelming success in Karachi are very high.

AWAMI NATIONAL PARTY - ANP

The survey data does not reflect a substantial province-wide preference for ANP. On an all province level it lags behind PPP, MMA and PML (N). However its voter preference can still be translated into winning seats through adjustments with other political parties and if the votes were strategically concentrated in some constituencies.

PAKISTAN TEHRIK-I-INSAF - PTI

PTI is faced with an odd situation. Its leader Imran Khan is favoured by nearly 7% of those polled as the next Prime Minister of the country, but only 1% support his candidates at the constituency level. Notwithstanding the low level of support for his party, some 12% of the voters expect that he may still find his way up on the top slot of the Prime Minister.

It appears that despite his personal standing, Imran Khan's political party might not score well at the polls.

MILLAT PARTY - MP

The Millat Party headed by former President Farooq Leghari enjoys a voter preference of 2%. But many more, 6%, believe that he might become the next Prime Minister.

Apparently the voters are going along with the widely held view of expecting a fragmented or hung parliament, under the influence of the President. Should that happen, the voter believes that the future Prime Minister might not necessarily come from the larger groups in the Parliament.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

About the survey

The survey was conducted among a highly scientific sample comprising of 2953 adult men and women chosen from nearly 100 villages and 50 urban locations of all the four provinces of Pakistan.

The choice of the sample was strictly on the basis of the probability of various provinces in the Census distribution of the population. The rural and urban voters also came out in the same ratio as their share in the population. Similarly voters with respect to the age were in the same ratio as their share in those eligible to vote. The gender distribution also corresponded with their census share. Thus the sample was highly represented in most of the population proportion, age 18 years and above.

The fieldwork was conducted face to face by a team of men and women during September 18-28, 2002. The error margin for the national sample is highly likely to be $\pm 3\%$ at 95% confidence level.

Sample: National probability sample, Rural and Urban, covering all the four provinces. (Except Fata, Chitral and Kohistan)

Sample Method: Multi-stage area probability sample*

Sample Size: 2953 men and women

<i>Distribution of the sample</i>	
Locality	Percent of Sample
Rural	67%
Urban	33%
Gender	
Male	52%
Female	48%
Provinces	
Punjab* (Including Islamabad)	58%
Sindh	23%
NWFP	14%
Balochsitan	5%

* Kish method was used to select the respondents 18 years and above within the randomly selected household. The right hand method was used to select every third household in the localities selected through area probability sample.