

Background

Majlis-e-Shura, the Parliament of Pakistan, consists of the President and two Houses, known respectively as the National Assembly and the Senate. The Senate was constituted for the first time in 1973 under Article 50 of the Constitution of Pakistan that stipulates a bi-cameral Parliament.

Purpose and Role of the Senate

The main purpose for the creation of the Senate of Pakistan was to give equal representation to all units of the federation. There is equal provincial membership in the Senate that balances the provincial inequality in the National Assembly where the number of seats is determined based on population size.

The role of the Senate is to promote national cohesion and harmony and to alleviate fears of the smaller provinces regarding domination by any one province because of its majority in the National Assembly.

Composition of the Senate

The Senate of Pakistan consists of one hundred and four members elected indirectly by the Members of the National Assembly and the Members of the Provincial Assemblies:

- a) Each of the four Provincial Assemblies elect fourteen Senators on general seats, four women, four technocrats including Ulema (religious scholars) and one on seat reserved for non-Muslims;
- b) The Members of the National Assembly from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs) elects eight Senators to represent FATAs;
- c) All Members of National Assembly elect two Senators on general seats, one woman and one technocrat or Alim to represent the Federal Capital.

Figure 1: General and reserved Senate seats by province

Federating Unit	General Seats	Seats reserved for Women	Seats reserved for Technocrats including Ulema	Seats reserved for non-Muslims	Total
Punjab	14	4	4	1	23
Sindh	14	4	4	1	23
KPK	14	4	4	1	23
Baluchistan	14	4	4	1	23
FATA	8				8
Islamabad	2	1	1		4
Total	66	17	17	4	104

Earlier, non-Muslims did not have reserved seats in the Senate. However, under 18th Amendment to the Constitution, four seats for non-Muslims have been reserved to give appropriate representation

to non-Muslims in the Senate. These seats have been filled for the first time in the March 2012 election to the Senate.

The term of Senators is six years with half of the seats being up for election every three years. Whereas the President of Pakistan has the power to dissolve the National Assembly, the Senate cannot be dissolved.

Method of election

The Election Commission is responsible for the conduct of the Senate elections. For this purpose the Returning Officers and Polling Officers are appointed by the Election Commission from amongst its senior officers.

The election to the Senate is held in accordance with the Proportional Representation (PR) system by means of single transferable vote (STV). Counting of votes under STV system is complex and complicated. Therefore, ECP in collaboration with IFES conducted a four day training workshop in January 2012 for 28 officers of the ECP to provide them the required skill for the conduct of the elections and to familiarize them with the counting process.

Qualifications for being member

A person seeking election to the Senate must be a citizen of Pakistan, not less than thirty years of age and be registered as a voter in the Province or Area (Federal Capital or FATAs) from which he/she is seeking election. Those seeking election on seats reserved for Technocrats and Ulema should, in addition to the above, have at least sixteen years of education and twenty years of experience including achievements at national or international level.

Chairman and Deputy Chairman

After the Senate has been duly constituted and members taken oath, the members elect a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman from amongst themselves at its first session. When the office of Chairman or Deputy Chairman becomes vacant, the Senate elects another member as Chairman or, as the case may be, Deputy Chairman.

Legislative Powers

A Bill has to be passed by both the National Assembly and the Senate before it can be presented to the President for assent, at which time it becomes law. Bills can originate in either of the Houses, except money bills which can originate in the Lower House only. The Senate can make recommendations on budgetary proposals after discussion but cannot vote on them.

Senate Elections 2012

The term of half of the 100 members of the Senate expired on 11 March 2012. To fill in the seats being vacated by 50 senators who completed their 6 year tenure and four seats reserved for non-Muslims under the 18th Constitutional Amendment, election for the Senate was held on 2nd March, 2012. Nine candidates returned unopposed.

Figure 2: Returned candidates on 2 March 2012

Province/Area	General seats	Seats reserved for Women	Seats reserved for Technocrats/Ulema	Seats reserved for non-Muslims
Federal Capital	1	-	1	-
Punjab	-	2	2	1
Sindh	-	-	2	-

The polling for of the remaining 45 seats was held at Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. Most of the seats were won by political parties as expected. However, in Punjab PPP lost one seat to an independent candidate. This candidate belonged to PML-N but the party did not award him ticket so his nomination paper was rejected by the Returning Officer on this ground. His appeal was allowed by the Election Commission and he contested election as an independent candidate.

Figure 3: Seats obtained by the political parties and independents in the March 2012 election

Party	Federal Capital	FATAs	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Balochistan	Total
PPP	1	-	3	7	4	4	19
PML-N	-	-	7	-	1	-	8
ANP	-	-	-	-	6	1	7
PML-Q	1	-	1	-	-	2	4
MQM	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
JUI-F	-	-	-	-	1	3	4
BNP-Awami	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
PML-F	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Independents	-	4	1	-	-	-	5

After the 2012 Senate election Pakistan Peoples Party emerged as the largest party in the Senate having 41 Senators in the Senate (22 existing and 19 newly elected). The ruling party, along with its coalition partners, now has two-third majority in the Senate. Most of the independents traditionally go with the ruling party.

Figure 4: Final party position in 2012 Senate

Party	Existing Senators	New Senators	Total Senators
PPP	22	19	41
PML-N	6	8	14
ANP	5	7	12
MQM	3	4	7
JUI-F	3	4	7
PML-Q	1	4	5
BNP-A	2	2	4
NP	1	0	1
PML-F	0	1	1
Independents	7	5	12
Total	50	54	104

Senate in 2009 and in 2012

A major shift in strength of some of the political parties ensued as a result of the 2012 Senate election compared to the previous elections in 2009.

Figure 5: Comparative party position in Senate 2012 versus 2009

Party	Seats in 2009 Senate	Seats in 2012 Senate	Difference
PPP	27	41	+14
PML-N	7	14	+7
PML-Q	21	5	-16
MQM	6	7	+1
ANP	6	12	+6
JUI-F	4	7	+3
BNP-Awami	2	4	+2
MMA (JUI-F & JI)	9	-	-9
PML-F	1	1	-
JWP	1	-	-1
PKMAP	1	-	-1
PPP-Sherpao	1	-	-1
National Party	1	1	-
Independents	13	12	-1

Website of the Senate: www.senate.gov.pk

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