

PRAP Canada Projections for 2008 NWFP Provincial Elections

Federal and provincial elections in February 2008 are pivotal for the future of democratic process in Pakistan. The imposition of emergency in November 2007 and later the postponement of elections from January 8th to February 18 has encouraged the uncertainty regarding the outcome of these elections. Nevertheless people living in NWFP, FATA and Baluchistan are anxiously waiting for the results of these elections because of the growing spread of extremism, armed conflicts and lawlessness in these regions. Capitalizing on growing unrest in the masses, political parties and their candidates are making Herculean and exaggerated promises to secure more votes. A few political parties are predicting that their parties will sweep the elections.

PRAP Canada an independent think tank focusing on South and Central Asia has felt the need to provide objective analysis of the election process and relative strength of different parties in NWFP. For this purpose a two weeks long study that included random surveys, examination of previous election results, expert analysis on current voters needs and expectations was concluded in Peshawar. Based on this study PRAP Canada has projected the outcome of the Provincial Elections in NWFP. It should be noted that these projections are not totally scientific as logistical, security and financial constrains made it difficult for PRAP Canada to do a more in-depth analysis. PRAP Canada also categorically states that the purpose of this study is in no way to influence the outcome of the elections that's why constituency wise projections are omitted from this study. It should also be noted that these projections are based on the supposition that there will be no extraordinary Election Day rigging. Pre poll rigging/favoritism is already taken in to account in these projections.

For analysis purpose NWFP has been divided into three regions. These includes

- 1) Peshawar Valley
- 2) Southern Region
- 3) Mountain Region

Peshawar Valley:

Peshawar valley has a total of 36 provincial assembly seats, which includes Peshawar (11), Nowshera (5), Charsada (6), Mardan (8) and Swabi (6). In 2002 MMA candidates swept this entire area. It is widely anticipated that MMA will not be that fortunate this time around as they have lost considerable amount of credibility in their previous tenure. However reversal of fortune doesn't mean that MMA will be totally annihilated form the Peshawar valley. They still have several candidates who are very popular in their constituencies and are more experienced and resourceful this time around. It is also worth mentioning that



MMA relies heavily on people to people networks incorporating religious institutions such as mosques, madrasas etc and avoid over emphasis on billboards and overt advertisements. This different style of campaigning should not be confused with lack of preparation on their behalf.

ANP and PPP seem to be the biggest beneficiaries of MMA's drop in popularity in the Peshawar valley. However none of these parties will sweep Peshawar valley like MMA did in 2002. The reason is that no party has created a genuine momentum that influences the entire region. Instead parties have focused on constituency politics by nominating resourceful candidates. The death of Benazir Bhutto might prove beneficial for PPP candidates in Peshawar city and Mardan district but still this tragic event will not create an overwhelming majority for PPP in Peshawar valley.

PRAP's projections break down for Peshawar Valley is

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
ANP	12	33.33
PPP	8	22.22
MMA	7	19.44
PPP (S)	4	11.11
PML (Q) & Independents	4	11.11
PML (N)	1	2.78
Total	36	100

According to our projection ANP will gain most number of seats in Peshawar valley. Their best performance is projected to be in Swabi district where they are projected to gain 50% of the seats followed by 40% seat in Nowshera and 36% in Peshawar. ANP might under- perform in Charsada and Mardan.

PPP is expected to do well in Peshawar and Mardan. PPP (S) is expected to retain some of its seats in Charsada while MMA will also retain some of its seats in Peshawar, Mardan and Charsada.

Southern Region:

Southern region consists of a total of 20 seats. This includes Kohat (3), Karak (2), Hangu (2), DI Khan (5), Tank (1), Bannu (4), Lakhi (3). In 2002 Elections MMA was the majority party from this region. However this time around there are no visible signs that any political party is ahead in this region. Unfortunately for PPP Benazir Bhutto was killed before she could visit these southern districts. Due to logistical and deteriorating security reasons ANP and PML (N) leadership were also not able to mobilize the masses in these districts. As a result most notables and traditional vote getters are running as independents. PRAP Canada estimates that up to 35% of the seats will be won by independents in this region.



These independents will be critical in formation of a new government in the province.

People party enjoys considerable support in DI Khan city and is likely to emerge as the biggest party in the city. MMA will hold on to some seats in Bannu. ANP might be a net loser in this elections in this region as two of its elected MPA's in the previous assembly and its former provincial general secretary are now running on different tickets.

Following is PRAP's projection for this region

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
Independents	7	35
PPP	4	20
MMA	4	20
PPP (S)	2	10
ANP	2	10
PML (N)	1	5
Total	20	100

PPP (S) has no mass following in this region yet the leaders of the party has selected at least three candidates who are traditional winners in their constituencies. It is pertinent to note that many PML (Q) candidates and some individuals previously elected on MMA tickets are now running on independent tickets.

Mountain Region:

This region constitutes of Hazara division and Malakand division. It has a total of 43 seats in the provincial assembly. Hazara division is the most peaceful part of the province while Malakand division is the most restless. Hazara division has a total of 20 seats. These include Abbotabad (5), Haripur (4), Manshera (6), Battagram (2) and Kohistan (3). Malakand Division has 23 seats that include Bunair (3), Swat (7), Sangla (2), Chitral (2), upper Dir (3), Lower Dir, (4) and Malakand agency (2).

Two of the biggest parties of the Peshawar Valley, ANP and PPP are at their weakest in Hazara division. ANP is not expected to win any of the 20 seats in the district while People's party is expected to get no more than 2. PML (N) is expected to make a come back and dominate Abbotabad, and Haripur. PML (Q) is expected to retain some seats in Manshera while MMA will also retain some seats especially in Battagram and Kohistan. Some independents are also projected to win in Haripur and Manshera.

The break down for Hazara division is projected as

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
PML (N)	6	30
PML (Q)	4	20
MMA	4	20
Independents	4	20
PPP	2	10
Total	20	100

PML (N) has a real momentum going in the lower districts of the Hazara division, but a late decision to enter the election race has limited the success rate. Unlike other districts many PML (Q) candidates in Hazara division are confident to run for elections using their party name. PML (Q) and MMA are both expected to retain some of their seats.

Unlike Hazara division, Malakand division has seen armed conflicts, anarchy and in some areas total breakdown of civil order in the last few months. People are worried about their day-to-day existence and the election process is not necessarily their top propriety. Turn out in these districts is expected to be very low. If the over all turnout in this division is less than 20%of the registered voters then it will not constitute a proper mandate for the elected candidates as majority of the population would be disfranchised due to security reasons.

PML (Q) has the most difficult task of justifying military action in the area and as a result is not expected to win any seats in Malakand division. The absence of JI will considerably reduce MMA's vote bank through out Malakand division, however it will greatly change the political landscape of Lower and Upper Dir. PPP seems to be emerging as the dominant party in the division especially lower Dir and Malakand Agency. ANP will most likely have its best result in Bunair is also expected to get votes in Swat and Dir.

PRAP's projections break down for Malakand division is

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
PPP	8	34.78
ANP	5	21.74
MMA	4	17.39
PML (N)	2	8.70
PPP (S)	1	4.35
Independent	2	8.70
Elections delayed	1	4.35
Total	23	100

Overall PPP, PML (N) and ANP will gain ground in the mountain region while MMA will lose most of its advantage. The combined total for the entire Mountain region is listed below

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
PPP	10	23.26
MMA	8	18.60
PML (N)	8	18.60
ANP	5	11.63
PML (Q)	4	9.30
Independent	6	13.95
PPP (S)	1	2.33
Elections delayed	1	2.33
Total	43	100

Projections for the entire province:

It is evident from the information above that no party will be in a position to gain a simple majority in the province. The projections of provincial assembly seats for the entire province is listed below:

Name of Party	Seats	Percentage
PPP	22	22.22
MMA	19	19.19
ANP	19	19.19
Independent	13	13.33
PML (N)	10	10.10
PML (Q)	8	8.08
PPP (S)	7	7.07
Elections delayed	1	1.01
Total	99	100

As this is not a scientific projection the margin of error can be high. Nevertheless we think that the projected number of seats can be within 3 or 4 seats plus minus range for each party listed above. It is also not clear exactly how many of the independent candidates will join PML (Q) or MMA once they get elected. Under such circumstances a combination of three parties and some independents will be needed to form the next government in the province.

Our Analysis contradicts PML (Q)'s claim that they will take majority of seats in the provincial assembly. This is only possible if heavy Election Day rigging takes place. We also don't see a dominant ANP with substantial lead over other parties. This is mainly due to the fact that ANP candidates are running individual campaigns rather than properly centralized campaign that focuses on issues and policies. ANP has considerable difficulties in Malakand division due to assassination of a several party leaders, internal party rivalries and logistical difficulties of Provincial and central leadership to campaign for local candidates. The Impact of Benazir's Bhutto death has increased sympathy vote for PPP but it's hard to determine the quantitative impact of it. MMA is going to see a big cut from its 60 percent seats in the previous elections. However over the last five



years some MMA candidates have solidified their positions in their constituencies and are likely to me formidable candidates in the coming elections.