

## **Press Release on BENAZIR BHUTTO'S ASSASSINATION**

The grief on the assassination of Benazir Bhutto was almost universal in Pakistan. As a community, it evoked a different response compared to the demise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Zia-ul-Haq when certain segments of the society seemed to breathe a sigh of relief and even rejoice in the tragedy. The grief in the case of Benazir Bhutto has been observed across provincial and linguistic boundaries as well as political and socio-economic divides. It may have been shared with different levels of intensity, but it was grief nevertheless. This expression of unity, which remained elusive during her life and times, was a big gain for Pakistan.

This opinion poll is dedicated to the memory of Benazir Bhutto.

The poll was carried out in two rounds. The First Round was conducted shortly after her assassination, on December 30-31, 2007. The Second Round was carried out during January 6-8, 2008. The sample comprised of over 1300 men and women in all the four provinces spanning cities, large and small towns and villages. Fieldwork was carried out face-to-face. Details on the sample are provided at the end.

The poll addressed the following issues:

- 1- First Source of Information on the Assassination
- 2- Public Opinion on 'Who killed Benazir'
- 3- Public Opinion on Foreign Investigation
- 4- Public Opinion on the Succession of Leadership in the Pakistan People's Party

5- Public Opinion on the Handling of Crisis by Musharraf and other key Political Leaders

**FIRST SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE ASSASSINATION**

For nearly half of the respondents in this survey, their first source of information was Mass Media, principally television (43%) followed by radio (3%). The tragic news reached the other half through relatives and friends, face-to-face (35%) or telephone (17%).

The information reached most people early in the evening, within a couple of hours after the incident (62%); most of the remaining were informed of it later that night (35%). The rest 3% came to know of it on the following morning.

**Public Opinion on  
WHO KILLED BENAZIR BHUTTO?**

Nearly half of the sample suspected Government agencies (23%) and Government allied politicians (25%). Al-Qaeda or Taliban were suspected by 17%, while 16% suspected other external forces, principally the United States (12%) and India (4%). 19 % said they would not know.

The view that Government agencies and allied politicians were responsible for the assassination was higher than the national average among voters of Pakistan People's Party (61%).

## **Public Opinion on FOREIGN INVESTIGATION**

A question was asked about views on involving foreign investigators to probe the assassination. In response to the question, **‘In your view, would a decision to invite foreign experts to investigate this incident be right or wrong’**, 46% favoured the possible invitation, 30% opposed it, while 24% said they did not know. *(This survey was carried out during December 30-31, 2007, before the decision was made to invite Scotland Yard to assist GOP in the investigation).* One might guess that the favourable view on inviting foreign investigators would have risen later, especially after the formal decision had been made.

## **Public Opinion on SUCCESSION OF LEADERSHIP IN PAKISTAN PEOPLE’S PARTY**

Who should lead the PPP after Benazir Bhutto was a key question. In the First Round of survey *(carried out during December 30-31)*, we provided two options, Asif Zardari or Amin Fahim, but allowed the possibility of nomination of any other person by the respondents to the survey. Between the two pre-structured options, the majority favoured Amin Fahim (48%) followed by Asif Zardari (30%). A number of names other than the two provided in the Question were given by 17% of the respondents, while the remaining 5% did not answer this question.

The Second Round of the survey was carried out after the succession issue had been settled by the party and Benazir Bhutto's son, young Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had been chosen to head the party, with the assistance of his father, Asif Ali Zardari, until the young party head came of age and completed his studies. The question was asked: **‘People’s Party has chosen Bilawal Bhutto Zardari**

**as its head. Would you say they made the right or the wrong decision?’**

Among the respondents to this survey, 53% believed it was the right decision, 28% considered it wrong, while 19% did not answer. The support for the party decision was much higher among PPP voters, 74% of whom endorsed the party choice in favour of Bilawal, while only 14% considered it wrong and 12% did not answer.

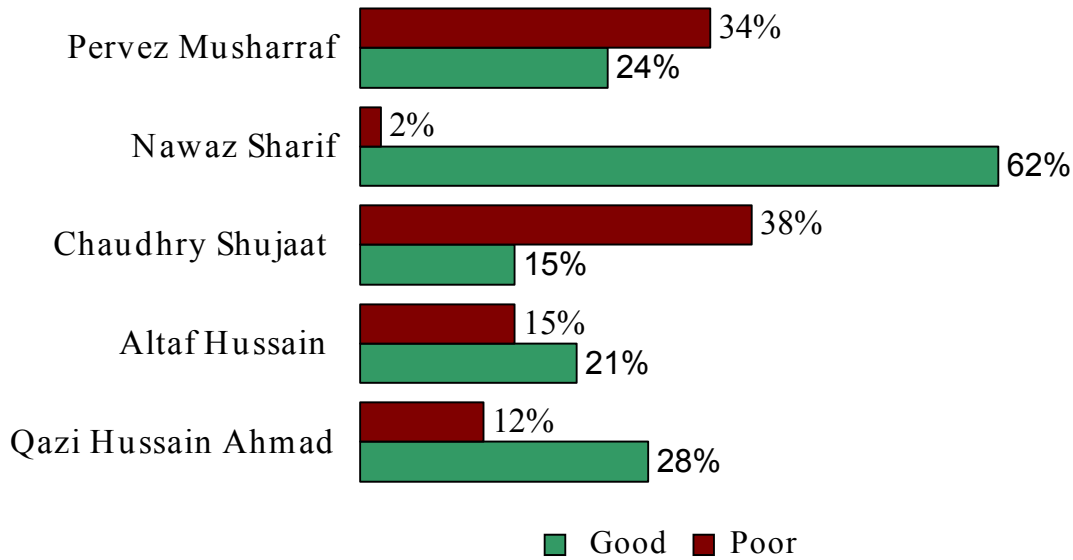
In a follow up question, the respondents were asked: **‘If you were a member of the People’s Party Central Executive Committee, who would you have supported for party leadership: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Asif Zardari, Sanam Bhutto or a competent leader from other members of the party?’** In response to this, 47% favoured Bilawal Bhutto Zardari; the remaining were distributed among Sanam Bhutto (21%), Asif Zardari (6%) and one of the other competent party member 19%; 7% provided other alternatives to the issue. Among the PPP voters, views were slightly different than the national average. Among them the responses were: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (64%), Sanam Bhutto (21%), Asif Zardari (5%), other competent party leader (5%), while the remaining 5% did not respond. These were the findings of the Second Round of survey carried out mostly during January 6-8, 2008.

### **Public Opinion on**

### **HANDLING OF THE CRISIS BY POLITICAL LEADERS**

The positive role of Nawaz Sharif on the occasion of the assassination was given the highest rating by the respondents of this survey. In response to a question: **‘How would you consider the role of political leaders in handling the crisis of Benazir Bhutto's Assassination: Good, Acceptable or Poor?’** the following ratings emerged, showing the percentage of respondents giving Good, Acceptable or Poor rating.

**"How would you consider the role of political leaders in handling the crisis of Benazir Bhutto's Assassination?"**



	Good	Acceptable	Poor	No Response
Pervez Musharraf	24%	32%	34%	9%
Nawaz Sharif	62%	30%	2%	5%
Chaudhry Shujaat	15%	33%	38%	14%
Altaf Hussain	21%	48%	15%	16%
Qazi Hussain Ahmad	28%	43%	12%	17%

Source: Gallup Pakistan, 2008

## Sample Composition

Total  $\approx$  1300

### BREAKDOWN

#### *Province-wise*

Punjab	n $\approx$	725	(54%)
Sindh	n $\approx$	350	(26%)
NWFP	n $\approx$	175	(13%)
Balochistan	n $\approx$	100	(7%)

#### *Location-wise*

Large Cities (over 2 million)	n $\approx$	300	(23%)
Medium Cities (over half a million)	n $\approx$	350	(27%)
Towns (Population 5000 plus)	n $\approx$	400	(31%)
Villages	n $\approx$	250	(19%)

#### *Gender-wise*

Men	n $\approx$	775	(57%)
Women	n $\approx$	575	(43%)