

Youth Voter Turnout- Empirical Analysis of Elections in Pakistan

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Agenda

What have been some recent and past trends of youth voter turnout in Pakistan?

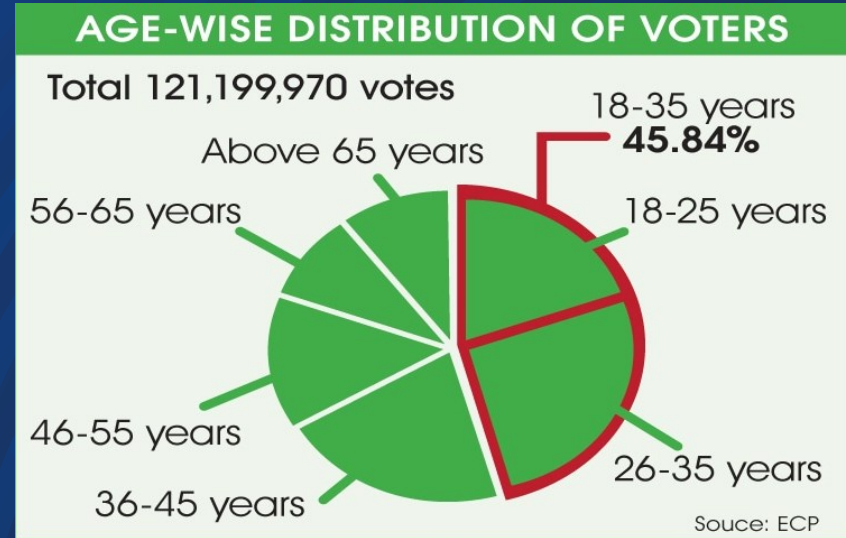
How do these trends compare with neighbouring countries like India?

What key steps can be taken to mobilise youth for voting in elections?

1. Who are the youth of Pakistan?

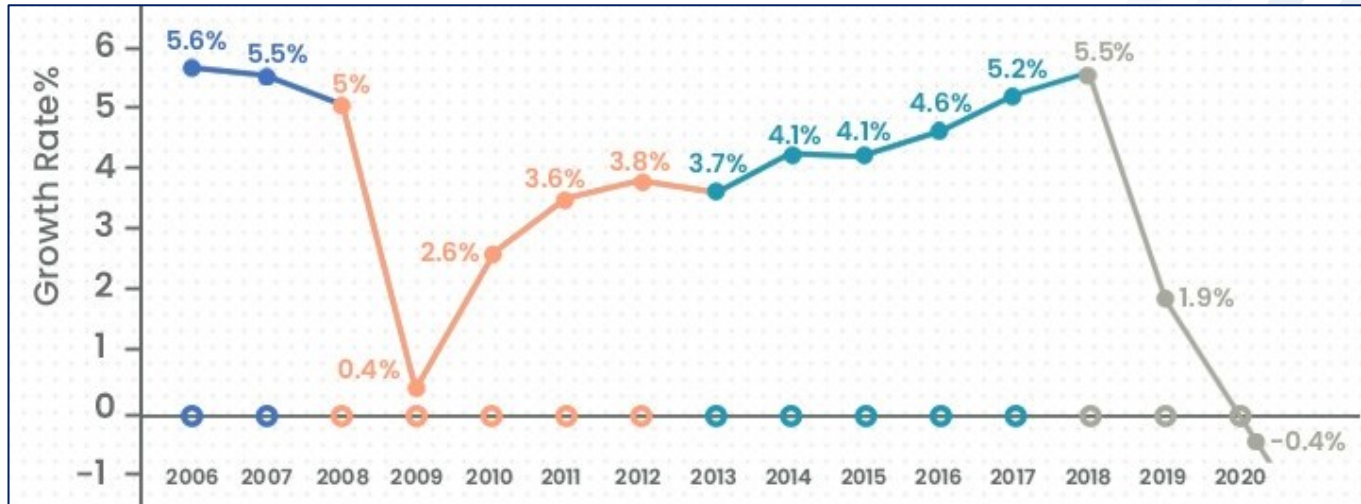
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How big or important are the youth voters?- 45% of all voters are in the 18-35 age group!



Youth of today – been through some of the worst times of our history

- Slowed economy like never before



Terrorism

10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

Pakistan

GTI RANK

7

GTI SCORE

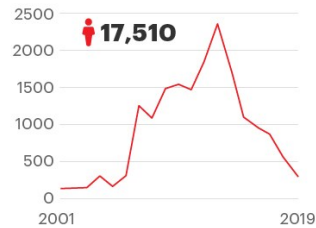
7.541

300  DEAD

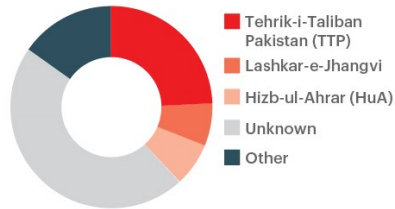
654  INJURED

279  INCIDENTS

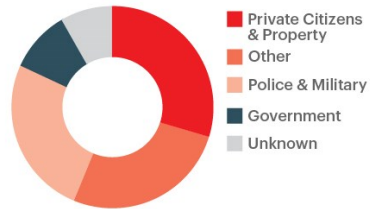
Total deaths since 2001



Deaths by group



Attacks by target

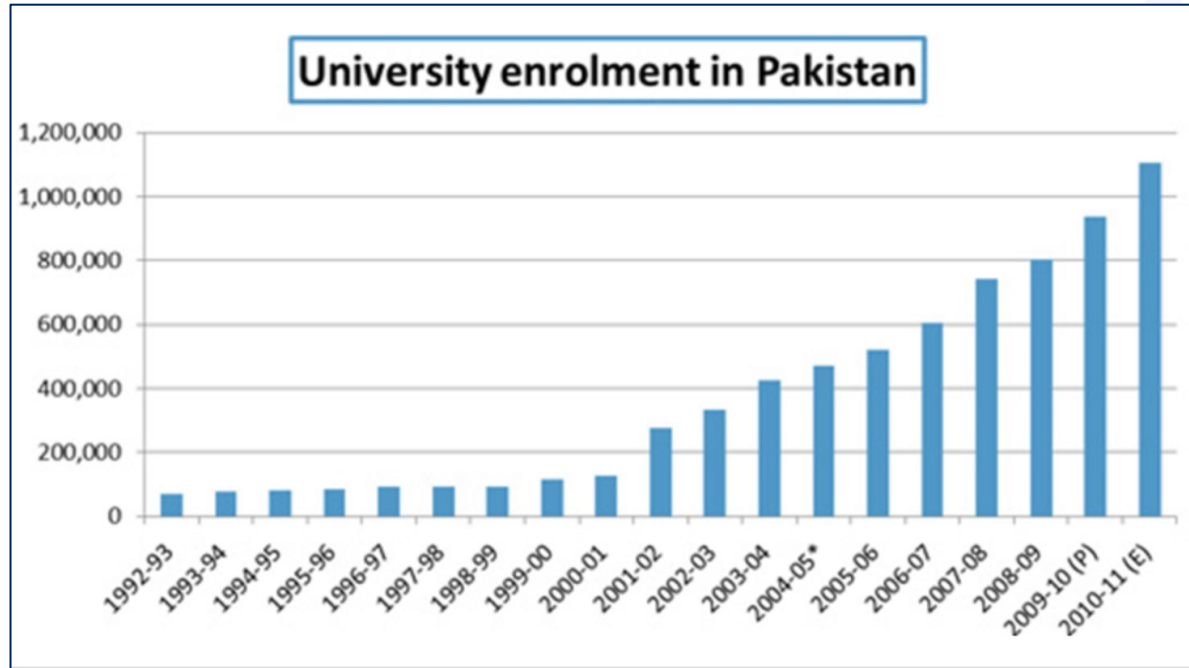


Source: IEP

IEP

GALLUP
PAKISTAN
Affiliated with Gallup International
Pakistan's Foremost Social Research Lab

Yet – University education has expanded



Overall Profile

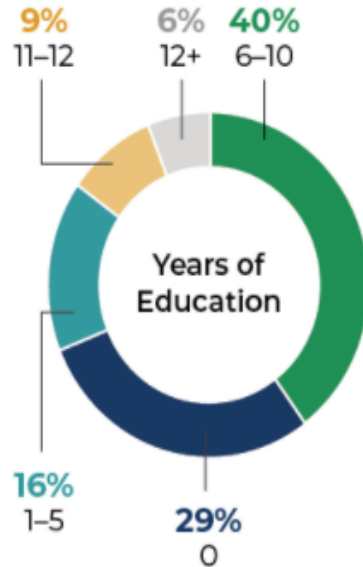
The Youth of Pakistan*



64% live in urban areas
36% live in rural areas



70% are literate
30% are not



39% are employed
(37% male, 2% female)

61% are unemployed
57% not seeking a job
(16% male, 41% female)

4% seeking a job
(2% male, 2% female)



15% have internet access
85% do not



52% have cell phones
48% do not

Youth voter turnout – how is it calculated?

Youth Voter Turnout in Pakistan

1/ Since votes are secretly counted, election data from election day cannot be used to know who voted for whom and why.

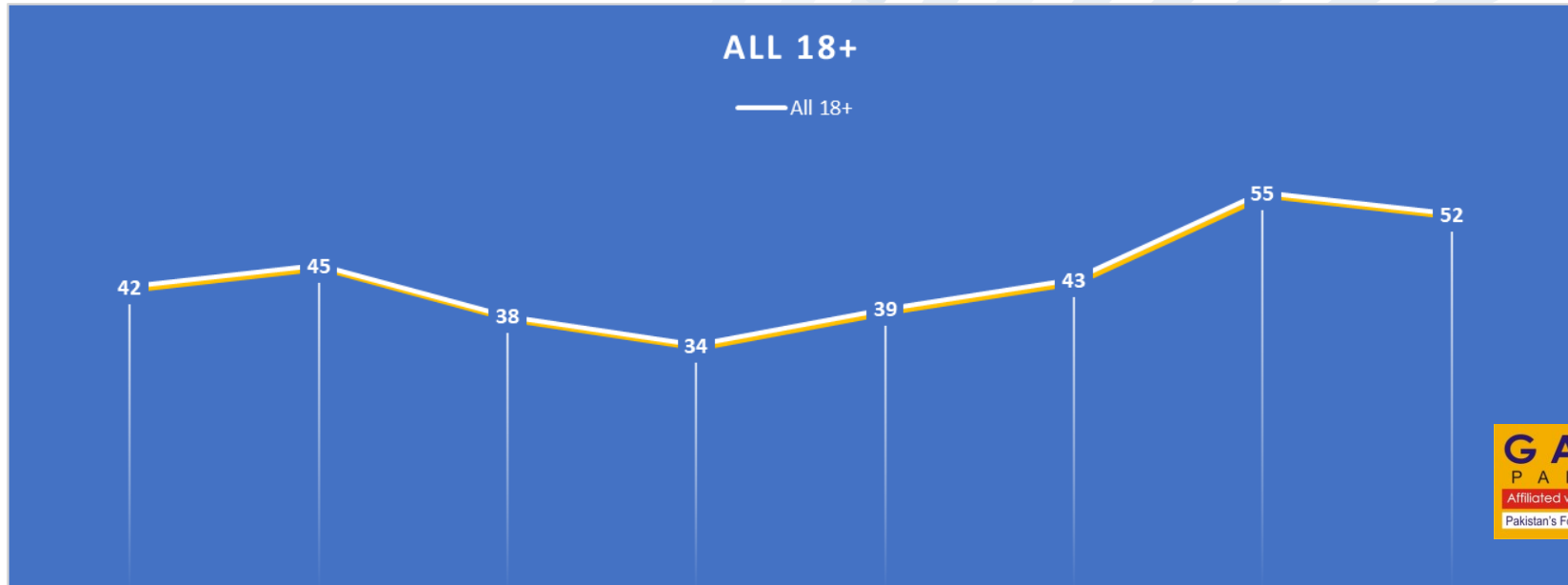
2/ Around the world 'Exit poll' is the only source to get to know this information.

3/ Since 1985 Gallup has been doing such polls in Pakistan.

4/ Typically 2000-3000 voters outside polling stations are interviewed and asked quantitative questions which lead to this information.

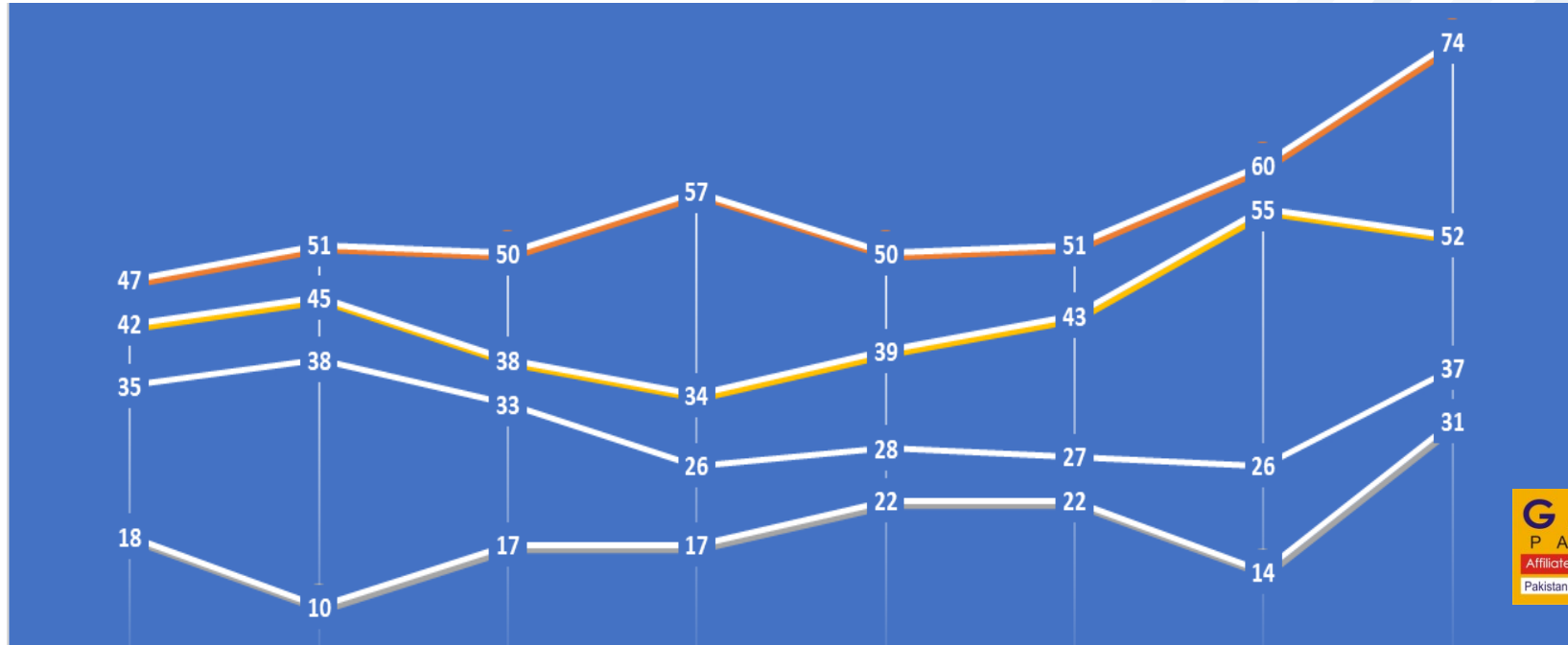
What does data suggest to us?

Past 3 decades of voter turnout – generally voter turnout in Pakistan is on an upward trajectory for the past 3 decades after hitting the lowest point in 1997



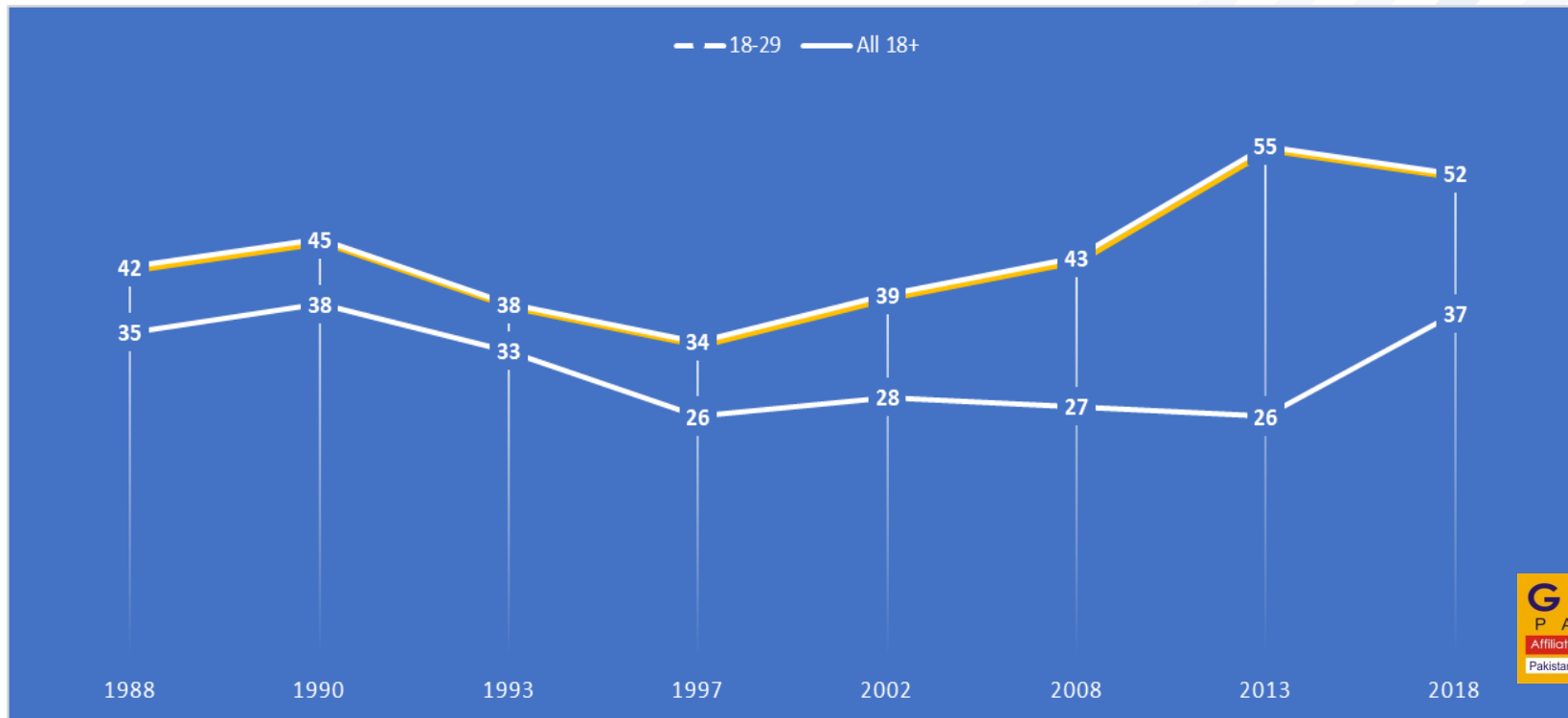
Who votes the most? Youth, mature or old?

30 - 49-year-olds have always had the highest turnout



Youth Voter Turnout

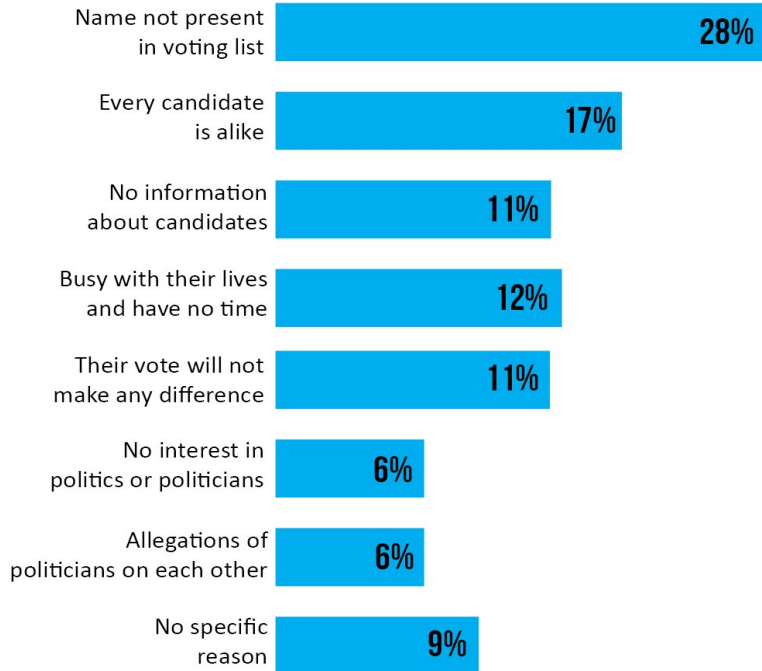
Youth voter turnout is very low, much lower than usual voter turnout – only a quarter usually vote; in the last elections it was 1 in 3



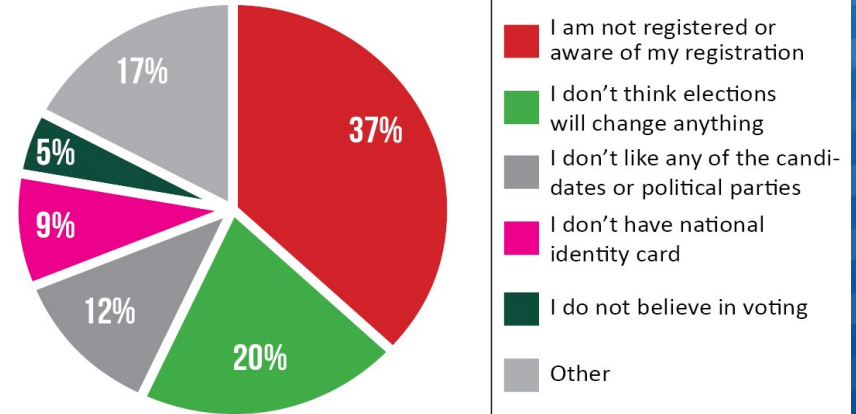
Reasons for Lower Voter turnout

Largest reason – not registered including lack of CNIC

Question: There is a general perception in Pakistan that youth does not cast their vote. In your opinion, what is the major reason for youth not casting their vote?



Question: What is your most important reason for not voting?



Not registered to vote/not having a CNIC

A quarter of women don't even have a CNIC!
Even 10% of 18+ men don't have a CNIC.

1. Cost of CNIC – over 500 PKR
2. Cost of travel
3. Cost of waiting to get CNIC
4. The documentation required to get a CNIC

Table 2.12. Registration with NADRA

Percentage of de jure household population registered with NADRA, according to background characteristics, Pakistan DHS 2017-18

Background characteristic	Among those under age 18		Among those age 18 or above	
	Percentage with Bay Form	Number	Percentage with CNIC	Number
Sex				
Male	34.9	17,584	91.3	21,067
Female	34.0	17,545	76.2	22,140
Residence				
Urban	48.8	11,685	86.1	16,893
Rural	27.4	23,445	82.0	26,315
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	9.5	8,195	76.8	7,475
Second	24.3	7,442	80.1	8,218
Middle	36.6	7,229	82.2	8,442
Fourth	50.1	6,442	85.1	9,226
Highest	62.8	5,821	91.6	9,847
Region				
Punjab	44.1	17,508	84.5	23,174
Urban	54.0	6,016	87.3	8,898
Rural	38.8	11,492	82.8	14,276
Sindh	23.6	8,299	81.4	10,417
Urban	42.5	3,808	83.9	5,784
Rural	7.5	4,491	78.2	4,634
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	21.8	5,798	84.3	6,097
Urban	39.1	1,020	86.7	1,276
Rural	18.2	4,778	83.7	4,821
Balochistan	39.7	2,375	82.0	2,319
Urban	48.4	661	86.8	671
Rural	36.3	1,714	80.0	1,649
ICT Islamabad	78.6	254	92.6	426
FATA	3.9	896	79.5	774
Total¹	34.5	35,130	83.6	43,207
Azad Jammu and Kashmir	51.0	4,655	89.2	5,895
Urban	56.1	724	92.0	1,091
Rural	50.1	3,932	88.6	4,804
Gilgit Baltistan	36.8	3,900	86.3	3,621

Note: Excludes cases with age not known or missing.

NADRA = National Database and Registration Authority

CNIC = computerised national identity card

¹ Total excludes Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

Exclusion of women from the voting process dents youth turnout too

Female Voter Turnout

TURNOUT: Female turnout was 10% lower than male turnout; lowest in KP (31%). Interestingly Gender Gap in Balochistan is at par with Sindh and very close to Punjab

	Males	Females	Gender Gap in Turnout
All Pakistan	57%	47%	10%
Punjab	60%	53%	7%
Sindh	51%	43%	8%
KP	50%	31%	19%
Balochistan	46%	38%	8%

Difficult Process of Voting

- Lack of information on how to vote, where to vote etc.
- Costly choice
- 1 in 4 voters used public transport and 32% used their own private means, which means casting the vote meant out of pocket expense for half the voters. Considering the income poverty in the country, this may help explain low voter turnout

Other Behavioral Reasons

- Don't have hope in the political process
- Don't have any engagement with political process as there are no opportunities to get into politics
- Politicians are maligned and politics becomes maligned –
VOTE WILL NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Higher perception among the youth that voters are bribed

Question: How often in the country's election: Voters are bribed?

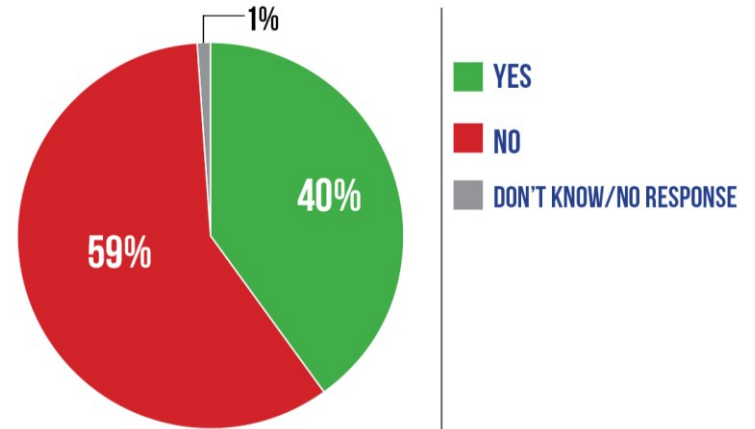
	TOTAL	Age			
		Up to 29	30-49	50 and more	No answer
Very often	29.8%	34.9%	27.5%	27.0%	44.4%
Fairly often	28.2%	26.0%	28.6%	33.2%	-
Not often	16.8%	15.9%	17.2%	17.2%	11.1%
Not at all often	17.5%	15.9%	19.5%	13.5%	-
Don't know	7.2%	7.3%	6.6%	9.0%	22.2%
No answer	0.4%	-	0.5%	-	22.2%
(N)	(1,995)	(628)	(1,114)	(244)	(9)

Selected samples: Pakistan 2018

Hopelessness created by media and elite

- 40% want to go abroad
- Hopelessness created political lack of action
- Why do any thing when exiting Pakistan is the strategy

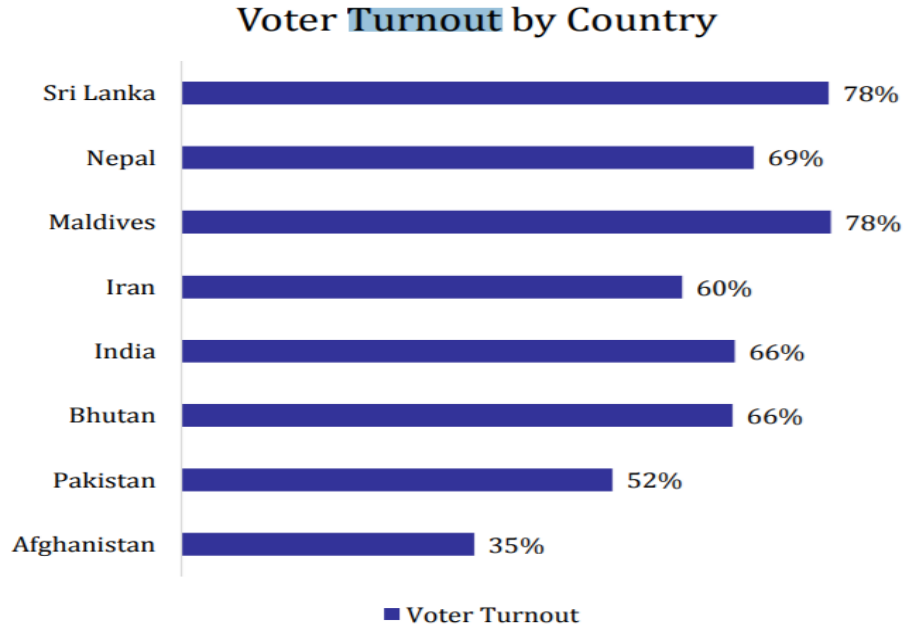
Question: Would you like to go abroad?



Youth Turnout in other countries

General voter turnout – we are one of the lowest

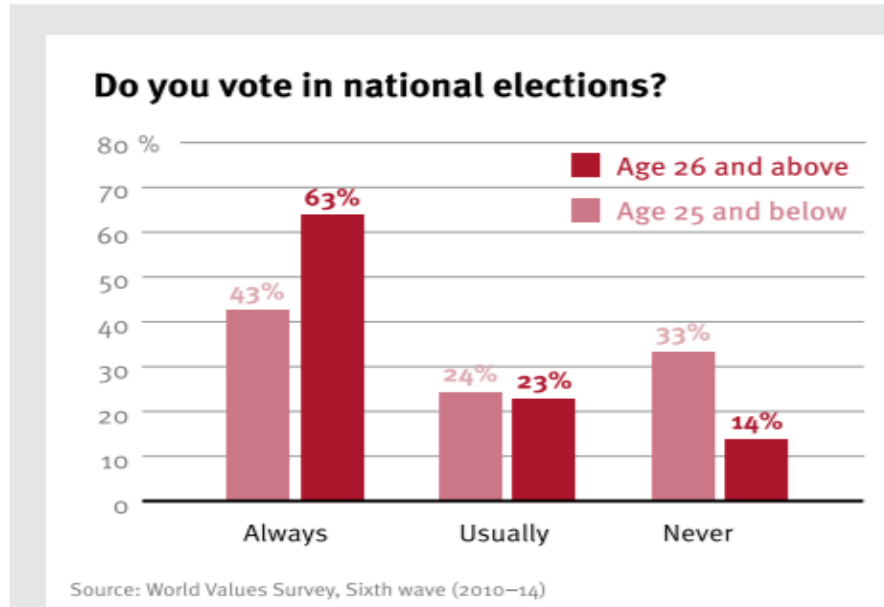
Voter Turnout in Pakistan and its Neighbours



Global Youth Apathy

Findings mentioned in “Youth Civic Engagement,” a 2016 UN World Youth report, reveal that voter turnout has decreased in all democracies since the 1980s and that the turnout decline is concentrated among youth. Survey results from a sample of 33 countries indicate that close to 44 percent of young adults aged 18–29 years “always vote,” compared to almost 60 percent of all citizens.

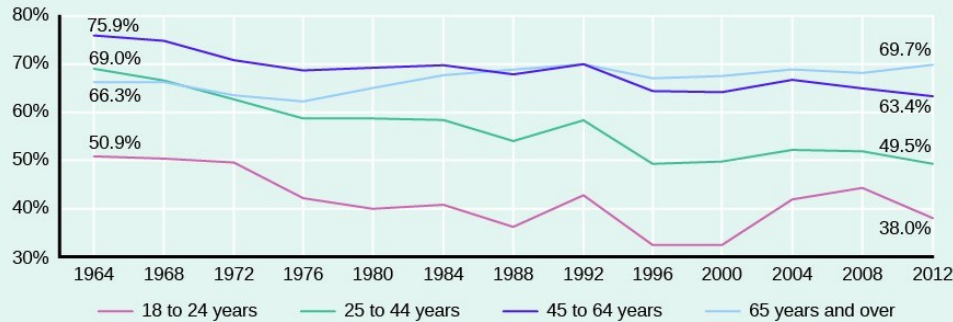
Figure 13. Differences in voter turnout by age



Generally, youth voter turnout is lower than other groups

USA VOTER TURNOUT AMONG YOUTH SITUATION

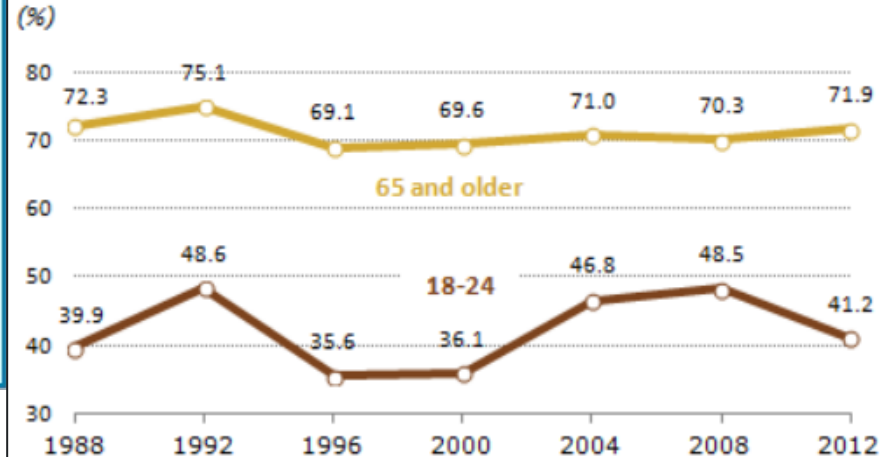
Voting Rates Over Time for the Voting-Age Population: 1964–2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Select Years.

Figure 3

Voter Turnout Rates by Age in Presidential Elections, 1988–2012 (%)

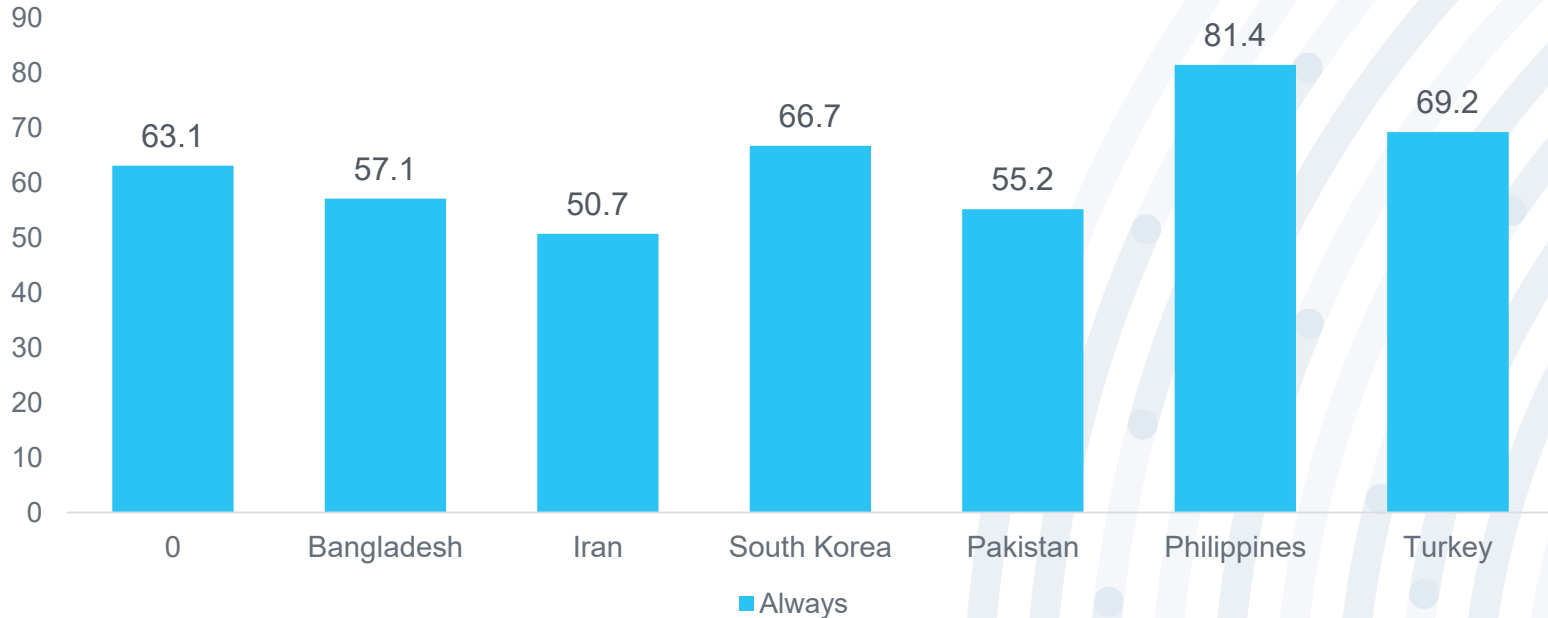


Note: Data for those ages 25 to 64 not shown.

Source: For 1988 through 2008, Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the Current Population Survey November Supplements. For 2012, U.S. Census Bureau.

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Pakistan ranks lower among peer countries in terms of region or democracy age - Bangladesh higher, Turkey and Philippines way higher in youth vote turnout intentions



What can be done?

1. Registration process needs to be made easier.
 - CNIC free
 - CNIC at doorstep
 - CNIC is the voter list
2. Female voter participation – 50 % of youth are women. If we don't solve the gender issue, youth turnout cannot be increased
3. Reduce the seat size – currently over 700,000 voters in some constituency – voter apathy is just natural. In UK, the average size is 60,000; winner gets 30,000
4. Create hope – Youth is more hopeless than other generations.
5. Open up politics - people want to be part of the process - 1100 seats vs. 500,000 seats
6. Create politics at school and education level. Democratic culture needs to be created and not just as a slogan but in function. **STUDENT UNIONS NEED TO BE REVIVED.**