

DID THE PRE-ELECTION POLLS WORK?

Did they Predict adequately?

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Introduction

Pre-Election Polls for General Election 2024 were right : Triumph of the statistical method

Scientific statistical polling applied to political landscape has its origins in early 20th Century. A famous episode is narrated from 75 years ago in which for the US Presidential Election 1936, a survey was conducted by Literary Digest (a major publication of that time) with close to 3 million readers participating in postal ballot. The contest was between Landon and Roosevelt for President of United States. Maverick personalities of their time. Digest suggested with 3 million votes that Landon would win. However, this Princeton trained Dr Gallup used a far smaller (but statistically chosen random sample), predicted that Landon would lose, and Roosevelt would win and he went on to also predict by how many % the Literary Digest would be wrong in its prediction. When the Election results came, millions of non random sample Literary Digest was wrong and a few thousand sample George Gallup was not only right about the horse race but also about by how wrong the media survey was. This was the start of political polling in the US and in the coming decades political polls became part and parcel of any political campaign and discussion. Pakistan got its first statistical sample political poll in 1979 when Dr Ijaz Gilani, trained at MIT USA set up what was then called Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion. Since 1979, political polling has gained currency in Pakistan slowly but surely.

What are seldom asked questions about political polling?

Together with fame of political polling came the criticism : some substantive others purely hypothetical and speculative. The key question asked is are pre-election surveys able to predict election outcomes? If yes how accurately? I as a pollster get asked this question a lot and my response is : Yes they are able to predict the elections significantly better than any other tool or instrument available for political analysis. For any pollster , the Election Day is like the Day of Judgement . Either you pass or you fail. How has the General Election 2024 been for political polling in Pakistan?

As we explain below its been a success and a triumph of not just Gallup Pakistan as a pollster but also triumph of the scientific tool and method we and many others across the industry apply . Let us explain how and why?

What did Pre-Election polls suggest and were the results accurate?

In January 2024, Gallup Pakistan released on its website a Report titled Political Weather Report One Month Before the General Election 2024 (available for public scrutiny on Gallup Pakistan website).

<https://gallup.com.pk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PWR-Jan-2024-For-Public-Release-.pdf>

What did Pre-Election poll say and what are Election results

- The report made following key assertions which were proven correct on 8th Feb 2024 .
- **Punjab:** PTI and PMLN were in a tough competition in Punjab, 34% and 32% of the sample survey respondents saying they would vote for the two parties respectively. The General Election 2024 results show that the predicted outcome was razor thin close to the actual outcome. PTI backed Independents got more votes than the score was 35 % for PTI and 34% for PMLN. The same survey suggested that despite significant efforts, PPP was unable to raise its vote bank and the study suggested 6% vote bank for PPP which has also been proven correct. Lastly, the report said and I quote ‘Survey results show that Punjab vote bank reflects return to 2018 General Election political landscape’. This has proven to be correct as well as the share of votes that the top three parties has received is almost the same as what they got in Punjab in 2018 General Election. In 2018 PTI was 1% ahead of PMLN in Punjab.
- **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:** The report suggested that KP has an overwhelming support for PTI (45% of the survey respondent said they would vote for it), and trailing much behind would be JUIF at 15%, PMLN (9%) , PPP (7%) and ANP (7%). The Election results match almost completely within this prediction. PTI has received 44% votes, JUIF 15% votes , PPP received 6% votes and ANP got 7%. The prediction and the election result is within 1-2% margin.
- **Sindh:** The report suggested PPP would be the single largest party in Sindh with 44% votes. The current Election data shows 44% of the voters in Sindh have voted for PPP.
- In other words electoral outcome predicted by Gallup Pakistan matched with the actual outcome.

PRE POLL SURVEYS WERE ABLE TO PREDICT VOTE SHARE OF MAJOR PARTIES ACCURATELY !

		Pre-Election GP poll published by Geo-Jang on <u>Jan 9 2024</u> (one month before election 2024)	ECP Result share in votes*	<u>Percent share in total NA seats</u>
Punjab including ICT				-
	PTI Independent	34%	35%	-
	PML-N	32%	33%	<u>54%</u>
	PPP	6%	6%	-
				-
KP				-
	PTI Independent	45%	44%	-
	JUI-F	15%	15%	-
	PML-N	9%	9%	-
	PPP	7%	6%	<u>17%</u>
	ANP	7%	7%	-
				-
Sindh	PPP	44%	44%	-
				<u>23%</u>
Balochistan	Pre-Election Poll Sample statistically not qualified and therefore no predictions were provided.			<u>6%</u>

- Sample size of those who responded didn't qualify for statistical reliability in Balochistan and therefore not released.
- Sample size of various geographic segments didn't qualify for statistical reliability.
- Geo Jang Group Reporting : <https://www.geo.tv/latest/526721-nawaz-sharif-most-popular-leader-in-punjab-survey>
- Access the full report from January 2024 on Gallup Pakistan website <https://gallup.com.pk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PWR-Jan-2024-For-Public-Release-.pdf>
- * Results computed by Gallup Pakistan using Form 47 released officially by Election Commission. Election results were not finalized when this report was prepared and therefore final results may vary. Errors and omissions are possible and cannot be ruled out. Gallup Pakistan has tried its best to be accurate as far as humanly possible.



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