

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION FOR PAKISTAN'S OVERSEAS VOTERS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16633190>

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
7 June, 2024	21 June, 2025	16 July, 2025	31 July, 2025

ABSTRACT

Overseas voting was a long debatable issue in Pakistan because major political parties claimed that their overseas voters cannot participate in the electoral system. In the history of Pakistan, first time Election Management body- Election Commission of Pakistan, gave political rights to overseas Pakistanis in 2018. The main aim of this study is to highlight the crucial factors which are the main hindrance of overseas voting registration. This study conducted purposive sampling and held overseas voters', from all over the world, interviewed for the deep understanding of their behavior towards national politics and elections. This study highlighted the factors which are hindrance in the registration of overseas voters. These factors are lack of mass media campaign, lack of technical knowledge, complicated registration process, and no information sharing cells in concerned embassies and consulates. ECP should disseminate the information about overseas voting via foreign embassies because these are more effective ways to provide information to Pakistani community/overseas and conduct mass media awareness campaigns to properly inform citizens.

Keywords: Election administration, Political parties, Election Management body, Overseas Pakistanis, Elections, Registration of overseas voters.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world, more than 190 million people are emigrants. Only in the USA, more than 5 million voters are living abroad (Paul et al. 2015). Overseas voters' participation in national politics is becoming an important topic in the new arena because democratic countries have recognized their rights in national elections. Moreover, consolidated democracies have their first priorities to give rights to emigrants. For instance, Portugal was one of the first democratic countries to give political rights to their emigrants. According to Portuguese Emigration Observatory report, 22% of the

Portuguese population is living outside their country (Observatório da Emigração, 2017). Apart from the political rights, emigrants have played an important role in the country's economic advancement as well (Spiro, 2006). Overseas citizens played an important role in the country's economic development, not only in terms of remittance but also played a crucial role in terms of participation in the country's political system. For instance, in 2019, Consul General of Philippine "Paul Raymund P. Cortes" encouraged the eligible voters in the Middle East to participate in the political system for the elections of senators

for 12 seats. There were around 209,000 voters under its jurisdiction which was a big number of voters to change the position of winning candidates. He encouraged the voters to cast their votes and make changes in the system (UNPF Report, 2019).

In the case of Pakistan, Overseas Pakistanis actively send back remittances to Pakistan of around US\$ 19 billion, which is 5% of the country's GDP. In this perspective, they were not only residents of Pakistan but also economically and socially supportive of Pakistan's economy (Haq et al. 2019; Ali et al. 2024). The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 gave fundamental rights to vote to every citizen of Pakistan. Article 17 of the constitution clearly mentioned the rights of citizens irrespective of their residence (The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

"Every citizen, not being in the service of Pakistan, shall have the right to form or be a member of a political party, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan and such law shall provide that where the Federal Government declares that any political party has been formed or is operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, the Federal Government shall, within fifteen days of such declaration, refer the matter to the Supreme Court whose decision on such reference shall be final." (The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

Election administration is an integral element and the main pillar of the country because all leadership selection from the lower tier to the higher tier is selected by the Election Commission of Pakistan, election management body, by the will of the people. The most important function of the election administration is to register the voters who are eligible and count their votes impartially and accurately. In addition, there are a lot of studies on election procedures and voting systems but there is a serious gap in academic research on overseas voters. This indicates the lack of interest of the government to add them to the mainstream of politics. In this context, the election management body is unable to fill

the important goal of election administration which is registering the eligible voters. It is certainly true that overseas citizens are eligible voters, but they cannot participate in the elections due to lack of awareness about the system (Barreto et al. 2006; Cain et al. 2008). This study focuses on the factors that affect the registration of overseas voters. Wellman et al. 2024 highlighted in their studies that overseas voting could not implemented due to legal and operational issues.

It is necessary for the people who are overseas to cast their vote in their national political system because the country's policies affect them from a larger perspective. This is very important in the public policy context and the realm of election administration. Nowadays, the world is a global village and there is a very strong relationship between international migration and awareness of the political systems. Everyone becomes aware about their political rights when they see other people exercising their own rights, which in turn leads to the question about their own rights arising in their mind (Tether, 1994). For a long time, overseas Pakistani's raised their concerns, but no one has addressed their concerns. This debate about emigrant franchise has different responses from developed and developing countries. In 2007, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) reported on overseas voting and pointed out that 115 countries allowed their citizens to cast their vote from abroad, but Pakistan was not in the list of those countries (Collard, 2019).

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) defined overseas voting as the voting system which allows their citizens to cast a vote from outside of their country. Overseas voting trends are increasing with the advancement of time. Moreover, the overseas voting trend is quite common in the developed world but nowadays, developing nations are also adopting overseas voting to enhance political rights of expatriates. In addition, globalization has made the world small. These days, people

actively participate in the system without giving considerations about boundaries. In this perspective, this globalization trend has highlighted the issue of overseas voting in the political arena. Almost more than 115 countries gave rights of votes to their overseas residents for political participation (Sevi et. al., 2020).

Overseas voting was a long debatable issue in Pakistan because several political parties claimed that their overseas voters cannot participate in the existing electoral system. On the other hand, Election Commission of Pakistan has considered this proposal for a long time and wants to execute this proposal and give the right to vote to overseas voters to effectively participate in the system. Subsequently, for the first time in the history, on 18th April 2018, the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) conducted a session under the Chairmanship of Chief Justice of Pakistan wherein the voting right was granted to overseas Pakistanis. All stakeholders (political parties, voters and media) appreciated this decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan, Election Management Body. ECP started work on this task on 19th April 2018 on Internet Vote (iVote) for overseas Pakistan for proper implementation in true letter and spirit (Voting rights of overseas Pakistan executive report, 2018).

Overseas Pakistani's are an important asset of the country. Similarly, they represent the country in other countries and send huge amounts in remittances to Pakistan. In fact, the Ministry for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OPHRD) statistics pointed out that there are more than 7.3 million people living abroad which is a huge number and they have sent almost 1.9 billion US\$ in remittances to the country. In addition, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) pointed out that, "In 2015, 244 million people, or 3.3 per cent of the world's population, lived outside their

country of origin. Most migrants' cross borders in search of better economic and social opportunities." Consequently, the government decided to give them proper rights in voting.

Pakistan has a huge number of diasporas across the world, but the government was not concerned about their political rights as overseas Pakistanis. However, different countries have given political rights to their citizens who are eligible for voting. For example, 56 countries had given political rights overseas by the 1990's decade. With the passage of time this issue became widely known. Furthermore, presently 139 countries gave political rights to their overseas citizens. Thus, this trend is increasing day by day due to political awareness and effective participation of citizens in the electoral system (Pallister, 2020).

"No nation today can be seen as a people living just within the boundaries of a state—all nations, instead, are global in the sense that, even though they have a homeland, many of their members live scattered around the globe" (Fred Riggs's Quote; Dark, T.E. 2003).

1.1 Overseas citizens of Pakistan:

Overseas citizens of Pakistan spread all over the world as shown in Appendix I. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (2017) estimated that more than 8 million people (8,840,732) are overseas. Moreover, Pakistani diaspora spread across the world. In figure 1, it is clearly indicated about the countries where Pakistani diasporas are in great numbers. The highest number of Pakistani citizens are living in the Gulf region which can be seen in figure 1. In Saudi Arabia 2.6 million, UAE 1.5 million and the third highest number is in the United Kingdom (UK) which is more than 1.1 million.

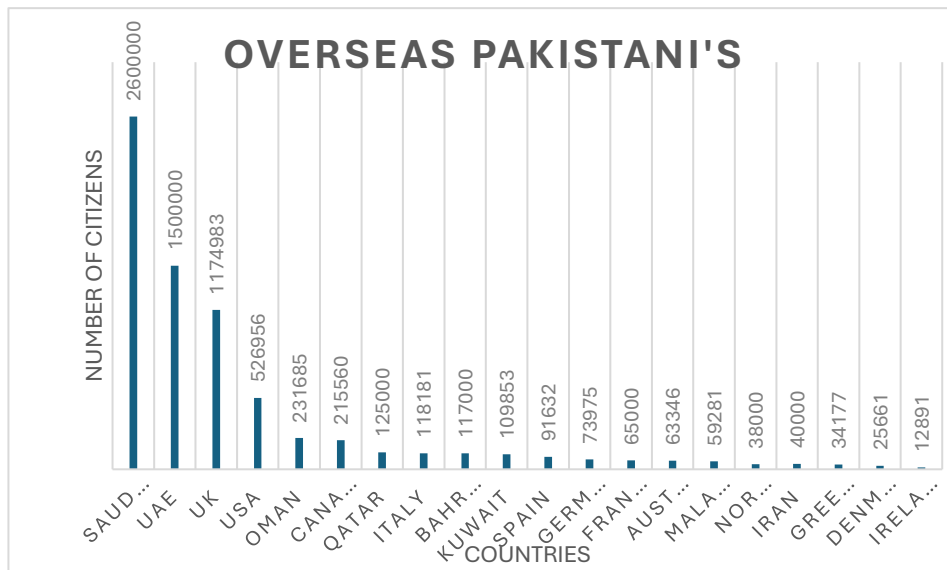


Figure 1: Region of majority Overseas Pakistanis in the major country in the world.

1.2 Significance of this research

There are two main purposes of overseas voting (Brand, 2010): i) Increase political participation and promote the true spirit of democracy and ii) Give political rights to those people who are living abroad. Across the world, different countries have given political rights to overseas citizens because they brought a lot of revenue to their country but were unable to actively participate in the country's politics as a responsible citizen. According to the Ministry for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Pakistanis overseas sent back 1.9 US billion-dollar revenue to Pakistan which is a big amount.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study to highlight the factors affect non-registration of overseas votes. And why are many people reluctant to register themselves as an overseas voter? The main purposes of overseas voting: i) Increase political participation and promote the true spirit of democracy and ii) Give political rights to those people who are living abroad (Brand, 2010). Across the world, different countries have given political rights to overseas citizens because they brought a lot of revenue to their country but being a Pakistani citizen, they were unable to actively participate in the country's politics as a responsible citizen.

1.

2. The I-Voting system for overseas Pakistan

In the I-voting system all databases are centralized by the National and Database Registration Authority (NADRA). Moreover, all data is tabulated by NADRA and monitored by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). ECP put all information on its website about how to register and cast a vote in Elections which are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4. Figure 2 showed the voting system architecture where NADRA verified the voter identity then voters needed to verify their credentials. Consequently, voters received an email and checked their eligibility to cast vote. In addition, Figure 3 showed the registration process, when voters got access to the voting website then they could create their account and get confirmation of account creation. Consequently, voter passcodes would issue after successful registration to the voters. Furthermore, Figure 4 explained the vote casting procedure where voters enter their passcode and access the name of candidates who are contesting the elections. After casting a vote, voters could get a confirmation message which would display on their computer screen.

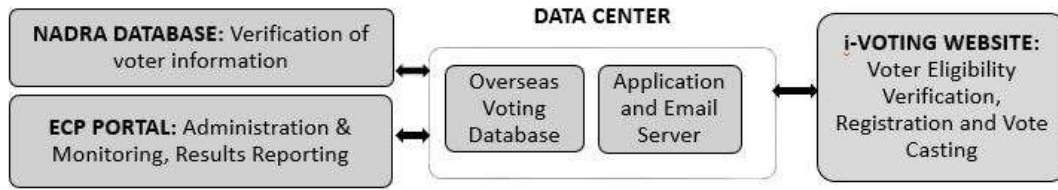


Figure 2: Voting system architecture



Figure 3: Voter registration

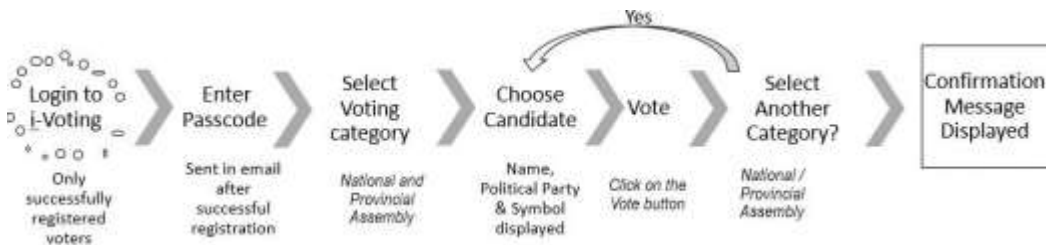


Figure 4: Vote casting

2.1 Overseas constituencies

In Pakistan, overseas can cast their vote in the constituency in which they are living last in the country. Each voter has a National Identity Card (NIC), they have the right to register themselves in that area which address is mentioned in their National Identity Card. In addition, there are two options in National Identity Card permanent address and residential address. If both addresses (permanent address and residential address) fall in different constituencies then voters have the option to register themselves in any one of the constituencies. Moreover, Overseas Pakistani's have a National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistan (NICOP). NICOP is helpful for overseas Pakistanis to cast their internet vote from any country where they are living (www.ecp.gov.pk). On the contrary, in other countries, there are proper overseas constituencies, and those candidates represent the overseas in the parliament. In France, overseas cast their vote in that

constituency where they lived last in their country. In the case of Italy, there are four electoral overseas constituencies which are bifurcated region wise. For instance, Europe constituency (Include Russia, Turkey and Greenland), South American constituency, North and Central American constituency, and Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica constituency. There are twelve seats which consist of eight deputies and four senators, and they represent the overseas in the Parliament (Battiston & Mascitelli, 2008; Smith & Patel, 2024).

3. Methodology

This qualitative study aims to provide insightful information about overseas citizens' behavior toward overseas voting and politics. The focus of this study is to investigate the factors which are the main barriers in the registration of overseas voters and the reason that they are reluctant to register and cast their vote. This research used purposive sampling and conducted overseas voters' interviews for a deep understanding of their

behavior towards national politics and elections. In interview studies, participants have more opportunities to give their opinion and raise their real concerns which are helpful to understand the reality (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Moreover, they can easily share their experiences during an interview's discussion. Additionally, focus interviews provide valuable information as compared to other forms of data collection (Merton & Kendall, 1946). In this context, an interview study is helpful to identify the weaknesses of the overseas voting system as compared to the other forms of qualitative studies.

3.1 Data collection

This study selected fourteen interviewees from across the world who were living abroad for more than five years because they have a deep understanding, knowledge and experience as overseas Pakistanis. The selection criteria also ensured that participants from different educational backgrounds and various backgrounds were included to make this study well balanced. However, to make this study well balanced and comprehensive, this research selected interviewees from both genders (male/female) located in major regions of the world (Table 1).

The selected regions included USA, Canada (North America), United Arab Emirates (UAE) Middle East, Portugal, Spain, Netherland (Europe), Japan and China (East Asia) which shown in figure 6. The detailed interviews and responses have been enclosed in Appendix II. The questions of the interview are designed properly after reviewing the study of different countries (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Engelmark, 2015; Bigoness & Tosi, 1984).

Before conducting the interview, the interview questionnaires were properly designed to directly target the desired information which is necessary for this study. Some interview questions were open ended, and some were close ended to know the opinions about overseas Pakistanis and limit themselves to target the exact information, which was needed in this study, respectively. Except for demographic and basic information, the remaining interview questions are as follows: 1) How do you get information about politics and elections? 2) What do you think about politics? 3) Do you consider Voting is proper duty or

obligation for citizens? 4) Did you make use of the internet to get news or information about the 2018 General Elections? 5) How did you cast a vote before? 6) During the election campaign, did a candidate or anyone from a political party contact you to persuade you to vote for them? The main themes of the questions were interest in domestic politics, information and knowledge about national politics, administrative procedures and technical issues during registration of voters, and whether voting is considered as a sense of duty/obligation.

On the other hand, selected interviewees were informed via WhatsApp and decided the schedule for conducting the interview. Interviews were conducted via zoom, WhatsApp and messenger call. After getting permission, some interviews were electronically recorded, and some interviewees were reluctant for recording. As a result, those interviews were not recorded to make interviewees more comfortable. The average duration of one interview was 12-15 minutes.

3.2 Data description

Full confidentiality was assured for all the participants before carrying out the interview. Each interviewee was assigned a reference number during the analysis to allow confidentiality in reporting the results. The sampling, therefore, of this study is unbiased and selected both genders (male /female) participants from the different educational backgrounds and various age brackets to make this study well balanced. In this study, the respondents of the interview are overseas Pakistani who have been settled outside the country for more than five years. This study divided the information into various categories to understand the mental framework in this study: generic category, main category, and subcategory. The generic category covers the base of study: country, visa status and political interest. In addition, there is further bifurcation into subcategories to reveal the overseas Pakistani's information of generic category elements. These subcategories include the name of the country, visa status, whether they have dual citizenship or live abroad on technical visa basis, and their political interests as a Pakistani in foreign countries. On the other hand, due to privacy, this study coded the names of interviewees to assure confidentiality (Table 1).

Sr	Age	Gender (M/F)	Educational Background	Countries (Overseas Voters)	Staying Period (In Years)	Citizenship /Visa type
1	18-30	M	Graduate degree and above	USA	5	PR
2		F		Canada	More than 20	
3	31-40	M		China	5	High Talent Visa (Cat A)
4		M		USA	25	PR
5		F			18	
6		M		UAE	15	Working Visa
7	41-50	M	Primary Education	Portugal	12	Dependent Visa
8		M	Secondary Education	Spain	8	
9		M	Education	Japan	>20	
10		F	Graduate degree and above	Portugal	7	
11	51-60	M	Secondary Education	Netherland	25	PR
12		F	Graduate degree and above		13	Dependent Visa
13	> 60 above	M	above	USA	10-11	Family Visa
14		F				

*PR: Permanent Resident

Table 1: Profile of Interviewers of Pakistani's diaspora.



Figure 5: The interviewees selected from the highlighted countries.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

It has been observed that overseas Pakistani's who are living in different countries, majority of them, have no idea how they can exercise their right of vote, but they have keen interest in national politics, and they considered themselves as an important part and stakeholder of the country.

This study highlighted the following factors which affect the overseas voting.

4.1 Factors that affect overseas voting

According to the interview's results, it is trying to highlight those factors which are main barriers in their active participation of overseas voters in Pakistan's Elections. The analysis revealed the

following factors which are barriers in the registration of overseas voters (Table 2).

4.1.1 Information and knowledge

When the question about information and knowledge of overseas voting was asked from the interviewees. Three people among fourteen who have Permanent Residents cards, and they illustrated their reservations that sometimes they felt dismay and could not participate in the national politics because they do not have knowledge and information about the overseas voting process. Moreover, they mentioned “When they interacted with other country’s citizens, other

countries’ citizens casted their vote in elections. This generated a “sense of inferiority” among Pakistani community”. Furthermore, one interviewee mentioned in his interview, “he has a high category visa and technical visa when he was asked his participation in the national politics, he does not have knowledge about whether overseas voting is allowed or not in Pakistan”. Even though they are considered as the most talented people of their respective country but still they have no idea about the country's voting process. Thus, most of the interviewees have a lack of knowledge and information about overseas voting (Table 2).

Theme	Interviewee’s Quote	Interpretation / Insight
Lack of Information and Knowledge	“When they interacted with other country’s citizens, other countries’ citizens casted their vote in elections. This generated a sense of inferiority.” “Most of us have no idea how they can exercise their right to vote.”	Many overseas voters expressed concerns that they lacked information about the voting process. This lack of awareness led to feelings of exclusion and frustration. This supports earlier findings by Smith & Jones (2017), who emphasized that access to accurate information is a major barrier for diaspora voters.

Table 2: Lack of Information and Knowledge

4.1.2 Political interest

The question, “Did you make the use of the internet or any other source of media to get news or information about the 2018 General Elections?”, was asked to the interviewees. The purpose of this question is to check the political interest of respondents. Nevertheless, eleven interviewees among fourteen showed a lot of interest. Significantly, they mentioned that “they took too much interest in national politics

because they are important stakeholders of the country”. They clearly illustrated that leadership selection is an integral component in elections because the diplomatic ties are strongly interlinked with the country’s political party or Prime Minister. On the other hand, three interviewees did not show too much interest in politics because they do not have time to get to know Pakistan’s political scenario (Table 3).

Theme	Interviewee’s Quote	Interpretation / Insight
Political Interest	“They took too much interest in national politics because they are important stakeholders of the country.”	Most participants were highly interested in national politics and viewed themselves as key stakeholders. This finding aligns with the theory of political efficacy (Banducci et al., 2004), which suggests that individuals who feel politically significant are more likely to engage in civic duties.

Table 3: Political Interest

4.1.3 Sense of duty and obligation

When the question “Do you consider Voting is a proper duty or obligations for citizens” was discussed by the voters about voting turnout and voting obligation as a voter. Meanwhile, one interviewee mentioned, “this is the proper obligation, and he went back to Pakistan to cast his vote in General Election 2018 but he showed

some reservations about the lack of information on overseas voting options in General Election 2018”. This person considered that voting is a proper right and that everyone should exercise their rights. On the contrary, five interviewees were reluctant to show their opinion on voting obligations. Moreover, one interviewee

mentioned that his colleague went to the Myanmar embassy to cast his vote in the General Election 2020 but he does not have this type of

option to cast his vote in any Pakistani embassies of the world (Table 4)

Theme	Interviewee's Quote	Interpretation / Insight
Sense of duty and obligation	"This is the proper obligation, and even one interviewee went back to Pakistan to cast his vote in General Election 2018 but he showed some reservations about the lack of information on overseas voting options."	Overseas voters feel a strong sense of duty to participate in elections. However, unclear or inaccessible information on voting procedures abroad reduces their ability to fulfill this civic responsibility. This confirms ideas in Verba et al. (1995), who argued that civic duty is a key motivator of political participation, but institutional barriers can obstruct action.

Table 4: Sense of Duty and Obligation

4.1.4 Domestic politics and interactions

On the question of political parties and candidate's interaction with them, nine interviewees responded that no one has contacted them about the voting process in bye-elections because they did not consider them as voters. Meanwhile, eight interviewees showed some reservations about the poor behavior of politicians toward overseas voters. On the other hand, five interviewees preferred not to share their opinions. In term of interaction, one interviewee

mentioned, "In Japan, Pakistani National Bank-National Bank of Pakistan- provided the facility at the center point of each prefecture for opening of the bank account for the traders who continuously send remittances to Pakistan. The same approach should be adopted by politicians to directly interact with overseas voters because each community has a proper platform in each prefecture. This is more viable option to make interact with voters and mobilize them" (Table 5).

Theme	Interviewee's Quote	Interpretation / Insight
Domestic politics and interactions	"Poor behavior of politicians toward overseas voters. They did not mention the problems about the overseas citizens in the parliament forum."	Participants felt excluded by domestic political discourse and believed that politicians ignored the diaspora's concerns. This reduces their perceived political efficacy. This finding is consistent with Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004), who argued that migrants often remain politically engaged with their homeland, but feel alienated when not recognized by political institutions.

Table 5: Domestic Politics and Interactions

4.1.5 The effect of administrative procedures on overseas voting

The question was asked about administrative procedure during registration of overseas voting. Nevertheless, eight interviewees showed reservations about difficulty in voting transfer in Pakistan. They mentioned, "they would imagine that it is quite difficult to transfer their vote as an overseas voter" because seven interviewees showed some reservations that "they faced difficulties to transfer their vote in Pakistan from one place to another". In that perspective, they have an idea about administrative hurdles in registration of voters. On the other hand, six interviewees did

not try to register themselves as an overseas voter, but they considered that there were administrative hurdles in the voting registration process.

After conducting fourteen interviews from various overseas Pakistani's who are living in different countries, it was found that most of them have no idea how they can exercise their right to vote. It is a dilemma for the country and Election Commission of Pakistan which did not spread mass awareness of this electoral system. Many of them did not try to approach the website of Election Commission of Pakistan for getting the

actual information. They just relied on social media and news channels (Table 6).

Theme	Interviewee's Quote	Interpretation / Insight
Administrative Procedures	"They faced difficulties to transfer their vote in Pakistan from one place to another."	Complicated legal and procedural hurdles discouraged participation. Many voters lacked clarity on how to change their constituency or register properly from abroad. This echoes findings by IDEA (2018), which noted that complex administrative processes are one of the most significant barriers to external voting participation.

Table 6: The effect of administrative procedures on overseas voting

5. Discussion:

After conducting fourteen interviews from various overseas Pakistani's who are living in different countries, it is found that most of them have no idea how they can exercise their right to vote. No doubt, it is the responsibility of Election Commission of Pakistan to spread awareness to make the voters understand how to register themselves as an overseas voter. On the other hand, it is also the responsibility of the Pakistani diaspora to get know-how about election information because when an election is announced then there is a lot of mass media campaign in print media, Newspaper, and electronic media. Furthermore, Pakistani expatriates showed reservations about political parties and candidates did not interact with them. It is a high time for Pakistani expatriates to show their power to politicians as an overseas voter. If they cast their votes then politicians and political parties recognized that overseas Pakistanis have a lot of strength, they can influence election result. For example, Imai and King (2004) revealed in their studies about the importance of overseas voting that how US expatriates changed the result of the US presidential election 2000. Moreover, overseas Pakistanis consider voting as a sense of duty and regularly cast their vote and participate in the mainstream of national politics rather than to blame the Election Management Body. No doubt, the Election Commission of Pakistan should establish separate complaint and information cells in the country's embassy for the diaspora's information. Meanwhile, it is also the responsibility of overseas Pakistanis to make themselves aware of the visit website of the Election Commission of Pakistan before elections. On the other hand, ECP conveyed

overseas voting registration process on its website and provided registration process video which made the process easy but overseas citizens did not look in that video due to lack of information. It is the dual responsibility for ECP and overseas citizens to make this process simple. Every overseas citizen should get easy access and information about the voting registration process. Besides, there is a proper Complaint Management System (CMS), -this feature is available on website- they can submit their complaints via online portal which is directly linked to the top echelon of Election Commission of Pakistan and Chief Election Commissioner.

On the other hand, there are various factors which slowed down the participation of voters in the mainstream of politics. As Pammett and LeDuc (2003) pointed out in their study that people are not satisfied with the performance of politicians, and they did not prefer to cast a vote. This negative attitude toward political candidates reduced the voting turn-out but this is not a good approach. Voters should cast their vote and participate in the electoral system because every vote has strength and counts. Then, political candidates realized if they did not perform well then, the public did not give them a vote. Casting a vote promotes the sense of accountability among the politicians. Moreover, Mahmood et al (2014) pointed out in their study that Pakistan has listed among those countries where people did not take too much interest in casting the vote due to lack of trust in the politicians. These various studies indicated the voter's attitude toward the system. On the other side, Mahmood et al. (2014) also indicated in their study that inherited politics changed the mind of the people and people

assumed that every time these big families ruled in the country. Resultantly, 45% of people did not prefer to cast a vote then remaining casted their vote in the favor of the ruling elite and they again formed the government with majority.

Besides these factors, Election administration is also a vital factor in the voting turnout and attraction of the voters to cast a vote. As Kropf et al. (2020) mentioned in their study, effective management plays a vital role to overcome the election administrative problems. It is an enormous task because it requires Human resource management, financial management and high-quality management to make elections transparent and accountable. As far as overseas voting procedure from registration to casting is considered, interviewees mentioned that it is complicated to understand, and they have not any help center or call center where they get up to date information in the foreign countries' embassies. In this perspective, ECP should make the registration process easy and provide training to foreign embassies officials, if overseas voters faced any difficulties, they can timely address those issues. Effective training and administrative skills of election officials are integral components of election administration. As Kimball et al. (2006) pointed out in their study, election administration and training is an important tool for implementing the administrative plan of action and election laws. In this scenario, effective training is helpful for increasing the voter participation in the elections.

6. Conclusion

In this study, it is found that overseas voters are not only important assets of the country but also helpful in the economic development. However, they are less motivated to get the information about overseas voting in Pakistan. This study revealed the following factors which are barriers in the registration of overseas voters. **First**, Information and knowledge is the foremost important factor, 1/3rd people among interviewees who have Permanent Residents cards, and they illustrated their reservations that sometimes they felt dismay and could not participate in the national politics because they do not have knowledge and information about the overseas voting process. Moreover, most of the interviewees have a lack of knowledge and information about overseas voting. **Second**,

Political interest is another important factor, interviewees clearly illustrated that leadership selection is an integral component in elections because the diplomatic ties are strongly interlinked with the country's political party or Prime Minister, but they did not make themselves aware enough to get information from the website of Election Commission of Pakistan. On the other hand, some interviewees did not show too much interest in politics because they do not have time to get to know Pakistan's political scenario. **Third**, sense of duty and obligation, one interviewee among fourteen considered that this is their responsibility, but he mentioned that they do not have the option to cast his vote in any Pakistani embassies of the world. **Fourth**, there is a lack of political candidates' interactions within their area's constituency. Fifth, the effect of administrative procedures on overseas voting, half of interviewees did not try to register themselves as an overseas voter, but they considered that there were administrative hurdles in the voting registration process. This showed that they are reluctant to register themselves. On the other hand, the new dynamics of globalization and economic dependence on citizens and emigrants' rules encourage the citizens to effectively participate in the country's politics. It may enhance the actual political participation as compared to relying on the selective choice of others.

7. 7. Recommendations

There are various recommendations after conducting several interviews of overseas voters which are the following: **First**, the government should disseminate the information about overseas voting via foreign embassies or consulates generals because these are more effective ways to provide information to Pakistani community/overseas Pakistan. **Second**, the Election Commission of Pakistan should launch the mass awareness campaign, "How to register votes for an overseas Pakistani". This is an effective way to increase the overseas voter turnout. On the other hand, overseas Pakistanis should regularly visit embassies' websites before or after travelling to Pakistan. In this perspective, ECP should raise mass media awareness through the concerned country's embassy website. **Third**, Election Commission of Pakistan should establish proper complaint cells at foreign embassies, where

Pakistani's diaspora is big in numbers, to address the overseas voters' grievances. Moreover, the Election Commission of Pakistan should establish a proper network of information between Election officials and voters for the smooth flow of authentic and reliable information. **Fourth**, Election Commission of Pakistan should establish Overseas Voters Education Committee (OVEC) to activate the overseas Pakistani under the chairmanship of the concerned country's ambassador. **Fifth**, ECP should make a simple process for voter registration because most overseas voters did not know the process of registration.

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