



Bridge Communications and Research - BCR

Policy, Awareness & Rights - Since 2001

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**PRE-ELECTION VOTERS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEXT GENERAL
ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN – 2013**

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Executive Summary:

In an ongoing effort to increase public awareness in the elections process, Bridge Communications and Research – BCR has undertaken Pre-Election Voters Awareness Campaign – PEVAC in compliance of Pakistan Awareness Initiative – PAI, launched last year from Canada. This is a non-partisan and non-profit initiative.

BCR's partners/ supporters/ volunteers and staff shall continue to place a strong emphasis on voters education programs to create an interest in the election process and to target as much of the population as possible in an effort to increase voter participation. Voter's education programs are a very effective tool in disseminating election information to the public and increasing voter awareness.

BCR conducted a survey about voter's education in 2008 while monitoring the general elections in Pakistan and a revision in 2011 following the inspirations of The Collins Centre for Public Policy in March, April and May 2012. The results were compared with the survey conducted in the year 2008.

Methodologies and statistics changed in the different parts of the country. The very disappointing fact is that only 24% of illegible voters know how to differentiate between rhetoric and delivery of the services by the candidates. Armed wings of the major political parties scare away the clean candidates. Clean candidates also have no funding to run election campaign and street supporters.

The awareness of voters under PEVAC clearly deals with one argument that why parliament is needed to serve people in Pakistan? Why a candidate is not opting to become a social worker or philanthropist? Because incumbents have turned the parliament into a trading place to benefit their own families and cronies. The conspicuous truth is that the country has witnessed a sharp spike in target killings, people falling behind poverty lines, devaluation of currency, gender issues, honour killings, protection of minorities and religious and political intolerance. Voters are the most important part of democracy but not aware of how to enforce democracy through the power of the vote. PEVAC would also work as Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) for the contestants. BCR would encourage voters to press for the law to prosecute the party leaders who call for bloody strike. The current situation has ridiculed the democracy as voters have no say in the system and turned into silent supporters of incumbent's failure to deliver.

PEVACs have been successful tools in Indian Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Orissa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Uttarakhand, a closest instance comparing to the situation in Pakistan.

Assessment Questionnaire:

BCR has developed a questionnaire for the voters to assess the candidates:

- 1. Tax returns for past five years.*
- 2. Ownership of assets. Self and immediate family members.*
- 3. International travel record and capital.*
- 4. Public service until now.*
- 5. Involvement in charity work and NGO links.*
- 6. Academic qualification.*
- 7. Profession – industry.*
- 8. What do you do for living?*
- 9. How many immediate and distant family members are parliamentarians/ politicians/ bureaucrats/ serving armed forces and related to the media?*
- 10. How many times you, your immediate and distant family members have gone abroad for health care and education?*
- 11. Have you or your immediate family members have loans written off or allotted any property?*
- 12. What steps have you taken to pull this country out of the current situation?*
- 13. Have you ever been to jail?*
- 14. How many immediate and distant family members been to jail or convicted?*
- 15. How many times you have defied law?*
- 16. Elections within the party.*
- 17. Name and evidence of the constituency where you have provided any service to people.*
- 18. Your party follows the democratic practical values or heredity and personality.*
- 19. Are your leadership and family currently in Pakistan?*
- 20. What steps you or your party has taken to pull this country out of the current situation?*
- 21. Why did you not resign after mass killings, collapse of the institutions and failure of governance?*

- 22. How many strikes have been observed yet on your party's call? How many people are killed and how much economic losses have occurred?*
- 23. Do you publish a monthly newsletter about what you have delivered to your constituents?*
- 24. What is the plan in place to stop killings, strikes, support economy, lower poverty and maintain rule of law?*
- 25. What is the percentage of your presence in assembly sessions? How many questions, how many bills you have produced and the number of point of order you have raised?*

Voters would be encouraged not to vote the candidates if they are tax defaulters, beneficiaries of political affiliation, inherited politics, been to jail, do not have faith at the country's health care and education, holding fake degrees, never worked for living, never worked voluntarily, never delivered to their respective constituency, been an executive of a collapsed institution, have loans written offs and how violent strikes have victimised this country. PEVAC encourages voters not to vote a candidate who has been to jail and discredit them from politics. Don't take chance for someone who is proud to be in jail, instead try new a clean candidate to show the respect of law and strengthen judiciary in Pakistan.

Realizing the awareness level in Pakistan, BCR is not assessing candidates on the standards of Approval and Score, Chicken Dilemma of or Fractional Rating.

How PEVAC would work?

Pre-Election Voters Awareness Program (PEVAP) needs to be specifically designed for each level. If, for example, the area has a low literacy rate, then it is important to use more of audio-visual techniques and less of print media for publicizing electoral information.

The PEVAP includes the clear planning of the outline of activities to be taken place during the campaign, which includes types and content of communications, the time frames, the organizational structure, sharing of tasks, and budget estimates.

Depending upon the context, some of the public communication strategies might include:

BCR would coordinate with media/ NGOs/ local and international partners.

2. Aware people that an informed decision to vote would bring a good candidate to the parliament and at the same time stop a bad candidate coming into the parliament.
3. This awareness message would be sent out through articles/ seminars/ informative sessions/ interviews/ social media and talk show.
4. Volunteers/ students related to social science and journalism would be trained.
5. Political parties/ Sitting members of parliament/ oppositions parties and independent candidates would be invited to participate in the debate.
6. Train volunteers and students to strengthen the advocacy groups.
7. Our questionnaire would be sent to the Election Commission of Pakistan- ECP.
8. Include social scientists/ media professionals and intellectuals in discussions with the potential candidate and party representatives.
9. Universities, Colleges, institutions would be registered before official launch of the PEVAC.
10. If potential candidates refuse to participate because of our tough questionnaire, we would conduct mock interviews also telling people that how good parliamentarians

turned their countries into welfare societies and prosperous states.

11. Discussion and display about the delivery of services in the developed countries and the countries on the fast track of economy like India, Brazil and China.

Objectives:

- . Aware people of basic qualification/ disqualification of the candidate according to the country's need.
- . Strengthen democracy by putting clean candidates into the parliament and create democracy within the political parties.
- . Keep parliament free from heredity, influence and emotional party slogans.
- . Let people benefit from a clean, fair and free parliament with peace, prosperity, freedom and justice.
- . Aware young voters for long term gains and about the questions to evaluate the candidate

Background:

Bridge Communications & Research – BCR <http://bridgecommunicationsandresearch.com> is working to promote Diversity, Policy, Awareness & Human Rights since its inception in 2002. BCR is promoting these core values using social media, coverage, lectures, articles, book referrals, talk shows, interviews and covered the events promoting such values. BCR interviewed leading figures in Canada to have them convey their message to the politicians in Pakistan to deliver for what they are in the office.

In 2011, BCR initiated Pakistan Awareness Initiative – PAI for both people and incumbents in Pakistan. We recommend books, lectures, links, published research based articles and general discussion for social and community awareness. BCR is the member of The American Political Science Association and The Canadian Journalists for Free Expression and has intervened in 7 cases of Human rights and racial discriminations since 2002. For more details please contact our regional office or visit our website.