

1970

Pakistani General Election, 1970

- **General elections** were held for the first time in the history of Pakistan on 7 December 1970.
- The polls in East Pakistan, originally scheduled for October.
- The election was under the scrutiny of military government of General Yahya Khan.

Parties And Candidates

- The general elections of 1970 are considered one of the most fair and clean elections in the history of Pakistan.
- About **24 political parties** took part in the election.
- The general elections presented a picture of a Two-party system:
 - **Awami League (AL)** - a Bengali nationalist party
 - **Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)**- a leftist and democratic socialist party

Election Campaign In East Pakistan

- The Awami League mobilized support in East Pakistan on the basis of its **Six-Points Program (SPP)**.
- In East Pakistan, a huge majority of the Bengali nation favored the Awami League, under **Shaikh Mujibur Rahman**.
- The party emerged as the largest party overall in the nation by gaining the **exclusive mandate** of Pakistan in terms of both seats and voters.

Election Campaign In East Pakistan

- Pakistan Peoples Party failed to win any seat in East Pakistan.
- On the other hand, Awami League had failed to gather any seat from West Pakistan.
- Failing of Awami League to win any seat was misused by PPP led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.
- He argued that **Mujib** had received “**No mandate or support from West Pakistan**” (ignoring the fact that he himself did not win any seat in East Pakistan).

Election Campaign In East Pakistan

- Then leaders of Pakistan, all from West Pakistan and PPP leaders thought that the **Awami League-controlled government** would oversee the passage of a new constitution with a simple majority.
- Bhutto said his infamous phrase "**Udhar tum, idhar hum**" (there you, here me) – thus dividing the Pakistan first time orally.

Election Campaign In East Pakistan

- Some Bengalis sided with Pakistan Peoples Party and had voiced no support for the Awami League.
- On the other hand, Several notable people from West Pakistan supported handing over power to Awami league.

Elections In West Pakistan

- However, the political position in West Pakistan was completely different from East Pakistan.
- In West Pakistan, the population was divided between different ideological forces.
- The **right-wing** parties, led under **Abul Maududi**, raised the religious slogans and initially campaigned on an Islamic platform, further promising to enforce **Sharia Laws** in the country.

Elections In West Pakistan

- **Bhutto and the socialist-leftists** appealed to the people of the West to participate and vote for the Peoples Party for a better future for their children and family.
- Bhutto's socialistic ideas and the famous slogan "***Roti Kapra Aur Makaan***" ("Food, Clothing and Shelter") attracted the poor communities, students, and working class.

Elections In West Pakistan

- The democratic socialist, leftist, and Marxist-communist masses gathered and united into one platform under Bhutto's leadership.
- As compared to the right-wing and conservatives in West Pakistan, Bhutto and his allied leftists and democratic socialists won most of the popular vote.

Nominations

- A total of 1,957 candidates filed nomination papers for 300 National Assembly seats.
- After scrutiny and withdrawals, 1,579 eventually contested the elections.
- The Awami League ran 170 candidates, of which 162 were for constituencies in East Pakistan.
- Jamaat-e-Islami had the second-highest number of candidates with 151.
- The Pakistan Peoples Party ran only 120 candidates of which none in East Pakistan.

Voter Turn Out

- The government claimed a high level of public participation and a voter turnout of almost **63%**.
- The total number of registered voters in the country was **56,941,500**
- Out of which **31,211,220** were from the Eastern Wing,
- While **25,730,280** from the Western Wing.

Results

- The **Awami League** emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly by winning a majority with **160 out of 300 seats**.
- The Pakistan Peoples Party won by a landslide in West Pakistan, taking **81 of 300 the seats**.
- The second-largest party won **just eight**.

Provincial Election Results

- In the provincial elections, the Awami League won **288 of the 300 seats** in the East Pakistan Assembly, but none in any of the four West Pakistan assemblies.
- The Pakistan Peoples Party won **144 seats** out of 300 seats in West Pakistan Assembly.
- The Pakistan Peoples Party did well the **Punjab** and **Sindh** Assemblies but failed to win any seats in East Pakistan.