

## MAJOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This topic is an effort to assess if electoral systems in vogue in sub-continent are the only options available or there or some other systems too that may be given serious consideration keeping in view political challenges in the area. Electoral system design is regarded as the highest level of policy intervention to improve public delivery. This intervention is highly technical, time taking and cautious as it substantially affects social fabric of the society. Perhaps, this might be the reason that different models and designs applicable in Europe have never been cogitated here. However, it is high time to research over Electoral systems available in the world and their pros and cons. Researchers have followed descriptive research design for the current research. Secondary data, primarily published by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, has been used in this study. This research highlights that more efforts are required from ECP and Parliament to consider the application of different Electoral Systems in Pakistan. It might be helpful for better service delivery and electorates confidence over the system.*

**Keywords:** *Electoral systems, Electoral system design, Electorates, Plurality / Majority System, Proportional System, Mixed System, Policy outcomes, policy effectiveness.*

### INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, electoral system design has not been given due heed by researchers and there is relatively less literature available on the subject. Most of the research in the country has remained focused on the concept of devolution of powers through devolving administrative, economic and social powers at grass root level. So, it is needless to mention that literature relating to the choice of electoral system for local government institutions, and consequences of such choices in the past, is hardly available in the country.

Debate over electoral system designs is gaining momentum in Pakistan gradually, especially with regard to election to the national legislature. Electoral system helps to increase inclusiveness and contestability hence, it plays an important role in public policy decisions and governance arena. Pakistan has mostly followed colonial legacy of first-past-the-post system. However, voices are raised over the wastage of vote in this system. Some scholars have advocated to consider other options for electoral system design but electoral systems available around the world have not been discussed at length.

Electoral system may simply be described as translation of votes into seats. It defines and determines the role and relationship of the electors and the elected. It may be explained with an example that in a country where elections are held on the basis of the closed party list<sup>2</sup>, elected members usually consider their first responsibility to obey party discipline than to appease voters. Whereas, in a country where elections are held on the basis of seats or districts (term used for constituency in many countries), party system remains weaker as political parties have to woo electable to their folds.

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<sup>2</sup> Where Candidates are elected from party lists as per votes obtained by the political party.

Electoral system has strong reliance upon institutional structure like the country is presidential or parliamentary, unitary or federal, democratic or hybrid. Besides, impact of geographic, religious, lingual, cultural and ethnic dynamics in a country strongly reflects in its electoral system. It must also be kept in mind that choice of adaption of electoral system is too tough or tricky as it has far reaching institutional consequences and is based upon the concept of trade off in economics. Moreover, electoral system might help to provide impetus to different arenas of development like inclusiveness in political participation.

### **Research Problem**

Electoral system is seen as a barometer to access if a country considers geographical representation or proportional representation more important to its political growth. Similarly, electoral system choice does also have significant impact on participation of women and minorities in the electoral mainstream. In Pakistan, geographical versus proportional representation are discussed for revamping electoral system design. However, little research is available about electoral systems in the world in order to deliberate upon apposite electoral system for Pakistan.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What do we mean from the term 'electoral system'?
- ii. What are the broad electoral systems?
- iii. Why is the choice for electoral system significant for a political system?
- iv. How does the electoral system choice impact the governance in a country?

### **Objective of Research**

Considering the previous discussion, Objectives of the study are as following:

1. To understand electoral systems in vogue around the world.
2. To evaluate the impact of different electoral systems on geographical and proportional representation.
3. To assess the importance of electoral system in enhancing governance.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Manner of casting votes in an election and their translation into seats of assemblies is called Electoral System (Menocal, n.d). Encyclopaedia Britannica defines 'electoral system' as the rules and method used for counting of votes to determine the outcome of elections (Nolen, 2009). In another definition, manner of casting votes in an election and their translation into seats of assemblies is called Electoral System (Menocal, n.d). ACE project dubs the electoral system as an integral component of a legal framework as it describes the relationship of political parties and elected public office holders in the country (ACE, 201).

International IDEA explains electoral system as a system that translate the vote casting in elections into the seats won by the candidates or the political parties. An electoral system may be examined as per the following key variables:

- i. Electoral formula: it explains the type of elections used in a country and mathematical formula for calculating and translating votes cast into seats won.
- ii. Structure of Ballot Paper: It examines as to whether a voter has to cast vote in favour of one or more candidates or the voter has to cast votes in favour of political parties rather than individual candidates.
- iii. District Magnitude: This term may, for the sake of simplicity, be considered as size and weightage of the constituency after delimitation. It is important that all constituencies should almost have equal number of population of voters so that every vote could have roughly the same weightage in the process of electing a representative.

Some other administrative aspects in conduct of elections like establishment of polling station, registration of votes, nomination of candidates, constituencies and their number etc. are highly dependent upon the choice of electoral system by a country. In designing or selection of an electoral system, the following aspects may, inter alia, be taken into account:

- a) Is the system financially and administratively sustainable?
- b) Will the voters feel powerful?
- c) Is a competitive party system encouraged?
- d) Does the system fit into a holistic constitutional framework?
- e) Will the system help to alleviate conflict rather than exacerbate it?

Electoral System is pivotal in a country apropos of issues relating to governance and service delivery (Bowler, David, Farrell et al, 2005). Choice of a particular Electoral System has a profound effect on the future political life of that country however, such choices are usually made under the concept of political advantage than technical strength of the system. Hence, it is considered as the most influential political institution to address gamut of issues relating to governance (IDEA, 2005) as character of politics and public policy depends a lot on the Electoral System (ACE, 2012). In order to deter exclusion and promote equity in policy arena, power sharing institutions, through Electoral System, might be helpful besides, Policy Effectiveness Cycle also appreciates Electoral System as higher level of the best intervention mechanism. Last but not the least; Political Systems Theory covertly concedes to the importance of Electoral System in its phenomenon of environment (Birkland, 2016).

World Bank in its report published in 2017 (World Bank Report, 2017) advocates higher level rules (R3) for finding best intervention mechanism in policy effectiveness cycle. It would be pertinent to cite examples of Bolivia, India (West Bengal & Tamil Nadu) and Kenya where power sharing institutions (electoral systems) helped mitigating the problems of mestizos and indigenous people of Bolivia, representation of gender and water issues in India and education sector problems in Kenya. However, Brazil is considered as the best example of improvement through change in electoral system where it is regarded that introduction of electronic voting has contributed to improve healthcare in the country.

Electoral system helps determining the scope of Political arena and role of stakeholders thereat. Efforts are being made to find out relationship between electoral system and governance, conflict management, accountability and public policy choices in developing countries. Political systems theory covertly admits importance of electoral system in public policy (Birkland, 2016) whereas, world bank report (2017) overtly appreciates electoral system as the best intervention mechanism in the domain of governance and public policy.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive research design has been selected for this research because of thematic scrutiny required for this research is based on officially published figures by different governments as reported by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Pragmatic paradigm has been followed in order to thwart the risk of being subjective.

### **Hypothesis**

Electoral System adapted by a country may help:

- a) Political inclusiveness of all segments of society;
- b) Enhancing contestability among citizens and elite;
- c) In improving governance.

### **Units of Data Collection**

UDC's for this research are the following:

UDC1: World Bank Report,2017.

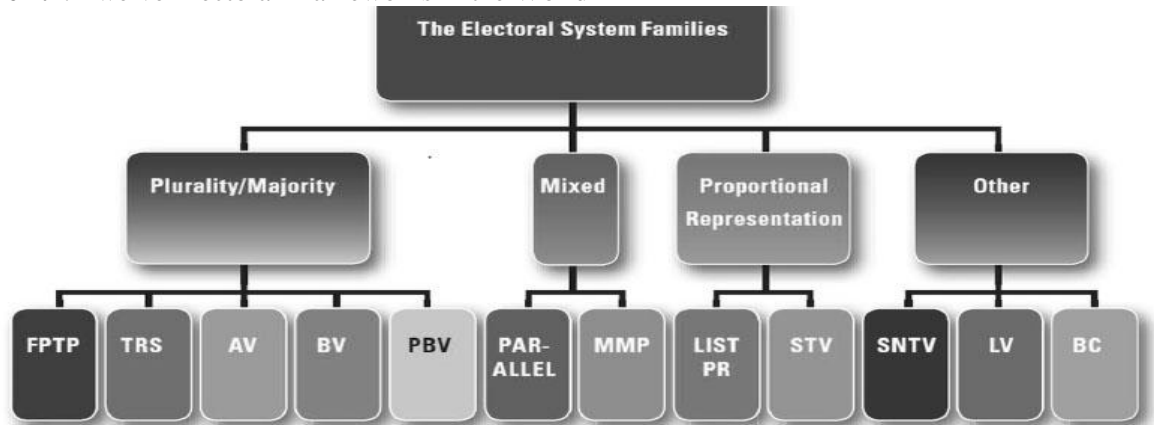
UDC 2: Data officially published by *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (IDEA).

### **Electoral Systems: International perspective**

There are three broader categories of electoral system families that are:

- i. Plurality / Majority System.
- ii. Proportional System; and
- iii. Mixed System.

In addition to the three broader categories of electoral system families, there are some other electoral systems too that cannot be included in any of the categories so such systems are covered in the category of others. But how many exact electoral systems are currently in vogue is a difficult question to response with certainty. However, twelve main electoral systems have been recognized by International IDEA that are as follows:

**Figure 4.1.** Twelve Electoral Frameworks in the World<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.1 Plurality / Majority System

Word ‘plurality’ has come from plural that means more than one hence, this system is regarded as the one where a candidate gets majority by getting more than one vote to all other candidates. There are two main characteristics of these systems:

- i. The system usually uses single member districts. Moreover, the concept of district (delimitation in the case of Pakistan) is relevant to this system. The examples of single member and multi-member districts are given below:

##### Single Member Districts

- First Past the Post (*Simple Majority*)
- Two Round (*Absolute Majority*)
- Alternative Vote (*Absolute Majority*)

##### Multi-member districts

- Block Vote (*Simple Majority*)
  - Party Block vote (*Simple majority*)
- ii. This system usually works with majority of votes and absolute majority of the voters is not necessary in most cases. However, majoritarian systems like two round system and alternative vote try to ensure absolute majority.

#### First Past the Post System (FPTP)<sup>4</sup>

FPTP is regarded as the simplest system for elections and it is being used in United Kingdom (UK) and most of the former colonies of UK. A number of Caribbean countries and Belize in Latin America use this system for conduct of elections. Similarly, 16 countries in Africa and four countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan) conduct their national elections by using this system.

##### a) Salient features

- i) Delimitation of constituencies is regarded as the most important feature of FPTP system as this system is based upon Single member constituency meaning thereby, one candidate is elected from a constituency.
- ii) FPTP system ensures representation in legislature from each geographical unit.
- iii) Voters vote for candidates in FPTP system and ballot papers usually bears names of the candidates.
- iv) Candidate securing the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared as winner(returned).
- v) Voters in FPTP choose from amongst the contesting candidates so, it provides fair chances to independent candidates for winning elections.
- vi) FPTP system is considered as a strong link between the electors and the elected.
- vii) FPTP system provides a simple formula for counting of votes and tabulation of results.

<sup>3</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 28)

<sup>4</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 35)

**b) Critical evaluation**

FPTP system does not ensure the support of majority population for winners. Perhaps this is one among other reasons that women and minorities are elected in lesser number to their proportion in population. There is more wastage of votes in this electoral system as compared to any other system. This phenomenon may be explained by 1990 general election results in Pakistan (Table No. 4.1)<sup>5</sup> and 2014 election results in India (Table No. 4.2)<sup>6</sup> where percentage of vote did not exactly translate into percentage of seats won by the political parties. For Pakistan, the following table may be helpful to understand the scenario:

**Table 4.1:** FPTP Disparity; Pakistan 1990

<b>Pakistan: General Elections 1990</b>				
<b>Parties</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>%age votes</b>	<b>of Seats</b>	<b>%age of seats</b>
Islami Jamhoori Ittehad	7,908,513	37.4	106	51.2%
People's Democratic Alliance	7,795,218	36.8	44	21.2%
Haq Parast	1,172,525	5.5	15	7.2%
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	622,214	2.9	6	2.9%
Awami National Party	356,160	1.7	6	2.9%
Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (Noorani)	310,953	1.5	3	1.5%
Pakistan Awami Tehrik	237,492	1.1	0	
Jamhoori Wattan Party	129,431	0.6	2	.96%
Pakistan National Party	127,287	0.6	2	.96%
Pakhtun-khwa Milli Awami Party	73,635	0.3	1	.48%
Sindh National Front	51,990	0.2	0	
Pakistan Democratic Party	51,645	0.2	0	
Balochistan National Movement	51,297	0.2	0	
Sindh National Alliance (Hamid Jatoi)	31,125	0.1	0	
13 other parties	64,470	0.3	0	
Independents	2,179,956	10.3	22	
Invalid/blank votes	231,568	—	—	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,395,479</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>207</b>	

The above table shows that in terms of votes, there was less than one percent difference between Islami Jamhoori Ittehad and People's Democratic Alliance however, there was a gap of thirty percent seats won between the two alliances. Similarly, Pakistan Awami Tehrik (PAT) bagged more votes than three other parties who won seats in National Assembly but PAT could not secure a single seat. Election held in India in 2014 also show similar disparity between number of votes and seats won by different political parties.

**Table 4.2:** FPTP Disparity; India 2014

<b>Name of Party</b>	<b>Percentage of votes bagged</b>	<b>No. of seats won</b>	<b>Percentage of seats won</b>	<b>Level</b>
Bhartia Janta Party	31%	282/543	51.9%	National
Indian National Congress	19%	44/543	8.1%	National

<sup>5</sup> Election report 1990, published by Election Commission of Pakistan

<sup>6</sup> Official website of Election Commission of India, <https://eci.gov.in/>

Bahujan Samaj Party	19.6%	0	0%	Uttar Pradesh
Bhartia Janta Party	42.3%	71/80	88.7%	Uttar Pradesh
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	23.6%	0	0%	Tamil Nadu
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	44.3%	37/39	94.8%	Tamil Nadu
Indian National Congress	26%	0	0%	Odisha
Biju Janta Dal	44.1%	20/21	95.2%	Odisha
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	22.7%	2	4.7%	West Bengal
All India Trinmool Congress	39.3%	34	80.9%	West Bengal
None Of The Above 1.8% (more than 6 millions) Shivsena 1.8% ( 18 lok sabha seats)				

The above table explains that BJP bagged 31% votes in 2014 Lok Sabha elections, but the party won 51% seats. Similarly, All India Trinmool Congress in West Bengal elections won more than 80% seats with less than 40% votes.

### **Two Round System (TRS)**

As the name suggests, in TRS, elections for second round are held in case no candidate secures the number of votes in accordance with the threshold specified for the winner in the law for the first-round elections. First round of elections in this system are usually held in accordance with FPTP. There are 22 countries in the world including France and some countries where the French have ruled in the past, some countries that had been a part of Soviet Union and Iran that use this system for electing their national legislatures.

#### **a) Salient features**

- i) A candidate has to cross a threshold to get elected in the first round or qualify in the second round. France is a case in point where a candidate has to secure 12.5 percent votes for contesting second round of elections.
- ii) Two or more than two candidates contest the second round and the one with highest number of votes is elected.
- iii) In most of the countries, the candidate securing majority of votes in second round is declared as elected.

#### **b) Critical evaluation**

- i) this system encourages trade off and bargain between contesting candidates and political parties in second round.
- ii) Winner in TRS usually commands the confidence of majority of electors.
- iii) The system is administratively cumbersome and expensive in conduct of elections.
- iv) The system of second round of elections may be perilous for political stability for fragile or emerging democracies. In Congo and Angola, this system resorted to civil war.

### **Alternative Vote System (AV)**

This system of elections is quite similar to single transferable vote where voters have to mark preferences between all contesting candidates rather than choosing one candidate on ballot paper. However, balloting in this system is similar to FPTP. The system is mostly used in Australia and some other countries of Oceania for electing legislature.

#### **a) Salient features**

- i) STV is a preferential system in which the voter ranks the candidates in a single member district.
- ii) The candidate that surpasses the specified quota of first preference votes are immediately elected.

- iii) In successive counts, votes are redistributed from least successful candidates who are eliminated and votes surplus to the quota are redistributed from successful candidates, until sufficient candidates are declared elected.
- iv) Voters vote for candidates rather than political parties although political parties have an option to field candidates like FPTP.

**b) Critical evaluation**

- i) AV system helps in developing broader consensus on issues and it promotes politics of reconciliation as candidates of major political parties have to seek better preferences from voters of smaller political parties.
- ii) The system has helped in promoting ethnic integration in Papua New Guinea
- iii) AV is a complex system for illiterate voters.

**Block Vote System (BV)**

Block vote is a vote of plurality majority system where voters have to elect more than one candidate from a constituency (multi member district). The voter has to mark against as many candidates as are required to be elected from the constituency and the candidates getting the highest votes are declared elected in this system. Block vote system was used in countries where there were either no political parties or fragile political system like Kuwait, Mongolia and Jordan but all those countries abandoned the system later on. Moreover, the system also resulted in few countries for either increasing social fragmentation or oppression of opposition in legislature.

**Party Block Vote System (PBV)**

Party Block Vote system is used to elect more than one member from a constituency but it differs from block vote as in this system, a voter has to cast a single vote for a party. On the basis of simple majority, all candidates of a party are get elected from the constituency. This system was used only in four countries in 2004. This system is regarded as the one that encourages ethnic and minorities representation in political parties. This system has also resulted in decimation of opposition in legislature on the mere basis of a majority of one or two percent of the ruling party.

**Proportional Representation (PR) System <sup>7</sup>**

Proportional representation system is regarded as the one where voters' choices are translated into seats nearly in accordance with the proportion of their votes polled. Proportional representation system promotes multi member districts. In some countries, entire country is regarded as one constituency. whereas, in some other countries, provinces are considered as entire constituency. However, Indonesia is an exception where its EMB has a significant role is determining electoral districts (constituencies). Size of electoral district has significant impact upon the proportional outcome of election results: bigger the size of electoral district is; the more proportional outcome of the result might be. Most of the sovereign countries in the world hold their elections in accordance with proportional representation system. There are two types of Proportional Representation systems:

- i) List PR System
- ii) Single Transferable Vote (STV) system

More than 80 countries around the world use list PR system for conduct of elections whereas, at least two countries use ST system for conduct of elections. Some salient features of PR system are as under:

- i) It ensures all political segments into legislature in accordance of their popular vote.
- ii) It encourages smaller parties to contest elections.
- iii) Facilitates minorities and marginalized segments to register their voices in the legislature somewhat near to their political strength.
- iv) It encourages political parties to work beyond their strong holds for seeking as many votes as possible. Hence, it may promote social integration.
- v) It usually has resulted in stability of policies and coherent decision making in national development.
- vi) It mostly gives rise to coalition governments that has its prospects and perils too.
- vii) This system considers as somewhat weaker for ensuring accountability of the elected by the electors as voters usually vote for parties.

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<sup>7</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 57)

- viii) The system does not ensure representation on geographical basis and usually urban population get more representation in legislature.
- ix) The system requires strong party system and political culture.
- x) Conduct of elections in PR systems regarded as a complicated activity for voters and election administration in comparison to plurality majority system.

### **List Proportional Representation System (List PR)**

According to this system, voters have to choose from amongst the list of candidates fielded by political parties in multi member districts. Counting procedure and formula plays an important role in determination of the elected in this system. There are three types of List PR system that are:

- a) Open list
- b) Closed list
- c) Free list

Most of the countries using PR system prefer closed list systems. However, a significant number of countries do also use open list PR system. Only two countries used free list PR system.

#### **a) Open list PR system**

In open list PR system, voters not only have the option to choose from political parties but also candidates within the lists of political parties. Hence, open list does not restrict voters to the decisions of political parties relating to candidates. In some countries like Finland, voters vote for candidates and seats for political parties are determined in accordance with the votes received by the candidates of a political party and candidates from a political party are elected in accordance with the number of votes received by them.

Open list PR system has usually resulted in competition of candidates within a political party and such a situation requires mature political system within political parties. Moreover, in many countries, this system has resulted in relatively less representation of women as compared to other List PR systems.

#### **b) Closed list PR system**

Closed list PR system is the most prevalent electoral system of proportional representation in the world. In this system, voters have to choose from political parties and order of candidates in the lists of political parties remain uninfluenced by the voters. A political party gets its candidates elected in accordance with the proportion of votes received by a political party. This system may encourage representation of women and minorities.

#### **c) Free list PR system**

In Free list PR system, voters have as many numbers of votes as the number of seats to be filled. In this system, voters may choose candidates from different lists or cast more than one vote for a candidate. Returned candidates in this system are decided in accordance with the number of votes obtained by the candidates.

### **Single transferable Vote System (STV)**

This system is based upon the principle invented in the 19th century by Thomas Hare in Britain and Carl Andrae in Denmark. In this system, voters mark preferences among contesting candidates on ballot paper. Hence, STV provides an opportunity to the voters for their informed preferences as 1, 2, 3 on the ballot paper however, ballot paper in this system is identical to FPTP.

#### **a) Salient features**

- i) STV is a preferential system in which the voter ranks the candidates in a member district.
- ii) The candidates have to receive first preferences or preferences in accordance with specified quota.
- iii) In successive counts, votes are redistributed from least successful candidates who are eliminated and votes surplus to the quota are redistributed from successful candidates, until sufficient candidates are declared elected.
- iv) Voters vote for candidates rather than political parties on ballot paper.

#### **b) Critical evaluation**

- i) STV is regarded as the most sophisticated electoral system.
- ii) Geographical link between voters and candidates may be maintained in this system in contrast to other PR systems.
- iii) The system may help smaller parties and independent candidates.



- iv) STV is a complex system for voting and counting of votes.
- v) STV is a complicated system for illiterate voters.
- vi) STV may sometimes encourage politics of clientelism.

### Mixed Systems

Mixed systems are such systems where more than one method is being used for filling up the seats of legislature. Usually benefits from both plurality and proportionality are taken in mixed electoral systems. There are broadly two types of mixed systems:

- i) Parallel systems
- ii) Mixed member proportional (MMP)

### Parallel systems

A Parallel System has two different and separate elements for election to the legislature. Both of the elements work relatively independently and do not adjust the issue of proportionality arisen as a result of vote. Under this system, choices expressed by the voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems. The one among the two systems is usually based upon PR system of electoral families and the other one usually is based upon plurality/majority system.

More than twenty countries are using this system for election to their legislatures. In countries using parallel system, only Andorra, Russia and Ukraine hold a balance of 50% between PR seats and plurality/majority seats. This system provides geographical representation and also tries to mitigate disproportionality by provision of some seats through PR system. However, usually this system creates parallel streams in the legislature that usually remains apart from providing equal opportunity to all inside political system and legislature. A chart of some countries using parallel system is given below:

**Table 4.3:** Parallel systems in World<sup>8</sup>

Country	No. of P/M Seats	P/M System Used	No. of PR Seats	Total Seats
Andorra	14 (50%)	PBV	14 (50%)	28
Georgia	85 (36%)	TRS	150 (64%)	235
Japan	300 (62.5%)	FPTP	180 (37.5%)	480
Jordan	123 (82%)	SNTV	27 (18%)	150
Republic of Korea	243 (81%)	FPTP	56 (19%)	299
Monaco	16 (67%)	BV	8 (33%)	24
Pakistan	272 (80%)	FPTP	70 (20%)	342
Senegal	65 (54%)	PBV	55 (46%)	120
Sudan	270 (60%)	FPTP	180 (40%)	450
Taiwan	176 (78%)	SNTV	49 (22%)	225
Tajikistan	41 (65%)	TRS	22 (35%)	63
Ukraine	225 (50%)	FPTP	225 (50%)	450

### Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) systems

A Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system also has one List PR system and one plurality/majority system but these two systems are linked with the other for compensating disproportionality arisen in the results from the plurality/majority voting system.

In Germany and New Zealand, voters cast two votes; one for plurality majority system and the other for PR system. Some other countries also conduct elections under MMP system but their process for elections differ from one another.

### Salient features

<sup>8</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 112)

- i) Notwithstanding the fact that MMP system aims at reducing disproportionality but at times, it remains unsuccessful due to vast disparity resulted in plurality majority system.
- ii) Number of seats in legislature of Germany and New Zealand are not fixed in order to address disproportionality fully.
- iii) The system provides geographical representation and party representation both in the legislature.
- iv) The system may encourage strategic voting in case of political alliances as parties may request for votes against party ballot paper and support another party for geographical ballot paper.

The table below shows electoral system in some of the countries that use MMP system:

**Table 4.4:** MMP Systems in World<sup>9</sup>

Country	No. of P/M Seats	No. of PR Seats	P/M System Used	Total Seats
Bolivia	68 (52%)	62 (48%)	FPTP	130
Djibouti	52 (80%)	13 (20%)	BV	65
Germany	299 (50%)	299 (50%)	FPTP	598
Hungary	176 (46%)	210 (54%)	FPTP	386
Lesotho	80 (67%)	40 (33%)	FPTP	120
Mexico	300 (60%)	200 (40%)	FPTP	500
New Zealand	65 (54%)	55 (46%)	FPTP	120
Venezuela	100 (61%)	65 (39%)	FPTP	165

#### **Other Systems**<sup>10</sup>

Apart from three electoral system families, there are some electoral systems that do not fall in any category. In such system the procedure of vote cast is somewhat near to PR system however, tabulation of result is closer to plurality majority system. The following electoral systems fall under this category:

- i) Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)
- ii) Limited Vote
- iii) Borda Count

#### **Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) systems**

Under this system voter cast a single vote in multi-member district and candidates with the highest vote are declared as elected. Voters in SNTV system vote for candidates rather than political parties. This system is regarded as unfavourable for political parties as a political party despite having fifty percent voter support may lose seats more than fifty percent. This system is used for legislature in Afghanistan, Jordan and a couple of other countries. Although the system is considered as easy and worked over 45 years in Japan but it weakens party structure by and large.

#### **The Limited Vote (LV) systems**

Limited vote system is somewhat identical to SNTV but in SNTV, voters have to cast one vote for multi member district but in LV system, a voter has to cast more than one votes but less than the number of seats to be filled. Member to the upper house of Spain is elected through Limited vote system. This system is also candidate centric and less favourable to attain proportionality or party strength in accordance with the votes of a party.

#### **Borda Count (BC) system**

Nauru is a pacific country where election to the legislature is conducted in accordance with this system. This method is similar to Alternate Vote as voters have to mark preferences on ballot paper but there is only one count for counting of vote. Candidate getting the first preference is awarded 1 point, half point for second preference and one third point for third preference and so on.

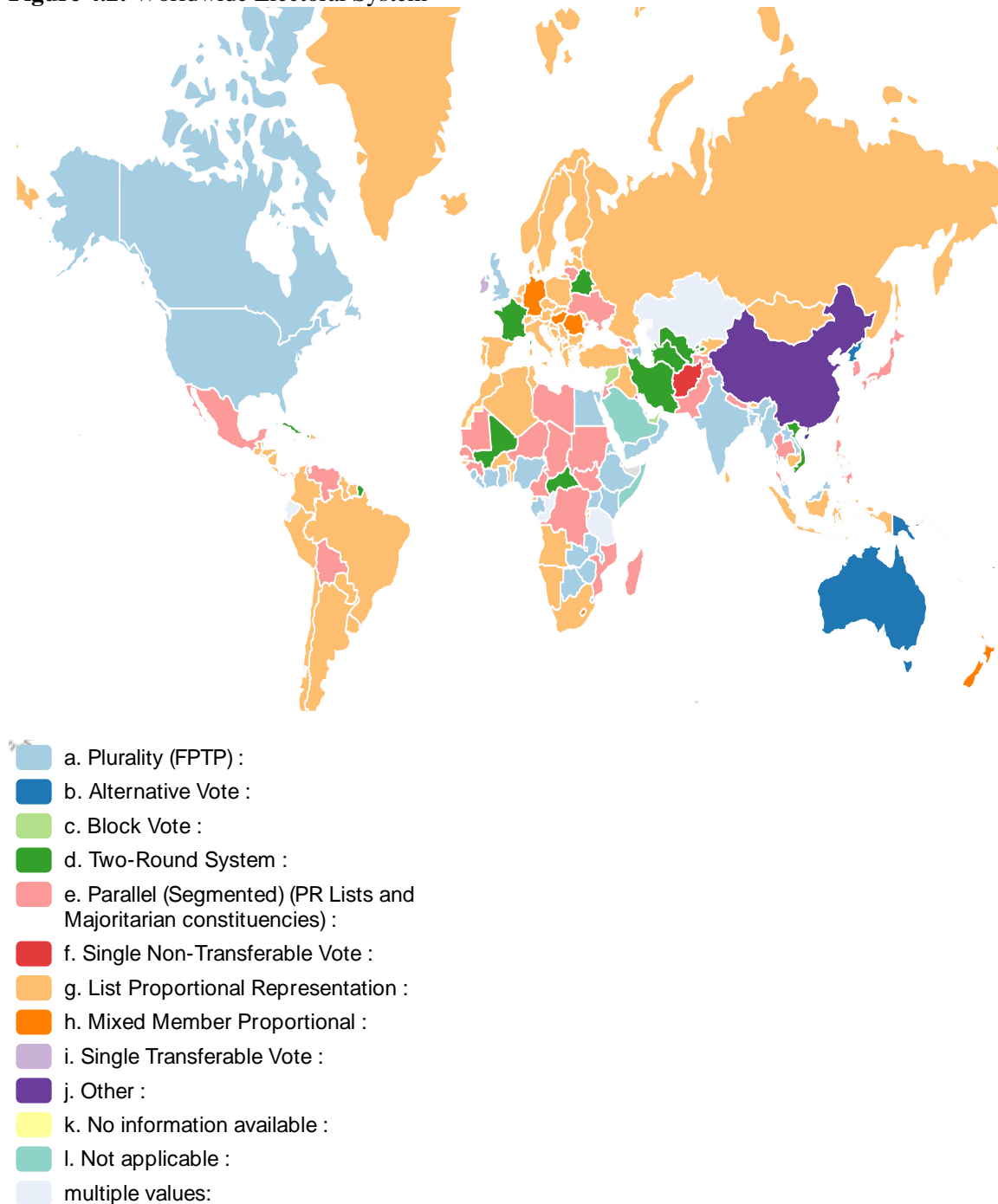
<sup>9</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 91)

<sup>10</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 112)

**Electoral Systems Families: a world view**

Elections are held through Proportional Representation system in most of the countries of the world however, the most world population elect their representatives through First Past the Post System. Worldwide distribution of electoral systems is as under:

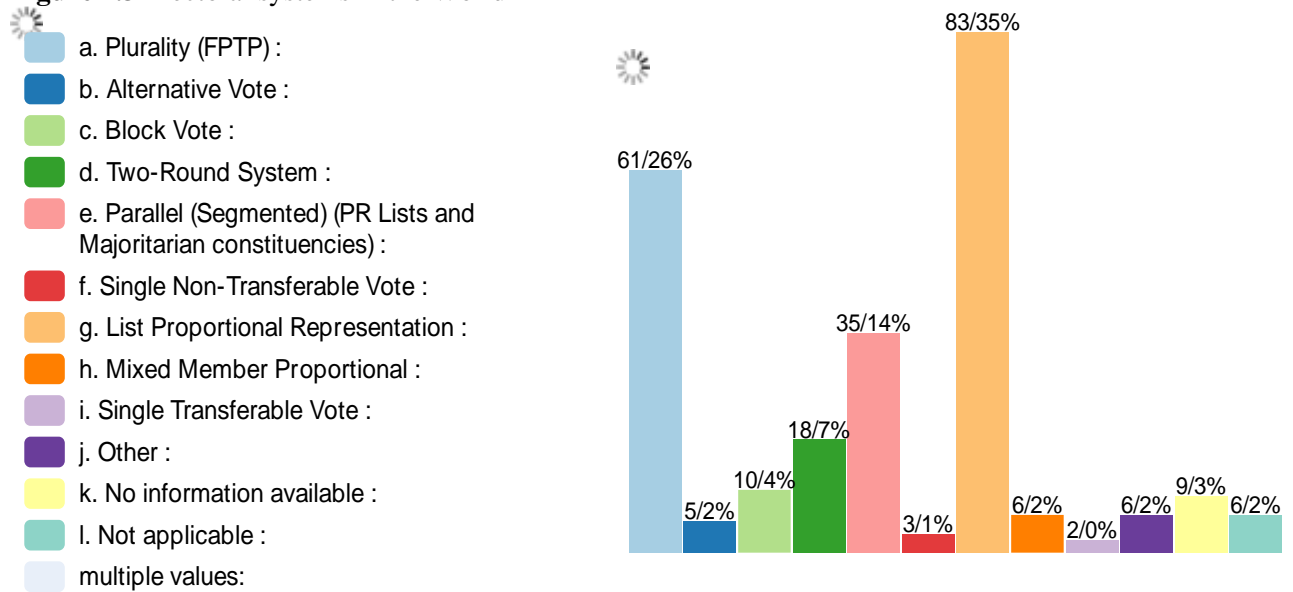
**Figure 4.2:** Worldwide Electoral System<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Map by IDEA

**ELECTORAL SYSTEMS: THE WORLDVIEW**

**Figure 4.3** Electoral systems in the World<sup>12</sup>



**Table 4.5:** Electoral Systems in the World

Electoral system	No. of countries	percentage
FPTP	60	26.0%
Two Round system	18	7.6%
Alternative vote	5	2.1%
Block vote	10	4.2%
Single Non-Transferable Vote	3	1.2%
List PR system	83	35.4%
MMP	6	2.5%
STV	2	0.8%
Parallel system	35	14.9%
Other	7	2.5%
No information available	9	3.8%
Not applicable	6	2.5%

**Significance of choice for Electoral System**

Choice for political system by a country is a political question that require a number of considerations. Legislature makes laws relating to conduct of elections and defines contours for the electoral system however, adjustments in electoral system are relatively easy in accordance with emerging political demands. Same number of votes manifest differently in different electoral systems like they may result in majority government of a party, coalition government or political instability. Notwithstanding the fact that Bowler, Farrell & Pettitt ranked different electoral systems in 2005, as per the experts’ opinion (the same may be perused in table below), choice of system revolves around the fact as if the country is unitary or federal; parliamentary or presidential; power symmetry or asymmetry in geographical areas; ethnic or communal divide in society and participation of different segments into political mainstream.

<sup>12</sup> Electoral system design (2008) by IDEA (page 32)

**Table 4.6:** Electoral Systems Ranking by Experts<sup>13</sup>

Electoral system	Ranking	Average score	Number of first preferences
Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)	1	2.37	52
Single Transferable Vote (STV)	2	2.60	38
List PR (open list)	3	3.26	18
Alternative vote (AV)	4	4.01	10
List PR (closed list)	5	4.17	9
Single Member Plurality (FPTP)	6	4.67	21
Run off (TRS)	7	4.9	7
Mixed Member Majoritarian(parallel)	8	5.18	3
Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)	9	6.76	3

Effective functioning of the government is another objective that has been achieved by the choice of electoral system. In emerging or fragile democracies, FPTP provides better chances for governments to legislate whereas, literate and developed democracies prefer PR system for broader consensus and dialogue for legislation. Similarly, administrative arrangements and expenditure upon elections is another aspect that affects that choice for electoral system by a country. Some of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of electoral systems are as under:

**Table 4.7:** Electoral Systems Advantages & Disadvantages

Electoral system	Advantages	Disadvantages
Plurality Majority system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) They provide fair geographical representation.</li> <li>ii) It is simple system for elections.</li> <li>iii) It usually allows to choose between candidates.</li> <li>iv) This system is more accountable for the electors.</li> <li>v) It promotes stronger political governments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) There is wastage of votes.</li> <li>ii) This system may impact political outcome through gerrymandering.</li> <li>iii) The system is not advantageous for inclusion of minorities in mainstream.</li> </ul>
Proportional representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) votes are translated into seats in proportion.</li> <li>ii) It promotes women and minorities in political mainstream.</li> <li>iii) Election administration is easy in this system.</li> <li>iv) It promotes the use of technology in elections.</li> <li>v) It strengthens political parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) It weakens accountability of the elected.</li> <li>ii) The system does not ensure geographical representation.</li> <li>iii) This system is usually difficult for illiterates.</li> <li>iv) It promotes coalition governments.</li> </ul>
Mixed system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) It ensures both proportionality and geographical representation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) It is a complicated system.</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Expert opinion on electoral systems (Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, April 2015), Routledge.

On administrative level, different electoral systems are viewed as under:

**Table 4.8:** Electoral Systems Evaluation on Administrative Grounds

System	Cost	Political Entities	Voter Education	Voter Registration	Counting and Results	Boundary Delimitation
<b>Mixed System</b>	Medium to High	Supports for many parties.	Difficult.	Must register each voter in a district (constituency).	Difficult.	Small Districts.
<b>PR system</b>	Medium.	Supports many parties.	Medium.	Easy	Difficult.	Easy.
<b>FPTP</b>	Medium to High	Leads to a few large parties, unless people vote by ethnicity	Easy.	Must register each voter in a district.	Easy.	Small Districts. Gerry Mandering.

### **Electoral Systems Families and representation**

Choice for electoral system cannot be oblivious of the question of representation. Three broad types of representation may be taken into account while making decision about political system. These are:

- i) Geographical representation
- ii) Ideological representation
- iii) Descriptive representation

#### **Geographical representation**

Geographical representation in an electoral system means how geographical regions would be represented in a system. Such representation may be based upon electoral districts, regions, urban and rural representation or any other unit that the system considers important. Boundary delimitation is the method through which geographical representation in a system is ensured. Such representation in Bolivia has helped rural areas to prosper with a reasonable pace.

#### **Ideological representation**

This representation in a system may be on the basis of ethnic, religious or political basis. Ideological representation tries to take into account political, religious and social asymmetry in the society and their relative strength in the system. Seats have been reserved in many countries in legislature to ensure presence of minorities in political system. In some countries, electoral system used to protect separate voting procedure for minorities, but many countries have now abandoned this system for enhancing social bargain of such communities.

#### **Descriptive representation**

This representation is based on the principal that legislature should be a mirror of nation. In theoretical terms, descriptive representation takes into account men and women; young and old; rich and poor and ethnic and linguistic cleavages in the nation. Women seats in legislature are ensured by most of the countries through their electoral systems. Some countries have introduced reserved seats for women. Whereas some countries have introduced legal restrictions for political parties to allocate tickets to women. Similarly, in Pakistan, seats for youth are reserved in local government institutions for ensuring their due participation in political system.

#### **Electoral System choice and governance**

Electoral system choice plays an important role in political stability and policy making hence, it impacts governance of a country in a great deal. The systems that promote stronger governments provide a great

room for changes in the laws and governance pattern. Whereas the systems that promote coalition governments require broader consensus for policy changes.

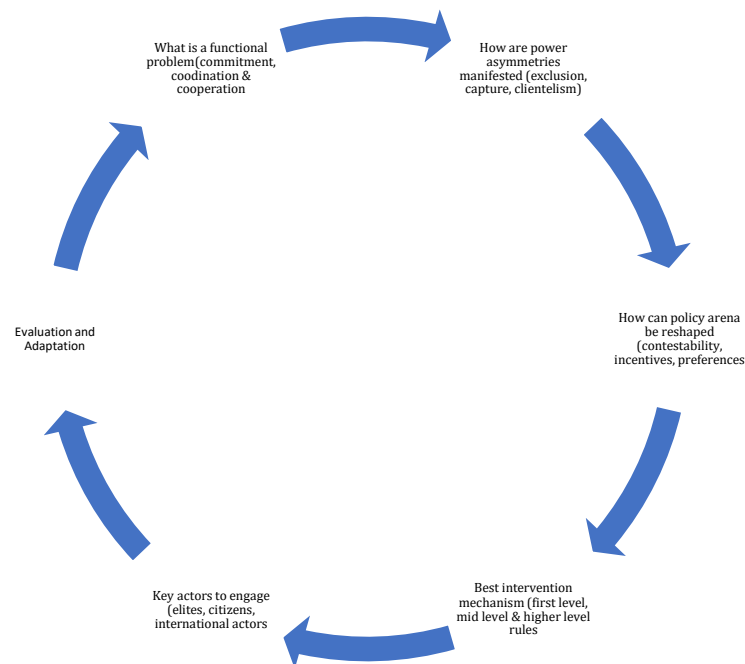
Thomas A. Birkland, in his political systems theory, appreciates the fact that response to environment is the pivot for a system to deliver. Structural, social and political environment, the terms used by Birkland, have their roots in the electoral system. If the electoral system is cognizant of such demands, the nation has more probability for better governance (Birkland,2016). Literature available in the disciplines of political science and Economics also appreciates the influence of electoral system choice over public policy outcomes however, such literature is either theoretical or empirically tested on the developed countries where party culture is strong. Hence, there is a need for rigorous study to know how the choice for electoral system affects developing democracies.

Candidates contesting elections may be taken as rational actors who desire to be re-elected. Their desire depends upon the electoral system. If the system promotes constituency-based politics, candidates will try to establish personal reputation among voters apart from political party profile. In case political system promotes political party politics, candidates would remain within the ambit of party ideology and party discipline. Hence, plurality majority system is regarded as more effective for public policy choices at local level whereas, PR system encourages public policy effectiveness at macro level.

Voter is another rational actor for electoral system design and he has to make choices between public goods and private goods. Voters, in plurality majority system, find private goods more easily accessible. Whereas, in PR system, voters have to focus more on the provision of public goods (Menocal, n.d).

World Development Report on Law and Governance, published by the World Bank in 2017, provides a policy effectiveness cycle that is worth consideration.

**Figure 4.4:** Policy Effectiveness Cycle by World Bank



Understanding of policy effectiveness cycle is important to understand role of electoral system in governance. Electoral system helps to mitigate coordination gap among different actors by providing a room for cooperation. Proportional representation system usually helps to address the problem of cooperation if a country is facing this problem to a larger extent. Similarly, power sharing institutions like legislature or executive might be pivotal in addressing the problem of exclusion in a country and such institutions come into existence by means of an electoral system in most of the countries. Contestability is very important to address for reshaping policy arena and electoral system choice may increase it. Brazil and India are cases in point where contestability has improved service delivery.



Change in higher level rules has been argued as the best intervention mechanism by world bank for improving governance and these changes relate to change in electoral system. Multi-party system or PR system both encourage contestability besides, the manner of conducting elections. It has also been observed in the report that mode of elections provided in the electoral system also plays significant role as introduction of electronic voting in Brazil enhanced voters' participation by almost ten percent and that resulted in better healthcare facilities (World Development Report,2017).

Pippa Norris has also dilated upon the aspect of electoral systems and governance. She has stated that one of the reasons for contentious elections is the electoral procedures throughout election process<sup>14</sup>. She also considers electoral system more important aspect for changing a nation among other factors like availability of a charismatic individual leader, economic development, availability of natural resources, controlled ethnic divisions, popular demands for radical movements, international pressures, and regional diffusions. In this regard, she pleads her case with the example of two neighbouring African countries, that are, Togo and Benin <sup>15</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Choice of electoral system encourages or discourages different segments of society in political mainstream, enhances or limits contestability in society and largely impacts the system of governance for a country. Local self-governance is directly related to people at gross root level and electoral system for elections of such institutions should be inclusive of greater representation and capable of providing better governance through enhanced contestability.

Choice of electoral system for local governments should cater the need for political mainstreaming of different segments. Hence, a consideration to limited vote system may also be given for local governments in Pakistan. There is a need to consider as to whether electoral system should be same for national, provincial and local government tiers or they should be different keeping in view different expected outcomes at each level relating to governance and service delivery.

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<sup>14</sup> Contentious Elections (From Ballots to Barricades) by Pippa Norris, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Driving Democracy (Do Power Sharing Institutions Work?) by Pippa Norris, 2008.