

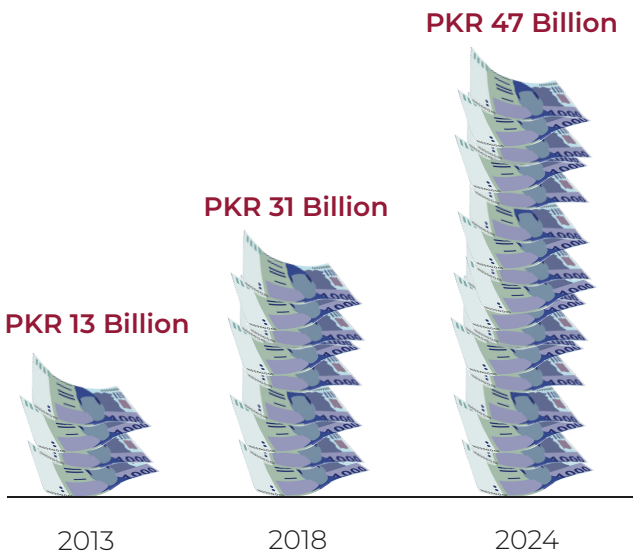
# COSTONOMICS

## COST OF CONTESTING ELECTIONS FROM MULTIPLE CONSTITUENCIES



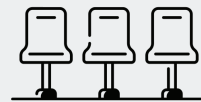
- Elections, despite their shortcomings, remain a major political activity in Pakistan.
- To date, 12 direct general elections have been conducted since 1970.
- Elections are a significant financial obligation for the country, with their costs rising exponentially over the past 3 elections. (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total Cost of General Elections (including elections for national & provincial assemblies).

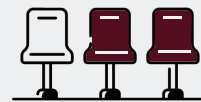


Source: THE NATION, newspaper

### 2 types of MPs in National and Provincial Assemblies: MPs on General Seats and MPs on Reserved seats.



MPs on General seats: Constituency-based parliamentary seats for which elections are contested.



MPs on Reserved seats (for women and minorities): Allotted to political parties based on general seats won by the party. Party nominates its members for the allotted reserved seats.

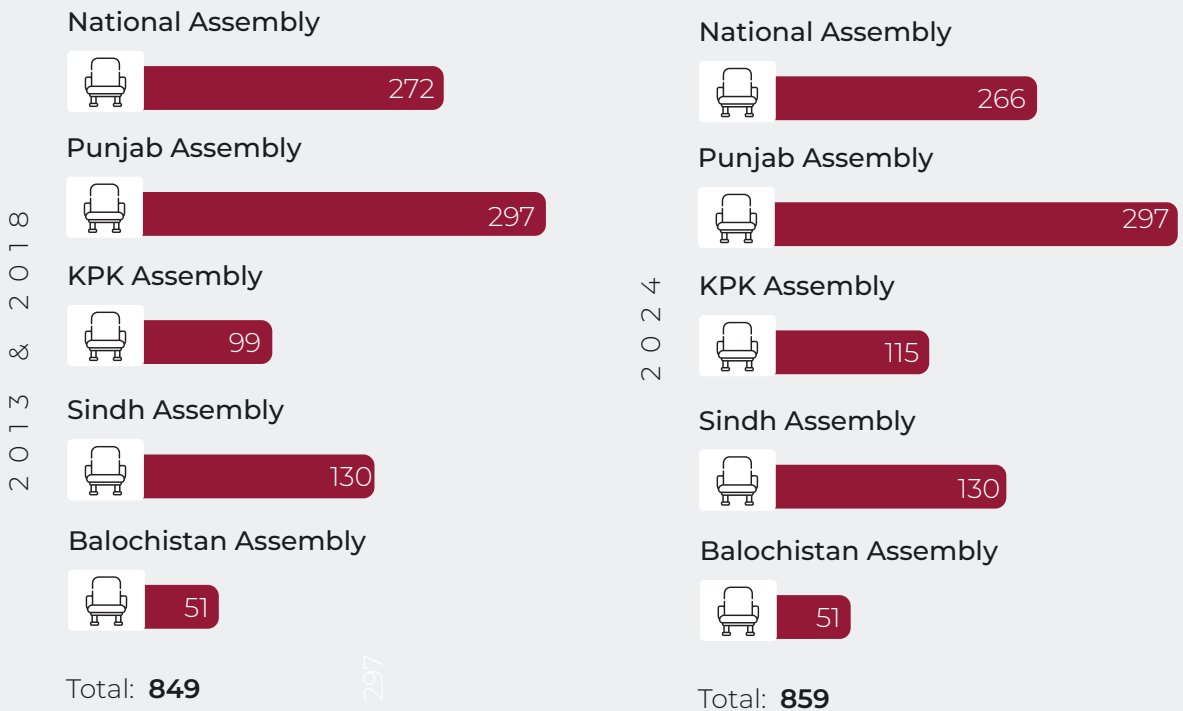


## Total General Seats in Past 3 Elections



Due to new delimitations under **The Elections Act, 2017 (as modified up to 5th August 2023)** and per **Population Census 2023**, the total number of general seats in the national assembly decreased in the 2024 elections while KPK provincial assembly seats increased due to incorporation of the erstwhile FATA region.

Figure 2: General Seats in Elections



Source: Election Commission of Pakistan



## Contesting Elections from Multiple Constituencies

### Loopholes:

- No limit is defined in The Elections Act regarding the number of assemblies a single candidate can contest from in a single general election, nor the number of constituencies a single candidate can contest from.
- This rule is exploited primarily by party heads and senior leadership to secure entry into parliament and choose between national and provincial assembly seats to vacate or keep based on executive position or gaining better political mileage.
  - For instance, a winner might vacate their national assembly seat where their party is in opposition to become a provincial cabinet member or even chief minister.



Senior leaders often contest elections on multiple seats



upon winning more than one seat, they retain only a single seat and vacate the rest



triggering by-elections on vacated seats



imposes a cost on national exchequer and the general populace

Figure 3: Printing Costs<sup>1</sup> – General Elections 2024

**PKR 120.24 million**



National Assembly Ballot Papers  
Expenditure

**PKR 121.2 million**



Provincial Assembly Ballot Papers  
Expenditure

Total Expenditure – Ballot Papers  
**PKR 243.4 million**

Source: Samaa TV

Figure 4: Average Cost of Election per Constituency – General Elections 2024

**PKR 47 Billion**



Total Cost of Elections

**PKR 46.7 Billion**



Total Cost of Elections  
(excluding ballot paper printing costs)

**PKR 0.452 Million**



Average Printing Cost  
per NA Constituency

**PKR 0.204 Million**



Average Printing  
Cost per PA  
Constituency

**PKR 175.79 Million**



Average Cost of Elections  
per NA Constituency

**PKR 79.9 Million**



Average Cost of Elections  
per PA Constituency

(exclusion ballot paper printing costs)

**PKR 176.242 Million**



Total Cost of Election  
per NA Constituency

**2.2 PA seats for 1 NA seat**



PA to NA constituencies  
ration

**PKR 80.104 Million**



Total Cost of Election  
per PA Constituency

Source: Author's Calculations based on tables above

**In 2024 elections, total of 22 by-elections conducted after general elections.**

**20**

**constituencies:**

reelection due to seats left vacant by  
candidates who won multiple seats

**2**

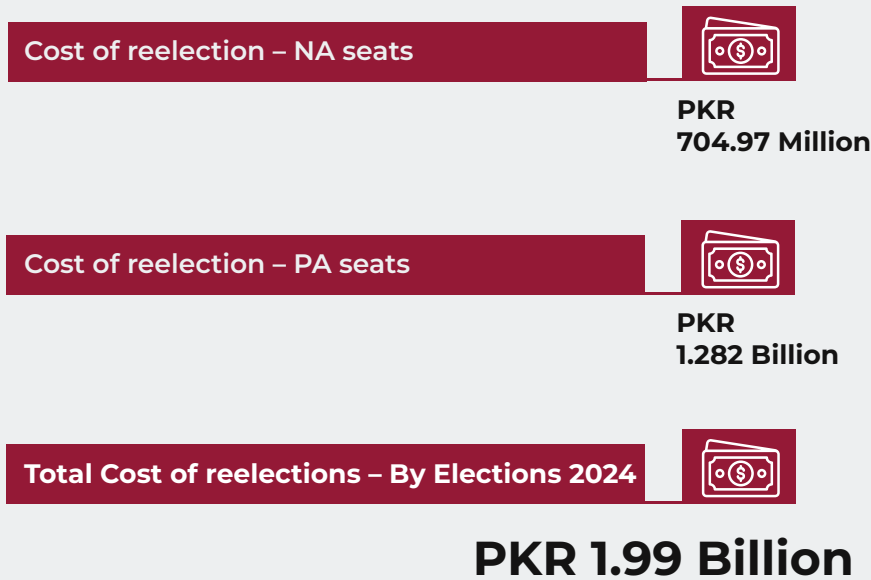
**constituencies:**

election delayed due  
to candidates' deaths



**04 National Assembly seats & 16 Provincial Assemblies seats**

Figure 5: Cost of Reelections (on vacated seats) – By Elections 2024



Source: Author's Calculations based on information presented in Figures 1-4 above

## Recommendations



Contesting on multiple seats must immediately be disallowed.



Candidates should be allowed to contest only from a single constituency of only one parliamentary house in a general election.

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1. As national and provincial elections are held together while all other costs in a constituency remain the same, printing ballot papers for each incurs twice costs for the same constituency, which must be separated to capture before estimating the average cost per constituency.