

South Asian Studies

Vol. 39, No. 2, July – December, 2024, pp. 123 – 132

Conceptions of Farm Laborers and Salaried Class About Politics and Government: A Case Study of Kala Shah Kaku, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan.

Zeeshan Saif Chadhar

M. Phil Scholar at the Department of Political Science, Forman Christian College
(A Chartered University) Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: zeeshansaif42@gmail.com

Received:
Sep. 01, 2024

Published:
Dec. 31, 2024

ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure conceptions of farm laborers and salaried class about politics and government. This is a significant segment that needs to be shadowed to find its involvement in politics and their political thoughts. This study discovers vulnerable communities how they take part in political activities and their insights regarding the political system. In this study, a qualitative contact analysis approach was used. Two communities were selected: semi urban area named-ziabad consisting of the salaried class, and a rural area named Kala Shah Kaku, consisting of farm laborers. This research will be useful for the developmental and policy-making departments of government, NGOs, and academia. It will provide original findings and promote further research.

Keywords: **Conceptions of Farm Laborers, Vulnerable Communities, Insights about Political System, NGOs, and Academia, Pakistan**

Introduction

The most famous lines of Abraham Lincoln about the Democratic system came as the rousing conclusion to his November 19, 1863, Gettysburg speech as the then US president: “Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people”. Democracy has been defined in various ways by so many authors; for example; Dicey defines democracy as “a form of government in which the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of entire nation.”

Yaser, N., Mashud, M.N. and Chaudhry, I.A. (2011) argue that political awareness simply means how much voters are informed about politics. Such information has been stored in the memory of a voter for a long time. Political awareness or knowledge is important for participating in political activities. Political awareness affects every aspect of citizen’s behavior and their electoral choices. If voters are aware of their interests, he\ she will vote for a party or candidate who fulfills his / her interests. Politically aware voters are not easily influenced by hollow slogans; rather, they demand comprehensive policies or programs that are linked to their lives and day-to-day affairs. For example, if a voter is interested in ending load shedding. Similarly, if a voter is interested in a

pay increase, he/she will not vote for a party or candidate that ignores such incentive. This means that politically aware do not vote blindly but on the performance evaluation of a political party or candidate. A party that does not perform well nor has any comprehensive policy program will get no votes from politically aware people.

Profile of The Study

Kala Shah Kaku (KSK) is a town in the district Sheikupura, with a cluster of villages like Ziaabad, Kala Shah Kaku Station, Kala Shah Kaku village, Etihad chemical, Rice Form, Thirty- eight Check Forty-Four, Forty-Five check, jare. Kala Shah Kaku is an industrial area. There are many industries located here. Among the famous industries located here are Punjab Steel Mills, Ravi Rayyan, Chipboard factories, rubber glue factories, Etihad Chemical Industries, and various other small industries.

Literature Review

A popular government without popular information or the means to obtain it, according to James Madison (1822), "is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both." Ignorance will always be overruled by knowledge. And a people must arm itself with the power that comes with knowledge if they intend to be their governors. Accountability is, in short, a vital and important component of the democratic process. However, voters must understand the government's actions and how they impact their lives in order for accountability to be effective.

According to Somin (2016), the main problems facing current democracies are a huge segment of inhabitants is generally not familiar with political system . Many voters consider that their votes are not bring any change and are not able to see anything exciting in being politically aware.

According to (Somin, 2016), Accountability is impossible if people lack political knowledge since, they will not know which officials are in charge of what type of problems. Whether illogical or rational, widespread and intense political ignorance makes it more difficult for the general public with little or no expertise to monitor and assess numerous government actions. Consequently, the public frequently fails to make responsible, educated, and successful choices about their representatives .

Democracy provides a chance for the individual to become an active citizen rather than an inactive subject (Jost, 2006). People need reliable political knowledge in order to participate in politics effectively and vote sensibly. They cannot hold political leaders responsible for their performance and actions if they lack political knowledge, which makes it difficult for them to vote sensibly (Craig, Michael, & James, 1999; Druckman, 2005; Eveland & William, 2004; Niemi, & Weisberg, 2001). Since democracy's inception as a political system, it has been

Conceptions of Farm Laborers and Salaried Class About Politics and Government: A Case Study of Kala Shah Kaku, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan.

plagued by the evil of political illiteracy. It erodes the government system, which is meant to be the people's rule. The public frequently lacks the political knowledge necessary to exercise their sovereignty responsibly and effectively if they are unaware of what the government does and how it impacts their life (Somin, 2015).

Research Methodology

Primary and secondary data were used in this study. The researcher also conducted the semi-structured interviews of masses and unstructured interviews of political agents. All the interviews have been self-administered by visiting different places of Kala Shah Kaku. Some of the respondents were unable to understand the interview in Urdu and were helped by the interviewer to understand the content.

Findings of the Research

Content Analysis: Conceptions Regarding Politics and Government

The researcher wanted to measure the conceptions regarding politics and government held by the Inhabitants of Kala Shah Kaku and the various conceptions across rural and urban area of Kala Shah Kaku. The content analysis is generated along two lines positive opinion and negative opinion and the categories for each are explained as under.

Negative Opinion

Overall content Analysis Main themes

Immortality

According to Nikolayenko, O. (2013) A subfield of political science called political behavior aims to measure and explain the factors that shape an individual's political beliefs, ideology, and degree of political engagement. In general, any action taken by people or organizations to try to control or avoid the impact of others is political. The subset of human behavior that deals with politics and power is known as political behavior.

Burki, S J. & Baxter, C (1975) argue that People consider politics as an immoral business. So the researcher found various verbatim quotes that reflected the masses' opinion about politics. One aspect of political immortality has yet to prompt the kind of moral outrage that it should, namely, the pervasiveness of lies and deception in campaigns. People believe that politics is fake because the poor class does not get anything from politics. Politicians who lie may trick them into believing that they're doing so for the good of the country. But to a large degree,

their aim is self-interested power. Corruption is a constant phenomenon in the society. People believe that politicians come into politics just to do illegal work. The culture politician's fellow is the one monetary incentive. Those people who give bribes solve their pending work within a few hours. Political elite do corruption when they get power.

According to Burki, S. J. & Baxter, C. (1975), Politicians promote a culture of unfairness. They want to use their power for their interest. They want to increase their business. People consider that politicians are indifferent to the needs of the society. They have been campaigning to serve the public; they knew the interest of the masses to the point when they were successful in an election, but once they did, they were following their interest and ignoring the demands of the public.

Lipset, S. M. (1960) argue that Politicians are the selfish segment of society because they always think about their profit. Politicians are usually quite motivated to protect and build their power and influence in their elected positions. They consider politics as business. They invest a huge amount in elections. After winning the election, they want to recover all expenses of an election. The political elite always think about an increase in their property.

Wilder, A. R. (1999) argue that people are being manipulated by cunning politicians. Politicians use their power for their self-interest. Politicians serve only likeminded people; they never solve the problems of lay people. According to one respondent, politicians never meet ordinary people during the year term of the Parliament. The political elite only sees ordinary people on election days to get votes from them. Due to this factor, respondents use the metaphor of petty insects for politicians.

Baxter, C. (1971) argue that people believe that politics is fake because there are no social welfare programs for the poor class. Politicians use people by their own choice. To get votes, politicians make green gardens in front of local masses. They make promises to ordinary people; they give you amenities of daily life. After the election, their ideology and practice change, and they lose sight of the public's desires. According to one respondent, politicians consider the masses just like insects.

Overall, the perception of immorality seems to have been generated from users' concern over the corrupt, fake, unfair attitude of politicians. The metaphors of insects and sometimes abusive language, petty insects, and the poor are manipulated by cunning politicians. Politicians never promote the culture of merit and transparency; they always promote the culture of unfairness. Politicians believe politics controls their economy; they generally get involved in politics in order to prosper and strengthen their business enterprises while utilizing government resources and equipment.

Conceptions of Farm Laborers and Salaried Class About Politics and Government: A Case Study of Kala Shah Kaku, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan.

Class Division

According to Palmer, Norman D. (1975), This world is comprised of two classes the upper class (Bourgeois) and the lower class (Preliterate), The upper class exploited the working class for the sake of their interest. During the past thirty years in the social sciences, there has been a wide-ranging discussion of “class politics” in capitalist modernity. The current study consists of two areas. One is lower middle urban that have salaried class; another area consists of rural areas comprised of farm laborers.

A lot of respondents tend to relate politics with class division. People consider politics as a game of the rich class; they believe that the poor always die when they involve themselves in politics. Politics is the power struggle, and it dancing in the sphere of elites. Politicians use the poor as fuel in their political activities. For the sake of a better future, the poor class blindly follows the political elite. But this game in which only the political class gets benefits, while the poor class suffers.

When it comes to the implementation of law in Pakistan, it is strictly observed in the case of the poor and not the rich. The respondent believes that all the rules and regulations are to be followed by the poor, not by the rich. Police cannot make reports on the political elite. Because they know their power and resources.

Some respondents believe that there is nothing in politics for the poor. These people have no interest in political activities; they think about their wages because they have to feed their families. People have no interest in politics because these poor people have limited wages; they always think about how to increase their means, and they are always busy thinking how to make good economy system for their children. They do not have any concerns with governmental activities.

Respondents believe that politicians use us as machines on ballot paper. These people believe that the political elite do not consider our value. They have no concern for our lives and needs. They only treated us, like machines for making thumbs on ballot paper. They take votes from us and after this, they forget us.

Mujhid, Sharieful, (1965) argues that the perceptions of class are reflected in their entitling of politicians as rich people, as manipulated, and poor are on the receiving side. Ordinary people used different metaphors to express their opinions; they believed that politicians used poor instruments just to make stamps on the ballot paper. They consider masses as insects. Once they get a vote, after this they will never meet local people. People relate politics to is to the game of the rich because the economic elite can come into politics because they have wealth; the poor have no resources to bear the expenses of the election. There is nothing in politics for the poor because the poor class always suffers when they indulge themselves in politics. People believe that all rules and regulations apply to the Poor class. Rich class have personal ties to government officials, politicians typically have the ability to influence government agencies, especially police

departments. Because of their fear of hostility, the rural populace refrained from speaking out against these dishonest leaders. Politicians can usually influence government institutions, particularly police departments, because they have personal relationships with government authorities. That's why the rural people had a fear of enmity and did not raise their voices against these corrupt politicians.

Insouciance

According to Almond, G. & Verba, S. (1989, 1st ed. 1963) though politics plays a vibrant role in developed countries, in the case of developing countries, people do not want to indulge in state affairs. They focus on their family matters. The researcher found various verbatim quotes that reflected the masses' opinion about no concern with politics.

According to Naveed, M. A. (December 2017,) People consider politics as a conflict-oriented business rather than a peace-making business. People believe that different individuals have different political affiliations towards different political leaders and political parties. Discussions about politics can occasionally lead to arguments with friends and family. As a result, it is best to steer clear of these conversations.

According to some of the respondents, participating in political activities is a waste of time and effort. Common People consider that thinking about work is preferable to investing time and effort on political activities. People assume that since we gain nothing from these pointless activities, we shouldn't be concerned about them.

Waseem, M. (2006) argue that People don't have any kind of concern with governmental activities. They think about their source of income; because they have to feed their children. People have no interest in politics because these poor people have limited income, they always think about how to increase their means, and they are always busy thinking about how they can make a good economic system for their generation.

Overall, the perception is that ordinary people are always thinking about their jobs; they want a good economic system. They always think about how to fulfill the needs of children. They have limited resources. Ordinary people believe that the discussion on politics leads to conflict. Local masses believe that it is useless to participate in political activities because in the end, the poor class suffers a lot.

Positive Opinion View of Politicians

Though the majority does not want to directly participate in state affairs, few people believe that politicians are playing a wonderful role in the development and prosperity of the working class. So, that's why they are participating and supporting the political elites with great zeal and zest. According to Shahwar, D.

Conceptions of Farm Laborers and Salaried Class About Politics and Government: A Case Study of Kala Shah Kaku, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan.

and Asim, M. (2012) politicians are good people in society because they know the art of governance. Everyone does not have the ability to rule.

Civic Obligation

According to Javaid, U. and Elahi, U. (2014) One fundamental procedure that keeps a country's political system functioning is voting. It gives the people the power to select their government. Additionally, it enables the populace to select their government representatives. Every government's goal is to create and carry out different policies that will benefit its people.

According to people, some of the respondents don't want to waste votes. They know the value of their vote. They believe that their vote will bring change. According to Parry, G., Moyser, G. & Day, N. (1992) people have positive remarks about the political elite that politicians are good people of society because they must put the interests of their people first. One of the main challenges that a leader faces is ensuring that he considers the people's interests above his own when making any decision. Ordinary people believe that politicians know the skill of governance. Local people cast their vote as a civic obligation. They don't want to waste their vote. They know the significance of their vote. They have a strong belief that by casting a vote, their circumstances will change.

Conclusion

Salaried class of semi-urban area of Kala Shah Kaku are more aware of political issues as compared to farm laborers. The main reason is that the masses of the salaried class have easy access to the flow of news and information mediums such as social Media, web, TV, newspaper, etc. while on the other hand, the farm laborers have less excess mediums that is why they stand less aware of the issues in the mainstream political atmosphere of the country. This might well explain their unarticulated and static opinions and voting trends compared to those of urban people.

References

- Ahmed, D. M. (n.d.) Voting behavior in rural and urban areas of Punjab.
- Anwar, M. F. (2016). Role of Biraderi in Politics: A Case Study of Voting Behaviour in Jhok Bodo Village, District Dera. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*.XXXVII, No.2.
- Asim, D. S. Voting Behaviour of People towards Different Political Parties in District Faisalabad.
- Awan, M. W. (December, 2016). Impact of Baradari Affiliation on Electoral Contests for Power in Khushab District (1982-2008).

Zeeshan Saif Chadhar

- Jalal, A. (1994). *The Ahmed, Manzooruddin, (1982). Contemporary Pakistan*, Royal Book Company, Karachi, p. 63.
- Almond, G. & Verba, S. (1989, 1st ed. 1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy I Five Nations*. London: Sage Publications.
- Azhar, M. (2009). *An Insight into Voting Behaviour of South Punjab: A Comparative Study of General Elections 2002 and 2008*, BZU Multan.
- Azhar, M. (2010), *The Impact of Income Over Voting Behaviour in the South Punjab: An Empirical Study of Pakistan's General Election 2008*,
- Baxter, C. (1971). *Pakistan Votes-1970*, Asian Survey, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp.199.
- Burki, S. J. & Baxter, C. (1975), *Socio-Economic Indicators of People's Party Vote in the Punjab: A Study at Tehsil Level*, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 34, No.4.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). *Some Social Requisites for Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*. American Political Science Review, Vol. 53, pp. 69-105 Azhar & Muhammad
- Lipset, S. M. (1960). *Political Man: The Social Basis of Modern Politics*. New York: Doubleday.
- Mujhid, Sharieful, (1965). *Pakistan's First Presidential Elections*, Asian Survey, Vol.5, No. 6, pp. 280-291.
- Palmer, Norman D. (1975), *Elections and Political Development: The South Asian Experience*, Oxford University Press, Karachi
- Parry, G., Moyser, G. & Day, N. (1992). *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rais, Rasul Baksh, (1985), *Elections in Pakistan: is democracy winning*, Asian Affairs, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 43-61.
- Verba, S. (1993a) *Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What do they say?* American Political Science Review, 87, pp. 303-318.
- Waseem, Mohammad, (1989). *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, Lahore: Progressive Publishers.
- Weinbaum, M.G. (1977). *The March 1977 Election in Pakistan: Where everyone Lost*, Asian Survey, Vol. 12, No3, p. 599-618.
- Whyte, F, & Whyte, A.F., (1932), *The Future of East and west*, Sidgwick & Jackson, ltd London, p.37
- Wilder, Andrew R., (1999), *The Pakistani Voters: Electoral Politics and*
- Wriggins, W.H. (1975). *Pakistan in Transition*, University of Islamabad Press, Pakistan, 157.
- Ziring, Lawrence, (1993), *the Second Stage in Pakistani Politics: The 1993 Elections*, Asian Survey, Vol.33, No. 12, pp.1175-1185. State and Political Privilege in Pakistan, .
- Muhammad Azhar. (June 2016,). *Educational Slabs and Vote for Political Parties: An Empirical Evidence of South Punjab (Pakistan)*. Orient Research Journal of Social Sciences, June 2016,.

Conceptions of Farm Laborers and Salaried Class About Politics and Government: A Case Study of Kala Shah Kaku, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan.

- Naveed, M. A. (December 2017,). Political Ignorance and Voting Participation of Rural Dwellers in Pakistan. *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 19–33. Philip Jones, *the Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 331.
- Rasul B. Rais, “Elections in Pakistan: Is Democracy Winning?”, *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 12, no. 3 (1985): 47. Baxter, C. (1971). *Pakistan Votes—1970*. *Asian Survey*, Vol.11 (3), pp.197-218.
- Downs, Anthony. (1957) . *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Edwards, K. (2006). *Youth democracy and social change*. Sydney: paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Centre for Social Change Research Queensland University of Technology.
- Flanigan, W. H. and Zingale, N. H. (1998). *Political Behaviour of the American Electorate*. Edition Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Henn, M., Weinstein, M. and Wring, D. (2002). *A Generation Apart? Youth and Political Participation in Britain*. *British journal of politics and international relations*.Vol.4 (2), pp.167-192.
- HRCP. (2008). *Human right commission of Pakistan. State of human rights: An annual report Lahore, Pakistan*.
- Javaid, U. and Elahi, U. (2014). *Patterns of Political Perceptions, Attitudes and Voting Behaviour: Influence of Media*. *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*.Vol.29 (2), pp. 363-378. Khan, F.K. (2014). *Electoral Politics in Pakistan (Elections 2013): A Case Study of District Muzaffar Garh*. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*. Vol.4 (4), pp. 79-99.
- Lazarsfeld, A. Berelson, B., and Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People’s Choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Columbia University press.
- Lednum, G. (2006). *Assess the Importance of Social Class to Voting Behaviour in the U.K*.
- Leighley, E. and J. Nagler. (1992). *Individual and Systemic Influences on Turnout: Who Votes?* *Journal of Politics*. Vol.4 (3), pp.718-740.
- Lipset, S. M. and S. Rokkan (1967). *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Vote Alignments*. New York: The Free Press.

Zeeshan Saif Chadhar

- Nikolayenko, O. (2013). A Comparative Study of Youth Political Behavior in the United States and Ukraine. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Shahwar, D. and Asim, M. (2012). Voting Behavior of People Towards Different Political Parties in District Faisalabad, Pakistan. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol.3 (2), pp. 85-91.
- Pandian, S. (2014). University Students and Voting Behavior in General Elections: Perceptions on Malaysian Political Parties Leadership. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*. Vol.10 (18), pp. 225-231.
- Rais, R. B. (1985). Elections in Pakistan: Is Democracy Winning, *Asian Affairs*, vol.12 (3), pp.43-61.
- Sheikh, J.A., Bokhari, S.S.S. and Naseer, R. (2012). Voting Behavior and Elections in Pakistan (A case study of Pakistani Election Methods and Methodology). *Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol.1, pp. 449-456.
- Waseem, M. (2006). *Democratization in Pakistan: A case study of 2002 Elections*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, pp.1-237.
- Wilder, A. R. (1999). *The Pakistani Voter: Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour In the Punjab Karachi*:Oxford University Press.
-