
Impact of Caste and Biradari System on Voting Behavior: Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Southern Punjab (District Bahawalpur)

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The researcher was influenced by unending contentious voting behavior in Pakistan because some ruling political parties used biradari and kinship system as organ of control to secure their vested interests. Some ray of hope is seen diffusedly in urban areas but rural areas are heavily inflicted by this malicious tradition. Hence it was decided to study and analyze in depth voting behavior in electoral and democratic process. This helped to understand the impact of caste, baradari and kinship system, political culture, rural and urban culture. This ethnographic research focused on voting behavior of Southern Punjab (district Bahawalpur) as a case study with special reference to General Election (2013) of Pakistan. The study was carried out with help of qualitative and quantitative methods. The caste and Biradari System as a tool to influence voting behavior both rural and urban studies was taken as a significant factor. Several strategies were used such as co-relational, comparative, ethnographic and historical. All these strategies were indirectly important variables of caste and Biradari system and voting behavior which connect all the strategies to explore and explain the hypothesis. A survey was carried by the researcher of 303 people of different walks of life such as students, government officials, less educated people and clerical staff working in civil courts and housewives. The sample was selected randomly of district Bahawalpur. A questionnaire (concept model) was developed and data was collected in person. The data was analyzed by SPSS.

Introduction

Since the end of World War-II, more than eighty-five former colonies have gained their Independence including Pakistan. All countries including Pakistan inherited democratic Political Institutions. The Pakistani does not have a lot of experience in elections. Since Independence Pakistan has held eleven General Elections so far. The first General Elections in December 1970, The second General Election was held in 1977. The system was also revised in 1977 to allow political parties to participate and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won heavily. It was also resulted into military takeover as results were not accepted by political parties. Later on General Election were held in 1985 on a party less basis which were boycotted by most Political Parties afterwards Elections were held in 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008 and 2013 respectively.

The year of 2013 is to be considered as a mile stone in the history of democracy of Pakistan as it was the completion of transfer of power after completion of full tenure of civil government. In this election, all the parties took part with full vigor and spirits. The focus of the researcher is 2013 election as the research paper is based on the General Election 2013 at National Assembly level of Southern Punjab (District Bahawalpur).

The caste system largely affects the electoral campaign in rural areas, where caste and Bradari (Kinship) loyalty is seen as one of the most decisive factors determining voting behavior of the villagers (Ahmed, 2007). Different studies explain how the local Identities become the substance of electoral politics in rural Punjab (Ahmed and Naseem, 2011; Wilder, 1999). Some are of the view that Caste system does not have effect in urban areas. This is due to the increasing Political awareness of the people especially in the large cities like Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad. Caste system has become insignificant factor for both voters and candidates.

Amir Bahawal Khan laid the foundation of Bahawalpur city in 1748 and this city remained well known for many years as "Soorah Ki Jooke". Two rivers namely Sarswati and Hakra (Gagrah) were flowing in this area since thousand years. District Bahawalpur total population was 1522061. Amir Muhammad Mubarak had built a wall around the Bahawalpur City with nine gates around it. The gates are namely Farid Gate, Mori Gate, Lahori Gate, Multani Gate, Bori Gate, Shikarpuri Gate, Ahmad Pur Gate, Dilawri Gate, and Duowari Gate. Their monuments are still in existence. The District Bahawalpur is further divided into 5 Tehsils. Hasilpur, Khairpur Tamewali, Yazmans, Ahmed Pur East and Bahawalpur. National Assemblies constituencies were NA-183, NA-184, NA-185, NA-186 and NA-187 in General Election 2013. The famous caste/Biradri of Bahawalpur are Abbasi, Gardesi, Syed, Owasi, Cheema, Baloch, Lunga, Murrall and Judgga. In the Cholistan Desert area and Tehsil Yazman other Caste/Biradri

are Mehar, Sammah, Lorrt, Sheikh, Dahbahs, Mughals, Muttoja and Panwar are prominent.

The detail of national assembly seats of District Bahwalpur maybe seen at Table 1 as under.

Table 1

| | | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|---------|-------|
| NA-183 | Makhdoom Syed Ali Hassan Gillani | PML (N) | 61891 |
| NA-184 | MIAN NAJIBUDDIN AWAISI | PML (N) | 94429 |
| NA-185 | Muhammad BalighurRehman | PML (N) | 88219 |
| NA-186 | Mian Riaz Hussain Peerzada | PML (N) | 74491 |
| NA-187 | Tariq Bashir Cheema | PML (N) | 92972 |

Objectives

1. To investigate in depth the real scenario of electoral system based on Caste, Biradari and Kinship system in politics.
2. To establish the root causes of the problems and devised strategies to improve voting behavior.

Hypothesis

Following hypothesis as follows.

H1: The voters in Southern Punjab follow the trend of caste, Biradri and Kinship system as compared to leadership.

H2: There is more impact of caste, kinshipand Biradrisystem on rural voters as compared to urban.

Literature Review

In reference (1 to 5) different authors have discussed various historical aspects of Bahawalpur i.eBrig (Retd) Nazeer (1959) and Shahmet Ali (1948) discussed the Bahawalpur location, its climate, constituencies and various castes. He says that the state is as large as Denmark. Politically, the history of Bahawalpur State is as old as that of the United States.

(Giles Henery (2008) spoke about the Bahawalpur state had an independent sovereign ruler, they had their own mint including three mobile ones. Bahawalpur was the only state which survived an independent Muslim state in 1947.

Tod in his history of Rajistan also mentions that Bahawalpur was built at the site of old fort which was once occupied and built by Bhatti rulers who also founded Koror Pucca. Tod's in his history of Rajistan mentions Alexander's invasion of this area somewhere near Marot,

Figure 1: Map of Bahawalpur District



According to Colonel Minchin (2013) “The dominate race in Bahawalpur is the Daodpotara which the Nawab is the Head. There can be no doubt that the founders of the tribe rather the Chiefs who led them to Bahawalpur were an enterprising set of men. They selected the Head of theperigani section to be the Chief of the whole tribe. This was Bahawal khan, the first who founded Bahawalpur and whose grave is at the village Musseeta”.

“The People, continues Colonel Minchin are to a certain extent nomad preserver the use of bows and arrows their hospitality is proverbial.

The Wilder (1999) explains the complete electoral process in Pakistan and especially on Punjab. He showed concern that very less work has been done by the political observers and analysts on electoral system. He made a point that Punjab voting behaviour differs from area to area. The Northern Punjab voting behaviour is different from the Southern Punjab. Same is the case of Eastern Punjab with the Central and Western Punjab. The Central Punjab is most populous and 42% Of Population resides in urban and 58% in rural areas.

The Dr.Mandis (2008)discusses the electoral system and voting behavior of the South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Based on the data collected from numerous articles, the author concludes that in most of the south Asian countries democratic system is although working but the electoral system of these countries is not functioning properly. These countries are struggling with electoral malpractices which is critical concern.

DrRasoolBukshRais has written the first article on the electoral system of Pakistan. He says that elections in Pakistan have always remained controversial due to the rigging issue. The trust of political parties in the election commission is very weak which leads to create uneven situation in the electoral process of the country. Further, he says that the political culture is influenced by Zamidars and Jageedars especially in rural areas of Pakistan. The influence of Zamidars and Jageedars over the electoral system of Pakistan always left privileges for this specific class.

Dr. Waseem says that social groups have to play a major role in election i.e tribe, caste, sub-caste, sect, sub-sect, faction and trade union etc. Candidates influence the big man in the community for electoral gains. Discussing the Pakistani voters in 1993 election, he concluded that the voter was not a national voter rather was parochial one and was obliged to the local power structure and caste/biradri. The party voter, patronage voters and voters of the social groups together made the Pakistani voters in 1993 elections. The author considers multiple factors of voter behavior relating all three theoretical models, which shows that there is no single factor to shape the voting behavior.

The Ziring (2004) discusses that Pakistan is struggling state internally as well as externally. Internally, he discusses the failure of electoral system for proper political process and development for Sound democracy. He has highlighted that Pakistani society is heterogeneous and they differ socially, culturally and religiously. Hence they are not one nation and this creates distance between the ruler and the ruled. Externally he explains that Pakistan is under foreign influence due to her economic and defense interdependence. It results in the foreign interference into the domestic matters of Pakistan.

Alvi (1997) added in InayatUllah study and concludes that only economically independent voters likely to make voting decisions in line with biradri/caste. The author argued that economically dependent voters vote accordingly to the voting decisions of those whom they depend on in other words voter's employers. Thus economic dependent/independence is even more fundamental factor of voting behavior.

Lieven (2012) has highlighted that Kinship is central to the weakness of the Pakistani State, but also to its stability, above all because of its relationship with class because the Pakistani political elites, especially in the countryside, rely

for their strength not just on wealth but on their leadership of clans or kinship network, kinship plays a vital part in maintaining the dominance of the 'Feudal' elites and many of the urban bosses. Patronage and kinship form the basic elements of the Pakistani political system- if water, chemically speaking, is H₂O then Pakistani politics are P₂K. Political factions are very important, But they exist chiefly to seek Patronage and have kinship links as their most Important foundations.

The writer gives the analyses of the local culture conflict which influences the voting behavior in the Punjab. The conflicting attitude is between the two groups of castes and sects. He has analyzed the whole Pakistan including rural Sindh and Urban Karachi and special emphasis on the Punjab. He has concluded that both the rural and urban areas are influenced by localism as the voting behavior of the people is concerned. He has touched upon the Punjab politics in general and throws light on castes and sects in particular.

Caste, Kinship and Biradri System

An overwhelming majority of the respondents considered various variables largely affect the electoral campaign in rural areas Where political culture, caste and kinship is seen as one of the most decisive factors determining voting trends of villagers. (Ahmed, 2007) Different studies explain how the local identities become the substance of electoral Politics in rural Punjab

(Ahmed and Naseem, 2011; wilder, 1999). However, Very less respondents were of the view that political culture, caste and kinship have lesser effect in urban areas due to their increasing political awareness and having higher educational qualification.

According to Ranney (1993: 65) the significance of media cannot be denied as it is the best short run technique for political modernization.

The Punjabi bureaucracy were not, however, the only ones to reject the democracy ideal backed mainly by the Bengalis: politicians in West Pakistan displayed the same attitude. Z.A. Bhutto himself rejected the results of the 1970 elections won by Mujibur Rahman not only did the West Pakistani Politicians not wish to fall under Bengali rule, but they also embodied a political culture stamped with feudalism made up more of clientelism and factionalism

"Feudalism" is a mindset more than a socio economic phenomenon, almost all the political parties have become family enterprises over time, in financial terms as well. As Maleeha Lodhi writes, "the personalized nature of politics is closely related to the dominant position enjoyed throughout Pakistan's history by narrowly-based political elite that was feudal and tribal in origin and has remained so in outlook even as it gradually came to share power with well-to-do urban groups. The urban rich functions much like their rural counterparts with their

efforts at political mobilization resting more on working lineage and biradari connections and alliances than representing wider urban interests.

Research Methodology

The Research is based upon the General Election of 2013 with special reference to the selected urban and Rural District of Southern Punjab i.e. (District Bahawalpur). The study was carried out with the help of qualitative and quantitative methods. The caste and Biradari System as a tool to influence voting behavior both rural and urban studies was the significant factor. Several strategies were used such as co-relational, comparative, ethnographic and historical. All these strategies are indirectly important variable of caste and Biradari system and voting behavior which connect all the strategies to explore and explain the hypothesis. The research was based on qualitative method. The statistical data was used by the researcher to seek help in analyzing the findings. The study was based on 2013 general election of Pakistan at National level of district Bahawalpur for the findings of the hypothetical study.

Analytical Tools

Following are the trends observed based upon analysis of questionnaire and interviews during the survey. The bigger portion of the collected data was about Arain caste. Mostly, the respondents were selected from the constituency of NA-184 Mian Najeebuddin Awasi PML(N). Overall trend of this constituency was that 94 respondents which were selected randomly were belonged to Arian caste. Results showed that overall 61 voters cast their votes in favour of PML (N), 10 respondents belonged to PTI, 6 were from JUI, 6 respondents did not cast their votes and 7 respondents gave their votes to independent and other candidates. Results further revealed that 42 voters cast their votes in favour of PML (N), 5 respondents were belonging to PTI, 3 were from JUI and 4 respondents did not cast their votes in rural area.

Results also showed that 19 voters cast their votes in favour of PML(N), 5 respondents were belonging to PTI, 3 were in favour of JUI, 1 respondent did not cast his vote, 3 respondents were quite indecisive and could not decide to whom they should cast their votes. 7 respondents gave their votes to independent and other candidates in urban area. As the winning candidate was from Arain caste so we can observe that 65% voters of Arian caste follow the trend of kinship in general election 2013. Moreover, this trend was more obvious in rural areas as 78% voters cast their votes in favour of Arian candidates. This trend was not followed much by voters of Urban areas as 48% voters casted their votes on the basis of caste system.

The second portion of the collected data is about Summah caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Summah caste was that 25 respondents selected randomly belonged to Summah caste. Results show that overall 8 voters cast their votes in favour of PML (N). 15 respondents belonged to PTI, 1 was from JUI, 1 respondent was from PPP and 1 was indecisive and did not cast his vote. The results further revealed that 4 voters cast their votes in favour of PML(N), 4 respondents belonged to PTI, 1 was from PPP in rural area.

The results also show that 4 voters cast their votes in favour of PML (N), 10 respondents belonged to PTI, one was in favour of JUI and one was indifferent. There were mixed result of Summah caste.

The next portion of the collected data is about Syed caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding the Syed caste was that 15 respondents selected randomly belonged to Syed caste. Results show that overall five voters did cast their votes in favour of PML(N), eight respondents belonged to PTI, one was from JUI, one respondent did not cast his vote. Results also show that four voters did cast their votes in favour of PML(N), ten respondents belonged to PTI, one was in favour of JUI, one was indecisive. There was mixed results of Syed caste.

The next portion of the collected data was about Rajput caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Rajput caste was that 11 respondents selected randomly belonged to Rajput caste. Results show that overall 6 voters cast their votes in favour of PML(N), 04 respondents belonged to PTI whereas one was from PPP. All these respondents belonged to urban area. There were mixed results of Rajput caste too.

The next portion of the collected data was about Gujjar caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Gujjar caste was that 9 respondents selected randomly belonged to Gujjar caste. Results show that overall 9 voters casted their votes in favour of PTI. All these respondents belonged to rural area. All the voters of this caste were in favour of PTI. Overall, result indicate that 100 % voters of Gujjar's caste were in favour of PTI.

The next portion of the collected data was about Lunga caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Lunga caste was that 9 respondents selected randomly belonged to Lunga caste. Results show that overall 7 voters cast their votes in favour of PML (N), 2 respondents belonged to PTI. All these respondents belonged to rural area. There were also the mixed results of Lunga caste. As this caste was not the major caste of District Bahawalpur and no candidate contested in the General Election of 2013. That was the main cause that we see the mixed results. Most of the voters of this caste were in favour of PML(N). Overall results indicate that 78 % voters of this caste were in favour of PML(N). While 22 % voters of this caste were in favour of PTI.

The next portion of the collected data was about Gardezi caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Gardezi caste was that 3 respondents selected randomly belonged to Gardezi caste. Results show that overall 2 voters cast their votes in favour of PML(N) and one respondent belonged to PTI. All these respondents belonged to rural area. There was also the mix result of Gardezi caste.

As this caste was not the major caste of the District Bahawalpur and no candidate contested the General Election of 2013. That was the main cause to get mixed results. Most of the voters of this caste were in favour of PML(N). Overall results indicate that 67 % voters of this caste were in favour of PML(N) while 33 % voters of this caste were in favour of PTI.

The next portion of the collected data was about Baloch caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Baloch caste was that 5 respondents selected randomly belonged to Baloch caste. Results show that overall all 5 voters did cast their votes in favour of PML(N). All these respondents belonged to rural area. All the voters of this caste were in favour of PML(N). Overall results indicate that 100 % voters of Baloch caste were in favour of PML(N).

The next portion of the collected data was about Mughal caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Mughal cast was that 2 respondents selected randomly belonged to Mughal caste. Results show that overall all 2 voters caste their votes in favour of PML(N). All these respondents belonged to rural area. All the voters of this caste were in favour PML(N). Overall results indicate that 100 % voters of Mughal caste were in favour of PML(N).

The next portion of the collected data was about Dahbaha caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Dahbaha cast was that one respondent selected randomly belonged to Dahbaha caste. Results show that overall single voter cast his vote in favour of PPP. This respondent belonged to rural area. Overall results indicate that 100 % voters of Dahbaha caste were in favour of PPP.

The next portion of the collected data was about Sheikh Caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Sheikh caste was that 2 respondents were selected randomly belonged to Sheikh Caste. Results show that overall all 2 voters cast their votes in favor of PML (N). All these respondents belonged to rural area. All the voters of this caste were in favor PML. Overall results indicate that 100 % voters of Sheikh caste were in favor of PML (N).

The next portion of the collected data was about Panwar caste. Overall trend of this constituency regarding Panwar caste was that 2 respondents selected randomly belonged to Panwar caste. Results show that overall all 2 voters cast their votes in favour of PPP. All these respondents belonged to rural area. All the voters of this caste were in favour of PPP. Overall results indicate that 100 % voters of Panwar caste were in favour of PPP. As the PPP candidate Imtiaz Safdar Warriach belonged to this caste. The results also show the kinship trend prevails.

Hypotheses of the research and the results obtained

H1: The voters in Southern Punjab follow the trend of caste system as compared to leadership.

H2: There is more impact of caste system on rural voters as compared to urban.

Reliability of Data

To achieve reliability, the data was collected from 303 respondents of District Bahawalpur of Southern Punjab.

Reliability Statistics (A)

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 0.551 | 4 |

The data is reliable when value of Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.50. The results show that this value is 0.551 is greater than 0.50. So data is reliable and will be used for further analysis.

The data was collected based upon 4 items scale. Leadership versus caste/ Biradrisystem, impact of caste system in rural and urban area was measured with the help of 2 items each.

We have applied the paired sample test for getting the results.

First hypothesis of the research are as follows.

H1: The voters in Southern Punjab follow the trend of caste system as compared to leadership.

The results indicate that all the values of t are non-zero. This means that value of t is in the acceptable range. Moreover, results also show that value of p about first hypothesis is 0.000 which is less than the value 0.01. This value indicates that our first hypothesis "The voters in Southern Punjab follow the trend of caste system as compared to leadership" is accepted. This result is similar to the result of interviews of the respondents. The interview responses have already informed that people of Southern Punjab were in favour of caste system as we have seen that most of the voters of Arian caste cast their votes in favour of Arian candidate.

Second hypothesis of the research is as follows.

H2: There is more impact of caste system on rural voters as compared to urban.

| Paired Sample Test (B) | | |
|---|----------|------------------------|
| Personality Traits | T | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Leadership versus Caste system | -12.985 | 0.000 |
| Impact of caste system on voters in Urban area verses Rural area | 18.401 | 0.000 |

The results also show that value of p about third hypothesis is 0.000 which is less than the value 0.01. This value indicates that our second hypothesis “There is more impact of caste system on rural voters as compared to urban” is accepted. This result is also similar to the result of interviews of the respondents. The interview results already reflect that people of Southern Punjab (rural area) were in favour of caste system. It has been observed that most of the voters of Arian caste cast their votes in favour of Arian candidate (as in rural area 78% voters cast their votes in favour of Arian candidate). This trend was not followed much by voters of urban area as 48% voters cast their votes on the basis of caste system but this result also indicates that majority of the Arian voters in urban areas also followed the trend of kinship.

Conclusion

A large majority of the respondents pleaded that caste and Biradari (Kinship) system overpowers leadership (the landlords overpower the tenants and low caste masses) at local and national levels. The culturally diversified Punjab is an important province of Pakistan which is enriched with long history. Historically, it remained a victim of foreign invasions. The rule of foreign invasions affected socio-cultural, religious, political and economic value-systems of the Punjabi society. Additionally, the ancient history of India made an impression and strengthened concept of caste-system and Hinduism which is still reflected in this region.

There is significant impact of caste system rural area as compared to urban. Interview results already reflect that people of Southern Punjab (rural area) were in favour of caste system. It has been observed that most of the voters of Arian caste cast their votes in favour of Arian candidate (as in rural area 78% voters cast their votes in favour of Arian candidate). This trend was not followed much by voters of urban area as 48% voters cast their votes on the basis of caste system but this result also indicates that majority of the Arian voters in urban areas also followed the trend of kinship. Moreover, in the rural society, the spirit of casteism has deep roots among rural people of Southern Punjab specially District Bahawalpur.

Recommendations

Electoral system is widely divergent, some being seen as more democratic or representative than others. It is difficult, for instance, to argue that non-competitive election in which only a single candidate is placed before the electorate, can be regarded as democratic since there is no electoral choice and no opportunity to remove office holders. However, there are also differences among competitive electoral system. There should be some criteria and this single nomination should not be accepted at all.

According to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and Dawn Lahore 30 November, 2014, over 1.5 million votes were rejected in General Election

(2013) which is higher than previous Elections. Political analysts say that this is the highest ever number of votes rejected during any electoral process while the number of rejected votes were 6635 in 2002 General Election and during 2008 were 6314 respectively. Election Commission of Pakistan should device some strategy to overcome this wastage.

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