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**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN KHYBER
PAKHTUNKHWA: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED DISTRICTS**

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted on identifying the “Social Determinants of Voting Behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Case Study of Selected Districts (2002-2013)”. It is a quantitative study aimed at knowing the social factors of voting behaviour in the past three elections (2002, 2008 and 2013), with major purpose to see the changing trend in the mentioned elections. It was preceded with 292 respondents who had cast vote in any of the target elections and they were asked through Likert scale questionnaire under purposive sampling technique. The Study found a significant association of social factors such as family, biradari, feudalism, religion, political discussion at home and personal interests with voting behaviour. The changing scenario was observed as the importance of some factors was replaced by others. The study recommends that local political leadership as well as Election Commission of Pakistan should come forward to actively launch an awareness movement regarding the importance of vote towards increasing the participation ratio of voting especially women’s voting.

Keywords: Voting Behaviour, Elections (2002-2013), Social Determinants, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

INTRODUCTION

Voting in national elections is the essence of democracy. A political system cannot be called democratic without public representation and participation. In representative democracies, people ensure their participation through vote casting which is considered an act that links polity with society. Elections ensure the right of the citizens to decide that who will govern them (Campbell & David, 2008). Elections afford an opportunity to the citizens to indicate their priorities, interests and reservations (Chinsenga, 2006). Why and how the people vote in elections is called voting behaviour (Anderson & Stephenson, 2010).

Although the importance of elections is globally accepted, however, elections in Pakistani context have special significance. Elections not only resulted in the creation of Pakistan but also in its break-up. In elections (1945-46) which was the last held in India, Pakistan got its independence; the 1970 elections, the first national elections of Pakistan, contributed to its break-up. The results of elections (1977) were charged as rigged which led to overthrowing of elected government and paved way for military regime. Gen. Zia got himself elected as the President in referendum and continued to rule for eleven years. The electoral history of

Pakistan has been turbulent. However, the subsequent elections of 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1997 remained peaceful and in each case peaceful transition of powers were observed (Wilder, 1999). The elected government of 1997 could not complete its tenure as the Nawaz Sharif-led government was overthrown by Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who clamped state of emergency and suspended the constitution. The military rule continued for around three years before general elections were held in October, 2002 which put the country again on democratic path and the successive elections of 2008 and 2013 further strengthened the democratic process (Asim, 2012). The electoral history of Pakistan is thus not too long. The first 23 years of Pakistan passed without national elections. Beside it, the delayed start of democratic process, the electoral system of Pakistan also experienced modifications. The frequent military takeover did not allow the representative democracy in Pakistan to flourish and strengthen (Ahmad, 2004). Each passing election reflected encouraging the turnout and remained remarkable in elections 2013 which was 55.83%, the highest ever.

Elections manifest political behaviour of masses and help identify the factors as well as considerations that shape their

political disposition and voting preferences. Voting behaviour means how and why people vote the way they do. Voting behaviour of voters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa always stunned the analysts. Political history of the province reveals that different political parties came into power in different elections with split mandate and no political party has been able to form its government for the second term. PPP, PML (N), MMA, ANP, and PTI got success in the previous elections of 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008 and 2013 respectively (Zubair, 2013). Understanding voting behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has, thus, become a complex puzzle. This study focused on the social factors that led the voters to change their voting choice each time. It is worth mentioning that an individual is the basic unit of democracy and voting behaviour of the province could not be explored until factors behind each vote decision are not identified. That's why utmost efforts were made to identify the social factors behind each vote decision to solve the puzzle of voting behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neither rich literature on the psephology of Pakistan is available nor has voting behaviour in Pakistan been studied at length. Extensive literature on the elections

in Pakistan and voting behaviour of voters is not available. "Democratization in Pakistan: A study on 2002-Elections" by Mohammad Waseem, M. and "The Pakistani Voter: Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour in the Punjab by Wilder, A. are however two extensive and book length studies available for guidance. The PH.D thesis of Ahmad, M. (2010) entitled "Electoral Politics in NWFP. 1988-1999", is another serious attempt in this regard. The rest of the studies are either local level or not containing enriched data.

The available literature depicts that social factors have an important role in voting behaviour in Pakistan having family as the more significant. Individuals' party identification is correlated with their parents' party identification. Voting choices and party preferences are associated with family background. Family is an agent of political socialization and a place of transmission of party affiliation to the youngsters (Erikson et al., 1980). According to Kanwal et al. (2016) youth are influenced by their parents' partisanship and inherit it. In Multan city, 30.8% respondents were influenced by their family in their voting choice. Javaid and Elahi (2014) found that 16% respondents in Lahore city voted a party just because their family voted the same party. Azeez et al. (2014) found that 34.4% respondents in

District Layyah voted parties as desired by their parents. The Pakhtun Code of life (Pakhto) and paternal control have become social chains and a challenge for free elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where 12% women identified family pressure very important in their non-voting in previous elections (Ahmad, 2010). Biradari (Fraternity) is an important kinship system operating in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Wilder, 1999). Voting choice of 55% respondents is influenced by biradari (Mahmood et al., 2014). Javaid and Elahi (2014) found Biradari as decisive factor in the voting choice of 28% respondents. Azeez et al. (2014) found that 55% of the respondents chose to vote for the candidate of their own biradari in District Layyah. Gallup Pakistan (2008) reported that 9% voters throughout Pakistan were biradari-bound. The percentage of voting based on biradari is highest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa i.e. 15 %. Biradari influenced voting behaviour in elections 1993, but with less importance beyond common belief (Wilder, 1999).

Religion could not be completely separated from politics. Both are closely related but this association is complex as well (Oshewolo, 2015). Political parties that follow religious agenda are supposed to be

supported by conservative and religious people (Lillemets, 2015). In elections 2002, most of the support for MMA in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa came from rural dwellers, illiterate citizens, low income groups and housewives, which suggests that such categories have greater liking and affection for religion and support religious parties in elections (Farmanullah, 2014).

Although feudalism is weaning away from the world and middle class is entering politics, this ancient system still exists in Pakistan camouflaged in the disguise of democracy. Few thousand feudal control two-thirds of parliament (Sehgal, 2012). Most of the independent candidate in the assembly from KP return from southern and Northeastern areas which suggests that semi-feudal and tribal social structures in these regions are still strong enough to influence voting behaviour of the people (Ahmad, 2010). Local feudal elites dominate in rural Punjab in particular and in Pakistan in general (Kaleem & Ayaz, 2015).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was carried out in seven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (one district from each division). The sampled districts were selected due to their major chunk of votes and relatively better understanding by the voters about the role and importance of

vote. Registered voters aged 18 years who had cast vote in any of the sampled elections constitute the universe of this study. Multi Stage Sampling was used for data collection. At first instance, districts with major populace in all divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were identified by stratified sampling and then data was collected from sampled respondents under the purposive sampling technique. Proportional allocation

strategy was applied for breakup of total sample size into target districts and respondents. It is noteworthy that sample size of 300 was chosen as per analogy of Roscoe (1975), however, during data collection, it was found that no woman voted in the sampled elections in district Dir upper, that is why 08 female voters distributed as per formula were not interviewed. So, total sample size of the study stands 292.

Table 1: Sample Composition and Selection Procedure

S. No	Sampled Districts	Population Size (Registered Voters)			Sample Size		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Peshawar	819869	596646	1416515	50	36	86
2	Mardan	577325	409797	987122	35	25	60
3	Abbottabad	381617	293571	675188	23	18	41
4	Dir (Upper)	205121	125883	331004	12	0	12
5	Kohat	262303	188139	450442	16	11	27
6	D.I.Khan	348697	280531	629228	21	17	38
7	Bannu	270858	182683	453541	17	11	28
Total		2865790	2077250	4943040	174	118	292

Source: (ECP, 2013)

Data was collected through Likert Scale questionnaire. Univariate and bivariate analysis of the data was carried out. Chi-square test was used for bivariate analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Respondents' minimum age was 18 years, being the least age limit for adult franchise in Pakistan. Age group of 10% respondents was 18-30 years. Most of them voted first time being underage in the elections 2008 and 2002, but their inclusion in the study was essential to highlight the voting behavior of youth and maiden voters. Age of the remaining 90% respondents ranged from 31 years to above 70 years.

Educated respondents constitute 73%, while uneducated constitute 27% of the sample size. As most of the sampled districts had major cities and urban centers, where the trend of and access to education is available, that's why majority of the respondents were educated. Rural residents constituted 67%, while urban constituted 33% of the respondents. As peripheries constitute major portion of the constituencies, that's why the number of rural respondents is more than urban respondents. Moreover, 87% of the respondents were married while 13% were

unmarried. Occupations of the respondents included government and private service (20% and 16.5% respectively), Housewives (15%), Business (13%), Students (7.5%), Manual Labour (7%), Farming (6%), Lawyers (6%), Politicians (4%), Journalists (2%) and Religious Teachers (2.5%).

Language of majority of the respondents (69%) was Pashto, followed by Hindko (21%) Saraiki (8%) and Urdu (2%). The Saraiki and Urdu speakers belonged to district D.I.Khan, Hindko speakers belonged to district Abbottabad, Peshawar and Kohat while Pashto speakers were distributed in all the sampled districts. However, all the respondents from district Dir Upper, Bannu and Mardan were Pashto speakers. As the province is mostly inhabited by Pathans and majority of the sampled districts are inhabited by purely Pashto speaking population, that's why major language of the respondents was Pashto. The inclusion of district Abbottabad, Kohat and Peshawar as area of the study justifies Hindko as the second major language of the respondents, whereas Saraiki with third language being spoken in district D.I.Khan. Majority of the respondents (66%) belonged to joint family units, (24%) had nuclear families, while (10%) respondents had extended family units. Extended family units being major

family pattern predicts the influence of family on the voting behaviour. Monthly family income of majority of the respondents (69%) was Rs. 50,001/- to Rs. 65,000/-, while that of (31%) was Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 50,000/- as per detail in the table 1.

Denotations:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| A. Under age | B. Party |
| Boycotted | C. |
| Didn't like any party to vote for | |
| F. Couldn't spare time to vote | E. |
| Family didn't allow to vote | F. |
| On election duty | |

Majority of the respondents 289 (99%) cast vote in general elections 2013, while 03 (1%) respondents didn't vote. 02 respondents (female) were not allowed by their family to cast vote and 01 respondent couldn't spare time for voting being on election duty. In elections 2008, 87% respondents cast vote while 13% respondents didn't vote. Reasons for not voting were either being under-age (8%), party boycott (3%), could not spare time for voting either due to personal engagements or being on election duty (1.2%), not allowed by family to vote (0.4%), or dislike for the existing candidates or parties (0.4%) and abstained from vote casting. In general elections 2002, 88.4% respondents cast their vote, while (11.6%) didn't cast vote. Reasons for voting

apathy were almost the same as in election 2008.

Association between Social Factors and Voting Behaviour:

Table 4 highlights the social factors that influences voters' choices. A highly significant association ($p=0.000$) was recorded between personal decision and voting behaviour in the sampled elections. Percentage-wise, vote casting as personal decision increased with each passing election i.e. from 75% in 2002 to 77% in 2008 and further to 80% in election 2013. It means that majority of the respondents in the province voted as per their own whim and desire without outside pressure and dictation. This freedom in voting choices could be attributed to increase in literacy rate, media exposure, and egalitarian culture of the province. Similarly, a strong association ($p=0.000$) was found between family and voting behaviour in the sampled elections. These findings are in line with the study results of Kanwal et al. (2016) who found significant association ($p=0.003$) of family bond and authority of elders with voting behavior. These results are also in consonance with the study findings of Azeez et al. (2014); Durre-e-Shawar and Asim (2012) and Ahmad (2010). These findings corroborates the findings of Erikson et al. (1980) that individuals' party

identification is significantly correlated with their parents' party identification. The Pakhtun Code of life (Pakhto) and paternal control in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have become social chains and a challenge for free elections. Almost one third of the respondents in Hazara division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa acknowledged the influence of family very important in their voting choices (Ahmad, 2010). However, family influence on voting decision declined with each successive election due to increase in education ratio, political awareness, exposure to mass media and weakening family bonds.

Biradari (Fraternity) is another unit of Pakistani society (Chaudhry et al., 2014). Biradari is an important kinship system operating in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Wilder, 1999). A significant association was found between biradari and voting behaviour in the sampled elections i.e. ($p=0.024$) in election 2013, ($p=0.029$) in 2008 and ($p=0.036$) in 2002. These results match the Gallup Pakistan's Exit Poll Survey (2008) which reported that 9% voters throughout Pakistan were Biradari-bound. The results are also in accordance with research findings of Mahmood et al. (2014); Javaid and Elahi (2014); Azeez et al. (2014); Durr-e-Shawar and Asim (2012), and Ahmad (2008). Biradari system is still strictly in

vogue and intricate in the electoral politics in areas like District Abbotabad and DIK. All political parties have grasped this trend in these districts and most often award tickets to candidates who belong to big biradaries. Party identification and ideological attachment is less important to voters than biradari. (Ahmad, 2010). Gallup Pakistan's Exit Poll Survey (1993) reported that biradari based voting reduced from 12% in 1998, to 7% in 1990 and further to 6% in 1993. The significance of biradari diminished due to intra-constituency biradari conflicts and rivalries (Wilder, 1999).

A non-significant association ($p=0.227$) in 2013 and ($p=0.908$) in 2008 was found between religion and voting behavior, however, both the variables were found significantly associated ($p=0.007$) in election 2002. Major reasons of greater religious influence on voting decision in election 2002 were the unity of six Islamic parties in the shape of MMA, USA attack on Afghanistan, Gen. Musharraf's support for USA and the political vacuum due to the forced asylum of the leaders of PPP and PML-N. The alliance launched a vigorous campaign arousing religious sentiments of the masses resulting into the success of MMA and formation of government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the subsequent elections, as no such religious

issue existed to be exploited, the religious parties didn't fare well. Political parties that follow religious agenda and defend religious traditions are supposed to be supported by people who are traditional and religious in their outlook (Lillemets, 2015). Major support for MMA in 2002 elections came from rural respondents (50%); house wives (69.8%); low income respondents (39%) and illiterate respondents (62.9%) (Farmanullah, 2014).

Landlordism / feudalism and politics goes hand in hand in Pakistan (Perveen et al., 2014). Few thousand Feudal lords control almost two-thirds of parliament (Sehgal, 2012). A significant association between landlordism and voting behaviour was found in the sampled elections, i.e. ($p=0.048$) in 2013; ($p=0.034$) in 2008 and ($p=0.001$) in 2002. These findings matches the study findings of Ahmad, (2010). Although the tempo of feudalism diminished with the passage of time in Pakistan, it is still part of the social structure of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Some parts of the province still reflects strong feudal tenant relationship. Petty local problems could easily be resolved by the elites which in turn demand political favours in the shape of vote. This relationship continues and so the vicious circle of feudalism. The data suggest that local

landlords do influence voting choice of the people (Ahmad, 2010). Most of the independent candidates in the assembly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa return from southern and Northeastern areas of the province which suggests that semi-feudal and tribal social structures in these regions are still strong enough to influence voting behaviour of the people (Ibid: 334). A highly significant association was found between personal favours by the party/candidates to the respondents and their voting behaviour in the sampled elections i.e. ($p=0.001$) in 2013, ($p=0.000$) in 2008 and ($p=0.001$) in 2002. These results are supported by the Gallop Pakistan, 1990 and 1993 Exit Poll Surveys, which shows that patronage and personal favours were the most desired qualities of the candidates for voters. These results supports Wilder (1999), that voting behaviour in

Pakistan is influenced by voters' desire for the resolution of local and personal issues, personal favours, provision of help in ensuring local utility services and backing in affairs related to local government departments. Majority of votes are thus collected by the candidates who are skilled on these fronts. A highly significant association ($p=0.002$) in 2013; ($p=0.010$) in 2008 and ($p=0.001$) in 2002 was found between frequent political discussion at home and voting behaviour of the respondents. Politics is a favourite topic of discussion in gatherings in Pakistan. People keep themselves abreast of political information. Such discussion is more common in families who are politically affiliated and enthusiastic. Political discussion at home is an effective tool to politically socialize members of the family.

Table 2: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Age Group (in years)	Frequency	Percentage	Education Status	Frequency	Percentage
18 to 30	29	10	Primary	6	2
31 to 40	37	12.5	Middle	9	3
41 to 50	90	31	Matric	30	10
51 to 60	78	26.5	Intermediate	24	8
61 to 70	47	16	Graduation	55	19
Above 70	11	4	M.A/MSc	57	20
Total	292	100	LLB	17	06
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage	Medical Doctors	14	05
Married	254	87	Uneducated	80	27
Single	38	13	Total	292	100
Total	292	100	Area of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Urban	95	33
Farming	17	6	Rural	197	67
Manual labour	20	7	Total	292	100
Business	38	13	Monthly Family Income (in PKR)	Frequency	Percentage
Government Service	58	20	5000-20,000	7	2

Private Service	49	16.5	20,001-35,000	34	12
Religious Teachers	7	2.5	35,001-50,000	49	17
Lawyers	17	6	50,001-65,000	66	23
Journalists	6	2	65,001-80,000	61	21
Politicians	13	4	Above 80,000	75	26
Students	22	7.5	Total	292	100
Housewives	45	15.5	Mother Tongue	Frequency	Percentage
Total	292	100	Pashto	202	69
Family Pattern	Frequency	Percentage	Urdu	5	1.5
Nuclear Family	69	24	Hindko	61	21
Joint Family	194	66	Saraiki	23	8
Extended Family	29	10	Punjabi	1	0.5
Total	292	100	Total	292	100

Source: Field Survey, (2016)

Table 3: Respondents' Voting Ratio in the Sampled General Elections

Voting in General Elections	Voted		Not Voted		Total	
	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
Elections 2013	289	99	3	1	292	100
Elections 2008	254	87	38	13	292	100
Elections 2002	258	88.4	34	11.6	292	100
Reasons for not Voting	A	B	C	D	E	F
Elections 2013	0	0	0	0	2(0.7%)	1(0.3%)
Elections 2008	23 (8%)	10(3%)	1(0.4%)	1(0.4%)	1(0.4%)	2(0.8%)
Elections 2002	32 (11%)	0	0	1(0.3%)	0	1(0.3%)

Source: (Field Survey, 2016)

Table 4: Association Between Social Factors and Voting Behaviour

Statement	Election	Agree	Dis-agree	Not Sure	Total	Chi-Square
Selecting a party or candidate to vote for was your personal decision.	2013	231 (80%)	52 (18%)	6 (2%)	289 (100%)	39.748(0.000)
	2008	195 (77%)	53(21%)	6 (2%)	254 (100%)	66.581(0.000)
	2002	193 (75%)	58 (22.5%)	7(2.5%)	258 (100%)	45.566(0.000)
Selecting a party or candidate to vote for was personal decision shared with family	2013	194 (67%)	93 (32%)	2 (1%)	289 (100%)	45.321(0.000)
	2008	209 (82%)	43 (17%)	2 (1%)	254 (100%)	32.050(0.000)
	2002	220 (85%)	36 (14%)	02 (1%)	258 (100%)	21.198(0.000)
Selecting a party or candidate to vote for was your biradari decision	2013	28 (9.5%)	24(83.5%)	20(7%)	289 (100%)	11.200(0.024)
	2008	26 (10%)	212(84%)	16(6%)	254(100%)	10.781(0.029)
	2002	27(10.5%)	215(83.5%)	16 (6%)	258 (100%)	10.308(0.036)
Your voting choice has been influenced by your religion	2013	14 (4.5%)	274 (95%)	1 (0.5%)	289 (100%)	5.649(0.227)
	2008	9 (3.5%)	244 (96%)	1 (0.5%)	254 (100%)	1.009(0.908)
	2002	27(10.5%)	231(89.5%)	0	258 (100%)	9.872(0.007)
Your voting choice has been influenced by your Landlord	2013	11 (4%)	278 (96%)	0	289 (100%)	6.068(0.048)
	2008	12 (5%)	242 (95%)	0	254 (100%)	6.751(0.034)
	2002	12 (5%)	246 (95%)	0	258 (100%)	13.070(0.001)
The candidate gave personal favours to you/your family	2013	81 (28%)	193 (67%)	15 (5%)	289 (100%)	18.299(0.001)
	2008	98(38.5%)	141(55.5%)	15 (6%)	254 (100%)	22.762(0.000)
	2002	85 (33%)	154 (60%)	19 (7%)	258 (100%)	18.393(0.001)
Your family members often discuss politics at home	2013	15 (5%)	259 (90%)	15 (5%)	289 (100%)	16.528(0.002)
	2008	13 (5%)	227 (90%)	14 (5%)	254 (100%)	13.266(0.010)
	2002	16 (6%)	227 (88%)	15 (6%)	258 (100%)	17.649(0.001)

Source: (Field Survey, 2016)

CONCLUSION

Family, biradari, feudalism, religion and personal favours were identified as important social determinants effecting voting behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The percentage of voting based on personal choices increased in every election. Among social determinants, family stands with greater significance. Although diminishing, is still more influential than other factors. Biradari was also important but restricted to some areas only. Feudalism did influence voting choice but was not so significant because of egalitarian culture of the province. Personal favours by the candidates was found significant because of voters concerns over assistance in local issues. Religion was significant in election 2002 but its influence substantially declined subsequently. Voting behaviour, thus, doesn't depend on any sole social factor rather each vote decision is a composite of several factors that explains how and why a person votes the way that he or she chooses. The collective influence of all social factors lead the voters to set their political preferences and make voting choices. Although political factors also influence voting choices, however most of the political determinants are based on social determinants, such as party affiliation originates from family, socialization and

norms. These are social factors that determine political preferences of the voters. It is thus safe to conclude that social factors are stronger determinants of voting behaviour in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Based on findings of the study, it is recommended that voters' education and political awareness is essential to discourage group prejudices and empower individual voters to make voting choices independently. The election commission of Pakistan should take strict measures to ensure that at no one who is eligible and willing to cast vote is barred by anyone from voting. Any political party restricting female voters to access to polling station must be banned to participate in any election for at least 05 years. All parties may be bound to have women wings in their offices orbit and they should mobilize the women to vote in favour of any contesting candidate.

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