

## Voting Behavior of People Towards Different Political Parties in District Faisalabad, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** Voting is the main form of political participation in democratic societies and the study of voting behavior is a highly specialized sub-field in political and social science. The study was concerned with the reasons why people vote the way they do. The main objectives of the present study were to find out the factors which affect the voting behavior & to explore the factors that constitute political affiliation in District Faisalabad. A sample of 160 household respondents was selected systematically from District Faisalabad through multistage sampling technique. Specifically explored through this study the relationship of voting behavior with education, internal changes in the party, voter's satisfaction and biradism are those factors that had strong effect on voting decisions. More than fifty percent (55%) of the respondents vote for the candidate not for the party and (53.1%) of the voters change their behavior due to the internal changes in the party. The value of Chi-Square and Gamma showed a significant and strong association between voter satisfaction with particular political party, favour of biradism and internal change in the party are strongly associated with voter's behavior.

**Keywords:** voting behavior, class, religion, caste, ethnicity and biradism

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### 1. Introduction

Man is a social being, and as such he always contributes in social life. But this contribution is not constant: the intensity and types of participation are relevant variables in political analysis. Voting behavior is very important aspect of humans because through this we can know the will of people and also the way they want to have it. Voting is very important tool in democratic societies. Democracy provides a chance to the people to become a dynamic citizens rather than inactive subjects (Jost, 2006). A person who is the citizen of Pakistan, is not less than 18 years of age on the first day of the January of the year in which the rolls are prepared or revised, is not declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind and is or is deemed to be the resident of an electoral area, can get himself enrolled as a voter in the electoral area. The citizens registered on the electoral roll are only eligible to cast their vote. (GOP, 2011). Voting defined by Universal Declaration of Human Right as "Voting is the fundamental right of almost all citizens over the age of eighteen. It ensures that will of the people is preserved" (HRCP, 2008). Voting is the expression of a person's preference for a candidate, or a group of candidates, as well as the person's preference of one political system rather than another (Blais, *et al.*, 2004).

The people of Pakistan do not have much experience in elections. The first 23 years of Pakistan were without elections while from 1970 to 2010 nation has experienced 4 regimes of dictatorship. Frequent military interventions hindered the development of a country. The election system has been changing since independence. Hence the political system of Pakistan is still in its experimental stage. Political behavior is a central part of politics of any political system. Politics is an activity related to political system. It is not only a part of political life but social life too (Ahmed, 2004). Studies allied with voting behavior report that voters can be classified into seven most important types by their inspiration to vote: Party Loyal, Morality Seeking Voters, supporter Seeking Voters, Legislation Minded Voters, advance Seeking Voters, *Biradari* Bound, and disbeliever Voters (Gallup, 2008). Voting decisions are the most important decisions that public make, They

decide who will rule the country and how the resources and capital are allocated. Voters do not know all of the issues. They only rely on informational cues (Cohen, 2003). Demographic factors do affect the voting decisions like gender, race are more important than socioeconomic factors like education (Leighley and Nagler, 1992). In the last few years ethnic and racial influence on voting decisions was studied more than other issues. Race and ethnicity had great influence on voting behavior (Branton, 2004). Social class plays a significant importance in voting behavior. However, other factors are showing an ever increasing importance today such as, social class, party policies, and ethnicity and region issues (Lednum, 2006). Voting for a candidate of one's own race might be a product of racism, or it may be the result of reliance on a simple, readily available cue. In other words, voters may support a candidate of their own race or ethnicity based on the assumption that a candidate who shares their racial or ethnic background also shares their basic political views (Michelson, 2005).

## 2. Methods and Materials

This study was designed to assess the voting behavior of people towards different political parties. The research uses a statistically valid random sample of 160 respondents to study the voting behavior of the respondents in Faisalabad. The study was carried out in randomly selected town. The universe of the present study was Faisalabad district. Out of eight towns of Faisalabad district one town namely Madina town was selected randomly. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage two union councils were selected randomly and at 3<sup>rd</sup> stage four localities from each Union Councils were selected randomly. At the 4<sup>th</sup> stage 20 respondents from each locality were selected by systematically sampling technique. A well structured questionnaire consisting of open and closed ended questions was prepared. Descriptive analysis such as percentage distribution, frequency distribution and bi-variate analysis was made by using SPSS. Significant relationship was tested through chi-square and gamma tests.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Voting is the expression of a person's preference for a candidate, or a group of candidates, as well as the person's preference of one political system rather than another. The results about literacy level of respondents exhibited by this study were very typical of Pakistani society. Study showed that 28.1% respondents were without education while mean education of the respondents was 8 year school education with 4.03 standard deviation reflecting the low level of education among the respondents. In Pakistan overall literacy rate is 57% according to Economic Survey (Anonymous, 2010). Majority of the respondents 73.8% belonged to age group of 18-30 years whilst mean age was 28.33 years.

Because of illiteracy the people of Pakistan do not have much awareness about the politics. They are inclined by the campaigns and party slogans and vote accordingly. There are also various economic factors behind their decisions. There are many factors that influence the voter's decision like *biradriism* was found sound effect on the voting behavior. More than fifty percent 55% respondents vote to the candidate because of the candidate and nominee belong to their own *biradri* or caste. *Biradriism* is the most powerful element in Pakistan and it is the main basis of the voting behavior in Pakistani society. These results are analogous with (Ahmad, 2004) who found that major part of voters has no political fidelity. People cast their votes to survive as a group or *biradri*. In case of candidates belonging to the same *biradri*, voters use their preferences. There is no party identification that is the psychological connection of a voter to a particular *biradri*. Wilder, (1999) was also pointed out this phenomenon. He depicts that in Pakistan, particularly in Punjab the leading aspect of the social system is *biradarism*. It has impact on the political system at national as well as at local levels. *Biradari* is a stronger determinant of voting behavior. In Pakistani culture family is considered the strong element and most of the people live in joint family system that's why family members have strong influence about any decision or matter.

Table. 1 Socio economic characteristic of the respondents

Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
18-30	118	73.8	23.30	3.68
31-40	22	13.7	34.45	2.44
41 and above	20	12.5	51.30	8.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28.33</b>	<b>10.52</b>
Education	Frequency		Percentage	
Illiterate	45		28.1	
Primary-Middle	16		10.0	
Matric	32		20.0	
Above Matric	67		41.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>		<b>100.0</b>	
Mean = 8.02 Std Dev. = 4.03				
Income	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Up to 15000	36	22.5	10333.33	2151.41
15001-30000	90	56.2	23688.89	4312.62
Above 30000	34	21.3	37529.41	5406.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23625.00</b>	<b>9941.81</b>

A mainstream of the 34.4% respondents vote to the parties because their parents and family members pursued them to do that. They have not their own choice. They just pursue their parent's decision. These figures indicate that the people of the Pakistan are not sovereign yet to take their own decisions. They depend on their parents and family members. The similar observations were of Birner *et al*, (2006) They stated that an ample share of the voters also considered the opinions of others, including the landlord, the community and husband or father as important. The results of present study was also supported by Ahmad, (2004) who said that people vote for the same party because their *biradari* support them. It means people caste their votes to *biradri* supported candidate. The ratio of *biradri* supported candidate in Faisalabad district is 74%. The Pakistani people have keen interest about political matters and party manifesto. Data exhibited that 45.6% respondents know about the party agenda. These findings line up with Lednum, (2006) who reported that the agenda of the party had dominated explanations for voting behavior in U.K for example in 1992 (56%) of the social class AB voted for the conservatives and only 20% voted for labor. About 13.8% respondents acquired information about political matters by newspaper. In developed countries media has great exposure and have sizeable impact in shaping the public's political knowledge, attitudes and behavior. But in developing countries like Pakistan people rely on their parents and peer group experiences. Result demonstrated that 62.5% of the respondents caste the vote in the previous (2008) general election. The male respondents were found dynamic role in casting the vote. In the total population about 64.7% of male respondents had cast their vote and 36% of the female respondents cast their vote in the present research. It was also reported by Anonymous, (2010) that the voting turn out in the previous general election 2008 was 44.5% and in the 2002 general election the voting turnout was 41.8%. It shows that Pakistani people have no much interest in the casting the vote. If we compare with other developed countries such as Sweden, Australia, Switzerland, Denmark and Italy etc. have more than 80% voting turn out. Adma, (2007) It also depicted that Pakistan had the problem a lack of political participation in the politics. Adma and Schoersh, (2007) marked that between 1945 and 1997 about 41.8% of the populations, who had allowed to vote, had voted. This compares with about 90.6% in India, 56% in Bangladesh and 63.7% in Nepal.

Data exhibited that Female voting turnout is low, if we compare with the male respondents. Birner *et al*, (2006) are also in consonance to the findings of the present study. They also identified that women's vote

turnout was considerably lower than men's vote turnout in all Provinces. The difference was particularly pronounced in khyber pakhtunkhwa, followed by Sindh. At the national level, 39.5% of the women voted, as compared to 56.8% of the men. The researchers also found that the main causes of the non-casting vote are inconvenient atmosphere did not have I.D card, had no name in voting lists, not take the interest in the selection of the representative and fear of violence were the major causes of non-casting vote in the election. The findings of the study carried out by Birner *et al*, (2006) they observed that more than a few of the respondents who did not vote because they did not have an I.D card, were not registered as voters, or because their name was not in the electoral list. Lack of possessing an I.D card was also a major reason non-casting the vote.

**Table. 2** Distribution of the respondents according to the reasons of non casting vote

No	Reasons behind of non-casting the vote	Frequency	Percent
1	Not take an interest in the selection of representative	21	35
2	Have no name in voting/registration lists in electoral area	10	16.7
3	Have not identity card (I.D)	7	11.6
4	Inconvenient atmosphere of polling zone	9	15
5	Fear of violence	10	16.7
6	Any others	3	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table. 3** Distribution of the respondents according to their voting decisions

No	Response categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
1	Vote caste in (2008) general election	100	62.5	60	37.5	160	100
2	Male respondent try to caste vote	55	64.7	30	35.3	85	53.1
3	Female respondent try to caste vote	27	36	48	64	75	46.9
4	Know about the party agenda which to vote	73	45.6	87	54.4	160	100
5	Internal changes in party affect voting decision	85	53.1	75	46.9	160	100
6	Decide before the election to which party to vote	97	60.6	63	39.4	160	100

Data revealed that 53.1% of the voter's alleged that due to the Internal change in the party they vote to the party. Best example of internal changes in the party effect the voter's decision was shown in the previous elections where Pakistan People's Party (PPP) got lead in the elections just due to the assassination of their leader Banzeer Buhtoo. The voting behavior of the people abruptly changes and the entire sympathy vote

goes to PPP. In the history of Pakistan the voting prototype of Pakistani people remain the same if a family gave vote to a particular party then they vote again and again to that party. And this affiliation goes generation to generation. This is not done due to the contentment they get by the party work but in Pakistan there are many other factors that affect the voting decisions and most important is *biradrism* in the present study this phenomenon is studied. Data demonstrated that 60.6% respondents decide before the election that to which party they will support in the next election. These statistics presented by Anonymous<sub>1</sub>, (2011) who explored that the voting preference of the respondents in the previous election towards different political parties such as Pakistan People's Party (PPP) 47.5%, Pakistan Muslim League N (PML N) 30.0%, Pakistan Muslim League Q (PML Q) 11.3% and 11.2% others political parties. These findings strongly grasped up the 2008 general election consequences in Faisalabad. There are total 11 seats of members in national assembly (MNA) and 22 members in Punjab assembly (MPA) in Faisalabad district. In 2008 general election members of national assembly (MNA) in Pakistan the winning candidate of Faisalabad district belonged to different political parties such as (PPP) having 6/11, (PMLN) 3/11 and (PMLQ) 2/11. (Anonymous<sub>2</sub>, 2011) was the eye viewed of Members of Punjab Assembly (MPA) (PPP) having 7/22 Pakistan Muslim League N (PMLN) 10/22 and Pakistan Muslim League Q (PMLQ) 5/22 respectively. This data show that two major parties PPP and PMLN are dominating in the Faisalabad politics. These findings are also lined up with (PILDAT, 2008) also identified that all elections since 1970 show that there are four clusters of voters: The PPP cluster, the Pakistan Muslim Leagues cluster, the Religious Parties and local Parties cluster. Past electoral behavior demonstrates that roughly 60 to 75% of votes are alleged by the first two clusters (PPP and PML) while the lingering gets distributed among the other two clusters as well as independents and miscellaneous. There is a positive and highly significant association between age, income and education toward voting behavior.

Table 4. Over all National Assembly results - Election 2008

Political Party	Islamabad	K.P.K	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Total
Awami National Party	0	10	0	0	0	10
Pakistan Peoples Party	0	10	44	30	4	88
Mutthida Majlis-e-Amal	0	4	0	0	2	6
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	2	3	61	0	0	66
Muttahida Qumi Movement	0	0	0	19	0	19
Pakistan Muslim League (Q)	0	6	28	5	4	43
Independent	0	11	13	1	2	27
Total	2	44	146	55	12	259

Table 5. Over all Provincial Assemblies results - Election 2008

Political Party	K.P.K	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Total
Awami National Party	31	0	1	2	34
Pakistan Peoples Party	17	79	29	8	133
Mutthida Majlis-e-Amal	9	2	0	4	15
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	6	102	0	0	108

Muttahida Qumi Movement	0	1	20	0	21
Pakistan Muslim League (Q)	5	64	4	16	89
Independent	17	35	0	8	60
Total	85	283	54	38	460

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan, Islamabad (2008)

#### 4. Conclusion

The people of Pakistan do not have a lot of experience in elections. . The first 23 years of Pakistan were with out election while from 1970 to 2010 nation has experienced 4 regime of dictatorship. The election system has been changing since independence. Hence the political system of Pakistan is still in its experimental stage. Political behavior is a central part of politics of any political system. Politics is an activity related to political system. It is not only a part of political life but social life too. Caste system seems to be stronger than political loyalty now-a-days as far as motivations for voting behavior are concerned. Party affiliation determines voting behavior. The strong and national level political parties are expected to wipe out the influence of *biradarism*. The better level of education and political knowledge will reduce the power of discouraging elements of *biradarism*. *Biradarism* as a racial or group prejudice should be discouraged. Because of that our public does not have awareness' about politics we are still living in a non- politicalised society.

#### 5. Recommendations

1. The literacy rate in Pakistan is very low such as the present study showed that the majority of the respondents were illiterate and they were not aware of the importance and right of the vote. The government as well as civil society/NGOs should take necessary steps to create awareness among the people about the importance, weight, meaning and the power of vote through adequate channels i.e. mass media, community based awareness program and etc, and assure them that the future of a nation highly depends upon its members' taking right decision by casting their vote.
2. Most of the people caste their vote in support of a candidate who belong to their same *Biradari*, caste, background and social order, but the people should choose and prefer to those candidate who are capable, candid, devoted and flag- waver which ever of their alike caste, *Biradari* and social group or not, in respect of abolishing the concept of *Biradari* and caste-favoritism, nepotism and chauvinism because these are the hindrances and impediments in the way of progress of any country as well as the nation.
3. It is no doubt to say that there are only some archetypal families who have hold, cuddle and ascendancy from top to bottom on politics in Pakistan. In this case, their should be created a atmosphere and ambience of such opportunities, accessibilities, feasibilities and circumstances in which every citizen of Pakistan may access to politics and think about to be elected as a member of parliament. The people should encourage and promote the new faces in politics.
4. The media is an important tool to represent and reflect the real picture of every aspect of life especially politics. The media should play a positive role in politics and create awareness among the people regarding hot and current political issues that are prevailed on politics in the country

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