

Gender and Voting Behavior: A Study of Biradari Based Politics of Punjab

AFTAB AHMED¹

Anthropologist

Pakistan Association of Anthropology

Islamabad, Pakistan

Dr. ABID GHAFOOR CHAUDHRY

Incharge, Department of Anthropology

PMAS-Arid Agriculture University

Rawalpindi, Pakistan

ZIA FATIMA

Lecturer, Barani Institute of Management Sciences

Rawalpindi, Pakistan

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

Program Manager, Regional Development Network (RDN)

Islamabad-Pakistan

HARIS FAROOQ

Anthropologist

Department of International Development Studies

Iqra University, Islamabad

Pakistan

Abstract:

Biradari is an important socio-political and cultural feature of Pakistan, which influence local and national level politics from gross root to country level. Women role is undoubtedly very important in this scenario because their vote is having a worth for their biradari. Current research focused to answer the relationship between gender and voting behavior with respect biradari system. For this a sample of 150 was interviewed and analyzes the data by using EpiData and SPSS. Data concludes that women inclined to vote in favor of their

¹ Corresponding author: huda.aftab@gmail.com

biradari and also vote for the sack to improve the socio-political power of their biradari within local and national level politics.

Key words: Voting Behavior, Gender, Biradari, Biradarism, Caste System and Politics, Punjab Politics

Introduction

In Pakistan, especially in rural context biradari system is well woven concept which is also a socio-political position carrier and an ethnic attachment. Importantly, *Biradari* system is very much active and playing its participatory role in all kinds of socio-political and community matters and issues ranging from very minor issues to big social disputes as explained by A. G. Chaudhry, et al. (2014).

History of India explains that the caste system depicts the groups of people by their religion, class, particular area, gender, language, profession, clan and socio-economic segregation. This class system and its further subdivisions of differentiation also exist in all human societies (Sekhon, 2000).

In Indian subcontinent caste system is operational from centuries. Individuals of a particular biradari are very much trained in their every day socio-cultural and political life to follow certain rules and regulation related to their profession, pleasure, marriages and other spheres of life as set within the biradari (Kolenda 1985; Ahmed A. et al., 2013; Chaudhry 2012).

In Pakistan especially in Punjab province, Biradari is an important key feature of social organization and daily routine life. Caste/biradari system influenced gross root socio-political activities along with its role to affect national politics. It is observed that biradarism is an influential factor to influence voting behavior of people than part affiliation with this exception that two candidates belongs to same caste (Andrew, 1999).

Socio-political group's especially key *Biradaries* support ideas, thinking and belief for their own ends as a source of holding and justifying socio-economic and political power. In multi-cultural societies, with many different ethnic groups, a belief may construct cultural superiority, the ideological control by one leading group over values, myths, and norms as stated by Chaudhry A. G. et al., (2014) in his study with special regards to the contribution of Scupin (2012) regarding his research on biradari system.

Voting is always an important democratic measure in democratic societies. Voting enables the people to get active role in country development by selecting the suitable individuals for democratic government and democracy also creates a chance for the people to become a active citizens rather than inactive subjects (Jost, 2006).

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 behavior that gives support to a candidate of one's own ethnic group might be a creation of racism, or it may be the product of confidence on a simple, readily available cue. In simple words, a voter may support a candidate who belongs to their own race or ethnicity with this point of view that a political candidate who shares their racial or ethnic features and background also shares their basic political views (Michelson, 2005).

As for as political system of sub-continent is concerned, caste system is very much concerned to observe the voting behavior of the masses. In Pakistan, especially in Punjab fabric of biradari is very rigid to select a candidate of the same biradari during general and local body's election. Political parties always take into consideration the major, dominant, authoritative and powerful caste groups during their whole life and especially when election is going to be held at national level

or district level. Biradarries not only support candidate of the same biradari but also run campaign for him and gathered the vote for his victory. It was observed that no clear research was taken into account with special focus on gender behavior to cast their vote on the basis of biradari during election.

The hypothesis for the present study was:

H₀: there is no association between gender and their voting behavior on the basis of Biradari

H₁: there is association between gender and their voting behavior on Biradari basis

Material and Methods

To test our null hypothesis a structured questionnaire was constructed to gather the required information from respective set of people with special distribution of sample at gender bases. A sample of 150 was interviewed to test the hypothesis with best available sample of 27% female and 73% male. All respondents were fully cleared with the objective of research and their responses were recorded with their verbal consent. Data was entered in EpiData and exported to SPSS was further analysis. To test null hypothesis Chi-Square Test was practiced.

Results and Discussion

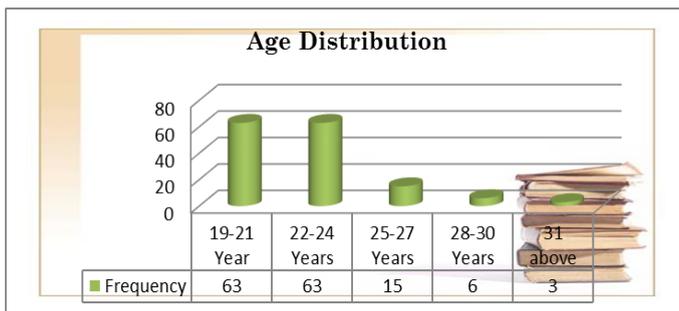


Fig.1 Age Distribution of the Respondents

Above figure explain the participation of respondents with respect to their age. Bars show that in between the age of 19-24 years, 126 respondents fall in while rest of the respondents was from above age categories.

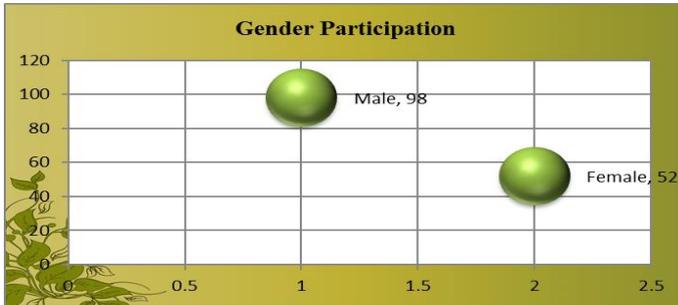


Fig. 2 Gender Participation

The balls of figure 2 represents that among study respondents 98 males and 52 females in the current study to record their opinion on the mentioned objective and hypothesis.

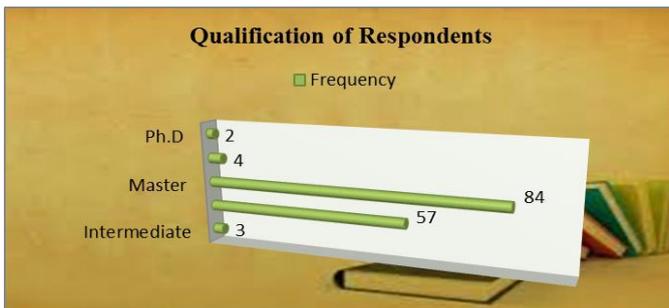


Fig. 3 Qualification of Respondents

Academic background of study respondents is always important because the research guides that educated people have different opinion as compared to other because of their academic and professional exposure. Above figure explain the academic qualification of study respondents.

Table: 1 Gender and Vote for Biradari

Gender	Your vote on the basis of Biradari?		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	80	18	98
Female	42	10	52
Total	122	28	150

Table 1 focused on the objective and hypothesis of the present study. Importantly, if you look at the frequencies among 98 males 80 male respondents argues that they will vote for biradari while on the other hand 42 (n=52) female say yes to vote for biradari. This is important because the percentages of both male and female responses are not much different in their opinion.

Chi-test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.017 ^a	1	.897		
Continuity Correction^b	0.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.017	1	.897		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.530
Linear-by-Linear Association	.017	1	.898		
N of Valid Cases	150				

It is clear from the crosstabs that about 81.6% of males and 80.8% of females were in favor of casting their votes on the basis of biradari. In aggregate about 81.3% of the respondents are in favor of casting their votes on the basis of biradari.

Here as p-value is greater than 5% level of significance so accept the null hypothesis which means that there is no association between gender and their votes on biradari basis. More formally there is no gender discrimination in vote casting, that is, every person is independent for casting their vote on the basis of biradari.

Discussion

Biradari affiliation is found everywhere in Pakistani scenario with different level of intensity, somewhere intensity is very high while at somewhere intensity is low. It is recognized that role of both gender is very crucial to promote any particular ethnic group. Women along with their males of biradari are also played an active role in political activities and especially those who have better level of education and strong ethnic affiliations feel more responsibility on their shoulder and stand with their biradari decisions.

Study results show the inborn socio-political affiliation of respondents with their biradari as Mughees (2006) explains in his study which further explains the biradari not only shows the political affiliation of one's but also his innate affiliation with his forefathers belongs to particular racial groups and construction of caste system. Mughees (2006) also explains that family system, kinship ties and association with caste played an important role in the politics of south Asia than individual political affiliation.

Results of present research shows that females long with males are inclined to vote for their biradari and to incorporate their efforts for strong political position of their biradari. On the result of hypothesis testing we might says that there is every person is independent to vote rather male or female and findings also explain that females along with male equally support their biradari in elections along with males.

Conclusion

Affiliation of biradari is very much cultural as well as socio-political for both part of gender. Present research shows that women are influenced by their biradari system and show strong bonds with their biradari. Results also help to conclude that women are interested to promote their biradari and do not

hesitate to share their feelings regarding voting to a particular biradari. Hypothesis also indicates that there is no gender discrimination in vote casting behavior. These results offer a new dimension for further study to evaluate the actual voting event and come up with findings that is there any discrimination in real activity rather in behavior.

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