

Impact of Cast (Biradari) System on Voting Behaviour of People Living in Rural Areas of Punjab, Pakistan. (A case study of Village Chalianwala of District Mandi Baha ud Din)

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Abstract:-

The researchers were influenced by continues contentious voting behaviour in Chalianwala because some ruling political parties used biradari system as a tool of control to protect their vested interests. Although urban areas are a bit better in this matter but rural areas are heavily influenced by this malicious tradition. Hence the purpose of the present research was to search out the impact of biradari system on voting behaviour. The study was done with the help of qualitative methods. Biradari is a strong unit of identity in a village. It is the basic unit of association, social backing and collective action. It accepts individual's behaviour and choices into collective ones. In present research local, the social institution of biradari has a unified structure along with political functions. The output of the present research shows that biradarism has a very significant role in local and national politics. People are restricted to norms and rules of biradari and if they don't follow it they have to deal with social boycott or many other social sanctions from the society.

Key words: - Voting Behaviour Biradari Chalianwala Urban
Qualitative

Introduction:-

Casting a vote is one of the most useful terms in the modern time of democratic politics. In democratic systems, adult citizen uses "voting" as a source for showing his acceptance or rejection of governmental decisions, policies, and programmers. Casting a vote is an important process of the democratic system, and the decision made at the base has the power

to change the power elites. For this purpose, voting maybe seen as the basic decision-making process in a democracy.⁴

Political behaviour is a middle part of politics of any political system. Biradarism is the fundamental component of local culture and voting behaviour of the district. There are all kinds of biradaries in the province including locals, settlers, immigrants, traders, professionals are settled here. Biradari is a mixture of castes while a caste is the name of the combination of some families.³ Castes are further distributed into sub-castes, which are more crucial in terms of their influence on the daily lives of people. Those who affiliate to Zats form a Biradri, which is the specific socio cultural entity within which caste rules are performed. Biradari can be defined as a strict social system in which a social hierarchy is maintained generation after generation.

The politics in Pakistan is affected by different tools; like ‘qaumism’ and ‘religion’ used to control the general public. “Biradari-based political system” is just a coverterm coined to feed personal “political objectives”⁸. It has been recognize that factional groups modify the voting behaviour, and political inclination as stated that “Local biradaries in Punjab performed their role as a pressure group and have their impact on political parties².”

In Pakistani society, biradari organization plays the role of most important force, authority and power, and influential than religion, cultural or any sociopolitical causes. Political associations and parties in Pakistan are normally depending on biradari system not ideologies. Within Pakistan, in the social system of the Punjab province biradarism is considered to be the main element as reported earlier studies. It influences the political system at the national and local levels ¹.

Objectives of the Study:-

1. To search out the socioeconomic status of respondents.
2. To search out the possible relationship between cast system (Biradari) and voting behaviour in the research local.

Material and Method:-

A qualitative research design was used together and illustrates the obtained data from the field. The researchers used individual in depth interviews in the aspect of data collection. The

respondents of the study were the household head of the research local. 20 respondents were elected in the phase of sampling. Purposive sampling technique was placed in the phase of sampling. The interview guide consisted of various parts: respondents' profile, voting behaviour. All interviews were held in the Punjabi language and interpreted into English for the purposes of scrutiny⁵. Respondents were inspired to participate in a discussion in which they were able to talk extensively about their roles and voting behaviour. The interview was not fixed to the prepared schedule but was open-ended and encouraged additional comments from the respondent. Data collection and search took place from the end of August to the end of September, 2023.

Research Local:-

The universe of this study was "Chillianwala" (also spelled Chellianwala) is a village and union council no 07 of district Mandi Bahauddin in the Punjab province of Pakistan. It is located at latitude of 32°39'0N and longitude of 73°36'0E at an altitude of 218 metres (718 feet) and lies to the north-east of the district capital Mandi Bahauddin.

This village is approximately 13 kilometers from district Mandi Bahauddin. The summers are long & severe & the winters are short in the village Chillianwala. Most of people speak Punjabi language. Most of the residents of village Chillianwala have agriculture based economy. The voting behaviour of entire Punjab is influenced by its local culture. Biradarism is the main element of local culture and voting behaviour of the district. There are all sorts of biradarries in the village Chillianwala including locals, settlers, immigrants, traders, professionals are settled here.

Talking about the voting behaviour of the people in present research locale, Voters have a mature knowledge about the importance of voting. People here fully utilize their right to vote. There is no difference in the voting ratio of youth, elderly, and women because of being educated and awareness. If the elderly voters faced any difficulty on the day of the election, the young voters fully cooperate with them. If we analyse people above 18 years of age, 95% out of 100% people cast their votes.

Data Analysis:

Socio Economic Profile of the Respondents:

Respondents of the study were the household head. The respondents were distributed into four age groups. The respondents had various educational levels: most of them had finished high school or lower; five respondents have graduate degrees; four had vocational certificates and one had an under graduate degree. The respondents were currently involved in distinctive jobs. The largest number of respondents was self-dependent. They were commonly engaged in agro based businesses.

Role of Biradari in Election Campaign

In Punjab Biradari is considered to be most important and strongest bond. It prioritized most of the time while making political alliances and loyalty of people within the same caste group. In the history of Indo-Pak, caste system has been at the top from centuries. People usually belong to a Biradari that is used to be guiding them in their daily social lives by a set of rules and regulation. It can also be shown as norms and values that relate to marriage patterns, work, enjoyment, recreation and many other social affairs. In the present segment of study an effort has been made to note the impact of Biradari on election campaign through asking different questions from the respondents. For instance respondents were asked “How your Biradari influence you to cast vote in last general or by elections?”. In reply to this question one of the respondents’ said;

At election times all people in the Baraderi collectively decide to whom they will cast vote Therefore it did not happen even a single time that I or my family cast vote without taking decision from Baraderi.

It was concluded from the findings that Baraderi has great influence on voting campaign. People select their candidate on the basis of Baraderi and in national or provisional assembly election all the Baraderi members gathered at one place which is locally referred as *Dara or Daira* and collectively decide about their candidate. This decision is usually taken by the head or chauthary of Baraderi and other Baraderi members gathered as formality. Chauthary or household head publically announce about his choice candidate through Baraderi gathering. After the formally announcement the selected candidate is invited at *Dara* and ensured him to support in election and everyone is supposed to vote that particular candidate. A similar kind of findings was gathered by Duke et al in (2009). They had concluded that parents influence on adolescent civic responsibility has also underlined the importance of parental warmth and the affective climate of family interactions. A stronger connection with

parents was found to be associated with a higher likelihood of adolescents endorsing civic values as well as participating in a wide range of election activities.

Role of Biradari on Election Day

Biradari system played an important role in different times in Pakistan during local body elections. In the present study a struggle has been made to know the role of Biradari on Election Day. To gain the objectives of the study the researcher has asked various questions from the respondents and has collected data from them. For instance the researcher has asked “What kind of tasks your family asks you to perform on Election Day (Related to elections)”; in response to this question one of the respondents said that;

We are very busy on the day of election as we have to pick and drop the voters, serve them meal and I also represent as election agent for my party usually.

It was analysed that on Election Day major roles are performed by the local Biradari heads or chaudhary. They provide pick and drop to those people who have to come from far areas and have no transport facility. They also provide basic arrangements to voters like sitting and food. Furthermore the most sensible person is selected to perform polling agent duty from the party side because it is considered that polling agent is very crucial person on Election Day. It was also observed that people cast their vote on the basis of their Biradari because they have many social ties in the Biradari. The Biradari system in the research area is so strong that even educated people could not cast their vote according to their sense rather they have to follow their family and Biradari norms.

On the other side poor or lower people of the society cast their vote according to the will of their chaudhary. They have no right to decide or give vote according to their own choice. On the basis of field data it was resulted that Biradari system in the study is very strong and has profound role on Election Day.

Biradari Response to Post Election

In this part of study an effort has been made to know the response of Baraderi after election. In order to gain the goal of the study different questions were asked from the respondents and their response was analysed. For instance they were asked that “What kind of reward you expect from your Baraderi after election”; in response to this question one of the respondents said that;

In every Baraderi there is a head that campaigned for candidate during national and provincial elections. He has the connections with the politicians who then assist to solve the problem of members of the Baraderi after election which are linked to courts.

It was observed that people were not much concerned about national politics rather they vote on the basis of their Baraderi and locale candidate. They don't get any advantage directly from their elected candidate. In case of any emergency they contact to their Biradari head and it's his duty to resolve their problems. If parents have high levels of political knowledge then positive influence of parent youth political discussion on youth political knowledge would be greater. It is believable that the transmission of civic values is stronger when the parent child relationship is characterized by high levels of warmth and support, a condition that may favour the endorsement of values within the family ⁷.

Conclusion:-

The objective of this study has been rationalization of the role of Biradari on election in the study area. It is concluded that election in the study area is in actual fact in Biradari politics and with the process of local bodies system it is playing crucial role. The voting has caused crucial role within civil society by provoking the locale chaudhary and biradarism. People are in planning how to push forward their families and tribes in the coming election. For winning in election it is necessary for candidate that he should better belong to a dominant "Biradari". In the locale body election every political party had nominated candidates belonging to larger Biradari. It is human nature to exercise ethnic preference for their own group in the form of aggressiveness against others.

Some advantages of Biradari are also found in the study. Biradarism assumes the status of the central character in the elections. It fills the gap of political parties in the locale body election and is a type of contest which is essential feature of democracy. In the study area the biradari system provides security and power for its members. It is an identity for them because Biradari is not just a matter of being a Jatt or a Rajput rather it is also a Kinship system.

Overall it was concluded that Biradari served as an institution in the study area and Biradarism has crucial role in the local and national politics. People are bound to follow the norms of Biradari otherwise they have to face social boycott or many other sanctions from the Biradari.

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