

Role of Vote Bloc in Politics of West Punjab: A Study of Voting Behaviour in a village Jhok Bodo District Dera Ghazi Khan

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Abstract

This research about the voting behavior of rural west Punjab was conducted through participant observation in the village Jhok Bodo, District Dera Ghazi Khan. In this research I probed into the role of social organization and economic structure on voting behavior of the people. The rural socio-economic structure provides the foundation of political structure. People strategically gather around their kinship networks and form vote blocs to negotiate with the patron to bargain for private and public goods. They give power to their biraderi leader who bargains with the patrons for collective action. The effectiveness and power of the biraderi is based upon economic power and social status. In this research I found that the voters in rural west Punjab are neither dependent voters nor they blindly follow their parochial identities. They are benefit seeking political actors. They in absence of universal services delivery and dysfunctional public institutions negotiate benefits with the politicians by strategically gathering their kinship networks for their collective actions. So they are rational voters and they try to maximize their material benefits by using the power of their votes. So in electoral politics of rural west Punjab, vote bloc plays the major role in determining the voting behavior of the people. The ideological commitment to political parties or programmatic following in politics has nothing to do with the rural voters of west Punjab.

Keywords: Social organization, Economic structure, Kinship networks, Vote bloc, Patronage, Collective action.

Vote Bloc:

In his work on politics of rural Punjab, F. G. Bailey (1969) quoted in Martin, points out the role of factions. He defines "faction" as "a group of persons without a common ideology as a basis for co-operation and recruited by a leader with whom they have a transactional relationship" (Martin, 2009, p. 17). Ralph Nicholas in his research on the role of factions in the village politics, points out that factions

are conflict groups for the control over human or material resources. They organize in political relations and have no function outside the politics (Nicholas, 1968, p. 23). He mentions that the power of the leader of the faction is multi-faceted. It can be of three types – social, economic and political. He further mentioned that the factions can be based upon kinship ties, patron-client relations, religious or politico-economic ties or any combination of these (Nicholas, 1968, p. 29). According to him these factions are not corporate groups and they lack permanence. But they can survive for a long period of time. Following the definitions of Bailey and Nicholas for factions, vote blocs are same, other than the definitional point of conflicting groups in political arena of Nicholas. Such as in any village there may not be conflict but may be consensus for the achievement of any targeted goal. Vote blocs are locality bounded informal political institutions. They are managed by local political influentials. Through vote blocs, these political influentials act as brokers or intermediaries between the voters and the candidates to makes collective electoral decisions. The vote bloc members or its leaders may show their affiliation with any political party but they are not organized by them.

Alavi (1971, 1976) argues that the political power in the villages of Punjab is organized by factions. These factions cut across class and kin relations. He uses Bailey's (1969) concept of "core" and "followers" in explaining the membership of the faction. He mentions that usually the leader of the faction is big landowner of the village. He gathers his political support from his faction members through different measures. The "core" of the leader can be of his economic dependents who have no option but to support him. They may be also his close relatives and neighbouring landlords. According to him, with the power of his "core" he recruits his followers normally independent small peasant proprietor (Alavi, 1976, p. 202). He mentions them as "an inner circle of retainers" and "outer circles of followers" (Alavi, 1971, p.112).

According to Alavi the nature of relationship of the members of a political faction depends upon the "sub-structure" of the village. These structures are "inherent sources of political authority, power and influence, and (given a parliamentary constitution) the ability to mobilize voters". He mentioned these sub-structures as the "traditional social institutions" of caste and kinship, the relations of productions with the economic structure, and the "structure of government and administration, especially the police and magistracy...which is a potential source of considerable power for those who can establish effective links with it" (Alavi, 1971, p. 112).

He further mentions that the faction leader enters into alliances with all possible measures to gain support. With the power of his core behind him, the faction leader sets out to recruit a following from among other sections of the rural society, principally the independent small peasant proprietors. The latter are weak individually but often they are organized under the authority of their *biraderipanchayat* (lineage council). Faction leaders enter into alliances with *biraderis* (hierarchically ordered status groups). They for this purpose use a variety

of means of persuasion. A powerful factor is the ability of a faction leader to bestow favours and patronage. For this the faction leader's relationship with administration and his access to official favours is of special importance (Alavi, 1976, p. 203).

So vote bloc provides the basis for rural political organizations. The members of these vote blocs strategically gather around their bloc leader who bargains with the political patron. So the study of vote blocs, the relationship of the member with the bloc leader, the bargaining power of the broker patron with the politician is of highly significant in politics like Pakistan. Therefore, in this study, following research questions would be discussed.

Why is old rural landed elite dominating in electoral politics? Why do rural voters become the members of vote blocs? Are rural voters dependent, ignorant and irrational? What factors determine the choice of voters and how they influence their voting decisions? Why don't rural poor voters give importance to political parties, ideologies or policies in electoral politics? How much economic inequality, social structure and status influence the agency of the rural people? How much has changed about the rural electoral politics and voting behaviour of the citizens of Punjab? In short the study would focus on how wealth, power, influence and prestige play its role in making the voting behaviour of the rural people and bar the poor becoming a part of collective action aiming at the betterment of their own class.

Review of Literature:

The literature on voting behaviour of rural Punjab can be divided into two main groups.

The scholars of the first category are of the opinion that in voting behaviour, class is the major determinant rather than primordial or parochial identities in rural Punjab. In this category, the major work is done by Saghir Ahmed, Hamza Alavi, Nicholas Martin and Shandana Khan Mohmand.

Saghir Ahmad (1977) conducted his research in 1964-65, in a landlord dominated village – Sahiwal in district Sargodha in central Punjab. In his analysis access to land defines all relations of production and livelihood in the village. It gives rights of ownership not only of the resources but also of the control of the life of the villagers. While mentioning the views of the people about the authority of the landlord in a village, he stated that the landlords “are the *maaliks* [owners/lords] and we are *reiaya* (subject) or *ghulam* (slave)” (Ahmad, 1977, p. 116). He is of the opinion that social stratification is a matter of economic class more than of caste or kinship group and that political behaviour is largely motivated by economic considerations. Ahmad concludes that attempts by landlords to suppress collective action is almost directed against the rural poor, and not against small, independent *zamindar* (Ahmad, 1977, p. 9). In his approach “... the class relations of south Asian villagers are more fundamental for most of their life experiences – including religious belief and practice than is their membership in *quoms* and caste like status groups” (Ahmad, 1977, p. 9). He mentioned that:

“...the followers’ affiliation with factional leaders is based in most cases upon economic dependency and real or perceived economic or political benefits rather than upon kinship or caste.... In the elections I examined, neither the differences between the leaders nor the relations between leaders and followers were based upon anything resembling political ideology or program” (Ahmad, 1977, p. 103).

The other important works related to voting behaviour were conducted by Hamza Alavi in different articles related to politics of rural Punjab. In his analysis, voting behaviour is determined by economic position of the voters. Those who are economically dependent on others, they will vote according to the dictates of those on whom they are dependent. In the words of Kathleen Gough, (as cited in Ahmad),

Hamza Alavi notes that where the voter is an economic dependent of a landlord or other figure, his ‘vertical’ alignment to this figure is likely to take precedence over his ‘horizontal’ alignments of kinship or caste in determining his vote. The horizontal alignment of voters, as in instances of lineage solidarity, is by contrast strongest among voters who have some economic independence (Ahmad, 1977, p. 11-12).

Nicolas Martin, is of the opinion that “... severe political and economic inequalities, and the absence of political parties that genuinely represented popular interests meant that election in the rural Pakistani Punjab could hardly be described as competitive and as occasions when poor voters could hold politicians to account and press their demands” (Martin, 2013, p. 12).

Shandana Khan Mohmand (2011) presents that with the advancement of mechanization and in its result the social structure has been changed. Rapid population growth, improved infrastructure, connecting the towns with rural areas, and rapid urbanization had led to political mobilization in rural Punjab. The autonomy of voters increased but it did so within vertical relationships with local landed patrons that moved the political system towards clientelism. She is of the opinion that social structure, historical land inequality, caste and connectivity are the major determinants of voting behaviour for villages in Punjab. In her opinion voters in rural Punjab are benefit seeking political actors. They strategically gather around *biraderi* networks and for dealing with candidate, support broker patron for state services and public goods. In her opinion both *biraderi* and patronage are tools of the dominant classes to continue their political dominance over the rural poor. The rural poor can only become equal citizen in casting their constitutional right of representation when these two would be replaced by class and universal services delivery.

In second category, the scholars argued that primordial or parochial identities as social and cultural value and patronage play the major role in shaping of voting behaviour. In this regard, the major research is conducted by Waseem Ahmed, Andrew Wilder, Stephen Lyon and Matthew Nelson.

Waseem in his analysis of 1993 elections in Pakistan mentioned that:

The basic electoral unit in Pakistani society is not the individual citizen but the leader or spokesman of the local community, be it tribe, caste, sub-caste, sect, sub-sect, faction, trade union, migrant or settler group or women's activist group. The electoral candidates operating from the platforms of political parties contacted not men and women in their homes but the local 'big men' who would deliver votes in hundreds or even thousands. (Waseem, 1994, p. 235)

Wilder (1999) is of the opinion that politics in Punjab is largely determined by political factors. In urban areas these are party and party leader loyalty, patronage orientation and issue orientation. In rural areas these are development and patronage. Stephen Lyon (2004) did his qualitative research in a village of Attock district of northern Punjab. His main focus is on patron-client relationship. He mentioned that everyone in Pakistan is sometimes patron and at other time client. He is of the opinion that:

... asymmetrical power relations form the cornerstone of Pakistani society. The fundamental cultural relationships that Pakistanis seek out with other individuals are asymmetrical. Close relations of equality are problematic for Pakistanis and seem to occur only in very limited conditions. (Lyon, 2004, p. 2)

Mathew Nelson (2011) argues that the land lords get their power through political networks which are based around access to land, traditional village level informal institutions and relations of kinship. He is of the opinion that they provide people access to post-colonial state institutions in related to matters of conflict resolution and inheritance of property.

All these studies have been conducted in either Central or Northern Punjab. None of these studies have been conducted in Southern or Western Punjab. As there is huge difference in socio-economic structures of different regions of Punjab, so it is unjust to consider the politics of different regions with same parameters. As no prior research have been conducted on the voting behaviour of western Punjab, so there is need of research about the voting behaviour of western Punjab. Therefore for this purpose, the region of Dera Ghazi Khan has been selected. So this study would fulfil the gap present in voting behavior of the Western Punjab and would contribute in existing literature for electoral politics and voting behavior studies in Punjab. It would facilitate the ongoing process of electoral reforms in Pakistan.

The Village:

The village Jhok Bodo is at 25 kilometres towards South West from tehsil town Taunsa Sharif. It is not only a village but also a *mouza* (revenue unit) along with nearby small hamlets. The population of the village is comprised of approximately 6,000 people. It is consisted of almost 750 households. The inhabitants of the village are divided into two main *quoms* – *zamindars* (landowners) and the *kammis* (artisans). Almost 85% of the village population is comprised of

zamindarquom, *Qaisrani*, a tribe of the Balouches. While the 15% of the population is comprised of *kammiquom*.

Vote Bloc in Jhok Bodo:

The politics of the village is based on vote blocs. There are two vote blocs in the village. These vote blocs are led by two big landowners of the *zamindar quom* of the village. The first vote bloc is led by Haji Latif Ghazi. He is the third eldest son of Haji Muhammad Hussain Ghazi, the richest person of the village. Haji Latif Ghazi, in his documents which he submitted to election commission office as candidate of the Union Council *Nazim* (Chairman) election 2015, he officially declared the value of his assets as twenty two crore rupees. On this amount he paid all his taxes. These assets are other than the assets of his father, brothers and other family members. He mentioned in his assets hundred acres of agriculture land, a ginning factory, a tractor show room, and commercial property.

Haji Latif Ghazi continuing the legacy of his father by leading his Ghazi *biraderi* started taking part in village politics. In early 1990s, he became part of Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa, MNA's faction in the area. Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa is descendent of aristocratic Khosa family of the region. His forefathers as tribal chiefs were granted huge tracts of land for their services to the British (Griffin and Massy, 1909: 355). He started his politics in 1979 by first becoming vice chairman of the District Council. He was also again elected vice chairman of the District Council in 1983. He was twice elected MPA in 1985 and 1988 elections. He was then twice elected MNA on the ticket of Muslim League (N) first in 1990 and then in 1997. During this period, being part of Sardar Amjad Khosa's faction, Haji Latif Ghazi developed his links with different government departments especially police and courts through the MNA. In this way, he started playing the role as intermediary between the village people and different government departments and also with the politician.

During Mushraff era, when Muslim League (N) was under oppression, Haji Latif Ghazi joined Khawaja Sheraz group. Khawaja Sheraz is a scion of aristocratic *sajjadanishin* (custodian of shrine) family of the *pir* (saint) of Taunsa Sharif. His elders from the beginning of electoral politics in Punjab are very active. His father was twice elected MNA of this constituency of the district. He was also once elected as senator. Haji Latif Ghazi supported Khawaja Sheraz in national assembly elections in 2003 and in 2008. During these elections Khawaja Sheraz was elected as MNA on the ticket of Muslim League Quaid-i-Azam. In his first tenure, he was appointed as Parliamentary secretary and in second tenure as Minister of the State. During this period, Haji Latif Ghazi strengthened his role as broker between the villagers and the politician. In this way, he got approved different development schemes from the development funds of Khawaja Sheraz for the village. He further strengthened his role for catering the demands of the village people for police and court matters. In elections 2013, realising the change in national politics and weakening the national politics of Muslim League (Q), Khawaja Sheraz joined Pakistan Peoples Party. In this political scenario, the emerging power of Muslim

League (N) was evident. The local MNA candidate of Muslim League (N) was once again Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa, who was deprived of the ticket in previous two elections. Now realising the change in national politics, Haji Latif Ghazi decided to join Amjad Farooq Khosa group and supported him in that election. Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa won the National Assembly election. Haji Latif Ghazi as a vote bloc leader also maintains his contact with tribal chief, Sardar Mir Badshah Qaisrani. Sardar Mir Badshah Qaisrani has been twice elected MPA. His wife is sitting MPA of this constituency. He is from landed aristocratic family of the region. His forefathers as tribal chiefs were granted huge tracts of land for their services to the British (Griffin and Massy, 1909: 357). Haji Latif on the ticket of PML (N) has now been elected as *Nazim* (Chairman) in Local Bodies elections 2015 of the Union Council Jhok Bodo. In this way, Haji Latif again got prominence in the village and local level politics by playing the role as broker patron between the village people and the politicians.

The second vote bloc is led by Dr. Riaz. He is in his late forties. He is M.B.B.S. doctor by profession and is running his own private clinic almost for the last twenty five years. He has hundreds of acres of land in the canal irrigated area and other residential and commercial property in Tibbi Qaisrani and Tehsil town Taunsa Sharif. He has constructed a double story magnificent house in the village. His agricultural land is managed by his younger brother Saeed. Dr. Riaz maintains his *visakh* (a men's place) in the village, where his younger brother, in his absence manages his all economic, social and political affairs.

He is politically active for the last almost twenty years. His *biraderi*, had been politically active from the beginning of the politics of the village. In general as well as in local government elections in the village, his *biraderi* remained at the top in political realm.

Biraderism and Politics:

The village is divided into two *quoms* (hierarchical status groups) – *zamindar* (landowning) and *kammi* (artisan). These *quoms* are further divided into *biraderis*. In the village there are twelve *zamindar*, five tenant and four *kammibiraderis*. These *biraderis*, at every election, general or local body, first gather at their *biraderi* level and then decide to become the part of either village level vote bloc or directly contact with the electoral candidate. The brief description of this relationship is mentioned here. Those *biraderis* whose relationship with the vote bloc leader is presented here were randomly selected among their groups.

Landowning Biraderis and voting Behaviour:

In the village, on the basis of their socio-economic position landowning *biraderis* can be divided into two groups. These are, rich, and middle income *biraderis*.

Rich zamindarBiraderis:

There are four rich *zamindarbiraderis* in the village Jhok Bodo. These *biraderis* are Jamalwali, Bhuraiwali, Ghazi and Hassani. In village politics, these *biraderis* act as political factions. In expediency, sometimes they make decisions to become the part of village level vote blocs but mostly they maintain their separate identity.

Rich ZamindarBiraderisTable 1. Distribution of rich *biraderis*

Name of <i>Biraderi</i>	Household	Population	% of the total Population
Jamalwala	75	600	10
Bhurawalai	20	150	2.5
Ghazi	30	225	3.75
Hassani	110	950	15.83
Total	235	1925	32.08

An analysis of nature of relationship of a rich landowning *biraderi* with the vote bloc leader and its voting behaviour as analysed by stratified sampling is as follows.

HassaniBiraderi: This *biraderi* is consisted of almost hundred and ten households. Their population is composed of nearly nine hundred and fifty persons. This is the largest *biraderi* of the village. They are descendants of the original settlers of the village. As this *biraderi* is economically rich, the largest *biraderi* of the village, the *numberdar*(head man) of the village from the colonial period was from this *biraderi*. They have their fields in the main area of the hill torrent irrigation system of the village. Those people in this *biraderi* who are living in the village they generally cultivate their land. However some big landowners have their tenets also. As many people in this *biraderi* are living in different cities for their jobs and businesses so their land is managed by their near relatives or some people of the tenant *biraderis* of the village. The houses of the people those who have migrated to different cities of the country for their jobs or businesses are also protected by their relatives. Some people among this *biraderi* have managed to buy canal irrigated land near Chashma Right Bank canal. Their lands are cultivated by their tenets. The people of *Hassanibiraderi* are more highly qualified than the other landed *biraderis* of the village. Two persons of this *biraderi* are PhD. from United States of America. One is permanently settled there. However he remains in contact with his relatives in the village. One person of this *biraderi* is currently pursuing his PhD. degree from China. Two doctors of this *biraderi* practice in nearby towns. Some people of the *biraderi* have rich businesses in tehsil town Taunsa. One person of this *biraderi* is serving as colonel in Pakistan army. Some qualified persons like doctors, engineers and university graduates are also members of this landed *biraderi*. They are serving in different towns and cities of the country. Most of the people who joined services sectors in different cities of the country realising the need for their children for better education and other facilities settled into those cities.

This *biraderi* is living in northern side of the village. Their houses are in compact form. Normally the houses of different segments of this *biraderi* are adjoining to each other's houses. The families of this *biraderi* are related to each other with marital relations. However these relations have been developed on economic basis. Financially rich families establish relations with family of same economic status. They actively participate in different ceremonies of joys and sorrows. Almost all the families of this *biraderi* have their brick constructed houses. Three houses of this *biraderi* are double story constructed. They have their own *biraderi* mosque. This mosque is the second largest mosque after the main *Jamia* mosque of the village. Here in this mosque, other than the main *Jamia* mosque of the village, *Juma* (Friday) prayer is also held. With this mosque after the main *Jamia* mosque, *Madarssa* (seminary) is also attached. As has been described in the second chapter that in the village there is serious problem of water supply scheme. Due to mismanagement, the water supply scheme system does not properly function. In this regard, the rich people have managed to install hand pumps which costs huge amount. It is unimaginable to think about the poor to install hand pumps. So under these circumstances, some funds have been sanctioned for the poor people by the public health department to install hand pumps for the poor. These funds are released to the people on the disposal of parliamentarians. So five hand pumps were installed through these schemes in the houses of his *biraderi*. These hand pumps were actually meant for the poor people of the village who were not getting water through public health schemes village tube-wells.

Dr. Riaz as leader of the one vote bloc of the village, is politically active for the last almost twenty years. His *biraderi* makes the core of his vote bloc. As he is in good contacts with local MPA, so he provides all types of patronage to his *biraderi*. Therefore, his *biraderi*, in general as well as in local government elections follows his decision.

Middle Income *zamindarBiraderis*:

In the village Jhok Bodo there are eight middle income *zamindarbiraderis*. These kin groups although try to maintain their separate identity as faction but because of their socio-economic middle ranking position, they strategically evolve their relations with the village level vote blocs. In this way they try to maximize their access to state resources.

Table 2. Distribution of middle income *biraderis*

Name of the <i>biraderi</i>	No. of Households	Population	% of total population
Bodowalai	35	200	3.33
Soofi	10	160	2.6
Mahmindwalai	30	225	3.75
Mianwalai	30	250	4.16
Chhandal	45	350	5.83
Lashkariwalai	30	250	4.16
Bhuwani	75	650	10.83

Mohli	35	300	5
Total	290	2385	39.75

A summary of the description of politics and voting behaviour of a middle income landowning *biraderis* as analysed by stratified sampling is as follows.

Bhuwani Biraderi: This *biraderi* is comprised of almost seventy five households. Their population is comprised of almost six hundred and fifty people. They were the initial settlers of the village. They are among the village proprietary body *biraderi*. They are among the middle income landowning *biraderis* of the village. Mostly the agriculture land of each *zamindarbiraderi* is in the same location. The agriculture fields of the *biraderis* of *Admani* section are at the top, and the *biraderis* of *Waswani* section are at the middle and the *biraderis* of *Bhuwani* sections are at the bottom in the hill torrent based agriculture. So under this hill torrent based agricultural economy, according to landownership, the *biraderis* of the *Admani* and *Waswani* sections are among the rich land owning *biraderis* in the village as compare to other *zamindarbiraderis* of the village. In education they are not as such qualified as some other landowning qualified *biraderis* of the village. Same is case of their progress in government sector jobs. They are in middle level businesses and jobs. So despite being a second largest *biraderi* of the village they are not socially as well as politically effective in the village. They are living in the northern half of the village in the vicinity of the rich landowning Ghazi *biraderi*. They in politics of the village from the beginning are part of the highly influential Ghazi *biraderi*. In local body elections of 2015, one person Abid bitany of this *biraderi* as being part of Haji Latif's group was elected general counsellor. They mostly depend upon Ghazi *biraderi* of all of their contacts with government departments.

The streets of the *mohalla* (locality) of this *biraderi* are paved. These were developed with the funds of NRSP on the proposal of Haji Latif Ghazi. For the electricity smooth functioning in case of high load, they were provided with new transformer by the MNA Amjad Farooq on the proposal of Haji Latif. This *biraderi* is provided with water supply through the only functioning tube-well of east-southern side of the village. when this tube-well ran out of order, for its repairing despite got sanctioning some funds from the public health department on the advice of MNA, Haji Latif Ghazi paid hand some amount himself. So this *biraderi* always decides about their electoral support in general as well as national elections in accordance with the decision of Haji Latif Ghazi.

Landless Biraderis and Voting Behaviour:

From the decade of sixties, with the introduction of mechanization, and in its results, the change from traditional agrarian economy to market economy, the social structure started changing in rural areas. In its effect economic change altered the position of different *biraderis* in the village. With land fragmentation and mechanization, most of the members of the land owning *biraderis* started cultivating their lands themselves. In its effect most of the members of the tenant *biraderis* have to lose their jobs. As they were unskilled and have no enough money to start their

business, they have to join village daily wage and field labour force. So in this way, the village social structure passed through different changes. So in this way, in its overall effect it severely affected the already poor and benefitted the already established *biraderis* of the village. So it widened the gap between rich and the poor *biraderis*. After that and even at present the *zamindarbiraderis* of the village are dominating in economic, social and political realm. So they are at the top in social hierarchy of the village. This economic change has elevated the status of the village elite very high and has increased their role in the village affairs.

Tenant *Biraderis*:

In this way, now the tenant *biraderis* are not directly dependent upon the landed *biraderis* of the village for their livelihood. Even with the construction of metaled road some among them also changed their professions and became able to earn in some better way. This change of nature of relationship of tenant *biraderis* with the landed *biraderis* also changed the political relationship of the village landed elite and landless tenant *biraderis*. With the process of electioneering, now they have become aware about the importance of their vote. Especially in last two decades, the holding of elections made them more conscious about their political role. Local landed elite realising the importance of their vote, have changed their behaviour with them. Now rather than telling them to whom they will have to cast the vote, they come to them and deal with them with different bargaining way. Generally they always behave with them in different ways.

There are five tenant *biraderis* in the village. Initially in the village land based economy, they started working as tenant to big landowning *biraderis* of the village. However after some time a few households bought a small patches of land. But that land was not enough to support their livelihood. So they have to depend upon other sources for their livelihood. In this way, most of them could not make their economic position better.

Table 3. Distribution of tenant *biraderis* of the village

Name of the <i>Biraderi</i>	Household	Persons	% of total population
Zakaria	37	300	5
Kasai	20	150	2.5
Wachhalai	20	150	2.5
Bhurriary	20	170	2.8
Gurray	15	130	2.16
Total	112	900	15

A brief description of a village tenant *biraderi*, its relationship with vote bloc leader and voting behaviour as analysed by stratified sampling is given below.

Zakaria *Biraderi*: This *biraderi* is comprised of almost one hundred and eighty people. They are divided into two groups. One group is comprised of five households who are living in western side of the village. While the other is comprised of fifteen households who are living in north eastern sides of the village. They are living in small houses. Even some families of them are living in just

in one room. Those who are living in eastern side of the village, their houses are in compact form. Among them just a few families have any *pucca* house. Unlike the village residential pattern of *zamindarbiraderis* where normally every house is composed of at least a canal, they have very small living houses just comprised of five *marlas* (1/4th of *kanal*). They have normally one or two rooms. Most of them have no wash rooms or toilets. Their family members have to go to fields on call of nature.

As they are landless, village labourers, dependent upon rearing sheep and goats, and could not make progress even in any other profession. Their ancestors came in this village as tenants. They are landless and are socially considered among the low status *biraderi*. They have conjugal relations with their relatives outside the village people. They are among the poorest *biraderis* of the village. They are the least educated and are almost unable to read and write. Even not a single one among them is associated with any kind of government job. Just a few among them are running small businesses.

Four families among them are working as tenants of Dr. Riaz in their agricultural canal irrigated lands at Chashma Right Bank canal. They get financial help in the time of need like in case of illness or events like marriages etc. from Dr. Riaz Hassaani. He manages canal irrigated land by five landless tenant families of *zakaria biraderi* of the village. The tenants have shifted with their families to the lands. Some other members of *zakariabiraderi* who are living in the village cultivate the hill torrents irrigated lands of Dr. Riaz. Those families who are living in western side of the village, they get help in case of any problem from the families of Haji Latif Ghazi. One family among them is from long time serving as home servants of a Haji Umer of *Bhuraiwalabiraderi*. The women of some families also serve as home servants in different *biraderis* of the village. They have no *baithhak* of their own *biraderi*. Their men normally join the *vasakh* (men's place) of the *biraderis* with whom they work as labourers in their *baithhak* (men's place) in the evening. They are mostly uneducated, and have no knowledge related to government departments. So they get help in case of any problem related to the government or public works from the people for whom they work.

Artisan *Biraderis*:

In its overall effect where this modernization affected their life, it gave them independence from the traditional *Oalak* system in which the artisan *biraderis* were paid after six month at the end of the cropping season. Now they have become daily wage labourer. Now they are not directly dependent upon the landed *biraderis* of the village for their livelihood. Even with the construction of metaled road some among them also changed their professions and became able to earn in some better way. This change of nature of relationship with the landed *biraderis* also changed the political relationship of the village landed elite and landless *biraderis*. Now they have become aware about the importance of their vote. Especially in last one decade the holding of elections made them more conscious about their political role. Local landed elite realising the importance of their vote, have changed their behaviour with

them. Now rather than telling them to whom they will have to cast the vote, they come to them and deal with them with different bargaining way. Generally they always behave with them in different ways.

Table 4. Distribution of Artisan *biraderis* of the village

Name of the <i>Biraderi</i>	Household	Persons	% of total population
<i>Moochi</i> (Cobblers)	20	150	2.5
<i>Pauli</i> (Weavers)	20	150	2.5
<i>Darkhan</i> (Carpenters)	20	150	2.5
<i>Jutt</i> (Camel Carrier)	52	450	7.5
Total	112	900	15

A short description of the relationship of an artisan *biraderi* with vote bloc leader and its voting behaviour as analysed by stratified sampling is given below.

Paulis (weavers) Biraderi: The weaver *biraderi* is consisted of twelve families. They are almost comprised of hundred people. They are descendent of a same ancestor who came from riverine area of the Indus. They are also related with each other through marital relations. They have no marital relations with other *biraderis* of the village. They have their conjugal relations with other members of their *biraderi* in different nearby villages. The seven families live in centre north of the village in the vicinity of *Hassanibiraderi*. They attend their *visakh* (men's place) and have social interaction with the families of their neighbourhood. They say prayer in the mosque of that *biraderi*. They participate in the joys and sorrows of that *biraderi*. The five families of weaver *biraderi* live eastern side of the northern half of the village. They live in the locality of different mixed *biraderis*. They say the prayer in the mosque of this locality. They have their interaction with these mixed *biraderis*. They participate in the joys and sorrows of each other. They are among the poorest people of the village. They are also among the least educated people of the village. Not a single one person among them is more qualified than matriculate. Just three persons among them are serving in low grades in government job. One is constable in police, the other is in Frontier Constabulary in Baluchistan and the third one is serving as meter reader in WAPDA. One has a small general store. The other persons work as casual labourers on the fields of Haji Muhammad Hussain Ghazi. Some also works as tenants in hill torrents based irrigation of the village. They also get financial help in the time of need like in case of illness or events likes marriages from Haji Latif Ghazi. Because of the low socio-economic position of the *biraderi*, the *bridaeri* solidarity is weak. The *biraderi* members in their electoral support, decide according to the situation and give votes to those vote bloc from whom they get patronage.

Conclusion:

The empirical evidence presented in this article suggests that the vote blocs which cut across class and caste divisions are the major building blocks of political organization in Punjab. They are characterized by vertical structures of power. They are based upon a loose coalition of individuals structured around a closely knit

kinship based core. They are often held together by multiple, overlapping kinship ties.

These findings, agrees with the findings of Mohmand that “majority of voters participate in vote blocs because of either a negotiated relationship that enables them to access public services and other material benefits or as a form of collective action in which they can act together with other members of their family or kin group to improve their material circumstances. Any given vote bloc can, therefore, be both a vertical network of patrons and clients, or a horizontal network of social solidarity and collective action. They were very rarely expression of political ideology or of political party support” (Mohmand, 2011, p. 170).

This research also coincides with the findings of Martin that “patronage networks – headed by powerful political brokers - diverted state resources away from the general public along particularistic lines and made people’s legal entitlements contingent upon political loyalty. Patronage networks also divided subaltern classes by co-opting certain segments within them therefore prevented the emergence of strong opposition to the dominant classes. Moreover, the presence of powerful political brokers limited people’s opportunities for meaningful political participation; because of their political dominance, the poor had fewer opportunities to complain about government services or become involved in politics even at the local level” (Martin, 2013, p. 15)

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