

PATRONAGE AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION: CASE STUDY OF VILLAGE JHOK BODO, DISTRICT DERA GHAZI KHAN, WEST PUNJAB

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Abstract

In Punjab, from the decade of eighties, with the advancement of mechanization, there came change from traditional to market economy. This economic change resulted in rapid population growth, improved infrastructure, connecting the towns with rural areas, and rapid urbanization. With the advancement of mechanization and in its result, the social structure has changed. This change in social structure has led to political mobilization in rural Punjab. The autonomy of the voters has increased but it did so within vertical relationships with local landed patrons that moved the political system towards political patronage. In this nature of relationship, during elections, the voters through the intervention of local patron with whom they have face to face contact, cast votes for the candidate and then through the broker patron they get services from upward to down ward. In this type of patron-client relationship, the clients can be patron's kin or biraderi members, friends or his neighbours, landless skilled and unskilled labourers found in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors in rural areas.

The research about the voting behavior was conducted through participant observation in a village Jhok Bodo, District Dera Ghazi Khan. It was found that the voters in rural South Punjab are benefit seeking political actors. They because of targeted services delivery and dysfunctional public institutions negotiate benefits with the politicians by strategically gathering their kinship networks for their collective actions. So they try to maximize their material benefits by using the power of their votes. In this way in electoral politics of rural West Punjab, patronage plays the major role in determining the voting behavior of the people. The ideological commitment to political parties or programmatic following in politics has very tiny role in determining the voting behavior of the rural voters of West Punjab.

Key Words

Social Change, Political Patronage, Social Structure, Kinship networks, Vote Bloc, Collective Action, Targeted Services Delivery, Voting Behaviour

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Introduction

In this section of the paper patronage and patron-client relationship have been discussed. There are different definitions of patron-client relationship depending upon the nature of relationship between the two. Powell in his work on politics in peasant societies defined the nature of patron-client relationship as “involving an interchange of non-comparable goods and services between actors of unequal socio-economic ranks”¹ with three essential features: first and the foremost, “the patron-client tie develops between two parties unequal in status, wealth and influence. Second, the formation and maintenance of the relationship by the patron are not done by the goodness of his heart. It depends on reciprocity in the exchange of goods and services....Third, the development and maintenance of a patron-client network rests heavily on face to face contact”². It is closeness that makes the relationship to be very particularistic and individualized between the two parties. In this nature of patron-client relationship, economic dependency, coercion, authority and manipulation have not been included. Both patron and client have their choice in making of their political relationship.³

Scott defined patron-client relationship as “... an instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron”⁴. He in his approach to the nature of relationship states that the clients have power over their patrons and they always try to ensure that the patron must satisfy his obligation.⁵ Lemarchand and Legg quoted in Archer defined, “Political clientelism, in short, may be viewed as a more or less personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships”⁶.

In this context, the traditional patron-client relationship largely is based on very much dependence of the client and the overwhelming economic power of the patron born out of necessity and mutual benefit.⁷ A change came from traditional patron usually the big landowners with the emergence of other people having outside connections with intermediate social status. They assume the function of broker patron in this political system. According to Archer by these definitions, the difference between the traditional and broker political patronage can be mentioned by four factors: First, the scope or extensiveness of the relationship. Second, its durability or persistence over time. Third, its intensity or degree of effectiveness. Fourth, the

type of transactions attendant upon such a relationship, in other words the nature of resources utilized by the patron to cement the relationship.⁸ Their real source is connection. They get importance not because of their economic wealth, but because of their contacts with the state.⁹ He mentioned it as broker patronage rather than as traditional patronage in which relationship always emerges from economic dependency. Scott presented them as “broker,” “middleman” “serving as an intermediary to arrange an exchange or transfer between two parties who are not in direct contact”¹⁰ According to Powell (1970) these patrons act as “gatekeepers” to contact state officials and politicians. For the purpose of this study, I bring together these three definitions of patronage.¹¹

Generally the discussion of patron-client relationship in Pakistani politics is close to the definition of Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007). In their definition of patron-client relationship, they state it as principal-agent relationship. In this relationship electoral constituencies are principals and politicians as agents.¹² In this way targeted exchange takes place. In this type of patronage, the clients have no relationship with each other. However some clients might have kinship with each other. According to this approach, in multiparty political system of a country, contrary to the monopoly of the patron over clients oligopoly exists. In this situation several patrons have a certain level of control over resources, even they sometimes compete for clients. This relationship in this way seems more symmetrical and sporadic which lacks face to face contact between the patron and the client. In this relationship they have to be confident about the reciprocity of the exchange. This nature of relationship is free of violence and it requires free will of the participant.

Political Patronage in Pakistan

Zia-ul-Haq came into power in 1977, by a military *coup, deta*. He after coming into power and to get political legitimacy, developed his rural constituency. For this, he appealed to rural landlords by holding non-party local body's elections in 1979 and 1983. These elections were planned to bend people's attention from national to local issues. In this way the process of localization and personalization of politics started. He gave local bodies enormous powers to raise and spend money. In this way these local governments changed into lucrative source of political clientelism. The two terms of local body's elections changed the political system into decentralized structure of political patronage with landed power holders. In this system, there was minimum role for political parties. Finally, the 1985 non-party based national elections helped to develop the culture of local body politics to the provincial and national levels. In this way the “MNAs were converted into glorified councilors, whose days were spent not dealing

with national issues, but with writing chits to get their constituents a job, or into a hospital, or out of a thana (police station)”¹³

With this tendency towards the localization and personalization of politics, Waseem in his study on 1993 elections in Pakistan presented that “electoral politics has gradually emerged as a competitive exercise for access to patronage.”¹⁴ In next eleven years period, Pakistan PPP and Muslim League-N twice came into power. Now for their political objectives, they had to respond to the demands of the people to get vote from their clients. According to Wilder this kind of politics revived political parties and re-politicized voter. The logic behind was “... politicians only have access to patronage if they win an election and in particular, if they end up in the winning party.”¹⁵ In 1999, after eleven years of civilian rule, once again General Musharraf imposed Martial law. He followed same policies towards the political parties as were followed by his predecessors. The leadership of main political parties – PPP and PML-N were exiled, imprisoned or disqualified from contesting the elections. He also introduced devolution plan through which he once again localized politics, and strengthened the influence of rural elite by extending them patronage at the cost of rural poor. In 2008, Musharraf was forced to leave the government. After him civilian rule of Pakistan Peoples Party started. During PPP era, the balance of power remained in favour of the establishment. After the successful completion of PPP government, PML-N came into power. But, despite its functioning the real power rests in the hands of Military.

In Pakistan and especially in Punjab, the absence of a popular political party and its weak organizational structure at the emergence of Pakistan, with military interventions provided the base for parochial form of government in which landed elite and their allies dominated. Authoritarian governments in order to get legitimacy, co-opted rural elites through localization and personalization of power. In its consequence, the allegiance to *biraderi* and patronage remained their political base. Now in politics of rural Punjab, one can easily observe that “Punjab’s politics today resembles the old politics. These are: patron-client relationships, expedient political alliances, exploitation of *biraderi* networks and the use of governmental institutions to do favours to friends and make new political friends.”¹⁶ Writing about the politics of western Punjab, Wilder in his research about the voting behavior of the opinion that:

At no time is the political conservatism of western Punjab more visible than at election time, when the same names of influential tribal leaders and landed elite appear on the ballots, although often with different party labels. The most distinctive feature of election results in western Punjab, and a further example of the powerful hold of its ruling class, is the high

percentage of votes won by candidates running without party tickets. In contrast to the strong move towards a two-party system in the other regions of Punjab, tribal leaders and the large landlords in western Punjab can still get elected contesting as independent candidates.... Furthermore, to a much greater extent than in the Punjab's other regions, the majority of votes that are won by the major parties are not votes for the party itself but votes for the influential elites who are given tickets by the party.¹⁷

Methodology

Generally the voting behavior of the people is analyzed especially by political scientist using quantitative methods by quantifying large data by concentrating on the votes given to a particular political party or any particular candidate. In this study, unlike the general way, the voting behavior of the people was probed through their membership at village level socio-economic organization. Therefore according to the nature of the research, a case study method was chosen. Generally no two villages in pattern of their socio-economic settings, closeness to urban centers, development of the villages and in its effect for analysis of politics and voting behavior of its population, are same in Western Punjab. Even with in the same village, the voting behavior varies across the households.¹⁸ But for the purpose of analysis and simplification, we have to generalize them.

The British administration, after coming into power in Punjab, introduced the ownership of property. According to this arrangement it divided the villages into three kinds. First was *zamindari* villages. In these villages, the land ownership was granted to a particular person or family on his services to the colonial masters: The residents of *zamindari* villages were to live on the discretion of the land grantees. Secondly, the villages where different lineages of the same clan were living, the land of those villages was declared as the property of those lineages and those villages were categorized as *pattidari* villages. The third category of the villages was of *Bhaichara* villages. Those villages where the ownership of land was granted to the residents of different *zamindar biraderis* living there. So the social structure of either *pattidari* or *bhaichara* villages is almost same.¹⁹ On the basis of colonial administrative measures under which it conferred the ownership of land, the villages of the Punjab even today presents the same voting behavior.²⁰ Those villages which were established under *zamindari* grants in which the ownership of land was conferred to a person or a family are more vertical in their social structure and those which were established as either *bhaichara* grants or *pattidari* grants are more horizontal in their social structure. Most of the villages of the Dera Ghazi Khan District were established as either *bhaichara* grants

or *pattidari* grants.²¹ So for the analysis of the voting behaviour of a more horizontal village, a *pattidari* village was selected.

The research was conducted through participant observation as its major source for a larger research project. The writer spent almost one and a half year in the village and participated in different activities of the village social life to comprehend the culture of the villagers. For the research, to collect data about the demographic and socio-economic profile of the village, he I conducted household survey through questionnaire. He also conducted interviews drawing the group sampling of the population. Then case studies were done about the nature of relationship between the village influentials, kin groups and the common villagers. In this connection two different elections were observed. One was local government election 2015 and the other was bye-elections of the provincial constituency PP- 240 of the area.

Social Structure of the Village

The village Jhok Bodo is at 25 kilometres towards South West from tehsil town Taunsa Sharif. The population of the village is comprised of approximately 6,000 people. The residents of the village are divided into two main *quoms* – *zamindars* (landowners) and the *kammis* (artisans). Almost 85% of the village population is comprised of *zamindar quom*, *Qaisrani*, a tribe of the Baloches. While the 15% of the population is comprised of *kammi quom*. In the village, both *zamindar* and *kammiquoms* are further divided into different extended families known as *biraderis*.

The social structure of the village is determined on the basis of present and previous land inequality, economic resources, and access to public institutions. On the basis of these mentioned factors, the village population is stratified into two *quoms* – *zamindar* and *kammi quoms*. At the top of the hierarchy is *zamindar quom*. Within this, there is further division between landowning *biraderis* of village proprietary bodies as recognized by colonial settlement pattern into rich landowning *biraderis*, middle income landowning *biraderis* and *biraderis* of non-proprietary tenants. The *kammiquom* is placed below the *zamindar quom*.

The politics of the village is based on vote blocs. There are two vote blocs in the village. The first vote bloc is led by Haji Latif Ghazi, the largest landowner and the richest person of the village. In 1990, he became part of Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa, MNA's faction in the area. He later twice elected MNA on the ticket of Muslim League (N) first in 1990 and then in 1997. During this period, he developed his links with different government departments especially police and courts through the MNA. During Mushraff era, when Muslim League (N) was under oppression, Haji Latif Ghazi supported Khwaja Sheraz in national assembly elections in 2003 and in 2008. He became MNA.

In elections 2013, realizing 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 also maintains his contact with Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani, twice elected MPA. His wife is sitting MPA of this constituency. Haji Latif on the ticket of PML (N) has now been elected as *Nazim* (Chairman)²² in Local Bodies elections 2015 of the Union Council Jhok Bodo.

The second vote bloc is led by Dr. Riaz. He is a big landowner, medical practitioner by profession and is running his own private clinic. 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* (extended family) remained at the top in political realm.

Voting Behaviour of the Village

In elections, usually extended families called themselves *biraderis* make their own village level political factions. These factions then according to the situation, develop their relations directly or through vote bloc leaders with the candidates most probably expected to win and come in power. The politicians mainly the members of landed aristocratic families of either tribal elite (*tumandars*) or from religious (*sajjadanashins*)²³ first try to get electoral ticket from the major political parties and most probably the party which has more chances to come in power. As becoming the part of ruling party, they could make their position in ruling set up of the country and get fulfill the demands of their potential supporters. On the other hand, the politicians bestow access to state resources to the villagers on the suggestions of the vote bloc leaders.

For the purpose of study, on the basis of social structure, the village is divided four rich *zamindar biraderis*, twelve middle income *zamindar biraderis*, five tenant *biraderis* and four *kammi biraderis*. The voting behavior of four *biraderis* as representative of these four above mentioned socio-economic groups selected through random sampling is discussed below.

Bhuraiwala biraderi

This rich *zamindar biraderi* is comprised of almost twenty households. It is consisted of nearly one hundred and fifty persons. Although they are numerically less but it is politically very influential *biraderi* of the village. This *biraderi* in its political dealings is known as very cunning in the village. There is strong *biraderi* solidarity. This *biraderi* maintains its own separate political identity. They themselves present their demands to the politicians and bargain with them with

solid weightage. This *biraderi* is led by a very active person Altaf Khan. He serves in Oil and Gas development Corporation (OGDC) of Pakistan in Islamabad. He has developed his contacts with politicians and bureaucrats in Islamabad. This *biraderi* strategically sometimes divides its support into two groups to remain in contact with the winning candidates of MPA and MNA slots. A few cases of the dealing of this *biraderi* and its leaders with the politicians are described here.

When OGDC established its plant in Dodak Oil field, at ten kilometers' distance from the village, The Corporation, accepting the right of the local people for jobs at the plant, gave privilege to Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani, the tribal chief and MPA, to recommend the names of the people for appointment in the corporation. Altaf Khan being *biraderi* leader, on his personal links with the MPA, got appointed five of his near relatives. Among these employed people two persons were his real brothers and three cousins in relatively highly paid jobs in OGDC at Dhodak Oil and Gas plant. He also got appointed four other relatives, one brother and three near relatives in different jobs of other departments on the recommendation of Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani. Another example of the bargain of this *biraderi* with local MPA is as follows.

National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in their initiative to uplift the rural communities and support them in their different income enhancing projects, started different projects. In these projects, NRSP pays almost 70% while the other amount is paid by the beneficiary of the project. One project among these was to financially help those landowners who independently cannot install tube-well for agriculture purpose. In this regard, they mostly designed the projects in the area on the suggestion of Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani. In this context, two tube-wells for irrigation purpose were installed on the recommendation of Meer Badshah to the lands of one for Altaf Khan and the other for his near relatives of his *biraderi*.

Here is another example of patronage for this *biraderi*. Under *Tameer Watan Programme*, when Punjab government started financially supporting the poor people, it gave preference to the locally recommended people of every MPA from its constituency. So in the village, Meer Badshah Qaisrani, gave this opportunity to the influential people of his group to nominate the deserving people for this financial help. In this regard, many people of this *biraderi* got nominated for this support. They also gave the names of those poor people of the village who were under their influence. Especially those poor families who were working as their home servants/maid or their tenants. So in this way, through their contact they got this financial benefit in lieu of their political support.

In an interview with Riaz Goga, younger brother of Altaf Khan, about the voting behavior of his Bhuraiwala *biraderi*, he told that,

“during national elections for votes, like other matters the first consultation is made within the people of a same *chulh* (cooking hearth), then in the form of *biraderi*, through its active member by keeping the prospective benefits in mind contact is developed to a politician.”²⁴

Lashkariwala Biraderi

This middle income zamindar *biraderi* is comprised of almost thirty households. Their population is round about two hundred and fifty people. They are descendants of the *Badhani* section of the Qaisrani tribe. They are among the village proprietary body *biraderi*. The education level of this kin group is relatively better as compare to other middle income *zamindar biraderis* of the village. One person among this *biraderi* is PhD. from Netherlands. Other is pursuing his PhD. from France while another is getting his PhD. in a Pakistani University. There are two FCPS doctors in this *biraderi*, while two lady doctors are pursuing their FCPS degrees. There are some engineers and doctors also in this *biraderi*. Most of the people of this lineage group are associated with services sector and are living in different towns and cities of the country. This *biraderi* was previously among the politically active *biraderis* of the village. A person Sir Manzoor was elected as *Nazim* union Council in 2001 local government election. In 2005 local government election, he competed for this slot to the first cousin of sitting MPA of Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-i-Azam and chief of the tribe Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani. But after his death, no politically active person is present in this *biraderi*. Now at present, this *biraderi* is politically led by an older person Allah Bakhsh MP who himself was elected as vice-chairman Union Council Kot Qaisrani being member of *tumandar* group in local government elections 1983. So due to lack of strong leadership, internal *biraderi* rifts, and least interest of its young educated persons in the *biraderi* matters, the solidarity of the *biraderi* is weak and this *biraderi* has lost its previous political role.

Most of the streets of the *mohalla*²⁵ (locality) of this *biraderi* are paved. The people told that these streets were paved during the first local government tenure of Mushraff. In this tenure, the local government were given tremendous developmental funds. As at that time, the *Nazim* of the union council was from this *biraderi*; so through these local government funds, he got paved the streets of the *mohalla* of his *biraderi* on priority basis.

This *biraderi* in village level politics is part of the vote bloc of Haji Latif Ghazi. He provides them patronage in different matters. During the field work, two streets of the *mohalla* of this *biraderi* were being paved. The funds for the development of these streets were given by the MNA Amjad Farooq Khosa on the suggestion of Haji Latif Ghazi. He got paved these streets on priority basis as this *biraderi* has

considerable weightage for bargaining. As there was serious problem of shortage of electricity voltage to the residential area of this *biraderi*, so on the suggestion of Haji Latif Ghazi, Sardar Amjad Farooq approved electricity transformer for the *mohalla* of this *biraderi*. During my stay in the village, once the tube-well of public health department supplying water to this *mohalla* was out of order. It required almost 1, 50,000 rupees for repair. On the suggestion of Haji Latif Ghazi, Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa ordered Public Health Department to release funds for repairing. The Department approved just Rs. 1,00,000. While the remaining money Rs. 50,000 was paid by Haji Latif Ghazi himself. In an interview with Muhammad Aslam, a retired *Niab Subedar* (a middle ranking official of Pak Army and politically active member of the *biraderi* told that:

Most of the members of our *biraderi*, are serving in different government departments outside the village. Some members have their internal differences and no strong leading personality is there. So due to lack of influential leadership, our *biraderi* cannot play effective political role. However, the people of our *biraderi* who are living in the village, continuing the old alignment with Haji Latif, maintaining their own identity, support the latter's group in elections. Haji Latif also keeps in touch with us and always tries to solve our problems.²⁶

In an interview a 90-year old Baba Ghulam Hassan, told that when he was teen ager he used to go to Kot Qaisrani village, at a distance of ten kilometers, on foot to fetch water for the *tumandar*. I used to do this just to have some relations with them. Now the things have changed. The People especially of *zamindar quom* are no more under his power. In elections, they decide according to their own interests. He told that "one day I was sitting outside of my home, Meer Badshah was going to the *visakh* of *hassani biraderi*. When he was passing near, me somebody told him that this old man is not giving you vote. He came to me and took me in his own arms and said 'Baba Are you not giving me vote?' I pushed him back and replied, '*dafah ho, teday peo koon dethha hasay, teday dada koon vedeth hahasay, jehra kujhunhain kerna ha toonveio hoo kujh krasain*' (Go away; we saw your father, your grandfather, what they did for us you would do the same). And I always gave vote to Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa as he was a man who did a lot of works of the village.²⁷

This interview confirms the supposition and already collected data through questionnaire that there is always patronage that provide the basis behind the support of the members of this *biraderi* to different candidates either in the form of vote bloc or individual support of a person to any candidate. There is nothing like political ideology or

political party programme which provide the basis for the voting of the people.

Garrayb iraderi

This *biraderi* consists of ten household. Their population comprises almost one hundred people. They are landless. They in traditional economy of the village used to work as tenants of the different *zamindar biraderis* of the village. But after change from agrarian to market economy, most of them are daily wage labourers and a few among them are low level government employees. This *biraderi* is led by a police constable Ghulam Mustafa. He is politically very active person. He keeps in touch with Haji Latif Ghazi and also with Meer Badshah. In case of any help for his *biraderi*, he contacts with Haji Latif. This *biraderi* is living in southern half of the village in the *mohalla* (vicinity) of Ghazi *biraderi*. The women of some families also work as home maids in different homes of the well of families of the village. They are among the poorest people of the village.

The members of *Garrabiraderi* get financial help in the time of need like in case of illness or events likes marriages etc. from the wealthy *zamindar* families. The rich people give them charity. Their men normally join the *vasakh* of the Ghazi *biraderi* in the evening. This *biraderi* is among the least educated *biraderi* of the village. Most of the members of this *biraderi* have no knowledge about the government departments. They get help from different people of the *zamindarbiraderis* in case of any problem related to the government or public works. Like if they need to make National Identity Card or correction of their electricity bill. So they normally get the help of their neighbour people of *zamindarbiraderis*. In accordance with their information provided by them in structured interviews and household survey they are part of Haji Latif's vote bloc and cast their votes in accordance with his consent.

Jutt (Camel Driver) Biraderi

One of the numerically strong *biraderi* of the artisan *quom* is *Juttbiraderi*. This *biraderi* is consisted of almost forty households. It is comprised of almost four hundred people. They were traditionally associated with village services. By profession they rare camels for transportation of material, grains from the fields to the houses or stores or from one place to another place. However, with the change from traditional economy to market economy, the traditional transportation system with camels has been replaced by modern transport vehicles like tractor trollies, carries, taxis and other means of transportation. So in this way most of them lost their previous way of earning their livelihood and started working as daily wage labourers. This is the least educated *biraderi* of the village. They work most of the time as

labourer. Sometimes in construction work, other times especially in harvesting season as field labourers. They also work as labourer for the village shops in loading and unloading of different items. They also work as labourers in marriages and any other events in the village. They get their daily purchase even on credit basis from the local shop keepers. Most of the people among this *biraderi* haven't even travelled to tehsil town Taunsa Sharif except in case of serious illness. Some among them have camel cart or oxen cart for transportation of construction material, grains from the fields to the houses or stores or from one place to other place. They in case of illness are unable to pay for private doctor and get medicine from the village Basic Health Unit. They cannot even go to Bank or Post office or franchise of any company to pay the electricity bill. They for these purposes have to get the help of the people for whom they work for or any other person of other *biraderi*, living in their neighbourhood whom they think would be supportive in these matters.

They live in south western half of the village in neighbourhood of Ghazi *Biraderi*. They also sometimes work as labourers on the fields of Haji Muhammad Hussain Ghazi. They also get financial help in the time of need like in case of illness or events like marriages etc. from Haji Latif Ghazi. As most of the members of Ghazi *biraderi* are financially sound, they give them *zakat*, and other charity. Haji Latif Ghazi adopts different strategies to amass support from the followers to strengthen his political power to deal with the politicians. One example of the deal of vote bloc leader with Jutt *biraderi* is here.

The Jutt *biraderi* lives in the south western side of the village. In the village there are three tube wells for water supply. The first tube was installed in the village in 1985. It was installed in the north western side of the village. Before this, people used to fetch water from the wells. This tube-well was meant to supply water to different public water tanks installed near the wells. So the water was supplied to the water tanks and people of every nearby *biraderi* used to get water from that water tank. In 1990, the government upgraded water supply scheme from supplying water to different tanks to directly providing water to every house. In this way a new tube well was also installed near the previous one and new pipe lines were laid down. Initially different pipe lines were laid down to supply water to different localities of the village. But after some time, the people who had their house near the main pipe line violating the rule started directly installing their tap connection from the main line. They started growing vegetables and other plants in their compounds. It created serious water shortage issue for the people living in the tail of the water supply schemes. As it was a community run project. A committee comprised of some People from different *biraderis* oversees its affairs. People used to pay monthly their payments for electricity charges and the

expenditure of the working employees. They initially asked the members of the committee to take notice of this issue. But the members of the committee failed to get compliance the rule. People living in the tale of the supply, stopped paying their monthly dues. It created disruption in the sooth running of the water supply scheme. Especially in summer it became a serious issue. The wealthy people started installing water pumps in their homes. Although it is costly but people did this. In some cases people installed by sharing its cost in three or four closely living homes collectively.

During this period another tube well was installed by Public health department on the recommendation of local MPA Meer Badshah. As there was serious water supply issue for the people living in southern and eastern side, so the new tube well was installed in south eastern side. This tube well was installed at this place because of the close contacts of the power full *Bhuraiwala biraderi* to local MPA, on whose recommendation this tube-well was approved. Although many people among them had installed their water pumps in their homes but they installed this tube well with their close contacts being the members of the group in their electoral setup.

Now the village in its water supply scheme was divided into two halves. The population of southern and eastern side was connected to this newly installed tube well while northern and western side was connected to the previous water supply set up. After some time the same issue erupted here. People in the front started installing direct taps on the main supply line. The public committee meant to regulate water supply could not solve this issue as the people who had installed the taps were powerful in the village. Resultantly, the weak *biraderis* have to bear the brunt.

Among those *biraderis* who were facing this serious problem was *Juttbiraderi* also. They in national elections 2013, being the part of vote bloc of Haji Latif Ghazi supported Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa in National Assembly election. Sardar Amjad Farooq khan promised them that he would solve their issue. Now recently Haji Latif Ghazi got approved nine water pumps for all the *Juttbiraderi*. They were asked to make groups of four households for the installation of one water pumps. Each pump cost almost 1,50,000 rupees. So now they have been provided with water by MNA on the proposal of Haji Latif Ghazi. Another example of providing political support to the vote bloc leader in lieu of patronage is as follows. Government of Pakistan in 2008/09, realizing the need for social protection of the poor started cash transfer programme under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). In its selection procedure every MNA was supposed to help pick 8000 eligible households from amongst his/her constituents. In its implementation it was found that it too fell prey to patronage. Only the households which were in close contact of the local patrons of the

incumbent MNA were given the membership for the transfer of cash support. Even those villages which were not politically supporter of the MNAs, the programmes was absent in those villages. While some households which were not connected with the influential villagers were despite being deserving were not included in the eligible members.²⁸

Most of the families of *Juttbiraderi* are getting monthly financial help from BISP. This amount is almost Rs.1500 per month. It is paid after three months through banks with ATM cards. On enquiring about their membership of BISP, most of the members of the *Juttbiraderi* were of the opinion that they are given this amount by the government to them on the recommendation of Haji Latif Ghazi. I conducted the interview of Rab Nawaz *jatt* in his mid fifties, about the attachment of *Jattbiraderi* with the vote bloc of Haji Latif. He told that:

Our *biraderi* unanimously support Haji Latif in elections. Haji Latif, his family and the other members of Ghazi *biraderi* are very kind to us. We are poor people. They help us in all our matters. They financially support our *biraderi* members through *zakat*, *ushur*, financial loans and help the members of our *biraderi* in case of illness. They support us in *thana* (police station) and *kachhry* (court) matters. Their women also help our women in case of need. We are very much *ehsanmund* (obliged) to Haji Latif for his help. How can we think of deviating from going to vote to any person other than his choice?²⁹

I also conducted the interview of Allah Dita, in his late forties, earns his livelihood by running a bull cart, about the voting behavior of his *Jattbiraderi* in national elections. He told that “we are poor people of the village. We have to go to the influential people of the village in time of need. So we have to see the situation and cannot say ‘no’ to anyone. Thus sometimes we divide our support to make all the influentials happy”³⁰.

In an interview with Haji Latif Ghazi, about the voting behaviour of the people, he told that:

The repeated cycle of elections and governmental policies, have made the people conscious about their own interests. They expect that the group leader shall remain in contact with them. So I have to keep in contact with them. For this reason, despite my business in tehsil town Taunsa, I spend Friday in the village. In other days of the week, I meet the people in my office in ginning factory and also at show room. I attend the ceremonies at different occasions of joys

and sorrows. I visit many times to different government offices in Tehsil even District offices in Dera Ghazi Khan. In these offices, the officers listen you if you are in group of ruling politician and political party. So for this reason, we have to support the candidate expected to come in power.³¹

I also conducted the interview of Sardar Meer Badshah Qaisrani³² about the politics and voting behavior of the people of provincial constituency, he told that:

The people of my constituency always have their security concerns and I being tribal chief always provide them security against the criminals. I also try to get approve government funds for different development schemes. I try to solve the problems of the people of *damaan* and other areas of my constituency. I participate in *khushi* and *ghami* of the people of my constituency. In this way, I remain in contact with the people. I do not just remain in contact with the influentials of the *biraderis* and the villages, I also keep in contact with the common people. In this region the politics is based on personal links. I contested for the representation of Provincial Assembly in elections 2003 on the ticket of Muslim League (Q), I won. In 2008 general elections, I contested on the ticket of Muslim League (N), I won for the provincial Assembly seat. In general elections 2013, I also contested on the ticket of JUI (F), I won for the same position. After that when I was disqualified in by elections for the same seat, my wife contested the election on the ticket of Muslim League (N) and she also won the election. So in this region, most of the people give their votes on the basis of their personal links.³³

In an interview with Khwaja Sheraz Mehmood³⁴, about political participation and voting behavior of the people of the constituency, he was of the opinion that:

The voters are concerned with their personal interests. In this regard as in 2002 and 2008, I was contesting the election on the ticket of Muslim League (Q), I won these elections. But in 2013, I contested that election on the ticket of Pakistan Peoples Party. The people were less optimistic about the next coming of PPP in power. So the peoples did not support me as such. In every area the voter considers that the candidate of his area would play better role in development of his own area. In elections 2013, there was a very little role of religion like *piri-muridi*, kinship like tribe, clan or extended *biraderi* and economic dependence in determining the voting behavior of the people.³⁵

So these interviews of the politicians affirms the premise that people vote under socio-economic structures in the form of vote bloc and *biraderi* and their concern for vote is mainly patronage. It confirms the collected data through questionnaire that in the village people vote for their material benefits. So when the people's are not provided their rights on merit and they are obliged to contact the influentials for their basic rights, they come under the influence of those influentials. In this way, the influentials develop their personal contacts and oblige them. This bars the emergence of ideology based politics.

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. It contradicts the general view that the extended family networks functions as building block in the rural western Punjab.

These findings, coincides with the findings of Mohmand (2011) who did her research in central punjab 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 dependence or of political party support"³⁶

This empirical evidence presented in this research suggests that with the change from traditional economy to market economy the choice of the voters has also increased. Although even now the leadership is confined to the landed elite but the relationship of the voters with the patrons has changed. Most of the voters are in transactional relationship with the patrons. This research also coincides with the findings of Lyon who conducted his research in central Punjab that "Class divisions certainly exist in Pakistan. There are real differences in wealth, socioeconomic status and effective control of the means and surplus of production. The extent to which a class analysis of Pakistan may reflect people's political consciousness or behaviour is questionable.... The social strategies individuals have at their disposal are firmly embedded within a culture of groups who have grossly different access to, and control of, material and social resources."³⁷

This research also confirms the findings of Martin who did his research in central Punjab 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"³⁸

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- ²¹Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XI.(Oxford: Clarendon Press,1908), 253.
- ²²In local government system, *nazim* is the elected head of the local government body. This system of local government body consists of three tiers – district, tehsil and union council. At all three levels *nazim* and *naibnazim*head the body.
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- ²⁵It is a locality of the village where dominant *patti/biraderi* lives and is named almost after that *biraderi*. For further detail see Chaudhary, M.A. *Justice in practice: Legal ethnography of a Pakistani Punjabi village*. Karachi, Pakistani: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 17-22.
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- ³⁴KhwajaSheraz is a scion of aristocratic *sajjadanashin* family of the *pirs* 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.
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