

Dynamics of Electoral Politics in Punjab: A Case Study of Elections 2018 and 2024 in Faisalabad

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Faisalabad, located in Punjab, has a significant political presence. It is known for its active participation in national and provincial politics. Various political parties have a strong presence and influence in the region, making it a politically vibrant city. Faisalabad's political dynamics involve multiple parties like PML-N, PTI, and PPP. In this context, this research entails a quantitative and qualitative study of the main electoral trends of Faisalabad with special reference to the elections of 2018-2024. The research sought to uncover the truths regarding regional politics and shed light on various facets of social culture to foster additional intellectual discourse.

Methodology: The research combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researchers have analyzed primary sources, including questionnaires and interviews. The main group in the study included 52 individuals chosen through purposive sampling. Most of the data was gathered through interviews. Selected respondents from Faisalabad, representing different parts of the community, completed the survey. The questionnaire was made up entirely of closed questions, which helped analyze voters' opinions through numbers.

Findings: The finding insights into how elections work in Punjab. They highlight the links between local issues and larger political trends. Both caste and party ties play key roles in election outcomes. These factors influence how people vote and shape the process. Understanding these relationships helps explain why elections turn out the way they do. It shows how community bonds and political loyalty are central to voting behavior.

Conclusion: The research revealed public opinion, political leaders, and officials who shaped the political scene in Punjab, especially in Faisalabad. These views had a big impact on the recent two elections. Several factors influenced election results, including political grouping, rural-urban divide, biradarism, party affiliation, and issue-based politics. All these elements played a key role in shaping how people voted and who won.

Keywords: Electoral Politics, Voting Behavior, Political Parties, Biradarism, Elections, Caste.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Faisalabad Division consists of 4 districts, namely Faisalabad District, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang District, and Chiniot District. Faisalabad, known as Lyallpur, is popularly known as Manchester industrial city of Pakistan (Butt, 2017). Sir James Loyal, then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, laid the foundation for Lyallpur in 1896. Before 1880, it was referred to as the Chenab colony. The map of Faisalabad was planned by Sir Ganga-Ram (Bano, Kokab, & Mohabbat, 2021). In northwest direction, Chenab River is at a distance of 25 miles, while Ravi River is at a distance of 27 miles in east direction. It is an industrial city and the industries of the land made Faisalabad Prominent from other cities of the Punjab whereas it maintained its traditions as well as cultural (Magstadt & Schotten, 2020; Safdar et al., 2018; Safdar et al., 2018a; Safdar et al., 2016). Peoples of this area are famous for literacy, health, and bravery. With its unique, Faisalabad is also a fascinating destination for its political tendencies (Kumar, 2020). In Punjab, Faisalabad's political geography and its electoral politics in different regions encompass several crucial aspects. Firstly, the region and the residents' localities have a significant influence on their voting preferences and political culture. In Faisalabad, individuals residing in distinct localities exhibit diverse behaviors during national elections, which can be attributed to the varying ethos of the local political culture. Secondly, the differing inclinations of the populace in specific areas compel candidates and political parties to devise distinct electoral strategies to garner widespread support. Thirdly, changes on a national level significantly impact the voting behavior in the region (Ram, Nizamani, & Hassan, 2018). These changes may arise from military dictatorship, ineffective governance, and even national crises. Additionally, the winning political parties and their candidates employ campaign strategies that align with the culture of local politics, allowing them to establish a closer connection with the local population (Kanwal, 2016). Consequently, all these factors play a crucial role in shaping the political dynamics of the city of any province and influencing the voting behavior of its residents in national or provincial elections (Anwar, 2019 Safdar et al., 2015; Safdar et al., 2015a).

Electoral politics in Faisalabad has long been shaped by the caste and biradari system, which dates back to ancient Aryan society. Even though political systems changed and the biradari system largely broke down in 1970, its influence did not disappear. It still played a role, especially in local body elections. Different biradaris such as Jutt, Arain, Rajpoot, Cheema, Sial, Malik, Gujjar, Ansari, Awan, Khan, and Baloch have a presence in politics. Their influence has shifted over the years, from 1988 to 2018, during various elections (Ashraf, 2023). The numbers and support for each group have changed over time, showing a fluctuating pattern. Industrialization and urban growth have reduced the influence of biradaris on national politics. Still, their effect on local politics stays strong. They play a major role in choosing and planning district council members. The electoral system includes factors like identity, party loyalty, and local groups. Punjab, especially Faisalabad, plays a key role in Pakistan's politics. This study looks at voting trends in Faisalabad from 2018 to 2024. It considers party ties, local alliances, caste, biradari networks, ideas, and religion. Punjab's voting patterns greatly affect national politics. Election results here are shaped by social, economic, psychological, and political factors (Asif, Khan, & Hassan, 2024).

1.1 Research Objectives

This study explores how politics affects elections in Punjab, focusing on the role of parties during the 2018 to 2024 general elections in the Faisalabad district. The research aims to identify key voting patterns in Punjab, especially in Faisalabad. It looks at how political parties influence the election process and voter choices in this area. The goal is to understand the main electoral trends in the province and how they shape political outcomes. Electoral trends in Punjab reveal the region's political culture, social traits, and the public's views on politics. The study focused on understanding the true nature of regional politics and highlighting social customs. It aimed to encourage more discussion and thought on how society shapes political behavior.

1.2 Research Questions

RQ 1: What are the political dynamics of Punjab during democratic regimes?

RQ 2: What are the major electoral trends that help understand the voting patterns of the people of Faisalabad, Punjab?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. This mixed approach helped reveal the complicated patterns and trends that influenced how voters made choices. The researchers have analyzed primary sources, including questionnaires and interviews. The main group in the study included 52 individuals chosen through purposive sampling. This size was enough to explore the electoral scene in Faisalabad thoroughly. Most of the data was gathered through interviews. A pilot study was carried out before distributing the questionnaire. Selected respondents from Faisalabad, representing different parts of the community, completed the survey. The questionnaire was made up entirely of closed questions, which helped analyze voters' opinions through numbers. Besides, secondary sources written by Pakistani and foreign scholars are directly related to this study. Additionally, books related to electoral politics have also been used or studied. The data collection process also includes consulting online journals and magazines. To obtain the most reliable data, the Internet and other electronic resources have also been used. The data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using SPSS software. In this study, the research purely focused on the dynamics of electoral politics in Punjab during the general elections period of 2018-2024 in promoting democracy in Pakistan.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Electoral Politics and its Dynamics in Punjab, Faisalabad

Faisalabad's political dynamics involve multiple parties like PML-N, PTI, and PPP. These parties compete for seats in national and provincial assemblies, with their leaders and representatives actively engaging with the local population to address their concerns and promote their agendas. The political landscape in Faisalabad is dynamic and can often be influenced by national-level political developments (Kanwal, 2016).

But caste and biradari politics do also play a role in Faisalabad's political landscape. They have historically influenced political alliances and voting patterns. However, it's important to note that there has been a growing trend towards more inclusive and merit-based politics in recent years. Efforts are being made in politics and focus on issues that affect the entire community (Ghauri, 2018). The influence of caste and biradari politics is still present because there is a growing demand for progressive and inclusive politics (Abdullah, Hakam, Wilodati, & Ratnafitria, 2019). Despite numerous changes since the formation of Pakistan, the biradari system continues to exist with its persistence and authenticity. Through continuity, with social and piratical ups and downs, the basic element of discrimination among people was created. Later, grouping systems were introduced, which tended to emphasize people's social status by considering biradaries or caste (Mahar & Malik, 2021). A majority of political parties rely on this system, particularly in the Faisalabad Division (an enclave of Biradarism) (Abbas, Waris, & Iqbal, 2023). Between 1985 and 2018, there were several elections, resulting in a cold war for power and supremacy (Ashraf, 2023).

3.2 Elections 2018 and 2024

Faisalabad is a district within Punjab province, and its division holds great significance in the region. which contains four districts. They are: -

- District Faisalabad
- District Toba Tek Singh
- District Chiniot
- District Jhang

During all elections, Faisalabad has consistently proved to be the trendsetter. The people of Faisalabad supported PPP leadership during elections 1970 and 1977. Since the labor unions were very strong, it was perceived as a city of laborers and farmers. PPP's new leadership also gathered some old and new candidates in the 2008 elections, and PML-N later replaced PPP in Faisalabad in the 2013 elections, replacing the new leadership from PPP. PML-N became popular among the business community. But the results of the 2018 elections changed the whole scenario (Mahar & Malik, 2021). The business community gained significant influence and showed a preference for the PML-N. In contrast, the peasants and labor unions experienced a decline in power as a result of Z.A. Bhutto's policies, which was further confirmed in subsequent elections (Akhtar, Awan, & Shuja-ul-Haq, 2020). Similarly, the 2018 elections brought about a complete transformation in the political landscape of the region of Faisalabad. Consequently, it is accurate to assert that the politics of kinship replaced the politics of ideology, with political parties distributing tickets based on the significance of kinship networks. This is because biradari (kinship) plays a crucial role in determining behavior on voting (Anwar, 2019).

3.1.1 Elections 2018: Pakistanis voted in July 2018; that was the 3rd time in the country's 71-year history that power had been shifted from one civilian government to another. Three main political parties were in power in the election: the PPP led by Bilawal Bhutto, PML-N led by Shehbaz Sharif and PTI led by Imran Khan (Shafqat, 2018). As a result, the PTI formed a coalition government with numerous smaller political parties. The 2018 election is expected to witness a staggering 105.96 million Pakistani voters exercising their right to vote, 46.73 million female registered voters and 59.22 million male voters (Anwar, 2019). These figures represent a 23% increase from the 2013 elections, during which a total of 86.19 million voters were registered (M.Shah, 2018).

The 11th general elections took place in Pakistan on July 25, 2018, with various political parties, such as PTI, PPP, PMLN, PML-Q, AAT, TLP, and MMA participating in campaigns. Across the entire Faisalabad division, there were 18 seats for the National Assembly and 38 for the Punjab Assembly seats (Mahar & Malik, 2021).

Distribution of seats are as follows: -

- District Faisalabad: - 21 seats for MPA and 10 seats for NA
- District Toba Tek Singh: - 4 seats for MPAs and 6 seats for NA
- District Chiniot: - 6 seats for MPAs and 3 seats for NA
- District Jhang: - 7 seats for MPAs and 3 seats for NA

For both PTI and PML-N, Faisalabad was a crucial city to win in Punjab. Having won 21 in the Punjab Assembly and ten seats in the National Assembly in the 2018 general elections, Faisalabad district now has a total of 25 seats in the Punjab Assembly (Darshan, 2018). The constituency (NA-101) Faisalabad was won by independent candidate Muhammad Asim Nazir. Faisalabad constituencies NA-102, 107, 108, 109, and 110 were won by Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf. Meanwhile, from the constituency (NA-106, 105 and 104), it was tried to manage to get seat by PML-N. Other parties like Tehreek-e-Labaik and PPP failed to acquire any seat (Mahsud, Wasai, & Hussain, 2021).

During the 2018 elections in Faisalabad, Punjab, Umer Farooq and M. Ajmal won their seats as independent candidates from the Faisalabad constituency (PP106 and PP-97). Shoaib Idrees Khan won the seat from Faisalabad (PP-98). PML-N gained nine seats, while PTI narrowly won thirteen seats, and their candidates remained successful (PP-114, 113, 111, 110, 105, 102, 100 and PP-99) (Islam, Zubair, & Muhammad, 2019). However, in Faisalabad, PTI remained dominant over all others by getting the majority of seats in this region. There were 21 Faisalabad MPAs during the 2018 elections. Their names are PTI candidate from Faisalabad constituency no PP-97 Ali Afzal Sahi, PML-N candidate from Faisalabad Shoaib Idrees Khan (PP-98), Haider Ali Khan from PML-N (PP-101), Ch. Ali Akhtar and Chaudhary Zaher-ud-Din PTI candidates from Faisalabad constituency (PP-99 and PP-100), Adil Pervaiz

won this election as a PTI candidate from (PP-102), Jafar Ali Hocha of PML-N candidate won elections 2013 from Faisalabad's constituency (PP-103) (Iqbal, Ghaffari, & Afzal, 2016). Hence, PTI candidates Muhammad Safder Shakir and Mumtaz Ahmad won their seats from Faisalabad (PP-104 and PP-105). Another candidate, Umar Farooq, won the seat as an independent candidate from (PP-106). Shafiq Ahmad, Muhammad Ajmal, and Zafar Iqbal PML-N candidates won from PP-107, PP-108 and PP-109). Besides, PTI Candidates Khayal Ahmad and Shakeel Shahid won their seats from Faisalabad (PP-110 and PP-111). Meanwhile, PML-N candidate Muhammad Tahir Pervaiz won the constituency from Faisalabad (PP-112) (Shafqat, 2018). From Faisalabad, PP-113 and PP-114, Muhammad Waris Aziz and Muhammad Latif Nazir won their seat as candidates of PTI. Meanwhile, PML-N candidates Ali Abbas Khan, Faqeer Hussain Doggar, and Hamid Rashid won their constituencies from Faisalabad (PP-115, PP-116, and PP-117) (Mahar & Malik, 2021).

3.1.2 Elections 2024: Pakistan held its 2024 general elections on February 8 to choose members for the 16th National Assembly. The Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N) won 98 seats and became the largest party. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), with support from independent candidates, secured 93 seats, making it the second-largest group. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) secured 68 seats. PTI claimed they won 180 seats in the National Assembly, citing widespread rigging. International observers and media voiced worries about the election's fairness. Before the vote, there were reports of thefts of nomination papers, random arrests, and many nominations being rejected. Shehbaz Sharif from PML-N was re-elected as Prime Minister with the backing of his allies, including PPP, MQM-P, PML-Q, BAP, and IPP. The coalition government was created with Shehbaz Sharif as the Prime Minister. PTI chose to take the opposition side in the parliament.

The 2024 Pakistani general election results for Faisalabad Seats are as follows. In the Faisalabad constituencies, PTI-backed independent candidates won in NA-97, NA-98, NA-99, and NA-100. PML-N candidates secured victories in NA-101, NA-102, NA-103, and NA-104. Independent candidates supported by PTI secured a large number of seats. PML-N also did well, winning several seats in the area. The Punjab provincial election in 2024 took place on February 8. It was held to choose members for the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. In Faisalabad, multiple areas held voting to select their representatives. The Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N) gained 204 seats in the Provincial Assembly. The party has a strong presence in Faisalabad. Some key constituencies for PML-N include many in the city. Important constituencies include PP-115, which was won by PML-N. PP-116 also secured a victory for PML-N. Additionally, PML-N claimed victory in PP-109 (Asif, Khan, & Hassan, 2024). Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supported independent candidates secured 106 seats. In Faisalabad, PTI-backed candidates did well in several areas. They won in PP-97 (Faisalabad-I), PP-99 (Faisalabad-III), PP-100 (Faisalabad-IV), and PP-110 (Faisalabad-XIV). PTI claimed widespread election rigging and said they won more seats. Many international observers and media outlets raised concerns about how fair the election was. There were also reports of pre-poll rigging, such as the theft of nomination papers, random arrests, and the rejection of candidates' nominations without clear reasons. On election day, mobile internet services were cut off, leading to accusations that authorities wanted to stop opposition groups from organising or sharing information. PML-N secured 204 seats, making it the largest party. They formed the government with help from other parties. Maryam Nawaz played a key role in the campaign. Her efforts were important for the party's victory.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMICS OF ELECTORAL POLITICS IN FAISALABAD, PUNJAB (ELECTIONS 2018-2024)

The district of Faisalabad in the Punjab region is being examined as a case study. Faisalabad is located in central Punjab and covers an area of 1.44 million acres. According to the 1998 census, it has a population of 5,429,547 individuals. Accounting for 58% of the total population, 3,111,114 live in rural areas, while 2,318,433 reside in urban areas. In addition to this, the establishment has attempted to increase its political influence in Faisalabad. Because of its 3rd large city in Punjab, it has a significant role in provincial politics. The electoral composition of Faisalabad, Punjab, has always reflected the pattern that

is seen at the provincial level—whoever wins in Punjab, wins on a larger scale. Election trends in Pakistan differ from region to region, with varying levels of voting behavior and culture. Election trends affect the overall democratic culture of a state. The electoral politics of Faisalabad are mainly influenced by multifaceted factors, including party affiliations and local groupings. These contests also reflect the influence of caste and sectarian divisions as well as family ties to prominent personalities. The influence of local biradaries is more significant than that of the political parties. The local biradaries have effectively dominated and controlled the political parties. In this context, a questionnaire was conducted in order to understand the dynamics of electoral politics among the residents of Faisalabad, the third largest city in Pakistan, which carries significant influence in the country's politics.

The study analyzed the questionnaire results in detail, considering the diverse backgrounds of respondents from Faisalabad. These included their academic, sectarian, ethnic, political, social, caste, biradari, and religious identities. The research first looked at the overall answers to each question. Then, it separated the data into groups based on rural or urban areas, age, education level, and occupation. The main goal of this multi-level analysis was to find out whether the opinions of individuals in Faisalabad are influenced by their ethnic and sectarian backgrounds, as well as their caste/biradari, about electoral politics. Initially, the researchers asked about respondents' connection to rural or urban areas. They also collected data on age, education level, and job.

Table 1: *Demographics of respondents*

		<i>f</i>	%
District	Urban Areas	35	67.3
	Rural Areas	17	32.7
	Total	52	100.0
Age of Respondents	25-35	3	5.8
	35-40	39	75.0
	40-45	7	13.5
	45-55	2	3.8
	Above 60	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0
Education of Respondents	Matric	2	3.8
	FA	5	9.6
	BA	10	19.2
	MA	19	36.5
	M.Phil.	16	30.8
	Total	52	100.0
Occupation of Respondents	Public Employee	11	21.2
	Private Employee	41	78.8
	Total	52	100.0

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in the following analysis. Out of a total of 52 respondents, the majority (67.3%) resided in urban areas, while a smaller proportion (32.7%) belonged to rural regions. This urban-centric distribution reflects a predominant representation of urban perspectives in the dataset. In terms of age, respondents were primarily concentrated in the 35–40 age groups, accounting for 75% of the sample. Other age groups were less represented, with 13.5% falling within the 40–45 age range, 5.8% between 25–35 years, 3.8% in the 45–55 groups, and only 1.9% aged above 60 years. This indicates a skew towards middle-aged individuals, potentially reflecting the demographic most engaged or accessible during the data collection process. With regard to educational attainment, the majority of respondents possessed postgraduate qualifications. Specifically, 36.5% held a Master's degree and 30.8% had completed an M.Phil., followed by 19.2% with a Bachelor's degree. Only a small fraction had completed intermediate (9.6%) or matriculation level (3.8%) education. This suggests a highly

educated respondent base. Finally, occupational data reveal that 78.8% of the participants were employed in the private sector, whereas 21.2% were affiliated with public sector employment, indicating a significant dominance of private sector professionals within the sample.

Table 2: *Public perception about electoral voting in Punjab.*

Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%
Punjab has a vital Role in the overall Political Dynamics of Pakistan	Agree	33	63.5
	Neutral	4	7.7
	Disagree	2	5.8
	Strongly Disagree	12	23.1
	Total	52	100.0
Voting Patterns are different in Rural and Urban Areas of Faisalabad, Punjab	Strongly Agree	10	19.2
	Agree	16	30.8
	Neutral	16	30.8
	Disagree	7	13.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	5.8
	Total	52	100.0
People Caste Vote based on Local Grouping and Personality in Faisalabad Constituencies	Strongly Agree	13	25.0
	Agree	24	46.2
	Neutral	11	21.2
	Disagree	2	3.8
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.8
	Total	52	100.0
People Caste Vote based on their Political Party Affiliation	Strongly Agree	11	21.2
	Agree	22	42.3
	Neutral	10	19.2
	Disagree	6	11.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	5.7
	Total	52	100.0
Caste, Birdari and Religious Sect is an Important Source of Voting Behavior in Faisalabad	Strongly Agree	17	32.7
	Agree	21	40.4
	Neutral	8	15.4
	Disagree	2	3.8
	Strongly Disagree	4	7.7
	Total	52	100.0
People give more importance to their Local Consistencies issue rather than the National Issues while casting Vote	Strongly Agree	14	26.9
	Agree	25	48.1
	Neutral	6	11.5
	Disagree	6	11.5
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0
People support their Candidates based on the performance of Previous Governments in Faisalabad	Strongly Agree	15	28.8
	Agree	13	25.0
	Neutral	19	36.5
	Disagree	4	7.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0
Political Ideology and Parties did not dominate during Elections but the	Strongly Agree	14	26.9
	Agree	23	44.2
	Neutral	10	19.2

electable personalities dominated the politics of Faisalabad	Disagree	4	7.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0
Biradari System is considered the stronger determinant of voting Behavior in Faisalabad	Strongly Agree	17	32.7
	Agree	22	42.3
	Neutral	10	19.2
	Disagree	2	3.8
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
	Total	2	100.0
Caste System seems to be stronger than Political Loyalty in Faisalabad	Strongly Agree	5	9.6
	Agree	12	23.1
	Neutral	14	26.9
	Disagree	14	26.9
	Strongly Disagree	7	13.5
	Total	52	100.0
Faisalabad still sucked about Biradaries, Regions, Ethnic Groups and Rural Urban Differences	Strongly Agree	11	21.2
	Agree	25	48.1
	Neutral	11	21.2
	Disagree	4	7.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0

The data presented reflects respondents' perceptions of the political dynamics and voting behavior in Faisalabad, Punjab, based on a sample size of 52 individuals. A majority (63.5%) agreed that Punjab plays a vital role in the overall political landscape of Pakistan, while 23.1% strongly disagreed, indicating the presence of significant divergence in opinion. Regarding voting patterns in rural versus urban areas, responses were somewhat divided. While 50% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that voting behavior differs between these regions, a notable 30.8% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or varied experiences among the respondents. A significant proportion of the respondents believed that voting in Faisalabad is heavily influenced by local groupings and personality traits of candidates, with 71.2% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this notion. Similarly, 63.5% concurred that political party affiliation also plays a key role in voter decision-making. The influence of caste, *biradari* (kinship), and religious sects on voting behavior was affirmed by 73.1% of participants, highlighting the persistence of traditional sociocultural structures in shaping political behavior. Furthermore, 75% of respondents indicated that voters prioritize local constituency issues over national concerns, suggesting a localized orientation in electoral decision-making. When asked whether candidate support is based on the performance of previous governments, responses were more varied. While 53.8% agreed or strongly agreed, a considerable portion (36.5%) remained neutral, possibly reflecting a lack of consensus or information regarding past governmental performance. Moreover, 71.1% of participants believed that elections in Faisalabad are dominated more by influential individuals ("electables") than by political ideologies or party platforms. The biradari system, in particular, was deemed a strong determinant of voting behavior by 75% of respondents. Opinions were more mixed on whether caste-based allegiance outweighs political loyalty, with 32.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing and an equal percentage (26.9%) disagreeing. Finally, 69.3% of respondents agreed that Faisalabad remains affected by biradari affiliations, regionalism, ethnic divisions, and rural-urban disparities, indicating the enduring significance of identity politics in the region's electoral landscape.

5. DISCUSSION

The empirical data from Faisalabad underscores the enduring influence of traditional sociopolitical structures on voting behavior in Punjab. A significant majority of respondents (73.1%) acknowledged the pivotal role of caste, biradari (kinship), and religious sects in shaping electoral choices. This observation

aligns with Bakht's (2019) study, which highlighted the profound impact of caste and biradari affiliations on voting patterns in Southern Punjab, emphasizing their role in both rural and urban contexts.

Furthermore, the data reveals that 75% of participants perceive the biradari system as a dominant determinant in electoral decisions. This finding resonates with Ahmed's (2006) analysis, which identified biradarism as a central component influencing political alignments in Punjab, particularly in Faisalabad. The persistence of such traditional structures suggests a complex interplay between modern democratic processes and entrenched social hierarchies.

In terms of candidate selection, 71.1% of respondents believe that elections in Faisalabad are more influenced by electable personalities than by political ideologies or party platforms. This trend reflects a broader pattern identified by Shah and Majeed (2022), who noted that personal affiliations and local influence often supersede party loyalty in Punjab's electoral politics. Such dynamics underscore the personalized nature of political engagement in the region.

The data also indicates that 75% of voters prioritize local constituency issues over national concerns when casting their votes. This localized focus aligns with the findings of Liaqat (2019), who emphasized the significance of immediate community needs and candidate accessibility in influencing voter behavior in Pakistan. The emphasis on local issues suggests a pragmatic approach to voting, where tangible benefits and direct engagement take precedence over broader ideological considerations.

Interestingly, while traditional structures remain influential, there is evidence of evolving attitudes. Approximately 32.7% of respondents agree that caste-based allegiance outweighs political loyalty, while an equal percentage (26.9%) disagree, indicating a potential shift towards issue-based voting among certain segments of the population. This nuanced perspective is further supported by the work of Karim (2014), who observed emerging trends of political awareness and ideological engagement among younger and more educated voters in Punjab.

In conclusion, the data from Faisalabad reflects a complex electoral landscape where traditional sociopolitical structures coexist with emerging patterns of political engagement. While caste, biradari, and personal affiliations continue to play a significant role, there is a gradual shift towards issue-based and ideological voting, particularly among the younger and more educated demographics. This transition suggests a dynamic interplay between entrenched social norms and evolving democratic practices in Punjab's political arena.

6. CONCLUSION

Electoral politics in Pakistan involves multiple political parties competing for seats in National Assembly and provincial assemblies. Elections are held every five years, and the party that wins the majority forms the government. It's a complex process with campaigning, voting and the counting of votes. In Pakistan, political parties play a crucial role in electoral politics. They campaign across the country, sharing their policies and engaging with voters. On election day, eligible citizens cast their votes for their preferred candidates. The party that wins the most seats forms the government. It's an exciting and dynamic process that shapes the political landscape of Pakistan. Hence, the electoral politics in Punjab, Pakistan, is quite significant. Because Punjab is the most populous province, its politics heavily influence national politics. Various political parties compete for seats in the Punjab assembly, and the party that wins the majority forms the provincial government. The dynamics involve intense campaigning, voter mobilization and party alliances to secure electoral success. The province of Punjab is known for its diverse political landscape, with multiple parties vying for power. The major parties include the PTI, PML-N, PPP. These parties engage in extensive campaigning, rallies, and door-to-door visits to connect with voters. The rural urban divide, caste and religious factors also influence the political dynamics of Punjab. It's an exciting and competitive political environment. Meanwhile, in Faisalabad a city located in the Punjab region of Pakistan, electoral politics is vibrant and dynamic. It is a key political hub with multiple parties actively campaigning and competing for seats in the NA and the Punjab assembly. Factors like local issues

candidate profiles, biradarries, casteism and party affiliations influence the electoral dynamics in Faisalabad. It's an exciting time during elections as the city plays a significant role in shaping the political landscape of Punjab. However, in Faisalabad, the dynamics of electoral politics are influenced by various factors. The city has a diverse population, including urban and rural areas, which leads to different political preferences and priorities. Parties like PML-N, PTI and PPP actively campaign and compete for votes. Local issues such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare play a significant role in shaping voter sentiments. Candidates, profile, party affiliation and alliances also impact the electoral dynamics. Overall, Faisalabad's electoral politics are dynamic and reflect the aspirations and concerns of its residents. In this context caste system does play a role in electoral politics in some regions of Pakistan, including Faisalabad. However, it is important to note that electoral dynamics are influenced by a combination of factors, including caste but also encompasses issue such as party affiliation. It is a complex interplay of various elements that shape the electoral landscape in Faisalabad. Hence, during the 2013 elections in Faisalabad, the PML-N emerged as the dominant party, winning a significant number of seats in both the PA and the NA. But in the 2018 elections, there was a shift in electoral trends. The PTI gained momentum and secured a considerable number of seats in Faisalabad, reflecting a change in voter preferences. These trends highlight the dynamic nature of electoral politics in Faisalabad and the evolving political landscape in the region. However, six formal interviews were conducted as part of the field research including former federal minister from PML-N Rana Sana Ullah (NA-106, Faisalabad-VI), and current MNA Changaiz Ahmad Khan Kakhar (NA-102, Faisalabad-VIII) as an independent candidate, current MNA Rana Atif (NA-101, Faisalabad-VII) former MNA Faiz Ullah Kamoka (NA-109, Faisalabad-IX) from PTI, Junaid Afzal Sahi (PP-98, Faisalabad-I) from PTI, Chaudhary Zafar Iqbal Nagra (PP-109, Faisalabad-XII) from PMLN. However, an interview has been conducted to know their valuable opinions about the dynamics of electoral politics in Punjab province, with particular reference to Faisalabad during elections 2013 and 2018 were added to the list to increase the authenticity of this study. According to their opinions, the dynamics of political behavior play a pivotal role within the realm of politics in any political system. Politics, being an activity closely tied to the political system, not only shapes political life but also significantly influences social life.

6.1 Recommendations

- In Pakistan, the literacy rate is alarmingly low, as evidenced in the present study, which revealed that the majority of participants lacked education in rural areas. Moreover, they had a limited understanding of the significance and privilege associated with voting. In order to address this issue, it is crucial for the government, as well as NGOs and civil society, to undertake proactive measures to raise awareness among citizens regarding the true influence, value/weight and implications of casting their vote. This can be achieved through diverse communication channels, such as community-based awareness programs and mass media. It is imperative to emphasise that the collective future of the nation relies heavily on the informed decisions made by its members through exercising their voting rights.
- Most individuals tend to vote for candidates from their own background, caste, Biradari, and social order. However, it is important for people to prefer and choose candidates based on their loyalty, dedication, honesty, capability, and regardless of their social group, Biradari or caste. This is necessary in order to eliminate the concept of caste and Biradari chauvinism, nepotism, and favoritism, which act as obstacles in the progress of any country and its people.
- It can be firmly stated that in Pakistan, a select few dominant families hold significant power and control in politics. In order to address this, it is essential to create an environment and atmosphere that fosters circumstances, feasibilities, accessibilities, and opportunities wherein every Pakistani citizen has the ability to engage in politics and consider running for a parliamentary position. It is imperative that the public encourages and supports new emerging figures in the political realm.

- The media plays a crucial role in reflecting and representing the true depiction of various aspects of life, particularly in politics. Its responsibility should be to positively contribute to politics and to raise awareness among the public regarding the pressing political issues in the country.

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Conflict of Interest

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