

PATRIARCHY AND SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR (SMVB): ANALYSIS OF FEMALE VOTING PREFERENCES IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

**Hassan Shah^{*}, Bakhtiar Khan[†]
& Wajid Mehmood Khatak[‡]**

Abstract

This study intends to underpin the presence of strong foundation of 'Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour' (SMVB) in female voters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. It hypothesizes that Patriarchal structure is a basic element to influence female voting preferences. It connects 'Patriarchy' with 'Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour'. The study found that the Patriarchal structure of the family in the Pakhtuns dominated society in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is significantly involved in determining female voting preferences. There are some other socio-political and economic components that supplement patriarchy and dependency of the female voters on male family members. A mixed-method approach was adopted for data collection. Quantitative data was collected through closed-ended questionnaires from Northern, Central and Southern constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Interviews were also conducted from female respondents in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: Voting Behaviour, Female, Patriarchy, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour

Introduction

^{*} PhD Political Science, Lecturer Department of Political Science, University of Buner.
Email: Hassan_shah@ubuner.edu.pk

[†] Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Buner.
Email: bakhtiar@uop.edu.pk

[‡] Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, FATA University.
Email: wajid.mehmood@fu.edu.pk

Patriarchy as described by Eisenstein (1984) is a male dominant system that affects the political status of female within a society. Patriarchal system has been constructed as male and female hierarchy in which male have more privileges than female in a society. According to Adrienne Rich, “a familial-social, ideological, political system in which man by force, direct pressure or through rituals, tradition, law, language, custom etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” (Sarho, 1997). This definition pretends two aspects of patriarchy; one is male dominancy over female and the second is underprivileged status of female in a society. Male dominant position causes the socio-political and economic dependency of female. A common reason for this, which is normally used in such societies, is that they (female) are physically weak and are not able to do a laborious job. However, this maxim of physical weakness is socially constructed. This has been psychologically affecting the females from their early childhood. It can be observed even from the toys and gifts received by children in such societies for example girls are given dolls and boys get toys like cars and weapons etc. The situation gets further worsened when it comes to a traditional society like Pashtoons across the Pak-Afghan border. The gravity of the issue can be understood from a common Pashtu proverb, *Khaze La Kor Day Ya Goor*, (female are either for home or for grave). This clearly indicates that females are not allowed and permitted to go out of their houses. However, due to the access of the common people to modern communication tools and technology, the situation is changing and improving day by day. Female education ratio and employment opportunities and shares are increasing with every passing day. On the other hand, ‘Masculinity Politics’ is still a global issue. A man always attempts to continue his superior position in politics. This shows a close connection of patriarchy and politics. Patriarchy in Pashtoons like other communities in Pakistan is affecting political behavior and particularly the voting behavior of the women. It has subjected women to be socio-politically and economically dependent on their male family members (Naz et al., 2012).

Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are politically far less empowered than men. Gender segregation has not only widened socio-economic gap between the two sexes but also affected the political attitude of female voters. It is observed that females even cannot cast their vote without the consent of their male family members.

As this study is limited to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; therefore, it would be better first to understand the social and political landscape of the region. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a strong contours of social structure exists in the society. Family is located in the first layer of this social structure that is further categorized into nuclear and extended family. Davies (1965) describes that a nuclear family consists of parents and their children, while the extended family is larger than nuclear family and it is a combination of grandparents,

uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews. At the same time, a family is hierarchically gender-wise divided into male and female members. Male family members are socially, economically and politically more empowered than female member of the society. Male domination in the society has several reasons. In the first stage we see the role of religion. During General Ayub Khan era in the 1960s the debate about the female rule started in religious circles. A large number of religious scholars were of the opinion that Islam does not allow and permit women rule. That debate created confusion in the minds of common people about women political participation and political empowerment. The question of women political participations and the divided opinion of the Ulama also show that a common layman can easily be divided on any religious matter. That debate if on one hand protected and prolonged Ayub Khan's dictatorial regime on the other hand discouraged women (even Fatima Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's younger sister) for any active political role in the future. A similar debate was started again in 1980s when Benazir Bhutto stepped into the national politics. Both of these political events witnessed the dominant narrative of religious circles that played a key role against the Women political empowerment or participation. In the hardcore religious circles in Pakistan and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women political empowerment and their participation in political and social events is considered haram and prohibited. Ulama from that group draw their arguments from the verses of the Holy Quran and some traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). That is why we cannot see any female candidate contesting elections on general seats from Jamiat-i-Ulema Islam (Fazal ur Rehman group), Jamiat-i-Ulema Islam (Sami ul Haq group), Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan and other traditional religious (Islamist) political parties' tickets. JUI-F ex-provincial Amir Maulana Gul Nasib Khan while taking to the researchers expressed his and other Ulama's dissatisfaction over the women elections to the legislature on reserved seats. In his opinion if it was not a constitutional requirement and number game in the parliament, the party would not have ever involved women in the politics (Gul Nasib Khan, 2016).

As per the 17th constitutional amendment in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan, women must constitute 33% membership of any legislature within Pakistan. For political participation of the women in the political processes, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has also taken some revolutionary steps the most important among these is the 10% female voters turnout requirement in each polling station (ECP, 2013). These steps magnified the importance of female voters in Pakistani elections. Now political parties' leadership realized the importance of female votes.

By examining the social fabrics of the society one can easily find that female have very limited politico-social role in Pakhtun society. Her duty is limited to household and family business. The main reasons that can be counted for this degradation are illiteracy, economic dependency and social structure. State role is also not satisfactory and even discouraging in this

regard as a very minor portion of female in the selected areas had excess to schools and colleges. Number of girls' degree colleges and girls' high schools were not up to the requirement of the society (Interviewee, 2020). However, in different areas the trend is changing now as because of availability and improvement in the means of communication and transport many of the girls are being sent for education to the colleges far away from homes. Such a development will obviously help in the women political empowerment; yet, it will take a decade or more to reach to a balanced stage.

It is somehow encouraging that with all these socio-politico-economic and administrative hurdles many of the female voters still poll their votes. However, their voting behaviour and preferences are still dependent on the male family members. The questions are needed to be investigated are 'why female voters are dependent on male family members? And 'why women are excluded from politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Women Political Exclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Political exclusion is process through which someone is intentionally sidelined from politics. We can call it political marginalization, elimination and segregation. Women political exclusion is a process through which they are marginalized or excluded from politics e.g. women political participation, mobilization and awareness controlled. Naz *et al.*, (2012) expounded that, "women exclusion from political structure and process is the result of multiple structural, functional and personal factors that vary in different social context across the countries in this modern time. Women in politics are contradictory concepts which possess limitations on women's effective participation and empowerment." In this portion of the paper the researchers attempted to discuss different elements that play role in women political exclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Naz *et al.*, (2012) figured out that societal norms and values and discriminatory social structure creates hurdles in the way of women political empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All these social norms and values are based on *Pakhtunwali*; the Pakhtuns code of life. According to Olaf Caroe (1958:24) *Pakhtunwali* is a code of Pashtun's society comprised of *Jirga* (Council of Elders), *Malmastiya* (Hospitality), *Nanawati*, *Ghairat* (Honour), *Purdha* (Veil), *Badal* (Revenge) and *Paighor* (Jan & Aman, 2015, Khatak, 2008). *Ghairat*, *Purdha* and *Paighor* are those elements that can be considered as the main hurdles in the way of women independent voting and political empowerment. Farzana Bari (2005:4) presented the concept of gender ideology for explaining the women political exclusion and empowerment. She genderized the society into two categories; female as wife, mother, sister etc. limited to home only. The second category is male dominant society where they control all the socio-political and economic

affairs. Connell (1987) describes that women socio-cultural and economic dependency politically exclude them in the society.

Another important source of women political exclusion is political parties. The leadership of the majority of political parties in Pakistan in general and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular is male dominated. All these political parties' organization and structure have a very limited space for women. Currently, we can see a minor portion of female members in the top leadership layer of Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Awami National Party, Muthahida Qaumi Movement, Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam-F etc. It is also observed that in elections during party ticket distribution, priority is given to male candidates rather than female candidates. That is why a very small number of female candidates contest elections on general seats. So we can argue that political parties are discouraging female in the mainstream politics of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In general election 2008, different political parties signed informal agreements in different constituencies to restrict female voting in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SPDI, 2013).

SPDI (a Non-Governmental Organization) reported that in Swat, Charsadda, Swabi, Buner, Peshawar and Malakand Protected Area districts had the highest proportion of polling stations with Zero percent (0%) female turnout. In district Swat 29% of the women's polling stations were reported to have 0% female voting, while in Charsadda, Swabi and in Peshawar the ratio was 15%, 12% and 9% respectively (ECP, 2008). As a result of such (informal) agreements against female voting, Election Commission of Pakistan formulated 10% female votes' mandatory law in each polling station. In case the ratio of female turnout is lower than 10%, the election on that polling station would be declared as invalid and the election will be re-scheduled.

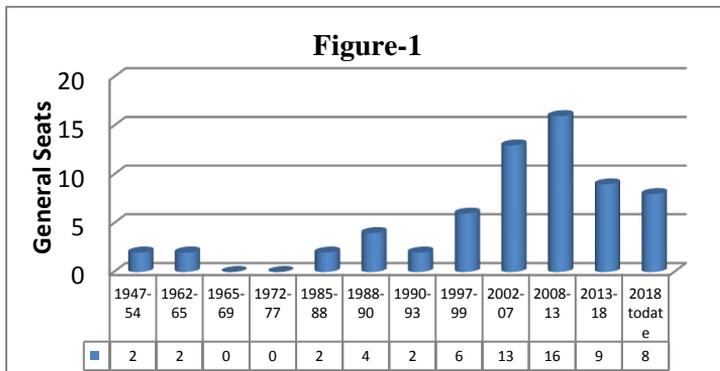
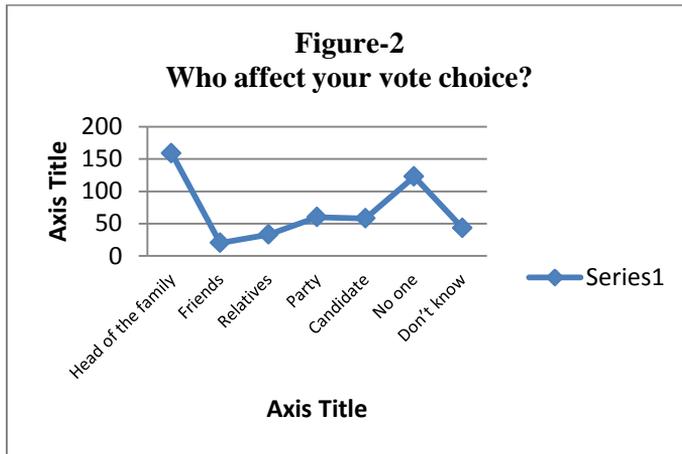


Figure-2 shows the history of female elected candidates in different constituent assemblies of Pakistan.



In Figure-1 we can identify a huge gap between male and female candidates in different regimes. On the basis of that statistics we can say that in national politics female politicians are side lined since the inception of Pakistan.

There is no clear dimension for the improvement of female encouragement in electoral laws. It is observed that mostly electoral laws are male oriented rather than female. In general election 2002, there were 71.9 million registered voters in Pakistan. Out of total registered voters 38.8 million male voters and 33.2 million were female voters (ECP Report, 2002). Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) reported that in 2008 general election female registered voter in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa went down by 45%. In 2002 there were 3.92 million female registered voters that were reduced to 2.17 million in 2008 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to TDEA recent survey in 2019 the difference between male and female registered voter is 2.6 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The relatively low female registered voters show the male oriented electoral laws of ECP that discourages female political participation.

This is unfortunate that several times martial laws were imposed in the political history of Pakistan. Each martial law administrator discontinued and sabotaged the democratization process during his regime. They also suspended and abrogated the constitutions. Martial administrators always stepped against the politicians and political parties. General Ayub Khan imposed Public offices disqualification ordinance (PODO) and Elective bodies disqualification ordinance (EBDO), General Zia banned political parties and General Musharraf abducted the elected government of Nawaz Sharif and formulated new political parties against the popular political parties. All these steps

disrupted the democratization processes, which directly or indirectly affected men as well as women's political development.

Patriarchy and Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour: A Theoretical Understanding of Female Voting Behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In the classical literature of political socialization, family is considered a significant element to determine the youngsters' (male and female) political attitudes and political behaviour (Davies, 1965; Langton, 1969; Dawson & Prewitt, 1969). Salem *et al* (2003) argued that parents, teachers, friends and media develop the political knowledge of an individual as well as the values of political socialization. Jaros (1973) and Valentino & Sears (1998) argued that parents transmit political awareness, knowledge and values to their offspring. Jennings *et al.* (2001) and Hyman (1959) have figured out that family has an important impact on determining the political attitudes of the children. Whereas, Plutzer (2002) and Rosenstone & Hansen (2003) argued that besides family there are other socializing agents like school, peer groups and voluntary associations. Quintelier *et al.* (2007) described that parents directly influence children's political attitudes. He further explored that it is an intergenerational transmission from parents to their offspring. Mehmood and Rauf (2018) highlighted the role of family in the political attitude formation and behavior of the children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Inglehart (1977) and Norris (2003) have figured out that in traditional societies women have relatively lesser level of political knowledge than men because they are less interested in political affairs. Particularly, married women tend to follow their husbands voting preferences and decisions. It is believed that women have ideologically conservative tendencies, and thus are more likely to support conservative political parties (Burns, Schlozman and Verba, 2001; Almond and Verba, 1963).

It is observed that inside a family, children are motivated towards the political party that is supported by the family head. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the whole family (male and female) are economically, politically and socially depended on the head of the family. The positive image and favorable discussion about a particular political party produce feelings of liking in the all of the family members and particularly in the children. However, the situation may be different if the head of the family has no political affiliations. In such a case different family members may develop liking for different political parties, even of the family follow his children footprints in making his voting decision. Even in that case the voting decisions are made on male children liking and not on female wishes and desires. The main reason is perhaps the dependency level (socio-politico-economic) of female family members which is higher than male family members.

Methodology

This study is based on Mixed Method Research (MMR). Quantitative data was collected through a survey, comprising of multi-stage random and systematic sampling from National Assembly (NA) constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A close-ended questionnaire was used for the data collection because it is easy for respondents to answer and is less time consuming. Closed-ended questionnaires are also less expensive survey method and the response ratio of close-ended questionnaires in a survey is higher than open-ended questionnaires survey (Dawson, 2002:16; Marsh, 1982). In addition to it, non-structured interviews were also conducted with different female respondents in different regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hypothesis

1. Female vote choice is influenced by Patriarchy.

Null Hypothesis

1. Female voters independently decide their vote.

Data Analysis

Total number of the respondents N=496.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Q	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Who influence your decision to vote?	496	1.00	7.00	3.7641	2.22629

Field Data

In Figure-2 data show that Patriarchy influence female voting preferences in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data demonstrated that a major portion of respondents (female respondents) were influenced by their head of the family that is usually a male family member. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa patriarchy is a common practice and male family members are always leading the family affairs. During elections it is a common practice that different party activists or independent candidates meet with male family members and ignoring female family members. Because it is observed that all the family members specifically female family members follow the decision of male family elders. Inglehart (1981), Verba *et al.* (1997) and Burns *et al.* (2001) argued that political knowledge drive voting decision of female. As women political knowledge is perceived to be lower in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, therefore, their vote decision is influenced by male family members. During election campaigns and other political gatherings mostly men participate. In such kind of political meetings men discuss the political

situations, contesting candidates and political parties. On the other hand female could not attend such kind of political activities; therefore, they have very little opportunity for political mobilization (Norris, 2007). Norris (2002) and Mayer (2010: 116) describes that low female turnout voting were typically attributed to structural and situational factors, and social norms.

Besides that, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during election campaign, door-to-door meetings and other corner meetings are only limited specific for male family members. However if a female candidate is contesting then she visits homes and meets with female family members of their constituency. According to, 'Proximity theorists' an individual always give preference to that candidate who is accessible' to him or her. That is why female voters always support same sex candidate. We have the example of late Benazir Bhutto who had a great support base in the female voters.

Another significant social indicator that influences female vote choice is family relatives. There are two types of family relatives; paternal relatives and maternal relatives. This is also an important aspect of the family politics in which mother tries to strengthen her family ties with their relatives and sideline her husband family relatives with the voting decisions and preferences. However, the male family members in majority of the cases have dominating position.

In Figure-1 data shows that female vote choice is mostly influence by male family members that proves the hypothesis. The highest number of respondents said that male family members influence their vote decisions. Some of the respondents accepted that relatives and friends also affect their voting preferences.

Conclusion

To summarize the study we can say that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a 'Patriarchal Structure' that influences every aspect of an individual's life. The patriarchal socio-politico and economic construction of the society deteriorate women political empowerment and independent status. It is affirmed that religion, social values, electoral laws, political parties, administrative machinery and martial law administrators are equally responsible and main hurdles in the way of political empowerment of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Voting behaviour is a significant feature of political empowerment. This is a sacred duty and every citizen (Male and Female) of eighteen years of age have equal right to cast their vote independently. But in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa female voters preferences are still dependent on the male family members. The findings of the study show that majority of the respondents are depended on their male family members for their voting decisions. Patriarchy is a source of the presence of strong base of 'Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour (SMVB) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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