

RURAL POLITICAL CLIENTELISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR: A PERSPECTIVE OF LANDLESS PEASANTS IN PAKISTAN

Sajid Mahmood Sajid*¹; Dr. Zahira Batool²

*¹MPhil Sociology, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan;

²Professor, Department of Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad

*¹sajidmahmoosajid@gmail.com; ²batoolazam@hotmail.com

Corresponding Author:

Received: 22 February, 2024

Revised: 22 March, 2024

Accepted: 02 April, 2024

Published: 17 April, 2024

ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study in which phenomenon of rural political clientelism has been explored in the context of peasantry in Pakistan. In addition to this, a relationship has been explored between rural political clientelism and voting behaviour of landless peasants. This study has been conducted in district Sargodha of Pakistan. Theory of political clientelism has been used as a theoretical foundation in this study and analogy of patron-client has been applied on the landowner and landless peasants respectively. Findings of the study show that patronage ties are the main determinant of the voting behaviour of the landless peasants in district Sargodha. Mutual exchange relationship of landless peasants with landowner is based on socio-economic inequality, mutual exchange and mutual dependence. Furthermore age, education, media and biradari have little influence on the voting behaviour of the landless peasants in district Sargodha.

1. INTRODUCTION

Clientelist practices and patronage-ridden politics are found in many contemporary societies (Roniger, 2004). Pakistan is an agrarian state and it's a popular perception that landlords control the voting behaviour of the landless peasants in Pakistan. "Landlords control the political activities of workers has historically been pervasive characteristics of the agrarian economies" (Baland and Robinson, 2008). This scholarship of Baland and Robinson, 2008) is also valid in the context of Pakistan. In fact Pakistan has a colonial history and since independence, Pakistan has been trapped into the ruthless clutches of feudal values and these values are still dominant into the sphere of politics.

In Pakistan, most people practice agriculture as an occupation and rural community is divided between haves and have nots. There is land inequality and very rigid social stratification in rural areas of Pakistan. Landless peasants are regarded as the most marginalized and impoverished community in the rural community of Pakistan. "In the Marxist treatment of peasantry, social stratification of the peasantry relates to that social stratification, and

those inequalities, associated with all peasant societies" (Byres, 2006, p. 20). It is argued that social stratification and land inequality in Pakistani society has developed a level playing field for clientelistic politics. "In its common social science usage, clientelism denotes a specific type of social structure or mode of social stratification" (Lemarchand, 1981, p. 19).

This study is focused on the voting behaviour of the landless peasants in relationship with their clientelist ties with the landowner. According to Wilder (1999):

It is widely believed that voting behaviour in the Punjab, especially in rural areas, is determined more by social than political factors. 'Traditional' group loyalties of family, faction or *biradari* (clan) are thought to influence voting decisions to a much greater extent than 'modern' or political factor such as party loyalty, patronage, or issue orientation. (Wilder, 1999, p. 149)

In this study, my assumption is that the patronage relations influence the voting behaviour of the landless peasants to great extent. So this study,

theory of clientelism and political clientelism have been used as a theoretical foundation.

According to Scott (1972):

Patron-client relationship-an exchange relationship between roles-may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic 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. (Scott, 1972, p. 92)

So patronage relations are based on socio-economic inequality and unequal exchange and in these relationships, patron is super-ordinate and clients are sub-ordinate. "Clientelist practices are described by some as elitist, forming patterns of domination between patron and client that creates an unhealthy dependency, which is sometimes fortified by coercion and material sanctions" (Macleod, 2006, p. 555). This scholarship of Macleod (2006) is similar to that of Scott (1972), Roniger (2004), Lemarchand (1981), Roniger (1994) and Hicken (2011) and it is applicable on the rural society of Pakistan.

Political clientelism is an extension of clientelism and it is associated with the domain of politics. It is argued that clientelism has a wide scope and it is applicable in economic, cultural and political sphere of the society. Political clientelism is a multiplex process and varies its forms region to region and culture to culture. All the characteristics of clientelism are equally operational in political clientelism. "Asymmetry, diffuseness and reciprocity are basic features of the type of social structure that has become associated with political clientelism" (Lemarchand, 1981, p. 15).

In the context of rural community, where landless peasants are the clients and landlords are the patrons, in these conditions, landless peasants are the vote bank of that landlord because landless peasants have dependent exchange relations with the landlord. So in this way, landlords have economic as well as political control over landless peasants. In addition to this, when clientelism intrudes into the sphere of politics, it becomes a vote getting technique.

Rural political clientelism is a new concept and it is argued that rurality of Pakistan has been never studied in the clientelistic perspective. It is assumed that socio-political and economic systems of

Pakistan seem to be clientelistic in their orientation and these are deep rooted in the regional culture. Since the clientelist dyadic relationship and networks are deeply rooted in the cultural mores (Macleod, 2006, p. 553), so in rural areas of Pakistan, clientelistic politics is still being practiced and land inequality is still a dominant reality. May be these are the aftermaths of those feudalistic and colonial traditions of the 19th and 20th centuries and are still prevalent and powerful as a remnant of colonial history.

Baland and Robinson (2012) developed a valid model of rural political clientelism where landlords employ clients and concede economic rents to them in exchange for controlling their voting behaviour in election:

The fact that patron-client link between landlords and workers is primarily based on an economic relationship has implications for relative prices and allocation of economic resources. In particular, the control landlords enjoyed over rural votes should be embodied in the value of those assets that allow such clientelism, namely land. (Baland and Robinson, 2012, p. 602)

Baland and Robinson's (2012) conclusions are made in the context of Chilee. In the context of Pakistan, their analogy of landlord and landless peasants is equally applicable and valid. So according to above quote, political clientelism in rural areas of Pakistan is much associated with ownership of resources especially land. Land is used as an important powerful tool of exploitation and dependency.

Because clientelism is based on mutual exchange, in rural areas of Pakistan, landlords provide land for employment to landless peasants, and in return, landless peasants vote blindly to the landlords. Consequently, this *quid pro quo* type of exchange give rise to the rural political clientelism where level of inequality in landholdings provides the *raison d'etre* for such clientelist dependency.

2. Theoretical Background

This study is focused on the rural political clientelism and its impact upon the voting behaviour of landless peasants. The theoretical model of clientelism is the most suitable one for this study.

In clientelism, patron-client relationship, patronage and mutual exchange are some major elements. Political clientelism is an extension of the clientelism and both of these share many major features. In the

present study, analogy of patron-client has been applied on the landowner and landless peasant. Patron-client ties are the core basis of the clientelism. Scott (1972), Keefer (2007), Roniger (1994) and Hicken (2011), agree that clientelism is based on patron-client ties and patron-client ties are kept enacted though mutual exchange relations between patron and client. It is argued that this analogy of patron-client is applicable in the study of landless peasants where, landlord is a patron and landless peasants are the clients. Eisenstadt and Roniger (1981) also explained some salient features of patron-client ties and their thesis has much in common with Scott (1972).

Furthermore, Hicken (2011) described some key elements of clientelist relationship. According to Hicken (2011), dyadic relationship, contingency, hierarchy, iteration and volition are some salient features of the clientelist relations. It is argued that elements of contingency and hierarchy are common in the theoretical perspectives of Hicken (2011) and Roniger (1994).

Political clientelism is based on exchange of goods and services for political support (Shaprio, 2012), and it is popular where social change has lagged substantially behind political modernization (Lemarchand, 1981), and in such circumstances, clientelist dependency is created and promoted to occupy government seat. Electoral loyalties are vital and pivotal in the political clientelism and in such a way, it is concerned with the voting behaviour of clients.

In the context of rural community, where landless peasants are the clients and landlords are the patrons, in these conditions, landless peasants are the vote bank of the landlord because landless peasants have dependent exchange relations with the landlord. So in this way, landlords have economic as well as political control over landless peasants. In addition to this, when clientelism intrudes into the sphere of politics, it becomes a vote getting technique.

It is argued that clientelism influences the voting behaviour of people. Baland and Robinson (2012) developed a valid model of rural political clientelism where landlords employ clients and concede economic rents to them in exchange for controlling their voting behaviour in election. In the context of clientelism, the analogy of landlord and landless peasants is equally applicable in Pakistan.

It is argued that political clientelism in rural areas of Pakistan is much associated with the ownership of

resources especially land. Land is used as an important powerful tool of exploitation and dependency. Because clientelism is based on mutual exchange, landlords provide land to landless peasants, and in return, landless peasants vote blindly to the landlords. Consequently, this *quid pro quo* type of exchange gives rise to the rural political clientelism where level inequality in landholdings provides the *raison d'etre* for such clientelist dependency.

It is argued that patronage is a political determinant of voting behaviour. Wilder (1999) explained the socio-political determinants of voting behaviour of the rural people of the Punjab, Pakistan. Wilder (1999) described gender, class, age, level of education, religion, *biradari* system and factionalism as the social determinants of voting behaviour in Punjab, while he has described four political determinants of voting behaviour in the context of Punjab: political party and party leader identification; voting for delivery; patronage; and national issue orientation.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study and data was collected from Union Council (UC) Chawa of district Sargodha. 20 in-depth interviews and 05 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in this regard. Respondents were selected purposively. A checklist was used for interviewing and various questions were asked to elicit

3.1. Participant Characteristics

Landless peasants of UC Chawa were respondents and participants. All the respondents were male and the age range was 25-60 years. In rural society of Pakistan, landless peasants work either as fulltime agricultural servants (FASs) or share croppers (SCs). So for in-depth interview, 14 landless peasants were selected who were working as FASs and 06 landless peasants were selected who were working as SCs. Detailed sampling design has been shown in table 1.

Table 1
Sampling Design for Qualitative Data Collection

Name of the village	FASs	SCs
Noor Pur Noon	4	-*
Sher Mohammed Wala	4	-*
Chawa	2	2
Tartri	2	2
Naryala	2	2

* There is no share cropping in Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala.

3.2. Data Analysis

All audio recorded in-depth interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim. The transcribed materials were translated into English. After multiple readings of the transcripts, researcher first identified common themes such as mutual dependency and exchange, patronage, exploitation etc.; second, the themes were coded to discover the patterns; third data were searched for similar occurrences and recurring phenomena; fourth, findings were translated into theoretical constructs that were refined continuously.

4. Findings

During in-depth interviews and FGDs, the researcher tried to explore the complexity and variation of rural political clientelism and voting behaviour among landless peasants. Furthermore, the researcher tried to explore the level of association between strength of clientelist relations and voting behaviour of landless peasants in five villages. At the end, the researcher tried to elicit perspective of landless peasants on democracy, human rights and importance of voting. Some major themes and major patterns of relationships have been discussed below.

4.1 Land inequality and land as a tool of exploitation

Pakistan is a traditional country where almost 70% people practice agriculture in one way or the other. Traditionally, land is recognized as a status symbol and matter of prestige and power in rural society of Pakistan. In addition to this, land has its political value too. In Sargodha, in rural areas, there exists land inequality. Some people own big *Jagirs* and some are landless as well. In such circumstances, landless people get dependent on the landowners for employment and other basic needs. In such way, sometimes land acts as a tool of exploitation.

In response to the question regarding possession of land, most of the respondents and participants acknowledged the importance of land and they further explained the aftermaths of land inequality. Respondents who were living as *rayiat*, in the Nur Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, they attributed this land inequality to fate and destiny. In the village Nur Pur Noon, one respondent stated:

Our family is landless since generations and we have been the servants of landlord since a long

time. Question is that what we can do now? We have limited options in this regard. We do not have land, but we are deeply associated with the land of landlord as our forefathers worked here. We live here, we work here and we lead a very simple life.

But in independent villages Chawa, Tartri and Naryala, landless peasants work on the land of landowner either as fulltime agricultural servants or sharecroppers. In both cases, land inequality decides who will be the super-ordinate and who will be the sub-ordinate. In these villages, fulltime agricultural servants are the most marginalized and deprived class. They are landless and they serve as agricultural servant.

An elderly participant of the FGD stated:

We are illiterate and poor. We do not own land and our class is regarded as the most inferior class in the rural community. Our landowner exploits us because he owns land and we do not. Our landowner is making profit and we are just surviving.

4.2 Patron-client relationship

In rural community, landowner acts as a patron and landless peasants as clients, because landowner gives patronage to the landless peasants. In UC Chawa, this relationship is very interesting and diverse in nature. In the villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, where landless peasants are living as *rayiat*, there landless peasants have evolved and developed a very strong affiliation and integrity with the landlord. Most of the respondents and participants consider their landlord as their true patron since many generations. In addition to this, landless peasants regard their landlord as their *mai baap*. One responded in Nur Pur Noon stated:

Our affiliation with landlord is not new. Our landlord is so kind to us. He fulfills our basic needs like housing, employment and justice. Electricity is free in our village for us. In return, we work on the land of landowner as a paid labourer. We feel safe and secure in the village and we do not have fear about criminals and thieves. Our landlord has taken a lot of measure of community welfare.

So far as the village Sher Mohammed Wala is concerned, same kind of situation prevails there as well. *Rayiat* of Noon family lives here. Landlord gives due respect, honour and social liberty to the *rayiat*. One participant of FGD said:

Our children now study and landlord has provided schools both for boys and girls. In addition to this, our children are free to get education or to learn some another skill. Landlord does not commit any kind of atrocities on our families. Landlord sometimes helps us financially in the arrangement of marriage of our children. If we need loan, landlord lends us money. So these are few reasons due to which we have very good relations with the landlord.

Now the situation is different in the Chawa, Tartri and Naryala. These are basically independent villages. In these villages, relationship between landowner and landless peasants were not so good and the level of integrity found in their relation was relatively low. In these villages, most of the respondents were working as fulltime agricultural servants and a few were practicing crop sharing or *theka*. In these villages, fulltime agricultural servants are regarded as the most inferior segment of the society and landowner treats them as commodity. So the level of integration is relatively low as compared to the villages of *rayiat*. Here most of the respondents and participants were not affiliated with the landowner since many generations. One respondent, who was working as a fulltime agricultural servant in village Chawa, stated:

Landowner exploits us in every way. Debt is the biggest tool of exploitation in the hands of landowner. But landowner provides us shelter and sustainable livelihood. My monthly salary is 3000 Rs. As a landless peasant, our family is suffering in poverty since many decades. Most of the time, landowner does not give due respect to the fulltime agricultural servants.

Despite of all this diversity, it was observed that patron-client relationship is a social reality in all the five villages.

4.3 Super-ordination of landowner and sub-ordination of landless peasants

In socio-political equation of rural culture especially in traditional societies like Pakistan, landless peasants and landowner are not treated on equal basis. In most of the cases, landowner is the patron and boss, while a landless peasant is the client and he is supposed to act like a passive employee and dependent.

In all the villages, it was observed that super-ordination of landowner and sub-ordination of landless peasants is a social reality and it is one of the

features of the rural community in district Sargodha. In the villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, landlord is like a king and landless peasants are like subjects, while in villages Chawa, Tartri and Naryala, landowner is like a master or employer and landless peasants are like servants. Sometimes, the landless peasants are called *kammi kameen* as well. So in such a way, socio-economic inequality prevails in the rural community of Sargodha where community is divided into two classes: owner and servant. These are the comments of a respondent who was a fulltime agricultural servant in village Naryala:

We obey the landowner and we are not supposed to argue with him. Our landowner is so kind to us and he treats all our family members like his children. He is our boss and we obey all his orders. *Zamindar* has land and resources and we own nothing. But there is no other way for us but to accept these circumstances.

4.4 Economic dependency

Economic dependency is a very prominent feature in the life of landless peasants. It was observed during the fieldwork that level of economic dependency is relatively higher among fulltime agricultural servants than share croppers. Share croppers actually adopt agriculture as an occupation. Because they do not own land, so they take land on rent or *theka*. So in this way, they develop some sort of partnership or mutual dependency with the landowner on sharing basis. These are the comments of a share cropper in the village Tartri:

Our family is expert in agriculture and we are practicing it since a long time. We do not own land but we are leading a respectable life through crop sharing. We take land mostly on *theka* for a specific period of time. Sometimes we share crops with the landowner and sometime landowner demand money either once or twice in a year. We are the clients of our landowner since many years, so there is a relationship of honour, confidence and equality.

Now landless peasants who were working as fulltime agricultural servants, they were more dependent economically on the landowner and the level of deprivation and exploitation was relatively higher among them than share croppers. A fulltime agricultural servant who was a participant in FGD, stated:

My whole family is serving the landowner as servants on fixed wage. We do labour in fields and we take care of the cattle as well. In return, landowner fulfills our needs of housing, clothes and food. We are totally economically dependent on the landowner and we do not have sufficient resources to educate our kids. Sometime we take debt from the landowner to do expense on some occasion and landowner never writes off this debt.

4.5 Mutual exchange between landowner and landless peasants

Mutual exchange between landowner and landless peasants is an important feature of the peasantry. Because both landless peasants and landowners are mutually dependent and they need the cooperation of each other in different ways. For instance, landowner gives employment and land to the landless peasants and landless peasants serve the landowner and they give him / her political support as well. In one way or the other, landowner also expects the votes from landless peasants.

The life of landless peasants of union council Chawa is a beautiful manifestation of dependency and mutual exchange. In the villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, there is a working relationship of mutual exchange between landlord and landless peasants. Landlord gives employment, housing, food, electricity, security and justice to the community of landless peasants. In return, landless peasants serve the landlord in different ways and give him / her, their political support during election. These are the comments of a landless peasant in the village Sher Mohammed Wala:

We work on the lands of landlord and landlord fulfills our needs. We, as a *rayiat* of landlord, treat landlord as a political leader and we give him unconditional political support during election. Sometimes our landlord does not contest election. Even then we give votes to a leader accordingly the will of landlord. Our landlord is so kind to us and he provides us schools, hospitals and roads.

In the villages, Chawa, Tartri and Naryala, there exists exchange based relationship between landowner and landless peasants. In the village Tartri, one participant of the FGD stated:

Landowner needs servants for fields and cattle. Fulltime agricultural servants need employment and place to live. In this way, our relationship

with the landowner is exchange based. This give and take keeps us alive.

4.6 Provision of political support

In all five villages, it was observed that most of the landowners either expect or demand the political support from the landless peasants, and may be this demand is a part of exchange between landowner and landless peasants. In Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, landlord demand political support and votes and *rayiat* follows the landlord voluntarily. But in villages Chawa, Tartri and Naryala, it was observed that landowners sometimes used to threat fulltime agricultural servants in order to secure their votes and political support.

A fulltime agricultural servant in village Chawa expressed his views:

We are poor workers and how we can challenge landowner? We have no interest in political affairs. We do not know which party is good for us, so most of us vote blindly accordingly the will of landowner. During election, landowner asks us for the votes of our whole families. If someone refuses, landowner may can commit atrocities on his family.

But a share cropper in village Naryala gave different opinion. He said:

Ok we are working on lands of landowner but we are not his slaves. I caste vote accordingly my choice, but most of the time I assure landowner about my vote in order to avoid any trouble. Casting vote is a secret activity and we can caste vote freely. But most of our fellows prefer to support landowner politically in order to avail public goods and services.

4.7 Interest in politics

As quantitative data of this study shows, literacy rate is very low among landless peasants of Sargodha. Because they earn sustainable livelihood and most of the time, they suffer in poverty as well. All the time they are busy in making livelihood and they do not have time or energy to think about education, political affairs and current affairs. During the field work, researcher observed that almost 50 % of the respondents were not provided with electricity and electronic media. One respondent told the researcher, "I listen to radio to know about news", and this was really astonishing news for the researcher in the context of 21st century.

So in these circumstances, most of the landless peasants did not have interest in politics. One respondent in Sher Mohammed Wala expressed his interest in politics in this way:

Our landlord is our leader. Either our landlord is contesting election or not, in both cases we give votes on the direction of our landlord. They are our masters and patron and they know politics well. We have not developed our political thinking. So we have no interest in politics.

Almost similar opinion prevails among the landless peasants of independent villages Chawa, Tartri and Naryala. Community of fulltime agricultural servant has concern with livelihood, bread and butter. Because they are mostly illiterate and they have no concern with political affairs. But so far as share croppers are concerned, 01 out of 06 respondents, showed some sort of interest in politics.

4.8 Hope for public goods and voting behaviour

It is a popular opinion and fact that across the globe, people vote for the provision of public goods and services. If people do such cost-benefit analysis based voting, then it will be a rational and pragmatic act in a democracy. In the literature of clientelism especially political clientelism, hope for the public goods and services makes a strong patron-client relationship.

Voting for public goods and services is a universal criterion. In the rural areas of Sargodha, some people vote for public goods and services. So it is one of the determinants of the voting behaviour in rural political culture. In the villages of landlord-Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala-landless peasants do not vote for public goods and services and they just vote in favour of landlord. But in independent villages-Chawa, Tartri and Naryala-hope for the public goods and services is a motivating element in the context of voting behaviour. A fulltime agricultural servant in the village Chawa commented on this issue:

Some leaders are good for community and some do nothing for the people after winning election. But all the time we have hope in their promises. The leaders who have done welfare of the community in the past, people remember him in a good way. In next election, I will vote for public goods and services. At *biradari* level, we convey our demands to the leaders before election. For example our village needs a

hospital. Any leader who will assure us about our demand, he will win our votes.

4.9 Voting behaviour of landless peasants

Determinants of voting behaviour in rural areas of Sargodha are multi-dimensional. As mentioned above in theoretical background, the determinants of voting behaviour in Punjab are of social and political nature (Wilder, 1999).

Rural political clientelism is much concerned with the political determinants of the voting behaviour. During the data collection, it was observed that issues of patronage were the most powerful agents which shape the voting behaviour of the landless peasants. Patron-client relationship, dependency and mutual exchange are the salient features of rural political clientelism.

In response to the questions regarding voting behaviour, these are the comments of a respondent in the village Noor Pur Noon:

Affiliation with landlord since generations is the main determinant of our voting behaviour. Because traditionally we are *rayiat*, so we think our landlord deserves our votes. *Biradari* does not play any role in shaping our voting behaviour in the villages where *rayiat* is living. We give political support and votes to our landlord voluntarily. Understanding of party manifesto does not play any role in making the voting behaviour of *rayiat*. So association with landlord family is the sole determinant of voting behaviour of landless peasants.

Sher Mohammed Wala is also a village of *rayiat*, and like village Noor Pur Noon, same kind of voting behaviour prevails among the landless peasants there. In these two villages, in the context of voting behaviour, traditional bonds of patronage are more important for landless peasants than other factors like age, education, gender, media and *biradari*.

Now voting behaviour of the landless peasants of villages Chawa, Tartri and Naryala is different from the voting behaviour of landless peasants in the villages of *rayiat*. Chawa, Tartri and Naryala are the independent villages and quantitative data of this study shows, strength of clientelist relations is relatively low in these villages, so due to this factor, landless peasants of these villages have developed different kind of voting behaviour.

In the village Chawa, a landless peasants who was a share cropper, gave these comments:

Although I am not literate enough, but I can understand the party manifesto. I give vote to that leader who is interested in the welfare of the community. Especially a leader who provided us the public goods and services in the past, I think he deserves my vote. Also at the level of *biradari*, mostly *biradaries* will vote for a leader who has provided community with schools, hospitals and roads in the past. So far voting is concerned, I have no fear of landowner and I do it accordingly my choice. Sometime I disagree with my *biradari* as well.

But voting behaviour of fulltime agricultural servants in Chawa, Tartri and Naryala is different than sharecroppers. Actually level of dependency is very high among the fulltime agricultural servants. Sometime landowner threatens fulltime agricultural servants in order to secure votes of their whole families. Employment and debt are two main weaknesses of a fulltime agricultural servant, so landowner uses these weaknesses to exploit or blackmail a fulltime agricultural servant.

In the village Naryala, a fulltime agricultural servant who was a participant in FGD shared a very interesting incident of his life:

In this village, many our relatives live and work and we have 49 votes. In the election of 2007, our landowner was active in local politics. Landowner demanded all votes of our family and we assured him in this regard. We gave vote accordingly his instructions but unfortunately leader of landowner lost election in our polling station. Coincidence was that he lost by 50 votes. So after election, landowner committed different kinds of atrocities on our family and they abused our women as they had suspicion in their mind that we had not voted accordingly instructions.

So in such a way, patronage and dependency relations influence the voting behaviour of landless peasants in one way or the other.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The data shows considerable diversity in the strength of clientelist relations and its relative impact on the voting behaviour of landless peasants. It is clear that there is a very strong association between the strength of clientelist relations and voting behaviour of landless peasants. In the villages of landlord where *rayiat* is living, there clientelist ties are so strong and as a result, landless peasants have very favourable

voting behaviour towards landlord. While in independent villages, clientelist relations are relatively weak and this leads towards relatively less favourable voting behaviour towards landowner.

Actually relationship between landowner and landless peasants is based on the principle of *quid pro quo*. Hicken (2011) verified such type of exchange relations. In the context of politics, patron gives benefits to the clients but some strings are attached with such type of material exchange. Likewise, the clients support that politicians who delivers or promise to deliver. The findings of the present study are similar to that of Hicken (2011).

In rural political culture of Pakistan, the political power is held by land elites and landless people are the most oppressed and impoverished segment of the rural community. Land elites do their politics and secure votes either through coercion or delivery of public good and services. In such a way they develop some sort of monopoly over local political affairs and clientelist ties help the barons to have a firm control over local political affairs. Schneider and Hamlin (2005) emphasize on the monopoly of patrons into the realm of politics. It is argued that this theoretical equation of Schneider and Hamlin (2005) is perfectly relevant and valid for landlord and landless peasants in Pakistan.

In rural areas of district Sargodha, local land elites have been emerged as traditional political leaders and they continue to exploit the marginalized and deprived rural people. So far as feudal values are concerned, their beautiful manifestation can be observed in the villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala. In these two villages, any member of *rayiat* never tried to contest election and the *rayiat* is supposed to vote in accordance with the will of the landowner. Landless peasants of these villages have no concern with the party manifesto or the profile of the leader and they will just follow the guidelines given by the landlord. So in these villages, it is argued that the clientelist ties are the most dominant determinant of voting behaviour of the landless peasants.

Data shows that voting behaviour of landless peasants is not strictly based on cost-benefit analysis. But some cultural constraints regulate the voting behaviour of landless peasants. Acheterberg and Houtman (2006) called it “un-natural voting behaviour”. Actually they explained the voting behaviour and tried to find out how cultural values and traditions shape the voting behaviour of the

people? This theoretical perspective of Achterberg and Houtman (2006) is equally valid for the rural community of district Sargodha where, traditions, patronage, *biradari* and group integrity play a vital role in shaping the voting behaviour of landless peasants. For instance, in rural areas of Sargodha, landless peasants strictly follow the cultural norms while voting rather than cost-benefit analysis.

Findings of this study show that landless peasants in rural areas of district Sargodha are dependent on landowner for land, justice, security, employment and debt. Economic aspect of their clientelist relations is also very important in the clientelist ties. Data shows that mostly respondents were strongly dependent on landowner for employment. Findings and conclusions of Scott (1972), Roniger (1994), Roniger and Eisenstadt (1981), Keefer (2007), Baland and Robinson (2012), Joshi and Mason (2011), Hilger (2009) and Hicken (2011) support the conclusion of this study. So it is argued that this tool of employment is also used by landowner as threat in order to get political support of landless peasants in district Sargodha.

Landless peasants actually do not own land and consequently they either take land on rent or work as fulltime agricultural servants. So far as their voting behaviour is concerned, Joshi and Mason (2011) developed a relationship between land ownership and voting behaviour. In their scheme, land elites may be compel landless peasants to vote in favour of their patrons. While findings of the present study show that ownership status of landless peasants is important in shaping the voting behaviour. All the respondents in this study were landless and they were dependent on landowner for land. Baland and Robinson (2012) also highlighted the importance of land in the clientelist ties and they have traced a link between clientelism and voting behaviour in their study. "Landlords / patrons provide economic rent to workers and in exchange workers vote parties favoured by the landlord" (Baland and Robinson (2012, p. 601).

Qualitative data shows that mostly landless peasants give political support to their land owners. Because clientelist relations are reciprocal exchange relations, so landless peasant work on the lands of landlords / landowners and in return, landless peasants are supposed to support the landowners politically. It is argued that this argument is supported by Shaprio (2012). In the approach of Shaprio (2012), clientelism is a method of distribution of resources in

democratic regimes. He traced the traditional link between clientelist ties and voting behaviour. He argued that clientelism generates votes from impoverished community and benefits are targeted at the individuals and linked to the political behaviour of an individual. So if landless peasants of district Sargodha support the landowner politically, then they do so for resources and benefits.

Rural society of Pakistan is traditional and it is stratified into different classes. On this ladder of social stratification, landless peasants fall in bottom. Especially landless peasants, who are working as full time agricultural servants, are regarded as the most inferior class in the rural community of district Sargodha. This class-consciousness gives birth to the group integrity and *biradari*. Walsh (2012) explained how rural consciousness is important in the context of voting behaviour. In addition to this, Walsh (2012) claims that socio-economic inequality plays a vital role in making group thinking among impoverished rural people. So mostly landless peasants make choice during voting keeping in minds their associations, status and class. In district Sargodha, class is also an important factor that shapes voting behaviour of the landless peasants. Wilder (1999) also classified 'class' as a social determinant of the voting behaviour in Punjab, Pakistan.

Data shows that most of the landless peasants are deprived of public goods and services in the UC Chawa. Despite of this fact, landless peasants have hope for public goods and services and this hope directly influences their voting behaviour. Wilder (1999) classified delivery of public goods as the political determinant of the voting behaviour in his book. Hicken (2011), Keefer (2007), Shaprio (2012), Baland and Robinson (2012) and Joshi and Mason (2011) emphasized the delivery of public goods and services in the clientelist democracies and all these authors have called it a major determinant of voting behaviour.

Now the issues of human rights are also important in clientelism. Qualitative data shows that most of the landless peasants are kept deprived of honour, respect and liberty by the landowners. Schneider and Hamlin (2005) explained the similar scholarship and they held that basic human rights have no room in the premise of clientelism. So this perspective of Schneider and Hamlin (2005) is exactly applicable on rural clientelist relations in district Sargodha. There is socio-economic inequality, deprivation, impoverishment, coercion and oppression, caste and

classes and exploitation in the rural areas of district Sargodha. All these social realities indicate about poor condition of human rights in rural community. Oppression and coercion are mostly practiced by the land elites especially during election. In addition to this, landless peasants who are working as fulltime agricultural servants are regarded as the most inferior segment of the community.

So far as the economic life of landless peasants is concerned, debt is a major problem for them. Landowners lend money to landless peasants but on some conditions. Consequently this debt becomes the weakness of landless peasants and for landowner, this debt works as an effective tool of exploitation.

Although the relationship of the landless peasants with landowner is based on inequality and oppression, but it works. Major basic needs of the landless peasants like food, housing, electricity, debt, security and justice are fulfilled by the landowner, and in return, landless peasants give political support and votes in favour of the landowner. For instance, in Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, landlords have taken a lot of measures of social welfare of the community and these measures directly influence the voting behaviour of the *rayiat*.

In the feudal culture of Pakistan, sometimes, rural people are known as the *rayiat* of the landlord and this identity of the members of a *rayiat* diffuses generation to generation. This phenomenon was observed in villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala. Eisenstadt and Lemarchand (1981) explained that patron-client relations are usually particularistic and diffuse. Hicken (2011) termed this phenomenon as 'iteration'. In the villages Noor Pur Noon and Sher Mohammed Wala, all the respondents have been the servant or clients of the landlord since many generations. So it can be argued that in these two villages, clientelist relations have been diffusing from one generation to another one. But in the villages, Chawa, Tartri and Naryala, it was observed that all the landless peasants were not serving their landowner for a long time.

Clientelist relations are of voluntary nature most of the time. If a client is serving the patron involuntarily, then such relationship will become a type of slavery. Data shows that most of the landless peasants were serving their landowners voluntarily and no any traditions of bonded labour exist in district Sargodha. Roniger (1994) explained that voluntarism is one of the salient features of the clientelism and political clientelism.

Now so far as socio-demographic variables like age, education, annual income, occupation and terms of exchange are concerned, these variables influence the voting behaviour of landless peasants to some extent. Young and literate landless peasants sometimes caste vote accordingly their choice. It was noted that landless peasants who were working as share croppers, were independent in making their choice during election. But the landless peasants who were working as full time agricultural servants, mostly, were unable to caste vote accordingly their choice.

References

- Achterberg, P., & Houtman, I. (2006). Why do so many people vote 'unnaturally'? A cultural explanation of voting behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45 (1), 75-92.
- Baland, J.J., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). The Political Value of Land: Political Reforms and Land Price in Chile. *American Journal of political Science*, 56 (3), 601-619.
- Bika, Z. (2011). Against the norms: the transition symbiosis of 'grassroots clientelism' and rural citizenship. *The Sociological Review*, 59 (2), 348-370.
- Blais, A., Young, R., & Lapp, M. (2000). The calculus of voting: An empirical test. *European Journal of Political Research*, 37 (2), 181-201.
- Byres, T.J. (2006). Differentiation of the Peasantry Under Feudalism and the Transition to Capitalism: In Defence of Rodney Hilton. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 6 (1), 17-68.
- Census (1998). *Basic Population and Housing Data of Sargodha by Union Councils*. Government of Pakistan.
- Das, R. (2007). Introduction: Peasants, State and Class. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 34 (3-4), 351-370.
- District Census Report of Sargodha (1998), Government of Pakistan.
- Eglar, Z. (2010). *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan: Perspective on Community, Land and Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Hicken, A. (2011). Clientelism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 14 (1), 289-310.
- Hilger, T. (2009). Who is Using Whom?. Clientelism from the Client's Perspective. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 15 (1), 51-75.
- Joshi, M., & Mason, T. D. (2011). Peasants, Patrons, and Parties: The Tension between Clientelism and Democracy in Nepal. *International Studies Quarterly*, 55(1), 151-175.

- Keefer, P. (2007). Clientelism, Credibility, and the Policy Choices of Young Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51 (4), 804-821.
- Lemarchand, R. (1981). Comparative Political Clientelism: Structure, Process and Optic. In Eisenstadt, S. N., & Lemarchand, R. (Eds). *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development*, 7-32. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Leonard, W. (2003). Clientelism and Voting Behaviour: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin. *World Politics*, 55(3), 399-422.
- Macleod, J. (2006). Nova Scotia: Clientelism and John Savage. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 39 (3), 553-570.
- Montambeault, F. (2011). Overcoming Clientelism through Local Participatory Institutions in Mexico: What Type of Participation?. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 53 (1), 91-124.
- Posada, C. E. (2000). "Electoral Juggling: A Comparative History of the Corruption of Suffrage in Latin America. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 32 (3), 611-44).
- Roniger, L. (2004). Political Clientelism, Democracy and Market Economy. *Comparative Politics*, 36 (3), 353-375.
- Roniger, L. (1994). Conclusions: The Transformation of Clientelism and Civil Society. In Roniger, L., & Ayata, A.G. (Eds), *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*, 207-214. Colorado : Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc.
- Roniger, L. (1994). The Comparative Study of Clientelism and the Changing Nature of Civil Society in the Contemporary World. In Roniger, L., & Ayata, A.G. (Eds). *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*, 1-18. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Roniger, L., & Eisenstadt, S.N. (1981). The Study of Patron-Client Relations and Recent Development in Sociological Theory. In Eisenstadt, S.N., & Lemarchand, R. (Eds), *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development*, 271-289. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Schneider, A, & Hamlin, R. Z. (2005). A Strategic Approach to Rights: Lessons From Clientelism in Rural Peru. *Development Policy Review*, 23 (5), 567-584.
- Scott, J.C. (1972). Patron-Client Politics and Political Changes in South East Asia. *The American Political Science Review*, 66 (1), 91-113.
- Shapiro, W. R. (2012). What Wins Votes: Why Some Politicians Opt Out of Clientelism. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56 (3), 568-583.
- Walsh, K.C. (2012). Putting inequality in the place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 106 (3), 517-532.
- Wilder, R. A. (1999). *The Pakistani Voter: Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour in the Punjab*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zilbatt, D. (2009). Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany. *American Political Science Review*, 103 (1), 1-21.

