



**Religion as a Determinant of Female Voting Behaviour in District Karak:
A Case Study of The 2018 General Election**

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Abstract:

This study investigates the role of 'religion' as a determinant influencing female voting behaviour and analyses its impact on the 2018 General Elections in District Karak. To understand voting behaviour, the researcher has connected this determinant with voting behaviour theory, namely, the theory of religion. As regards the application of the theory, it is argued that the theory is applicable (63.65%) in the electoral politics of District Karak. This study is based on published and unpublished data. This article answers the question i.e., is religion the determinant of female voting behaviour in the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak? Moreover, what are the impacts of female voting behaviour on the 2018 General Elections in NA-34 District Karak? Primary and secondary data have been collected for this research work. A quantitative research approach has been applied. The population was the registered female voters of District Karak. Through the Yamoni formula, data is collected from 400 respondents. A stratified sampling technique is used to collect data from registered female voters. There are three Tehsil: *Banda Daud Shah*, *Takht-e-Nasrati* and *Karak*. Therefore, the study used a proportional allocation method of sampling, i.e. $n_1 = N_1/N_i \times n_i$, to select the respondents according to the sample size from each tehsil. Data has been arranged in Tables, which are further analyzed.

Keywords: Karak, 2018 General Election, women political participation, female voting behaviour, religion, voting determinant

INTRODUCTION

The political system of Pakistan is under the firm grip of different political determinants that may include caste, race, religion, feudalism and ethnicity (Ahmad et al., 2020; Ahmad, 2015). Political participation is the fundamental right of every human being worldwide. These individuals may directly or indirectly participate in the state's political process. In this modern era of democracy, people choose their candidates by voting. The political determinants affect the electoral choice of

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people. Political participation is a process that connects rulers and the common people (Said et al., 2021; Anderson, 2010; Hazarak, 2015; Shah et al., 2019).

Politics and religion have always been two significant aspects of human society worldwide. Religions focus on the spiritual development of an individual, while politics aim to distribute the resources fairly among the individuals of a state. Belief in the supernatural elements/world can lead people to resist any perceived attempt to distort their religious beliefs. On the other hand, maintaining one's religion can determine how one behaves in the electoral process. In other words, the idea that a benevolent community guarantees freedom to practice their religious rituals freely can affect attitudes and how people decide who should rule them. Religion and politics have become inseparable in man's pursuit of political power (Agbor, 2019; Cameron, 2010; Gine & Mansuri, 2018; Haider & Ali, 2020).

In the 2002 general elections in KP, the data showed that (72.6%) of respondents supported the religious choice. Similarly, in 2008 general polls, the data shows that less than fifty per cent of respondents (47%) favoured religious determinants of voting behaviour. Similarly, with respect to the 2013 general election, the data showed that less than fifty per cent of voters (45.7%) based their voting preferences on religious choice (Farmanullah, 2014-b).

In the 2002 elections, most of the support for MMA in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa came from seminaries, rural residents, illiterate people, low-income groups and homemakers, which suggests that these categories have greater fondness and affection for religion. They support religious parties in elections (Farmanullah, 2014-a).

Farmanullah (2014-a and b) detailed the voting behaviour of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 2002, 2008 and 2013 general elections. The author utilised five (05) theories in his thesis: the theory of party identification, ethnic voting, issue voting, clientelism, and religious voting. According to this research work, the theory of clientelism and voting issues are more applicable than the other theories in the electoral politics of KP. The scholar discussed, in detail, the study's theoretical framework, but this research study needs to include the determinants of female voting behaviour regarding the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak.

Munir (2019) examined the situation that shaped the political decisions of the voters and their participation in the elections and different factors which affected the electoral process regarding voting behaviour in Lahore and its surroundings. The writer also shed light on the National and Provincial Elections of 2008 and 2013. The researcher used three electoral models: the sociological, psychosocial, and rational choice theory, as well as the economic voting model. However, this research study needs to include more literature about the determinants of female voting behaviour concerning the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak.

Bashir and Khalid (2020) discussed the impact of religion on the electoral process in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. According to them, religion has a strong effect on human life, and it shapes individuals' political attitudes and beliefs. The writers shed light on different general elections with reference to religion as a voting determinant, especially the 2018 general elections. They concluded that in the 2018 General Elections, the religious vote pool multiplied greatly because of the emergence of a few newly born religious groups in electoral politics, such as Tehreek-e-Labbaik

Pakistan and Milli Muslim League. This research is limited to one determinant of Election and lacks information about the determinants of female voting behaviour in NA-34 District Karak.

The study's objectives are a) to investigate religion as a determinant of female voting behaviour in the 2018 General Elections in NA- 34 District Karak and b) to study the impact of female voting behaviour on the 2018 General Elections in NA-34 District Karak. Moreover, the study's research questions are: a) is religion the determinant of female voting behaviour in the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak? and b) what are the impacts of female voting behaviour in the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research methods, known for their thoroughness and reliability, have been meticulously employed to ensure the validity of the results. The data was meticulously collected through a comprehensive questionnaire from female voters in the 2018 General Election in NA-34 District Karak, providing a thorough understanding of the subject.

Population

This research, specifically focusing on participation, delves into the voting behaviour of the registered female voters of NA-34 District Karak who participated in the 2018 General Elections.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame of this approach is the female voters who cast their votes in the 2018 General Election in District Karak. In District Karak, the total number of women registered to vote was 178504. The female population in the Tehsil Karak area was 74765, Banda Daud Sha's female population was 42088, and Takht-e-Nasrati's was 61651.

Sample Size

Taro Yamane's Formula (1973) determines this study's sample size. Statisticians use this formula worldwide, a recognised formula for social sciences. Moreover, this formula is most appropriate for this study. Through Taro Yamane's Formula, the sample size is obtained by 400 selecting respondents out of the total 178504 female registered voters for elections of District Karak. Taro Yamane's Formula (1973) is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

"n" is the sample size

"N" is the total population of the study

"e" is the margin of error, i.e. equal to (.05)

According to the Yamane Formula, the sampling error is 5%, while the confidence level is 95%. N1 is the total number of female voters in the District Councils of Karak, N2 is the total number of female voters in the District Councils of Banda Baud Shah, and N3 is the total number of female voters in the District Councils of Takht-e-Nasrati.

$$N=N_1+N_2+N_3$$

$$N=74765+42088+61651$$

$$N=178504$$

The sample size for District Karak is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = 178504 / (1 + 178504(.05)^2)$$

$$n = 178504 / (1 + 178504(0.0025))$$

$$n = 399.9977 \text{ or } 400$$

Sampling Technique

In this data sampling method, the researcher has utilized a stratified sampling technique to gather reliable data of proportionate sampling figures from the female, registered vote for the General Election of 2018 in District Karak. Therefore, the proportional allocation method of sampling, i.e. $n_1 = N_1/N_i \times n_i$ (Bowley, 1926), was used to select the respondents according to the sample size. The drawn proportionate sampling figures have been shown in the table no. 1 as follows:

Table 1: List of Female Registered Voters

| Tehsil | The population of each council | Proportionate Formula | Proportionate |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Karak | 74765 | $74765/178504 \times 400 = 168$ | $n_1 = 168$ |
| Banda Daud Shah | 42088 | $42088/178504 \times 400 = 94$ | $n_2 = 94$ |
| Takht-e-Nasrati | 61651 | $61651/178504 \times 400 = 138$ | $n_3 = 138$ |
| Total | | | 400 |

Proportionate sample of female registered voters:

$$n = n_1 + n_2 + n_3$$

$$n = 168 + 94 + 138$$

$$n = 400$$

Data Analysis

The collected data was examined using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Frequency and percentages were used for descriptive statistics to find the relationship among the relevant political and social variables, such as marital status, occupation, age, education, and voting behaviour. This voting behaviour is measured via a correlation T-test.

RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following statements were developed to collect data regarding the voting behaviour of the females in Karak:

- Female should cast their vote, and it is not a threat to *Pardha*.
- Votes should be given based on the candidate's religious background.
- A vote should be given to ensure the promulgation of the Islamic system.
- Ulema affiliation to a party/ candidate affects the people's voting decisions.

- Religious party role is essential.

In table no. 2, 133 respondents, 33.3%, belong to the first category of age consideration from 18-30. In contrast, 134, 33.5% of respondents belong to a second category from 31 to 45 and 133(33.3) belong to the third category from 46 up to above. In this table, 197 respondents that are 49.4% are on the job, while 203 50.8% are jobless. The table data shows 196 (49%) respondents are educated and 204 (51%) are uneducated. This table further shows that 200(50%) respondents are married while 200(50%) respondents are unmarried.

Table 2: Demographic Data of the Respondents

| Description | Category | Frequency | Percentages |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Age | 18 up to 30 | 133 | 33.3 |
| | 31 up to 45 | 134 | 33.5 |
| | 45 up to above | 133 | 33.3 |
| | Total | 400 | 100.0 |
| Job | on job | 197 | 49.3 |
| | Jobless | 203 | 50.8 |
| | Total | 400 | 100.0 |
| Education | Educated | 196 | 49.0 |
| | Uneducated | 204 | 51.0 |
| | Total | 400 | 100.0 |
| Marital status | Married | 200 | 50.0 |
| | Unmarried | 200 | 50.0 |
| | Total | 400 | 100.0 |

Religion is one of the critical determinants of voting behaviour. Five questions have been asked about religion and whether it is the hurdle in the way of female electoral participation. Item 1 in the table no. Three indicated that 77.5% of the respondents agreed that females should cast their vote and that it is not a threat to Pardha, 20.6% disagreed, and only 2.0% neutralised the statement. Item 2 indicated that 62.5% of the respondents agreed that a Vote should be given based on the candidate's religious background, 33% disagreed, and only 4.5% were neutral toward the statement. Item 3 indicated that 78.3% of the respondents agreed that a Vote should be given on the assurance of promulgation of the Islamic system, 18.3% of respondents disagreed, and only 3.5% were neutral toward the statement. Item 4 indicated that 54.3% of the respondents agreed that Ulema affiliation to a party/ candidate affects the people's voting decision, 32.8% disagreed, and only 13% were neutral toward the statement. Item 5 indicated that 45.8% of the respondents agreed that the religious party role is satisfied, 40.8% disagreed, and only 12.8% were neutral toward the statement. Religion is the most crucial determinant in District Karak in the 2018 General

Elections. Because 63.65% of females vote on religious terms, 29.2% disagree, and 7.15% are neutral.

Table 3: Religion as a determinant of female electoral behaviour

| Item | Statement | A | SA | DA | SDA | N |
|------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | Female should cast their vote, which is not a threat to <i>Pardha</i> . | 166 (41.5%) | 144 (36.0%) | 49 (12.3%) | 33 (8.3%) | 8 (2.0%) |
| 2. | The vote should be given based on the candidate's religious background. | 134 (33.5%) | 116 (29.0%) | 90 (22.5%) | 42 (10.5%) | 18 (4.5%) |
| 3. | A vote should be given to ensure the promulgation of the Islamic system. | 153 (38.3%) | 160 (40.0%) | 44 (11.0%) | 29 (7.3%) | 14 (3.5%) |
| 4. | Ulema affiliations to a party/ candidate affect the people's voting decision. | 131 (32.8%) | 86 (21.5%) | 102 (25.5%) | 29 (7.3%) | 52 (13.0%) |
| 5. | Religious party role is satisfied. | 116 (29.0%) | 67 (16.8%) | 91 (22.8%) | 75 (18.0%) | 51 (12.8%) |

The Pearson correlation (Benesty et al., 2009) was used to determine the relationship between respondents' education and religion. $r = 0.119$ p-value is 0.017, which shows a positive and insignificant relationship between respondents' education and religion. Moreover, the Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between respondents' occupation and religion. $r = 0.118$ p-value is 0.018, which shows a positive and insignificant relationship between respondents' occupation and religion. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between respondent age and religion. $r = 0.109$ p-value is 0.029, which shows a positive and insignificant relationship among respondent age and religion. The Pearson correlation was also used to determine the relationship between marital status and religion. $r = -0.096$ p-value is 0.055, showing a negative and insignificant relationship between marital status and religion.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

| Relationship between Respondent's Education and Religion | | Respondents' Education | Religion |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Respondent Education | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.119* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.017 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Religion | Pearson Correlation | 0.119* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.017 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Relationship between Respondents' Occupation and Religion | | Respondents' Occupation | Religion |
| Respondents' Occupation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.118* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.018 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Religion | Pearson Correlation | 0.118* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.018 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Relationship between Respondent's Age and Religion | | Respondent Age | Religion |
| Respondent Age | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.109* |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------|----------|
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.029 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Religion | Pearson Correlation | 0.109* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.029 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Relationship between Marital Status and Religion | | Marital Status | Religion |
| Marital Status | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.096 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .055 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Religion | Pearson Correlation | -.096 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.055 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |

The independent sample T-test was used to determine the mean difference between marital status and religion. In religion, the Mean of the married respondents is 2.3290 (0.72428), whereas un-married is 2.1920 (0.70142), and the t-value of the married and un-married respondents in religion is 1.922. The significant value is insignificant, i.e., 0.055. Moreover, the independent sample T-test was used to determine the mean difference between occupation and religion. In religion, the Mean of on-job respondents is 2.1746 (0.70506), the jobless is 2.3438 (0.71712), the t-value of on-job respondents is -2.379, and the jobless respondents is -2.380. The significant value is significant, i.e., 0.018. Furthermore, the independent sample T-test was used to determine the mean difference between educational status and religion. In religion, the Mean of educated respondents is 2.1735 (0.70668), uneducated ones are 2.3441 (0.71536), and the t-value of educated respondents is 0.05048. The uneducated respondents are 0.05009, and the significant value is significant, i.e., 0.017, which is significant.

Table 5: Group Statistics (Respondents' marital status, Occupation, and Education)

| Description | Category | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | Sig |
|--|------------|-----|--------|----------------|---------|-------|
| Religion and Respondents' Marital Status | Married | 200 | 2.3290 | 0.72428 | 1.922 | 0.055 |
| | Unmarried | 200 | 2.1920 | 0.70142 | 1.922 | 0.055 |
| Religion and Respondents' Occupation | On job | 197 | 2.1746 | 0.70506 | -2.379 | 0.018 |
| | Jobless | 203 | 2.3438 | 0.71712 | -2.380 | 0.018 |
| Religion and Respondents' Education | Educated | 196 | 2.1735 | 0.70668 | 0.05048 | 0.017 |
| | Uneducated | 204 | 2.3441 | 0.71536 | 0.05009 | 0.017 |

CONCLUSION

This research work is the electoral study of District Karak about the determinant religion and its impact on female voting behaviour in NA-34 in the 2018 General Elections. The female of District Karak cast their vote based on religion in the 2018 General Elections. Religion was the most crucial determinant in District Karak in the 2018 General Elections. Regarding the application of religious voting theory, it is argued that religious voting is applicable in the electoral politics of NA-34

District Karak. In the 2018 elections, the voters voted based on religious voting because more than 63.65% of the respondents supported a religious preference. The empirical data support the argument that religious voting is essential in the electoral politics of District Karak. The study findings show that female folk of District Karak cast their vote based on religion. Age, marital status, occupation and education do not impact the determinants of religion. To understand voting behaviour, the researchers also connected the research findings with the voting behaviour theory of religion. The research has also explored the role of religion in female voting behaviour. As regards the application of the theory, it is argued that the theory of religion is applicable. Religion is the most dominant voting determinant in District Karak (63.65%).

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