Gender Gap as a Result of Political Socialization in Formation of Voting Behavior among Christian Minority in Punjab (Pakistan)

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the gap that exists among the genders as a result of political socialization in the Christian religious minority within Punjab, Pakistan. A study in this regard was carried out in four major districts of Punjab namely Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. A sample of 400 was surveyed during Dec 2017-Jan 2018. The data were collected using multi stage sampling. The results of the study indicated that gender plays an important role in voting behavior. There is a huge difference in political awareness of men and women. Men are more politically aware and their level of knowledge surpasses that of women from their community. Where men are more independent in their decision making regarding whom to vote or not to vote, women are largely dependent on males of family in forming their political decisions

Key Words: Gender Gap, Political Socialization, Voting Behaviour, Christian, Punjab

Introduction

Political socialization plays a vital role in formation of voting behavior. The occurrence of political illiteracy especially among the females is visible in the Pakistani society due to lack of political socialization. Vote is generally expressed as a free will or an individual preference but it is interesting to make out that how this applies on the household members across the world. Voting is ideally a free will but the real life practices differ from the idealism. It is a common sight how fathers and husbands make choices on behalf of their daughters and wives. The controlled and split voting anomalies were given special attention (Schaffer 2014, 356). If it is male head in a household that makes the decision on behalf of females of household which indicates that it's a control vote. In this case the political parties should be making a pitch to this person in particular as eventually its him who would be deciding whom to vote for. Many times it is not an issue of how a vote is splitted within a household rather it is based on how the decisions are based on managing the relations like the family members, a neighbor etc. this is controlled voting. An important point worth understanding is how we misjudge the voter's behavior while ignoring the fact that there is a failure in vote secrecy in such instances and the voting behavior is psychologically compromised. The behavior of female is controlled by men of family. The whole knowledge in this

regard remains shallow. A special attention needs to be paid to the behavior of household members rather than making individual behavior a focal point of study.

Prediction of voting behavior is linked to gender bias in facial inferences is an important aspect that is related to voting behavior (Chiao, Bowman and Gill 2008, 1). Globally, the political power is held by the men as compared to women. This is even applicable in the areas where democracy exists and anyone can get hold of the political office. Yet, the highest positions are seen to be held by the men. It is interesting to explore the reasons for this gender gap. Apart from what existing literature says about behavior of people while making decisions regarding whom to vote mostly based on rational system and evaluations the research looks at a different angle to it. People do make analysis of an individual contesting in elections through his/her facial appearance and it plays an important role in their decision making whether to vote or not. The sample for the research constituted of seventy three students from the universities which included around thirty eight females and thirty five males. The stimuli that was introduced to these students were pictures taken from CNN website. The pictures were being standardized by making certain changes such as in background, size and color. There were a total of 106 pictures with a grey scale. In order to control the impact of third party candidate only two candidates race with 1 Democrat and 1 Republican were included. The participants further had to do two tasks one was facial judgment and the other was hypothetical voting task for the US Presidential election. The respondents had to look at the face of candidate and then make judgment about his competence etc., than were shown picture of series of candidate's pairs and to decide whom they would vote for the Presidential elections. All voters seem to vote for candidates that looked more competent. However, there was a variation that male who were more approachable were likely to win whereas females who looked attractive again were likely to win. Also males are going to vote for attractive women and females to vote for approachable male candidate. This gives an understanding of how political gender gap exists while emphasizing on the impact of gender physical appearance and how voters make decisions regarding how to vote.

Gender gap exists in Pakistan especially in areas like economic and political empowerment, education, health and population. Various indicators show a decline in gender gap such as education, in the field of health as well as when it comes to employment. Whereas, in the areas such as economic and political empowerment is concerned a lot of effort is required to bridge the gap that is currently existing. The results from previous studies indicate that in many parts of world women are conventional as compared to men. The study observes how this is applicable today. Whether there is an evidence that traditional gender gap still continue or there has been a change in this phenomenon (Inglehart and Norris 2000, 441). The data for the article have been drawn from World Values Survey of 1980s and mid-1990s. The survey was conducted in more than 60 countries worldwide. It is recognized through the study that there is a realignment in the differences based on gender when it comes to electoral behavior. When it comes to

industrial society women tend to be drifting towards the left of men. However, the scenario is different for women belonging to developing countries or the post-communist societies. The study also tries to look at the factors for this development while taking into account the cultural and structural factors. The results are helpful in understanding the gender gap that has emerged in the modern times. The importance of gender gap in electoral studies have started to gain momentum amongst the social scientists (Studlar, McAllister and Hayes 1998, 779). However, a disagreement persists about the factors that are responsible for this development. The focus of the paper is towards determining the differences that exist among the male and female when it comes to their voting behavior. The differences are looked from three possible explanations usually given by others. Firstly, when it comes to socio-economic achievement there is an element of disparity among the two genders. Secondly, women experience more situational limitations as compared to men and lastly there is a difference rather disparity that exists when it comes to the political orientation. Australian Election Survey Data of 1993 has been analyzed for the study. The technique thas has been applied for this purpose is regression decomposition. The data tend to support the argument that gender differences and situational restraints are the factors of discrimination in Australia and Britain. The gender gap is explained in terms of responsibilities that females have in familial context and the type of occupations they have. However, US reflects a different picture where the political orientation is more important and women there show inclination towards the left side of political issues that are mostly common. The study shows how gender differences are observed in the phenomenon of voting behavior. The reason for the differences are different for the three countries. While political factors are powerful in US, for Britain and Australia it's the socioeconomic and situational factors that are more significant.

Study of the political attitudes among the race specifically whites indicate that gender differences do exist however, there might be a variation depending on the nature of the issue (Howell and Day 2000, 858). Characteristics such as value differences, women autonomy, their socio economic status and the social roles on basis of gender are examined while taking into account conditional and compositional effects. When there is a difference in men and women behavior on an explanatory variable there is an occurrence of compositional effects. On the other hand if differences are based on policy preferences among men and women there is an occurrence of conditional effects. The study is based on the data from National Election Study 1996. Using logit and OLS regression the data exhibit complexity of gender gaps among various issues. Education seems to have a liberalizing influence on the females whereas religiosity seems to have a conservatizing impact on the men. In general the factors responsible for arise of this gender gap are the cultural role of females as well as their increasing independence from the men. With these complexities arising one cannot foresee this gap to be lessening in the future.

Research design

The primary focus of the study has been on understanding to what extent the gender gap exists among the Christian community within Punjab, Pakistan. The research for the present study has been conducted in the province of Punjab, Pakistan during December 2017 and Feb 2018. The sample for the research comprised of the Christians residing in Punjab. Four districts of Punjab were selected on the basis of majority of Christian community residing there. The districts selected were Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi district. A sample of 400 respondents was taken using multistage sampling. The idea was to divide the population in smaller clusters. This makes the data more manageable. As the research population was spread over four districts and in order to avoid the travelling cost as well as the time the method was the most suitable one (Kalton 1983, 37).

There was an equal spilt of sample among all districts. Further it was ensured that there is an equal representation of male and female. Hence there were 200 males and 200 females that were part of the study. Punjab being the province where the Christians are found in majority therefore it was selected as a universe for the present study.

Table 1.1

POPULATION BY RELIGION

(In percent)

Administrative Unit		Muslim	Christian	Hindu (Jati)	Qadiani (Ahmadi)	Scheduled Castes	Others
Pakistan		96.28	1.59	1.60	0.22	0.25	0.07
	Rural	96.49	1.10	1.80	0.18	0.34	0.08
	Urban	95.84	2.59	1.16	0.29	0.06	0.06
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa		99.44	0.21	0.03	0.24	*	0.08
	Rural	99.65	0.03	*	0.22	*	0.08
	Urban	98.42	1.06	0.11	0.31	0.01	0.09
F A T A		99.6	0.07	0.03	0.21	0.03	0.07
	Rural	99.63	0.04	0.03	0.21	0.03	0.06
	Urban	98.16	1.17	0.32	0.10	.007	0.23
Punjab		97.21	2.31	0.13	0.25	0.03	0.07
	Rural	97.66	1.87	0.15	0.19	0.05	0.08
	Urban	96.25	3.27	0.06	0.37	0.02	0.03
Sindh		91.31	0.97	6.51	0.14	0.99	0.08
	Rural	88.12	0.14	9.77	0.12	1.79	0.06
	Urban	94.67	1.84	3.08	0.17	0.14	0.10
Balochistan		98.75	0.40	0.49	0.15	0.10	0.10
	Rural	99.42	0.06	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.10
	Urban	96.61	1.49	1.58	0.16	0.05	0.10
Islamabad		95.53	4.07	0.02	0.34	*	0.03
	Rural	98.80	0.94	*	0.23	*	0.03
	Urban	93.83	5.70	0.03	0.40	*	0.03

*   Refers to a very small proportion.

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Data analysis

Both univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis was done for data analysis. The data were divided in descriptive analysis into two separate parts i.e. univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis.

Table 1.1

Variable	Political awareness		Chi-value	Sig.
	Lower	Higher		
Gender				
Male	36.0%	60.2%	18.183	.000
Female	64.0%	39.8%		
Education				
Illiterate	40.5%	32.2%	7.191	.027
Primary to Middle	18.0%	31.4%		
Matriculation and above	41.4%	36.4%		

Table 1.1 presents the results of bivariate cross tabulation between age and education and political awareness. Analysis indicated that majority of the males had higher political awareness (60.2%) as compared to the majority of females who had lower political awareness (64.0%). In addition, political awareness is lower among the majority of illiterate respondents (40.5%). Chi-square test indicated statistically significant association between gender and education with political awareness.

Table 1.2

Variable	Political Awareness	
	Sig.	Odd Ratios (OR 95%)
Gender		
Male	.000	2.680
Female	1	
Education		
Illiterate	1	
Primary to Middle	.011	2.196
Matriculation and above	.695	1.106

Table 1.2 presents the binary logistics regression analysis between gender, education and political awareness. Political awareness is found significantly higher among malse (OR 2.680) and among the respondents who reported their education

from primary to middle (OR 2.196) as compared to female and illiterate respondents.

Table 1.3

Variable	Political Awareness	
	Sig.	Adjusted odd Ratios (aOR 95%)
Gender		
Male	.000	2.543
Female	1	
Education		
Illiterate	1	
Primary to Middle	.035	1.956
Matriculation and above	.791	1.072

Table 1.3 presents the multivariate binary logistic regression analysis between gender, education and political awareness. Table 7.13 presents the result of multivariate binary logistic regression analysis between gender and education with political awareness. Both the variables i.e. gender and education retained significance even in multivariate binary logistic regression analysis. However, gender is the strongest determinants of political awareness (aOR 2.543 Sig.000) while the impact of education on future intention to vote is less powerful (aOR 1.956 Sig. .035) as compared to gender.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that political awareness is the highest among male respondents as compared to female regardless of the effect of education. Gender is the strongest determinant of political perception.

While looking at impact of gender on voting behavior the findings revealed that when it comes to phenomenon of gender there seems to be lack of interest in politics among the females. A significant number of population (75.5%) is either not at all interested in politics or is hardly interested in politics. Not much difference was observed in male and female responses for the interest in politics. Asking about 2013 General Elections the results showed not significant differences among genders. There was a lack of interest (68.5%) in previous elections, respondents were hardly interested whereas only a small number (30.5%) showed some interest in previous elections. In order to cast a vote it is important that people get themselves registered with Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). So, before getting to know about their political interests it is important to know if they have registered themselves or not, as this would in actual determine their future intent of voting. In total (85.75%) of the research respondents were registered voters. However there was a difference among the rates of getting vote registered among males and females. The percentage for male

(92%) is relatively higher than females (79.5%). The important reason found out for this was non-issuance of National Identity Card of females due to which vote could be not registered. A few of females also thought that having an Identity Card meant that their vote is registered which is not the case as it is important for every citizen above the age of 18 to get his National Identity Card and get their vote registered. The two phenomenon are entirely different and in no ways connected to each other.

An important phenomenon worth understanding is the fact that who decides that an individual would vote for whom. A huge difference was observed in male and female responses. A highest (65.5%) number of respondents said that they themselves are deciding factor as to whom they would vote, followed by impact of family (21.5%) and lastly biradri (9%). Whereas when the responses of females are analyzed it is interesting to find out that their decision making regarding whom to vote lies with family (58.5%) and not many (38.5%) were found to be independent in their decision making regarding whom they would cast vote for.

The findings of study revealed that social factors are not an important determinant of voting behavior of Christian community. However, it is concluded that gender plays an important role in voting behavior. There is a huge differences in political awareness of men and women. Men are more politically aware and their level of knowledge surpasses that of women from their community. Where men are more independent in their decision making regarding whom to vote or not to vote, women are largely dependent on males of family in forming their political decisions.

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