

Political Culture and Voting Behavior; A Case Study of Parsi Community in Pakistan

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Abstract

Parsi community of Pakistan is known for great contribution in the public welfare works, literature, industry and philanthropy. Moreover Parsis are considered one of the most hardworking and peaceful communities of Pakistan. However, the population of Parsi community in Pakistan is declining rapidly due to the migration of Parsis from Pakistan to Western countries. The following paper investigates how Parsi community perceives the political and security scenario of Pakistan. This research paper will also investigate whether Parsi community has adequate political rights or not and how are they contributing and participating in the political process in Pakistan. This research paper will also inquire if Parsi community has any political grievances in Pakistan. All these questions will be answered by studying the political culture and voting behavior of Parsi community in Pakistan. Survey method of research was used to conduct the research and data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The results show that the Parsis are patriot Pakistani people but have reservations regarding the constitutional provisions on minority rights and seek a reform in the system and better law and order situation.

Keywords: Parsi community, Political culture, voting behaviour

Introduction

Parsi community is a religious community that follows Zoroastrianism and whose ancestors have migrated to Gujrat and Sindh in 8th to 10th century from Iran. Zoroastrianism was founded in Iran by Prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathushtra) in 6th century BC. It is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. It remained one of the most powerful religions for around one thousand year. Zoroastrians believe that world was created by one God, Ahura Mazda, who revealed the truth through Prophet Zoroaster. They consider fire as the representation of God's wisdom. According to Zoroastrianism, there is conflict between Spenta-Maynu, the good principle, and Angra-Maynu, the evil principle in the world but good will eventually prevails. Zoroastrianism ordains its followers to fight against evil and keep themselves on righteous path without being influenced by the negative aspects of evil.

The representation of God in temples, altars or images is prohibited. The religious book of Zoroastrian is Avesta that contains sacred hymns called Gathas, which were supposedly composed by Zoroaster himself (Moore, 1912). They worship by orally reciting Sacred Words. The Zoroastrians keep the fire ablaze as fire is considered a divine symbol and representation of God's wisdom and has to be respected, but it does

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not imply that they are fire worshippers. The total population of Zoroastrians in the world is around 124,000 (Goodstein, 2006).

Parsi Community in Pakistan

The story of early settlement of Parsi community in Indian sub-continent is called story the Story of Sanjan or Qissa-i-Sanjan which explains that Zoroastrians migrated to Indian sub-continent in 716 A.D due to persecution after Muslims' armies' invaded Iran and Sassanid Empire collapsed. The exact number of Zoroastrian migrants is not known. They sought refuge in present day Pakistan and India and the descendants of those Zoroastrians are called Parsis. The Parsis settled in the Sanjan (a town in Gujrat state of present day India). According to a legend, when the Zoroastrians came to sub-continent, king Jadhav Rana of Gujrat sent a glass of milk that was filled till the brim in order to indicate that the addition of Zoroastrians would disturb the society when was quite stable. The leader of the Zoroastrians mixed sugar in the milk to imply that the Zoroastrians would be a sweet addition in the society rather than a disturbance. Thus the ruler let them stay in the region and also allowed them to build the temple of sacred fire.

The Parsis faced some hardships when Muslims conquered sub-continent and destroyed the temple of fire however they accustomed to Muslim rule with time and faced little hardship thereafter. The Parsis started out as agriculturists but flourished as traders and land owners during the Mughal rule (Menant, 1901).

During the British rule in sub-continent, Parsis were the major agents of reform, enlightenment, and progress and acquired a conspicuous position due to acquisition of Western education and social work. They quickly assimilated with British and acted as mediators between the locals and British, which can be attributed to their open mindedness and broad-minded intellect (Menant, 1901). The Parsis worked hard to acquaint themselves with Western education. A Parsi was the first oriental to have the prestige of being member of British House of Commons.

Proselytism and conversion are considered repugnant in modern Parsi-ism but they claim it is a universal religion and conversion to Zoroastrianism is accepted by them (Wadia, 2015). Since Parsis have no separate nation state due to their small population, they remain loyal to whichever country they reside in.

Parsi Community in Pakistan

During the partition of sub-continent, Parsi community was spared the violence suffered by Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. They were in very small number and did not pose any threat to any community or state (Moza, 2015). After the creation of Pakistan, they earned respect of fellow Pakistanis by actively engaging in social work and progressing in business and various professions. The population of Parsi community in Pakistan is around 1400 (Dubash, 2014).The literacy rate in Parsi community is very high.

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Most of the members of Parsi community are actively engaged in business and charity works. Despite their small number, the Parsi community made indelible contributions in the education sector and health sector in Pakistan which include the establishment of Mama Parsi Secondary School, BVS Parsi School, NED University, Lady Dufferin Hospital and Spencer Eye Hospital. These are some examples of their tremendous contributions particularly in Karachi (“A Sense of Belonging,” 2014). Their contributions are not limited to education and health sector as they were also dedicated to journalism, business, literature, civil service, politics and arts.

The first elected Mayor of Karachi was a Parsi named Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta, who is still fondly remembered today as Maker of Modern Karachi. He was a social worker and a simple man who established a hospital for leprosy patients. During his mayor ship, Karachi was kept very clean despite mass arrival of migrants in the wake of partition. He did not belong to any political party and the sole purpose of his political life was to help poor and needy people. Ardeshir Cowasjee was a famous columnist and social activist. He wrote columns for Dawn newspaper wherein he openly criticized corrupt politicians and mafias in Karachi. He was also the founder of Cowasjee Foundation, through which he financed scholarships for students who wanted to pursue higher education but could not afford it.

Justice Dorab Patel served as the Supreme Court judge from 1976 till 1981. He also campaigned for human rights. He also co-founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. He retired from the position of judge of Supreme Court in the wake of Provisional Constitutional Order issued by General Zia-ul-haq when all the judges of High courts and Supreme Court were urged to take oath on it.

Avari family is famous for their business acumen and credentials in sports. Dinshawji Avari founded the Avari hotels in Pakistan. Byram Avari, son of Dinshawji Avari, represented Pakistan in Asian games and won gold medal in sailing in 1982. Goshpi Avari, Byram’s wife, also participated in Asian games in 1982 and won gold medal in sailing as well. She promoted sports among women in Pakistan.

Bapsi Sidhwa is an internationally acclaimed author. Her famous novel “Ice candy man” narrated the aftermath of partition of India and the impact of partition on minorities.

Recently, Dr Nergis Mavalvala, Pakistani born Parsee and an MIT professor, was a part of team of scientists who announced the confirmation of gravitational waves. This led to the confirmation of main prediction of Albert Einstein’s general theory of relativity (Rehman, 2016).

Issues of Parsi Community in Pakistan

The populations of Zoroastrians in the world were recorded as 140,000 at the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress in 2013. The population of Zoroastrians is dwindling globally and India has taken steps to save the dwindling populations of Parsis which

was previously 114,000 in 1941 and has declined to 69,001 in 2001. In Pakistan, although the decline has not been recorded and documented but it is noticeable. The absence of Parsis from Political scenario is also evident. While India is taking initiatives to preserve the Parsi Community, Pakistan government-which has not been able to give its minorities basic rights- has entirely ignored Parsi community. The Parsi community is neither included in demographic studies nor any substantial research is undertaken to preserve their culture and religion despite Parsi community's contribution in development (Dubash, 2014).

Secondly, Parsi community in Pakistan is not given due appreciation despite the great number of the advancements they have made in scientific, economic and humanistic domains. This under appreciation is the evidence that Parsi community is being marginalized and abandoned. This situation is arising due to failure of the government to empower minorities and weakening the roles of minorities in every sphere of life. The kindness and tolerance shown by Parsi community towards others is also not acknowledged ("Our Parsi Community", 2014).

According to Yusuf (2015) the decrease in population of Parsis is due to migration and birth rates. The younger generation is migrating from Pakistan for pursuing careers and insecurity whereas the old population has stayed out of necessity rather than out of choice. The old population avoids travelling due to illness and due to difficulty in settling in some new place.

Political Culture

Sodaro (2001) defined political culture as "a pattern of beliefs, values, expectations, and-above all-attitudes people have with respect to authority, society, and politics" (p.270). Political culture is the reflection of how people think and feel about politics. The population's perceptions and actions in political arena is shaped by the political culture. Political culture can explain how ideas, beliefs and attitude will translate into political behavior. Political culture can also determine whether a certain group would participate in certain political activity and how would they participate; what are the perceptions of people regarding the government and what do they expect from the government. Analysis of political culture is helpful in analyzing politics and political system of a country (Summerlee, 2011).

Inglehart (1988) opined that researchers over emphasized the importance of economic factors in politics and society after late 1960s, which resulted into dearth of research on political culture. Different societies have different political cultures, which impact the viability of democratic institutions in those societies.

Almond and Verba (1967) stated that the population of any country can be classified into three categories on the basis of their political culture: participants, subjects and parochials. Participants are well informed about politics and they participate in political activities by casting vote in elections, making demands from the government or getting involved in the political process by contesting elections or campaigning for

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some political party. Subjects are law abiding citizens but they do not have much knowledge about politics and they are indifferent to political events. Parochials know nothing about politics and they have no expectations from politics nor do they believe they can make any change or demand to the system.

According to Sodaro (2001) despite continuity in certain population's political views, political culture is not fixed or static. He opined that political culture evolves with time. The change can be slow or rapid, depending upon political events. He cited example of West Germany's political culture immediately after the end of Second World War and three decades thereafter. The acceptance of democracy considerably increased among the youth three decades later. He observed changes in political culture of post-communist state as well and concluded that the attitude toward state and authority in such states was transforming. He identified three aspects of political culture in a population; attitude toward authority, society, and politics. He assumed that for sustenance of stable democracy, an interactive attitude toward authority, consensual attitude toward society and balanced support for intervention on part of the state would be conducive.

Voting behavior

The citizens performs their foremost civic duty when they casts their votes in the elections. A democracy cannot function without citizen's participation during the elections. The study of voting behavior explores the criteria on which voters base their judgement when they select the choice during the elections and how they tend to participate in elections in the long run. Hence voting behavior is studied in political science in order to understand what determines the choice of voters in the election and how do they arrive at the decision to vote for certain candidate in the elections. (Marshall, 1998)

Political culture of Pakistan

According to Khan (n.d.), the political culture of Pakistan presents a negative and aggressive style of thinking and behavior in political arena. He states that caste/biraadri system, which has its roots in the colonial era, has the major impact on political culture of Pakistan. British empowered land-owners and feudal lords for their own political ends. After the independence of Pakistan, the same old ritual of centralized power prevailed, with bureaucracy assuming the power which alienated people in different regions.

Moreover, the military rule in Pakistan, feudal class, and role of religious elite has also shaped political culture of Pakistan. Pakistan inherited the system of centralized power from the colonial era. The political parties adopted undemocratic norms in order to consolidate their power and evoked biraadri/caste affiliations in order to harness support. The absence of democratic norms due to prevalence of military dictatorships and dominance of feudal class, religious elite and businessmen on political sphere led to the autocratic political culture particularly in Sindh and

Balochistan. People assume the member of their caste/biraadri would secure their interests if they vote for him.

Minority Rights in Pakistan

Out of population of 180 million in Pakistan, the majority is of Muslims. The minorities include Christians, Hindus, and Parsis etc.

Pakistan signed international covenant on civil and political rights (ICCPR), which is a multilateral international treaty, on 17th April, 2008 and ratified it in 2010. However Pakistan has not signed International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights due to reservation that it contradicts with some articles of the constitution. Pakistan has also signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After the independence of Pakistan, the constituent assembly of Pakistan, passed the Objective Resolution which enumerated the broad outline of future constitution of Pakistan. The resolution ensured that the constitution would have requisite provisions for the minorities to profess their religions and develop their cultures.

The 1973 constitution lists various articles for protection of minorities. Article 25 ensures equality of all citizens before law their entitlement to equal protection before law. Article 27(1) states that there will be no discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, caste, etc. Article 36 is most pertinent to minority rights in Pakistan as it states that the legitimate rights and interest of minorities, including their representation in Federal and Provincial services will be safeguarded by the state.

Literature Review

The researcher read books, research reports, and journal articles to find out the significance of political culture, different types of political culture, and the political culture in Pakistan. In order to understand the perspective of Parsi community, the researcher studied the history of Parsi community in sub-continent and their religious traditions.

Almond and Verba (1963) were the first political scientists to study the interplay of politics and culture. They conducted survey research from 1959 till 1960 in five countries, namely United States, Britain, Italy, Germany and Mexico through survey research in order to identify a political culture most conducive to sustenance of democracy. They identified three types of political culture through their survey research: participants, parochials, and subjects. They concluded that a combination of large number of participants, subjects and small number of parochials are required for the stability of democracy in any country, they termed such a culture as civic culture. They deemed the presence of too many parochials as a threat to instability of democracy since listening to the demands of a very large number of people will not be manageable. Their research showed that United States had the largest number of participants as compared to other countries and its political culture was most similar to civic culture deemed ideal for democracy by Almond and Verba. Almond and Verba's

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study of political culture is considered as a classic work of political science but their critics have pointed out that the researchers ignored sub-cultures of race and class in their survey. Their research has also been critiqued as ethno-centric.

Almond, Powell and Strom (2000) identified three levels of political culture: system level, process level and policy level. Political culture at the system level explains views of citizens and leaders regarding the political system. Process level political culture explains citizens' relationship with the political process and policy level political culture explains what the expectations of citizens from the government are. National pride and legitimacy of the government depend upon the system level political culture. In order to explain how people acquire certain attitude, behavior, and beliefs about politics, they gave the concept of political socialization. Political socialization is the process of acquiring beliefs, attitude and behavior toward politics. They outlined different sources of political socialization as well; family, schools, religious institutions, peer group, social class, gender and mass media. All these agents of political socialization help in explaining how political culture is transmitted.

Inglehart (1988) wrote his article "Renaissance of political culture" in *The American Political Science Review*. He hypothesized that cross cultural differences in political culture exist that have a political impact. There is a debate among political scientists about the interplay of economy and culture; they argue whether it's the culture that spurs economic growth or the economic development which instills a democratic political culture. In order to find answer to this question, he carried out research from 1973 to 1987 through Euro-Barometer survey in 24 European countries. The factors which he used in his survey to assess the political culture were: support for existing social order, interpersonal trust, political satisfaction, and personal life satisfaction. He found out that its political culture that gives boost to economic activity and democracy. Sodaro (2001) enumerated ten conditions of democracy in his book and he deemed democratic political culture as conducive to the stability of democracy. He also identified different patterns of attitude toward authority, society, and state. He discussed cultural shifts in modernizing and post-modernizing states. He studies psychological factors affecting people's political culture and applied rational choice theory to understand whether voters make a rational choice when they cast their vote. He also discussed political culture with reference to game theory and prisoner's dilemma.

Hague and Harrop (2006) explained development of political culture with theory of post materialism. Their study of political culture in new democracies was very conducive to the research as Pakistan has faced a staggering democracy since its inception and his explanation of manipulation of political culture by dictators and authoritarian rulers was relevant to Pakistan's more than three decades of military rule. Lastly he discussed elite political culture which was again relevant to Pakistan where feudal, military, religious, and business elite have held sway over political

process for decades. He concluded that elite and authoritarian rules manipulate political culture and try to induce a parochial political culture.

All aforementioned researches and studies prove the significance of political culture in politics and state.

Menant (1901) wrote about life of Parsis from their arrival in sub-continent till British rule in Sub-continent in detail. His research gives insight into the life of Parsees before the partition of sub-continent. He explained how they progressed from agriculturists to traders and landowners. According to him, Parsis settled in Sanjan region of Gujrat after the conquest of Persia by Muslims. They faced some hardship when Muslims conquered sub-continent but they became accustomed to Muslim rule later on. They were engaged in agriculture during this time but in the Mughal era they progressed to landowners and traders. Despite their small number, they became force of reform, enlightenment, and progress in British India. They also acted as mediators between the British rulers and the local population of Hindus and Muslims in British India. They were ahead of Muslims and Hindus in political and literary matters. Parsis propagated the rights of Hindu women as well who were oppressed due to culture. They were able to accomplish all this due to their open mindedness. The author also discussed the life histories of Mr. Dadabhai Naorozi and Mr. Beramji Malabari who were two prominent Parsis that became the agent of reform and education among Parsi community. Although Menant studied life of Parsis before the formation of Pakistan, but his study explains the reason of high literacy rate and business acumen of Parsi community in Pakistan

Moore (1912) wrote about the origins of Zoroastrianism in detail. He emphasized on the religious beliefs of Zoroastrians. He also traced similarities between Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. He explained that Zoroastrians were provided protection by the Muslim rulers in Persia as they were people of book and their religion was monotheistic but later they were forced to convert to Islam hence they fled to India. At the time when Moore was writing his research paper, the number of Parsis in sub-continent was around 90,000 and they were mainly living in Bombay. He said that Parsis were prosperous at that time. Moore's study helps to understand the religious background and traditions of Parsis, which have a great impact on their political culture and attitude in the society.

Sidhwa (1991) narrated the experiences of Parsi community during the partition of sub-continent in her novel. She was nine years old when she shifted to Lahore with her family. She narrated her own experiences through the protagonist, Lenny. The researcher learned that Parsi community had remained apolitical during the partition and had decided to remain loyal to the country they inhabited. The Parsi community also made efforts to quell violence and helped victims of violence perpetrated by the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim zealots.

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Khan (n.d.) studied the political culture of Pakistan in the context of pre-partition British rule and the post partition power struggle among military, bureaucracy, political parties and clergy. He traced the roots of Pakistan's political culture to the colonial era. He opines that birdarism/caste system is a major factor in the political culture of Pakistan. British believed in controlling their subjects through centralized power and empowered bureaucracy and landlords. British rewarded feudal lords with vast tracts of lands in exchange for their loyalty. After the independence of Pakistan, military, landlords, religious clergy, and bureaucracy started playing a dominant role in the politics. Due to lack of education, some politicians incited ethnic, linguistic, and religious biases among the masses to garner their support. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, tribalism prevailed and the tribal leaders commanded their subjects in an autocratic manner. In Punjab, Biradarism/ caste system tailored people's political affiliations. He opined that due to various problems facing Pakistan immediately after its independence, the government could not give ample attention to nation building and was rather busy in state building. Hence the aforementioned factors made Pakistan's political culture conflictual rather than consensual. Democratic political culture could not flourish in Pakistan due to military rule and conflict between various religious and ethnic groups. This research provides comprehensive information about political culture of majority but does not explore the political culture of religious minorities in Pakistan.

Ziring (1997) while discussing reasons for imposition of Martial law in Pakistan, said that tribalism was a key feature of politics in Baloch and Pathan areas whereas Punjab and Sindh were dominated by feudalism. The people in different regions of Pakistan were inclined to follow known personalities. Hence he also implies that people in Pakistan have a subjective and parochial political culture.

Ahmed and Naseem (2014) studied the influence of social culture on the political culture in sub-continent before the partition. They pointed out the caste system was a significant element of sub-continent culture since the Aryan rule. The caste system existed during the Muslim rule as well, however, British perpetuated the caste system in order to consolidate their rule. The Biradarism/caste system prevails in both India and Pakistan after the partition. The Biradarism is especially prevalent in Punjab and plays a pivotal role during local elections. The authors opine that Biradari and caste play an even more crucial role during the elections than the political party affiliation.

Ahmed (2008) studied voting behavior in rural urban areas of Punjab. He also identified Biradarism as a major component of political culture in Pakistan. He said that the British consolidated Biradarism by allotting land to members of certain caste and allowing only land owners to contest elections. British designated the landless classes as "kammi". He opined that Biradarism continued to influence voting behavior even after the creation of Pakistan.

Mushtaq, Abiodullah, and Akber studied the political participation of individuals in Pakistan focusing on socio economic resource level or SERL. They conducted survey

in five cities, namely Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. Their sample size was 500. The survey questionnaire comprised of questions on the hours of television the respondents watch, their political participation, and their topic of conversations. They categorized education and income into high, middle, and low groups. They concluded that individuals belonging to high income and education group were more inclined to news media, political talk and hence they were more participative in political activities; however their participation was passive instead of active or proactive. Since most of the members of Parsi community belong to upper class and are well-educated, hence the voting behavior focusing on socio-economic resource level was very helpful in the research.

Malik (2002) wrote about status of minorities in Pakistan since independence. He explored status of minorities in different eras of Pakistani governments and explained how the conditions of minorities gradually declined. The author focused on rights of Ahmedis, Parsis, Sikhs, and Bahais in Pakistan. He opined that Parsis have been safe from religious persecution in Pakistan because of their commercial links and the principle of non-proselytization in their religion.

The researcher also read articles in newspapers like Dawn and Express Tribune wherein the issues and grievances of Parsi community was highlighted by some Parsi and some non-Parsi writers.

The review of the literature showed that there is dearth of research on political culture and voting behavior of minorities in Pakistan.

Research methodology

The research tool was semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of ten close ended and one open ended question. All questions were formulated on the basis of research objectives and questions. The respondents were also asked about demographic information which included age, gender, and educational qualification.

The target population for conducting the survey was members of Parsi community in Pakistan. Sample size for this research is 30. Since the Parsi community was hard to reach due to their declining population, hence the sample size is low. Moreover, Parsi community is a very homogenous community and the results can be generalized despite small sample size. Convenience sampling technique was employed to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed among the Parsi acquaintances of the researcher and the online questionnaire was emailed to Parsis living in Karachi and other cities of Pakistan. SPSS and Microsoft excel was used for data analysis.

Results

Structured questionnaire was used as a research tool to find following results. All the participants were educated and had completed their graduation.

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Do you think that the creation of Pakistan was a step towards ensuring minority rights in the new state?

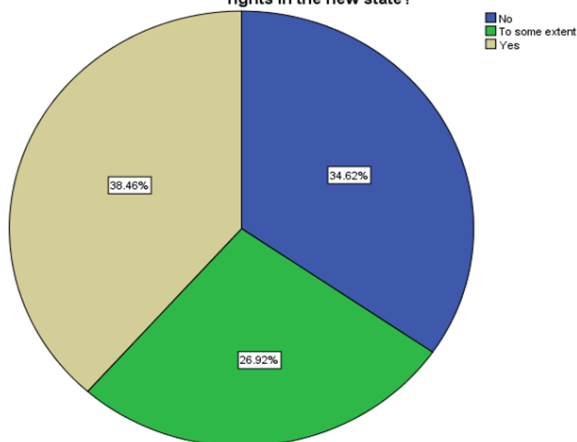


Figure 1 shows the views of Parsi community about whether creation of Pakistan was a step toward ensuring minority rights.

First question was asked to gauge whether Parsees think that creation of Pakistan was a step toward ensuring minority rights. In the wake of terrorist attacks on both Muslims and non-Muslims in Pakistan, some people suggest that the creation of Pakistan was not a right decision and the rights of minorities would have been safer in undivided secular state of India. This question will help in understanding the perspective of Parsi community regarding this debate. Since Parsee community is a minority in Pakistan hence their perspective would be conducive to understand this argument. According to 34.6 % respondents the creation of Pakistan was not a step toward ensuring minority rights. 38.4 % respondents answered yes and 26.9 % respondents chose the option to some extent. The results show that Parsi community has mixed feelings regarding this debate but the majority are not of the view that creation of Pakistan was not a step toward ensuring minority rights.

In the second question the respondents were asked to measure the general status of minorities in different eras of civil and military governments in Pakistan. Pakistan faced more than thirty years of authoritarian military rule and a turbulent democracy in the rest of the years. The answers to this question will help in examining the views of Parsi community about different military and civilian governments since 1947 till 2013. The results reveal that respondents had mixed views regarding the status of minority rights in the first three decades of Pakistan. From 1977 onwards the minority rights started declining in Pakistan according to their opinion. Majority of the respondents considered the condition of minority rights as poor from 1977 till 200

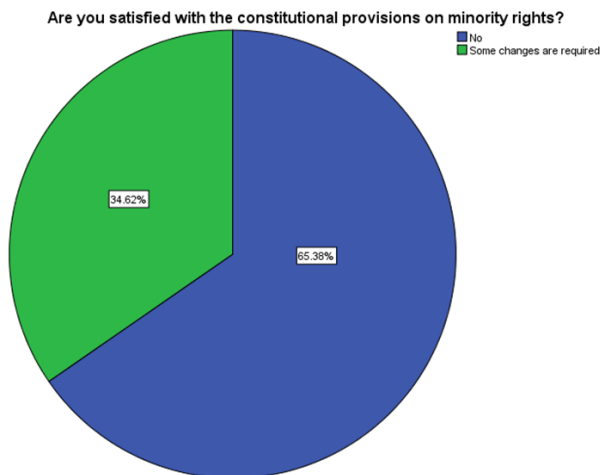


Figure 3 shows whether Parsi community is satisfied with constitutional provisions on minority rights.

Question no 3 was formulated to analyze whether the Parsis are satisfied with constitutional provisions on minority rights. A constitution is the most important document in a country that guarantees fundamental rights to all its citizens. 65% respondents chose the option no and 34.6 % respondents said to some extent. None of the respondents marked yes as an answer to this question which implies that according to Parsi community the constitution of Pakistan does not have adequate pro to protect minority rights.

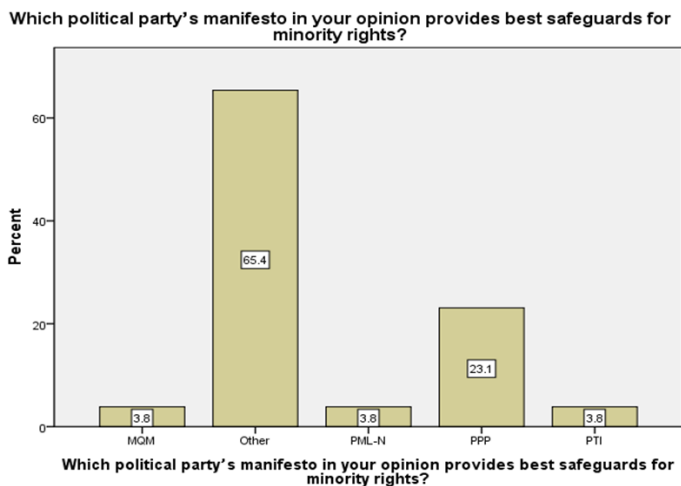


Figure 4 shows the opinion of Parsi community regarding which political party's manifesto provides best safeguards for minority rights.

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Fourth question was structured to evaluate which political party provides best safeguards for minority rights in their manifesto according to the Parsee community. A political party enlists its aims, objectives and policy position on all critical issues in its manifesto and the stance of any political on any issue can be gauged through it. The respondents were given the names of four mainstream political parties to choose and the fifth option was other. 3.85 % respondents chose MQM, 3.85 % respondents chose PTI, and 3.85 % respondents chose PMLN. 23.08 % respondents chose PPP and the majority of the respondents, that is 65%, chose other option. The results show that the majority of Parsi community does not believe that the major political parties provide best safeguards for minority rights in their manifestoes.

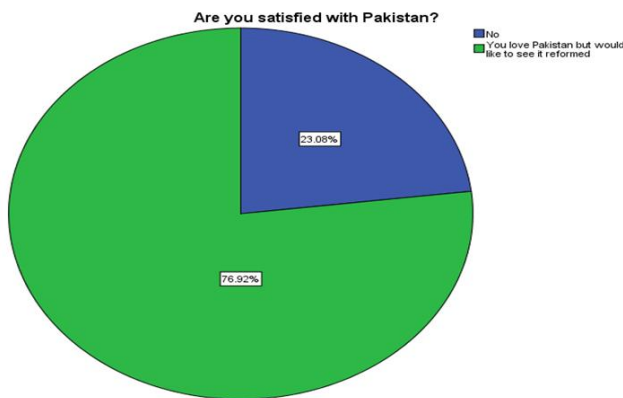


Figure 5 shows whether Parsi community is satisfied with Pakistan.

Question no 5 was formulated to understand whether Parsees are satisfied with Pakistan. . 23% respondents said that they are not satisfied with Pakistan, 76% respondents said that they love Pakistan but would like to see it reformed. None of the said that they are satisfied with Pakistan the way it is.

Sixth question was focused on determining factors due to which Parsis are migrating from Pakistan. The population of Parsi community has decreased over the years in Pakistan due to their migration to western countries. The answer would help in understanding the reasons for their migration from Pakistan. The respondents were give five options to choose from: security threats for minorities, general law and order situation, lack of economic opportunities, negation of political rights, and social unacceptability of their community by other citizens. The respondents had to rank these options from 1 to 5, 1 for most relevant and 5 for least relevant reason. The results show that security threats for is the major reason due to which the respondents would like to migrate from Pakistan. Whereas general law and order situation is the second most pertinent issue due to which the respondents would like to migrate from Pakistan. The respondents could also write some other reason for migrating from

Pakistan and some said that poor education is also one of the main reason for migrating from Pakistan.

Seventh question was related to the reason of staying in Pakistan when many of their fellow Parsees are migrating. This question was meant to understand if Parsi community has emotional affiliation with Pakistan or they are just staying in Pakistan out of necessity. The respondents were given five options to choose from: they feel secure, they are happy with economic growth, they have strong friends and family bonding, and they simply love Pakistan. The results show that strong family and friends bonding and the love for Pakistan are the two most pertinent reasons for not migrating from Pakistan. However, security is the least relevant reason for staying in Pakistan. The respondents could also write their some other reason for staying in Pakistan, to which they said that they being educated puts a responsibility on them to contribute toward the development of Pakistan

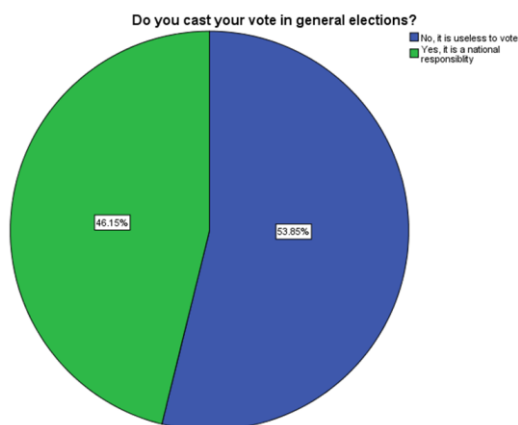


Figure 8 shows if Parsis cast their vote in general elections.

Eight questions inquired whether members of Parsi community vote in general elections. This question was formulated keeping in mind that participant political culture demands to be engaged in the political process through casting vote in the election. The answer will help in understanding whether Parsees are political vigilant and participative or are do they have a parochial attitude toward politics. 53% respondents chose the option that they do cast their vote because it is a national responsibility. While 46% respondents said that they do not cast their vote because it is useless to vote. The results show that there are both participants and subjects among members of Parsi community with reference to their political culture

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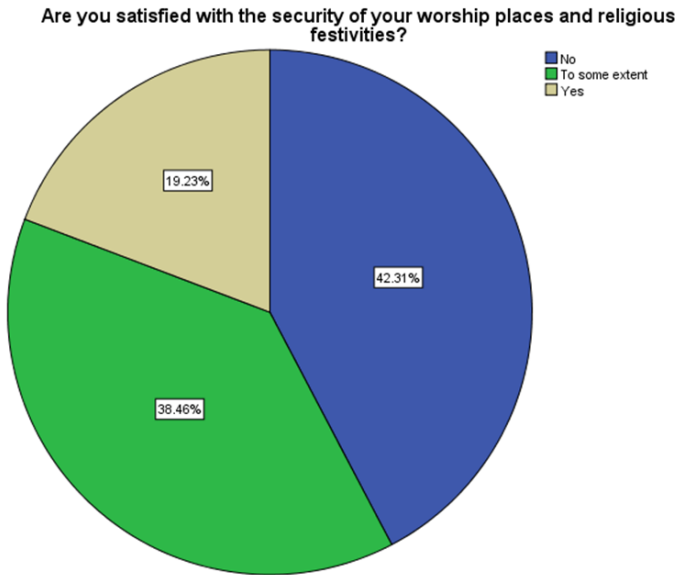


Figure 9 shows if the worship places of Parsi community are safe.

Ninth question was designed to find out if the worship places of Parsi community are secure. Every religious community should have a right to freely practice their religion and celebrate their religious festivities in a democratic state. This question helped to assess whether Parsis feel secure in practicing their religion, which is their fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution. First option was yes and 19 % respondents chose this option. The second option was no and some 42% respondents chose this option. The third option was to some extent and 38% respondents chose this option. The results show that worship places of Parsi community are not very safe.

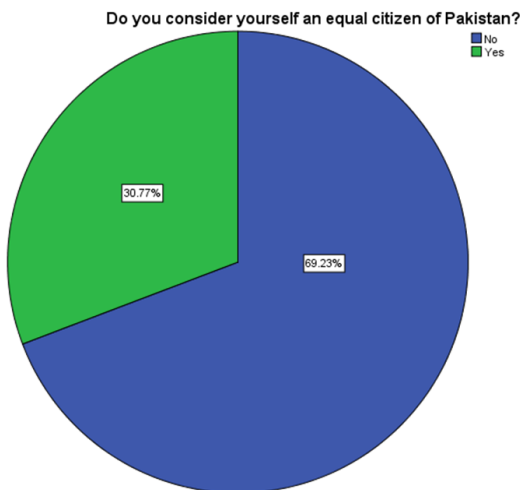


Figure 10 shows if Parsis consider themselves equal citizens of Pakistan

Tenth question intended to evaluate whether Parsis consider themselves equal citizen of Pakistan. It is meant to understand whether Parsis have equal economic, social, and political rights in Pakistan or they are discriminated on the basis of their religion. It is essential that every citizen is treated equally in a state in every sphere of life irrespective of his caste, religion, class or any other factor. 69% respondents said that they do not consider themselves equal citizens of Pakistan and only 30% respondents said that they consider themselves equal citizens of Pakistan. The results reveal that majority of the Parsis are not treated equally in Pakistan.

Eleventh question was an open ended question in which respondents were asked about their expectations and demands from the political system. This question attempts to understand the expectations of Parsi community from the government and what changes or reforms do they want in the country. It is imperative to understand the demands of the Parsi community in order to address their grievances about the system. Moreover, it is important to elicit demands and expectation of every citizen in state. Most of the respondents said that they want equal economic opportunities for all in Pakistan without any discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, and sect. The second most written expectation was protection of minorities, abolition of discriminatory practices against minorities, and security for minorities. Thirdly, they want general law and order situation to improve and removal of corrupt politicians from the government.

Conclusion

Pakistan is a democratic state which has faced more than three decades of military rule due to which the democratic political culture could not be inculcated in the public. The minority rights were abused at various occasions due to vested interests of certain groups. Moreover, despite having a democratic system, the law and order situation is weak in Pakistan. Many people lack equal economic opportunities in Pakistan.

This research was conducted to understand the political culture and voting behavior of Parsi community in Pakistan. Parsi community is a religious minority which has made enormous contribution in various fields in Pakistan. They are an asset to Pakistan; but their population is significantly decreasing due to various concerns. Hence it was pertinent to understand the political culture of Parsi community and assess the reasons for their migration from Pakistan.

The research showed that Parsi community is not satisfied with constitutional provisions on minority rights, Secondly; they consider that general status of minority rights in last ten years was poor. All the major political parties in Pakistan, namely PMLN, PTI, PPP, and MQM do not provide adequate safeguards for minority rights according to their opinion. It was understood that first and foremost reason for their migration from Pakistan is security threat for minorities. Furthermore, Parsis are not

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satisfied with the safety of their worship places. The general law and order situation is also a pertinent reason for their migration from Pakistan. Almost half of the respondents claimed that they do not cast their vote in general because they think it is useless to vote.

The research also showed that Parsis are very patriotic people and one the reasons for their decision to stay in Pakistan are because they love Pakistan. However, they would like Pakistan to be reformed. They have various expectations and demands from the political system which include provision of security for minorities, provision of quality education and health, abolition of corruption from the system, and equality for all citizens regardless of their religion, caste and ethnicity

Limitations

- The researcher could not travel to Karachi, where most of the Parsis live.
- The sample size is small due to limited time and resources.
- The researcher could not interview Parsees to listen to their experiences in person.

Recommendations

- The reasons due to which Parsis are migrating from Pakistan should be addressed by the government
- Amendments in the constitution should be made that guarantee more civil, political, and economic rights to minorities in Pakistan.
- The security of worship places of Parsi community should be increased so that they can practice their religion freely.
- . The major political parties should provide adequate safeguards for minorities in their manifestoes and spread awareness among the public regarding importance of minority rights.
- A democratic political culture should be inculcated in which minorities are granted right to voice their demands and concerns.
- The contributions of Parsi community in various fields should be recognized.

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Appendix

Research Questionnaire

Topic of the Research:

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Name of the Researcher: Zainab Asif Dar

Note: Data that shall be collected will only be used for the research purpose in particular and will be kept confidential.

Respondent's Information

Name (optional): _____

Age: _____ **Occupation:** _____

Gender: _____

Educational Qualification: _____

1. Do you think that the creation of Pakistan was a step towards ensuring minority rights in the new state?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) To some extent

2. How would you measure the general status of minority rights in following eras with reference to the performance of the government? (Please mark the appropriate box according to your opinion)

Eras	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
1947-1958			
1958-69			
1971-1977			
1977-1988			
1988-1990			
1990-1993			
1993-1997			
1997-1999			

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1999-2008			
2008-2013			

3. Are you satisfied with the constitutional provisions on minority rights?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Some changes required

4. Which political party's manifesto in your opinion provides best safeguards for minority rights?

- a) PML-N
- b) PTI
- c) PPP
- d) MQM
- e) Other

5. Are you satisfied with Pakistan?

- a) No
- b) Yes, you love Pakistan the way it is
- c) You love Pakistan but would like to see it reformed

6. Why would you like to migrate from Pakistan? (Please grade according to scale 1-most relevant, 5-least relevant)

Reasons	Preference no 1-5
Security threats for minorities	
General law and order situation	
Lack of economic opportunities	
Negation of political rights	
Social unacceptability of your community by other citizens	
Any other (please specify the reason)	

7. Why would you not migrate from Pakistan?

Reasons	Preference 1-5
You feel secure	
You are happy with your economic growth	

You have strong friends and family bonding	
You simply love Pakistan	
Any other (please specify the reason)	

8. Do you cast your vote in general elections?

- a) Yes, it is a national responsibility
- b) No, it is useless to vote

9. Are you satisfied with the security of your worship places and religious festivities?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) To some extent

10. Do you consider yourself an equal citizen of Pakistan?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. 1. What are your expectations and demands from the political system?
