SOCIAL FORCES INFLUENCING FEMALE VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN ALIABAD HUNZA

By

HUMA JEHANGIR

Department of Anthropology

Quaid-I-Azam University

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HUMA JEHANGIR

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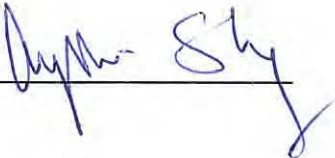**2023**

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Final Approval of Thesis

This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Ms.Huma Jehangir. It is our judgment that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad for the award of the Degree of M.Phil in Anthropology.

Committee:

1. Dr. Ikram Badshah _____
   Supervisor

2. Dr. Ayesha Sheraz _____
   External Examiner

3. Dr. Inam Ullah Leghari _____
   Chairperson
   Department of Anthropology

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Dedication

To my Aba, Ama and my sisters for putting up with me and making me what I am today. To their dreams and their aspirations.

Abstract

Women‟s participation in social circles has remained focus of studies for many feminist researches. It is also a crucial aspect for political scientist while analysing democracy and its features and for sociologists while analysing women‟s involvement in public spheres and especially political arena. Pakistan with one of largest youth body lacks provision of civil right to its citizens. Among these, right to vote and the freewill of women to choose a political representative is a crucial one. The study focuses „social forces influencing female voting behaviour in Aliabad Hunza‟. The aim of the research is to analyse and identify different social forces which determine females voting choices while documenting the perception of women about right to vote and subsequently identifying barriers that restrict female participation in politics. The study uses a qualitative research design to unearth local narratives through the implication of research techniques like in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The sample is extracted from census data through purposive sampling technique, which is inclusive of socioeconomic factors, like, age, education, profession, marital status, income, family background and family structure. The sample size used for the study is 28 in-depth interviews and 2 FDGs to triangulate the collected data. The data provided that female‟s perception of right to vote is expressed in terms of expectations towards the political candidate, and the possible major social factors which determine a female‟s voting choice is based on family preferences and the attributes of the candidate which are identified to be the features of their social groups to which women belong. The study deeply analyses effects of patriarchy on voting behaviour besides the influence of other barriers that restrict substantive participation of women in political arena.

Key Words: Social Forces, Right to Vote, Vote, Female Voting Behaviour

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1. Introduction

 "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live. You should take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life." The above mentioned quote is from archives of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in one of his 1944 speeches before the formation of Pakistan into an independent state (Shami , 2009) (Bhattacharya, 2014).

After the formation of Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 14th August 1947, the founder and the leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah was persistent in the political participation of females and addressed the importance in his speeches clearly explaining that females do need to create a sense of political consciousness and should be shoulder to shoulder to men in politics. The words seemed to lose its power just a year later in 1948 when the temporary political freedom of women ended (Shami, 2009).

Women have been fighting to acquire their rights since the inception of suffrage movement, which transformed the idea of women as citizen and their right to vote. Suffrage movement is one incident that is dated as the beginning of the movement that was ever recorded in the history. Before no movement as such was recorded in history (Catt & Shuler, 2020).

In 19th century the liberal political philosophy supported the idea of „free and rational‟ individual which was also proposed by suffragists when they were advocating the right for vote. Nonetheless, as Rai, (2000) mentions that liberal theory disseminates patriarchal patterns while ignoring subordination of gender in both society and political structures, it is therefore intrinsically gendered in many ways. Likewise, feminist theorists also criticized the concept of abstract individual in liberal theory, debating that the concept itself is not a gender-neutral category. This is why women are unable to influence public policy although they have the right to vote. Comparatively studying this to western democracies, we see similar nuances causing women to be displaced from many fronts. Hence, when women enter the political arenas in modern

democracies, even as the voters, they play their roles on men's terms. Since politics in our part of world is in patriarchal context, women are unable to change this gendered politics. Thus, these fundamental statements of liberal democracies need to be changed so that a gender-neutral political space is created for women (Bari, 2005).

In general, the issue of women's political participation is linked to the nature of politics, and particularly to the liberal democracy. History proves that democracy has been serving men way better than women. From the times of Ancient Greece to modern era of 21st century, political structure is built upon the dichotomy of public versus private and complete exclusion of women from the political structure. Throughout the history we get concrete indications that women have been kept outside of public sphere of politics which is evident in works of many famous political thinkers such as, Plato, Aristotle, John Lock, Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel, who consider women fit for domestic roles in private spheres. They also maintain the argument that women have no place in politics because they are suitable for caring roles as mothers and wives. The modern and ancient both democracies fail to identify women as equal citizens as their fellow men (Bari, 2005). Because of this, the normative political theory never considered private sphere as political and did not make efforts to explore the political aspect of private life. Moreover, this private versus public dichotomy remains as a building block for many types of world democracies. And since women were not identified as equal citizens, it led to absence of women and their concerns from both theory and practice (Bari, 2005).

For a sustainable democracy it is necessary that trends of mass democratic political culture are introduced and for that people need to realise importance of political participation (Mahmood , Sohail, Mushtaq , & Rizvi, 2014). Participation, according to (Janda, Berry, Goldman, Schildkraut,

& Manna, 2021) is defined as, "those actions of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government officials, or the policies of government or to support government and politics". According to UN Human Rights (2023), "Political and public participation is crucial to democratic governance, the rule of law, social inclusion and economic development, and the advancement of all human rights. Participation rights are important in empowering individuals and groups, which is essential to eliminate marginalization and discrimination. These rights are also inseparably linked to other human rights such as the rights to peaceful

assembly and association, freedom of opinion and expression and the rights to education and to information".

Additionally, (Mahmood , Sohail, Mushtaq , & Rizvi, 2014) further explain right to political participation as the public's right to affect public affairs in a state. There are many forms of political participation including party joining, competing as a candidate, participation in a demonstration and most notably voting in elections. Political participation provides individuals a platform in which they exercise their strength and can have opportunities to choose a leader who is deemed to have abilities to solve problems of people. It is therefore considered as one key determinant of empowerment.

Only when women are politically empowered will long-term well-being in the fields of culture, society, economy, and politics be attained (Harris, 2010). If women are fairly represented in politics and have full access to the decision-making process, they can be said to be fully empowered (Shah, Aziz, & Ahmad, 2015). When women are fully represented in the national and provincial legislatures and have unrestricted adult voting rights, this may be considered political empowerment. Women are considered individually empowered when they have the freedom to make decisions regarding their own affairs (Sohail, 2014).

Among many studies, those which focused individual behaviour concluded that socioeconomic factors primarily education and income are strong predictors of political participation in emerging democracies. Whereas, in macro-level studies, results indicate that developed countries will have higher participation due to the correlation between economic development and level of education as well as income (Mahmood , Sohail, Mushtaq , & Rizvi, 2014).

A study conducted in China by (Pang, Zeng, & Rozelle, 2013) that focused on the level and rate of participation in voting was varying and had a huge gap among females and males of the sample. The level of participation was linked to the level of knowledge about voting rights and voting process that ultimately influenced female voting behaviour.

While studying gender and political behaviour in Japan, (Steel, 2004) argues that there are profound structural gender differences mentioned by researchers in previous studies which exist in different cultural contexts that would lead us believe that

women and men vary in their political values and behaviour. Criticising these arguments, (Steel, 2004) states that these differences are very small, negligible because they are declining and inconsistent. These differences in political behaviour are rather due to participation of women and men in different social networks.

Considering the social networks that individuals are part of, Heath (2015) explains that the relationship between class position, class interests, and policy preferences is a crucial aspect of the political choice literature on class voting. In light of the fact that voters' views of their interests are influenced by their class standing, it follows that different social classes favour various redistributive political programmes. Thus, a political party's policy programme will determine how much the working class feels that their interests are represented by that party. Of course, policy representation is just one type of political representation, and it's possible that voters may respond to other, up until now unconsidered, political representational elements.

Referring to the barriers that restrict overall participation of women in politics, the UN Women and UNDP report (Kadribašić, Chiarenza, Čampara, & Mesihović, 2020), based on the study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted that structural barriers restrict women's political participation. The study concluded that investing in the bottom-up approach while combining it with top-down approach can be beneficial for gender inclusion in politics. Moreover, to harvest on existing results can amplify abovementioned approach.

The grant of suffrage to women through various historical movements served to enhance their status as active citizens within a nation-state. However, the exercise of this right, which constitutes an essential component of citizenship, is shaped by various factors. In the case of Pakistan, the complex social dynamics of the country necessitate a comprehensive examination of these influences, particularly with regards to women's rights and the right to vote. The impact of social forces on female suffrage in different regions of Pakistan has been analysed by several scholars, including Badshah, Rehman, & Muhammad (2018) and Sheikh, Bokhari, & Naseer (2015).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Hunza is located in the far north of the country where Aliabad is the centre and commercialized area. The area is known for its higher literacy rate in the region and its efforts to make the region more gender inclusive. Despite of these efforts there are

setbacks regarding female mobility in particular aspects which limit participation of women in political arena.

The culture embeds deep roots of patriarchy and female submission. The ultimate results of such cultural setting can be experienced in manifolds. Though the political arena welcomes males to participate as both voters and candidates, it does restrict the participation of women as only voters.

The reason being the integrity of families that are forced upon the movement of women, political arena is a big no for women which causes women to be unaware of their political rights and their rights as citizens. For a community determined to attain gender inclusivity this poses a big question on the absence of women in political scenarios.

1.2. Objectives

The study seeks to understand the underlying social forces for women's voting behaviour and political participation especially as voters. The specific objectives are:

1. Document perception of women regarding voting rights and freewill to choose a political representative.
2. Investigate associative aspect of social forces with that of female voting behaviour.
3. Analyse and identify barriers for active and substantive participation of women in political arena.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a conceptual structure used to understand, explain, or make predictions about a phenomenon. It consists of a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and principles that provide a foundation for analysing and interpreting data, guiding research and inquiry, and forming theories. The theoretical framework helps to organize and give meaning to the findings and observations of a study and provides a basis for future research.

Collins & Stockton, (2018) explains that the employment of a theory (or theories) in a study that both expresses the innermost beliefs of the researcher(s) and offers a clearly stated guidepost or lens for how the study will process new information is known as a theoretical framework. Three factors come together to build a theoretical framework:

1. prior knowledge and preconceived notions about complicated events; 2. the researcher's epistemological orientations; and 3. a lens and rigorously analytical methodology.

1.3.1. The Sociological Theory of Voting

The sociological theory of voting is a branch of political sociology that seeks to explain why and how individuals participate in elections and the processes that influence their voting behaviour. The theory draws on various social and psychological factors such as social class, education, race, gender, political attitudes, and group membership to explain why individuals vote the way they do. The theories of political socialization, the political culture, and the influence of political elites, parties and media are also considered in the sociological theory of voting. The electoral processes or the voting behaviour of individuals can be analysed with retrospect of different electoral models. These include sociological model, psychosocial model, and rational choice theory (Ahmad, 2011).

The *sociological model*, which is also known as School of Columbia, discusses the influence of social forces on voters. The voting behaviour according to this model is primarily shaped by an individual because it is an individual's cognition to make a choice (Shah, Ali, & Khan, 2020). Initially, the model argued that voting is an individual act, but later studies concluded that relationship between social groups to which individuals belong is the main determinant. The role of personal contacts during electoral choices suggests that voters" decisions are outcomes of group solidarity rather than individual act (Antunes, 2010). Moreover, the idea that media affects majorly during electoral processes is also contradicted that media has minimal influence whereas, social groups are decisive for group members.

The *party identification model*, also known as the School of Michigan, majorly focuses on party identification as the determinant of voting decision. It gives importance to partisanship because of an individual's similarity towards a particular group (Shah, Ali, & Khan, 2020). The act of voting is understood as expressive and not instrumental in party identification model. Voting in such case is an expression of loyalty towards a party that is deeply rooted in a person's behaviour (Harrop & Miller , 1987, pp. 130,131).

Lastly, the *rational choice theory*, also known as School of Rochester or Model of Economy, refers to different variables which include, rationality, choice, uncertainty, and information, as the important factors for voters" voting choices. The party identification model is an upshoot of social psychology which believes that an individual choice is shaped because of rational choices which are based on self-interests (Ahmad, 2011) (Shah, Ali, & Khan, 2020). In contrast to party identification model, this model posits that voters choose a candidate or the party that are closest to their interests, values and priorities. Voters rationally draw choices by analysing which party is the ideal one to attain their goals and expected benefits. Moreover, this model is also described as the „socialization model", because of the influence of family on individual"s partisanship (Harrop & Miller , 1987, pp. 130,131).

The above explained frameworks help to explain and understand the complexity of an individual"s voting behaviour when studied collectively. These models maintain differences to each other, but the fundamental similarity is the focus of all three on social structure. They all underline importance of social structure in shaping social behaviour (Wafula, 2014).

1.3.2. Operational Aspect of Theory

The key factors identified can be categorized into social, cultural, political, and personal. The social factors include, family relations, area residency of candidate, religious background, and social media. Cultural aspects include patriarchal structure of society and type of gender roles that are explained within cultures. Political factors include party preferences of individuals based on partisanship and family inclinations, as well as influence of federal government that individuals are likely to prefer party which is in power on federal government. Personal choices comprise of individuals understanding of civil rights and the sense of civic duty that an individual is required to vote for someone even if the voter has low expectations from government or political leader.

The influence of factors and relation among each other is demonstrated in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Operational Aspect Diagram
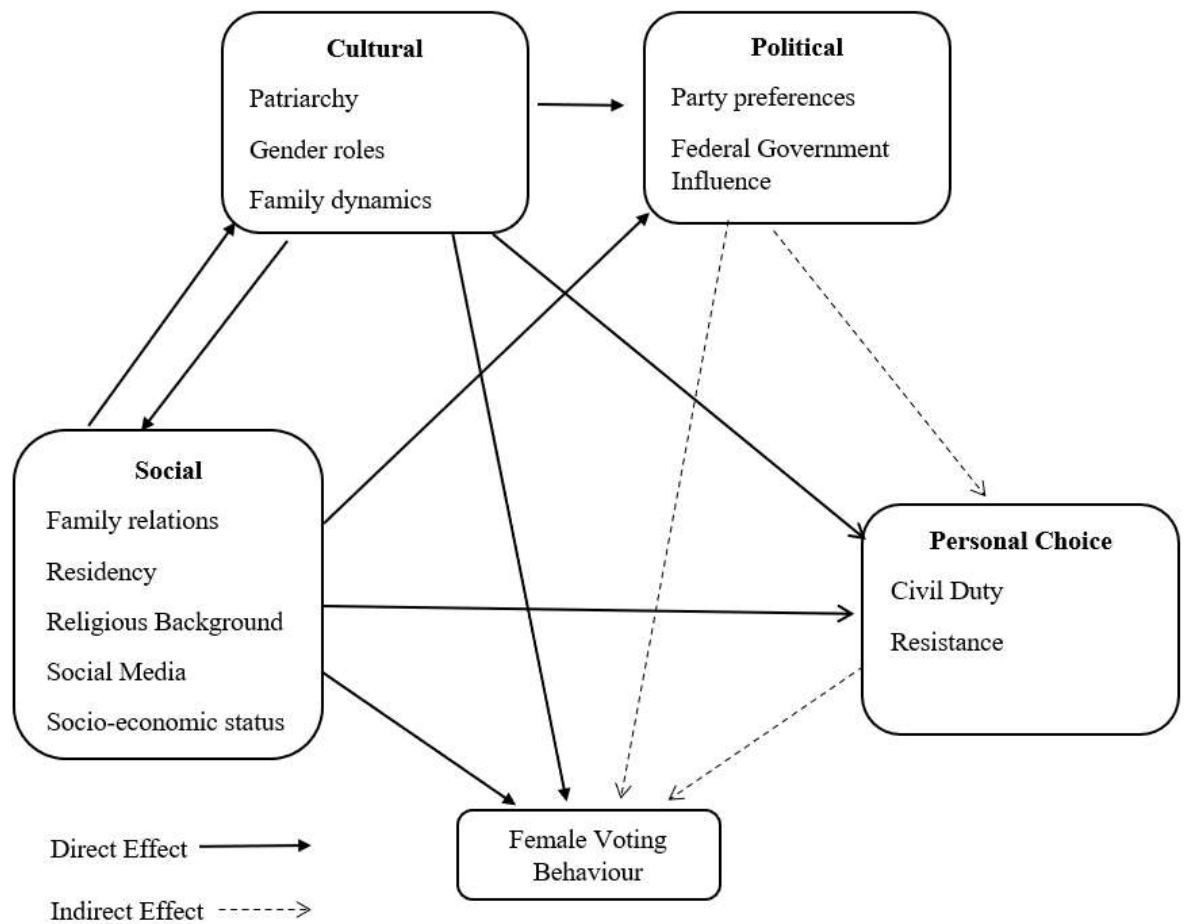
(Source: Researcher's own work)

The figure above illustrates direct and indirect influences on how women will exhibit their voting behaviour. To analyse overall voting behaviour of females, one need to analyse the relationships and influences that these identified factors have on each other.

The social, cultural, political and personal choice are different aspects which derive voting choices of women. The cultural and social factors directly influence female voting behaviour and are strong determinants of personal choice and party preferences. Since personal choices and party preferences are shaped by the influence of cultural and social factors, their effect on voting behaviour is indirect.

1.3.3. Conceptual Relationships

In this text, few theoretical models that have a strong correlation with the data are presented, along with their principal themes and proposed associations, to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the conceptual framework underlying the present study.

Table 1. Table of conceptual relationships

Models	Key Themes	Assessable variables	Proposed connection
Sociological model	Influence of social groups on voters" decision	Socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, race, area of residence	Patriarchy Family relations Religious background Residency Education
Party identification model	Partisanship Loyalty	Individuals identify themselves to a reference group which shapes their behaviour	Political inclination of families Family member who is party representative
Rational choice theory	Individual choice is shaped because of rational choices which are based on selfinterests	Variables which include, rationality, choice, information, values, benefits, interests.	Civil duty Expected benefits from candidate To favour federal government for future benefits

(Source: Researcher's work)

Above table shows socio-economic, political and personal indicators analysed to understand female voting behaviour. These are the factors that are directly linked to the primary data. Overall, these indicators are termed as social forces which are the focal point of the current study. The strong social cohesion in community increases the probability of decision making on the basis of group interests that could also lead to group party preferences and group choices.

1.4. Significance of the Study

In Hunza and its different regions the data on political participation of females as voters and the factors influencing their behaviour is fragmented. Such studies are conducted in other regions of Pakistan but Hunza and specifically regarding Aliabad is lacking in general scholarship. Therefore, the present study is intended to analyse the factors which influence female voting behaviour. The present study focuses on the

factors that majorly influence political decision making of women. As women of Aliabad are active participants in other areas of societal structure, their participation as voters in political structure also needs to be analysed. The present research provides a gateway to the reasons of the mere participation of women as voters and barriers of active participation of women in the politics.

Female participation in politics is relatively low in Aliabad Hunza. The contextual analysis of the community show that gender inequalities are present in some facets of community but the policies to respond do not exist. The study allows to identify barriers which restrict participation of women in politics and its long-term influences on the community. This will enable policy agencies to understand the level of awareness among females of community so that informed policies are curated while trying to mitigate such barriers. It presents a detailed case for governmental and nongovernmental organizations that aim to attain gender equality and development in the area while prioritizing evidence-based interventions for sustainability. It gives insights for the welfare agencies who advocate for rights of public and universal participation of people in democracy.

By documenting the actual narratives of locals, it provides a voice to the unheard stories and experiences of women during elections and their freewill of decision-making throughout their lives. This is helpful for commissions in the region to understand contexts and to the research about results to incorporate for further understanding of gender differences in election turnouts.

Although the ample amount of empirical evidence on voting behaviour in Pakistan is increasing, however, there still remains a considerable gap to test alternative factors in a new cultural context in order to expand the knowledge of subject matter. Hence, this research compares and identifies different factors that are salient in voting behaviour of women in Aliabad and consequences of these factors on political structure by using indigenous data. Thus, this research will not only study the relevancy of literature and variables identified in Aliabad context, it will also highlight and add to existing literature regarding female political participation and allow a paradigm for future studies in the area, enabling others to understand female autonomy in decision making and female agency in Aliabad Hunza.

1.5. Organization of the Study

The first chapter of this work opens with a brief introduction to voting and specifically female voting behaviour and current trends of research around the world. This provides an insight to what the research stands for and what kind of questions will be answered.

The second chapter provides details of literature and reviews it in the light of current studies. Different themes identified in previous works and their potential benefit for literature is discussed.

In the third chapter details the research methodology applicable in the research. Type of tools and techniques used to obtain data from field are explained and how these tools and techniques are made applicable for the particular research topic is discussed.

Fourth chapter of this document is area profile of the study locale. Area profile is divided into two categories, micro and macro profiling. The macro profile helps the readers to understand the social context of whole district comparing it to the larger context of Pakistan. The micro profile distinguishes particular and minute aspects and details of the respondents of the locale.

The later four chapters discusses themes generated from the primary data. The thematic analysis of collected data is analysed and explained in the context of Aliabad Hunza. In the fifth chapter perception of women regarding right to vote and political decision making discussed. The sixth explains experiences of females regarding their freewill to choose a political representative. The seventh chapter carries on the discussion and identifies social forces that determine voting behaviour of females in Aliabad Hunza. And lastly, the eighth chapter of the study discusses barriers that restrict active participation of female in political arena.

The last and final chapter of this document ends with the summary of the study and provides conclusion for the conducted study.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Conceptualization of the Key Concepts
2.1.1. Vote

Vote is civic duty that enables citizens of a state to choose people who represent them. Participation in voting process is responsibility of all who age 18 or above. Those who participate in voting process are called voters. Voters have legal right to make decisions about the country. Voting is founding pillar of democracy which is defined as rule of people by the people for the people. Vote, according to Cambridge dictionary (2023), is defined as, "the activity of choosing someone or something in a vote" and vote is defined as, "a choice that someone makes in an election or meeting especially by writing a mark on an official paper." Social force according to American Psychological Association (2023), is defined as "any global, systemic, and relatively powerful process that influences individuals in interpersonal settings, such as group pressure and normative influence".

2.1.2. Social Forces

Social forces are any human created ways of doing things that influence, pressure, or force people to behave, interact with others, and think in specified ways. Social forces are considered remote and impersonal because mostly people have no hand in creating them, nor do they know those who did. People can embrace social forces, be swept along or bypassed by them, and most importantly challenge them.

Social force can be understood with many examples such as the usage of the universal credit card to defer payment for products and services. This human-created invention became a "social force" that encouraged unprecedented numbers of people to spend money ahead of their earnings. While credit cards afforded those who could acquire them opportunities to delay paying for things they needed or wanted, it took special effort, discipline, and/or an advantaged position in life to resist using them (Sociology Guide, 2023).

Social force. Any effective urge or impulse that leads to social action. Specifically, a social force is a consensus on the part of a sufficient number of the members of society to bring about social action or social change of some sort. In the plural, the social forces are the typical basic drives, or motives, which lead to the fundamental

types of association. Any effective urge or impulse that leads to social action. Specifically, a social force is a consensus on the part of a sufficient number of the members of society to bring about social action or social change of some sort. In the plural, the social forces are the typical basic drives, or motives, which lead to the fundamental types of association and group relationship (Rummel, 1977).

2.1.3. Female Rights

Just like men, women are also entitled to human rights. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn an equal wage (Amnesty International, 2023).

2.1.4. Democracy

Democracy is a system of government in which state power is vested in the people, or the general population of a state. According to the United Nations, democracy "provides an environment that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the freely expressed will of people is exercised. Democracy is one of the universal core values and principles of the United Nations. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principle of holding periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage are some of the essential elements of democracy.

These subsequent human rights instruments covering the rights of specific parts of the population (e.g. women, indigenous peoples, minorities, persons with disabilities), are essential for democracy as they ensure access to information, freedom from fear, participation and equality and equity for all (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission, 2023).

2.2. Introduction

Voting represents a crucial area of inquiry in the discipline of political science, given its centrality to the manifestation of legitimate democratic authority. The act of casting a ballot constitutes the primary mechanism through which citizens select their representatives in government. In many cases, voting represents the most pivotal political action that individuals will engage in throughout their lifetime. Despite the availability of various alternative means of participating in the political process, such

as forming a political party, running for office, or signing a petition, voting remains the most prevalent method by which citizens participate in politics.

Given the fundamental position, prominence, and significance of voting in democratic societies, understanding the factors that shape voting behaviour has been a topic of ongoing research in political science. The exploration of how and why people vote sheds light on the mechanisms through which democratic processes function and provides valuable insights into the nature of democratic governance itself (Anderson & Stephenson, 2011, pp. 1,2).

Voting is the main component of political socialization in societies where liberal democracies are practiced (Azhar , Zain, & Asif, 2010). Democracy is a way through which the public masses of a state become active citizens rather than inactive subjects (Jost, 2006). According to Universal Declaration of Human Right (HRCP, 2008) voting is defined as, "the fundamental right of almost all citizens over the age of eighteen which ensures that the will of the people is preserved". An individual's preferences for a candidate and one particular political system as compared to others is expressed through voting. Hence, voting is also an expression of people's preferences (Blais, Gidengil, & Nevitte, 2004).

Voter behaviour during elections is a significant area of political science. Voting behaviour has recently gained popularity as a topic of political research among scholars and laypeople alike thanks to modern technologies (Catt, 1996). In fact, electoral politics is the area of social study that is both most fascinating to and easiest for those who are not social scientists to understand (Franklin, 1985). An avenue for figuring out how individuals choose who to vote for in elections is through the examination of voting behaviour (Catt, 1996). Although political scientists and sociologists analyse voting behaviour in different ways, the factors they uncover are strongly correlated. The socialist movements of the nineteenth century, according to Przeworski (1980) and Przeworski & Sprague (1986), were the primary influences on the development of the relationship between class and voting. The socio-scientific study of class voting is typically driven by an interest in testing the notion that class and electoral behaviour are directly related, as put forth by theorists and anti-social democratic activists (Azhar , Zain, & Asif, 2010).

Studies focusing on voting behaviour state seven most important types of voters which are based on their inspiration to vote. These classifications of voters include Party Loyal, Morality Seeking Voters, Supporter Seeking Voters, Legislation Minded Voters, Advance Seeking Voters, Biradari Bound, and Disbeliever Voters (Gallup, 2008). In contrast to this, study of (Leighley & Nagler, 1992) posits that demographic factors, gender, race, etc., have more influence and are more important than socioeconomic factors like education.

Literature details about female political participation. The influences on voting behaviour operate on multiple levels in a woman's social life and can be roughly summed up into macrolevel or structural influences and individual or microlevel characteristics that one needs to consider (Rombough & Keithly, 2010).

Pakistan and its people do not have much experience in politics because of the absence of elections for 23 years since independence. The country was without elections, and from 1970 to 2010, the nation came under the control of four regimes of dictatorship. Therefore, the election system has been changing from the very beginning and consequently, political system of Pakistan is still in its experimental stage. Since political part is an integral part of politics, it is not only about political life of people, but it is also deeply connected with social life too (Ahmed, 2004).

Previous studies are majorly focused on the ethnic and racial influences on voting behaviour as compared to other factors. These studies of the past few years identified that race and ethnicity majorly influence voting decisions and behaviour (Branton, 2004). Similarly, (Lednum, 2006) mentions that social class plays an important role in voting behaviour, nevertheless, other factors such as, ethnicity, regions issues, and party policies, are showing an increasing importance. This ever-increasing importance of race and ethnicity might be a result of racism. That is, voters supporting a candidate of same ethnic background or race assume that the candidate also shares same political views because race is a reliable and readily available cue for the population (Michelson, 2005). As far as motivation for voting behaviour is concerned, it appears that caste system is stronger than political loyalty these days (Shawar & Asim, 2012).

Women constitute more than half of the population, they also contribute to social and economic development of societies because of their multiple roles in productive and reproductive spheres. However, their participation is significantly low in formal

political structures and decision-making about the use of resources which are produced by both men and women. Around the globe, the representation of women in governments is 15%. Despite the contribution of different charters aiming for gender inclusivity in political arena such as Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, there are only 12 countries which have 33% of seats in parliaments (Bari, 2005).

As the exclusion of women from power structure is an increasing issue in current times, many signed up for the global commitment to reduce the gender imbalance in politics. Enhanced participation of women in governance and policy structures is a major step to overcome gender inequalities persistent in many societies (Bari, 2005).

2.3. Correlation with other factors

2.3.1. Vote and Gender

The World Economic Forums Gender Report 2021 indicated that Pakistan ranks 153rd out of 156 countries (World Economic Forum, 2021). Interestingly, the same report indicates that Pakistan has considerably better ranking in political empowerment index. The report recorded that Pakistan ranked 98th out of 156 countries. This provides a window for discussions regarding women˝s political empowerment and their increased political representation (Mohsin & Syed, 2021).

There are many feminist researches about gender and embodiment, particularly in South Asia, that basically provide a critique on the unequal gender relations, lack of mobility and female subjugation. For a time, woman of the Global South and particularly Muslim woman, has been the subject of discussion for many reductionist opinions concerned with gender, agency and freedom (Mohsin & Syed, 2021).

In the context of religious and post-colonial countries, such as Pakistan, within the political scenarios it is essential to maintain and perform socially coherent behaviours (Kandiyoti, 2016). Women who adhere to such cultural modesty and femininity codes are accepted and treated with respect, whereas, those who contrast to these dogmas are perceived as outsiders or others in a popular discourse (Kandiyoti, 2016) (Mohsin & Syed, 2021).

These socially coherent behaviour for women setups gender roles identifying what activities women should engage themselves. Studying the impact of gender roles on

women‟s participation in elections in Mozambique, Nyamuzuwe (2020) states that women‟s gender roles which include their family duties is identified to be one factor which limits engagement of women in electoral process. In the context of Kenya where females also spend majority of their time doing chores at home and doing agricultural activities, have little time to involve in electoral politics. Subsequently, this over-burdening because of gender roles results in low participation of women in electoral civic education and hence many women and especially rural women are left out.

Human voting conduct provides a window to understand the willingness of respondents. Sociologists have been focusing individual affiliations, their ethnic and social background as key factors of voting behaviour whereas, political scientists have maintained influence of party membership and voting behaviour. General population of Pakistan is usually unaware of the political system and therefore, do not know the true spirit of elections (Sheikh, Bokhari, & Naseer, 2015).

In research conducted by (Sheikh, Bokhari, & Naseer, 2015), the male respondents seemed to be more prone to party loyalty as compared to females. Among women, the tendency to follow spouses was higher in married women of middle-class and lower-class strata. Unmarried women were recorded as either uninterested in politics and followed family trends or their elders. The data stated that the only factor which influenced voting conduct of both men and women is ethnicity and caste affiliation or family political mindset. The decision announced by the family elder to vote for a certain candidate is decided for every family member.

The historic exclusion of women from political structures is the outcome of many structural, functional and personal factors that are different in every social context around the globe. Apart from these culture specific limitations, there is a generic issue of women in politics which needs to be addressed. It relates to the wider context of national and international politics, liberal democracy and development which makes it imperative to critically analyse these constructs and interpret gendered nature of democracy. Without such analysis it is impossible to address empowering environment for women participation in development and politics (Bari, 2005).

Before identifying key strategies to promote women participation and empowering environment, we need to get insights of structural regularities in societies where we

want to operationalize women‟s political participation. It is necessary to lessen the gap between shared values that are evident in national and international policies and practices (Bari, 2005). Gender disparities in socioeconomic achievement and situational limitations are the two main persistently discriminatory issues identified in Britain and Australia. The gender difference in these nations is explained by elements like women's heavier domestic duties and their various career experiences (Studlar, McAllister, & Hayes, 1998).

Although the gender gap has been debated since the beginning of political behaviour studies, it has only lately gained attention, particularly in analyses of mass behaviour in the United States. According to early research, men and women tended to vote mainly in the same direction, but when they did diverge, women consistently tended to be more conservative. This was attributed to a variety of social, structural, or contextual factors, including different early life experiences, women's stronger connections to religious influences through established churches, especially in Catholic countries and women's less extensive participation in the paid labour force (Studlar, McAllister, & Hayes, 1998).

2.3.2. Vote and Family

Many social scientists and specifically sociologists usually focus social and economic patterns that support political parties considering the correlations among class, profession, ethnicity, gender, age, family relations and vote. Whereas, political scientists tend to focus local issues, election campaigns, political parties‟ manifestos and political party leader. Nevertheless, political scientists and sociologists have same grounds which leads to overlap of analytical approaches in both of the disciplines (Shah, Ali, & Khan, 2020).

According to the social networks model presented by (Granovetter, 1973), family is a form of strong ties which influences behaviour of the members. Because of this family socialization and patterns of education, the socio-political tendencies of an individual in a family are defined and shaped. Therefore, family connections as a form of social network are a strong determinant of voting behaviour of people. In socio-political spheres, the most impactful entity is social networks, either virtual or real-world ones. These networks facilitate elections, bring political change and amplifies activism. Moreover, this assists in seeking information in political situations

increasing political effectiveness while enhancing political participation among populations (Shah, Ali, & Khan, 2020).

While these social networks are influential on women across cultures, many of the developing democracies around the globe have been documented where women population is less likely to vote as compared to men population (Giné & Mansuri, 2018). The hurdles faced by women while trying to take part in political activity are global and identified in many cultures that women encounter deprivation when they wish to become part of politics. This is based on the traditional belief that women are innately weak and they need a male supporter always by their side, and are therefore inappropriate for the political work demands (Latif, Usman , Kataria, & Abdullah, 2015).

Most of these studies do focus on women"s absence from political arena, but the barrier that restrict this participation are rarely considered and there is also lack of such studies which suggest ways to reduce these barriers. There are many factors and social forces that restrict the participation of women in political arena. In emerging democracies women face distinct barriers which include high cost of participation either because of mobility restrictions or due to gender stereotypes which does not support exercise of personal preferences, husbands may not want their wives to participate as voters or may control their voting decision, and lack of awareness or poor source of information about importance of voting, right to vote and voting process. Also, this lack of information among women population strengthens existing gender stereotypes leading to the disengagement of women from public life and spaces (Giné & Mansuri, 2018). Participation of female in political spheres is necessary because this participation might lead to weaken the judgemental perceptions about female credibility and to increase women"s engagement in public life to which they feel very distant (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

In social structure of Pakistan, caste plays an important role which directs the attitudes and behaviour of members. This caste system, persistent in the many cultures of Pakistan, is also part of our political culture. The political culture is made up of different components which are attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour that regulates the functioning of a certain political system (Ahmed & Naseem, 2011).

2.3.3. Patriarchy

In democratic societies, the major form of participation in political arena is voting (Shawar & Asim, 2012). The study conducted by Shah, Khan, & Khatak (2021), focuses and hypothesizes on patriarchy as an influencing social factor in female voting determinant. The study significantly draws that patriarchy is one of the dominant factors revolving around female choices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Other factors which restrict political participation of women are orthodox attitude of people, lack of education, Talibanization, misinterpretation of Pakhtunwali and seclusion (Purdah) (Khan, 2009).

The voting choices of women are mostly affected by the choices and wishes of the male household members of elders when women do vote. Women comprise half of the world's population, but they can rarely exercise their legal and political rights. They have always lagged when it comes to exercise of such rights. Considering this, suffrage movement in 20th century included women rights to political participation. In spite of these developments, women are still less likely to stand and compete for public offices even in developed countries with old democracies. Similarly, in developing democracies, women are also less likely to participate as voters or compete as candidates. Their independency of candidate choice is also less likely when they actually do participate as voters. Because of these nuances, women are more prone to vote according to the preferences of her caste, clan, or the household head (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and Council of Europe, 2002). Studies conducted by (Zia & Bari, 1999) and (Bari, 2005), reports one significant difficulty faced by females while voting is that they are often not registered as voters because of the opposition from male family heads which results in low female turnout.

2.3.4. Gender Inequality and Unequal Power Relations in Marriage

Marriages that are based on unequal power relations result in right's violation of spouse. In many cases, woman's right to vote is violated because of her husband's decisions. Such cases are found in rural areas of many developing countries. As is the case of Kenya, where gender inequality is caused due to unequal power distribution in relations. Most of the decisions are made by husband, and voting choices are also determined by the husband. He decides when his wife will vote, to whom she will

vote and when she will participate in election campaign rallies. Women cannot go against their husbands because there are high chances of them losing their marriages. Therefore, to protect their marriage they give up their choice to vote. It is also identified in studies that the husbands usually ask their wife who they voted for upon their return from polling stations. This is to conform whether they have followed given instructions by men (Nyamuzuwe, 2020).

2.3.5. Vote and Awareness

Areas where literacy rate is low and voter education programs are less effective, such areas have high voter absence particularly for women. Rural areas, where women majority is illiterate, they tend to not value vote or elections. As compared to this, studies identify that voter registration in urban spaces is higher due to increased awareness of citizen's rights. Comparative studies of young and elder women show that young women tend to vote when it is their first time. This is because that young ones feel it as an exciting experience and also because of the hopes and expectations for change that is promised to them (Nyamuzuwe, 2020).

Similarly, study conducted in China to identify the relation of knowledge about voting rights and elections turnout among women concluded that the lack of awareness among women about vote and voting process can result as a barrier for high rates of voters whereas, information and knowledge about the processes can lead to confidence and realization of civic duty to exercise voting rights (Pang, Zeng, & Rozelle, 2013).

2.3.6. Class Voting

The methods in which parties create social divisions have received attention in recent class voting studies. The "old dogma," according to which social progress had lessened the uniqueness of social classes, had been thoroughly debunked, and the new generation of political choice literature now links changes in parties' policy platforms to changes in class voting dynamics across time. In other words, class status is less likely to dramatically influence party preference if there is no party strategy that highlights class distinctions in interests (Heath, 2015).

Heath, (2015) significantly provides stronger evidence for social representation impacts on class voting by concentrating on the contrast between policy representation and social representation. This demonstrates that voters are maybe not

as instrumental or individualistic in their voting decisions as is commonly suggested in the policy representation literature, and that the social cues that parties give to voters are important. In some aspects, the idea of social or descriptive representation is really much more similar to the original concept of group voting that serves as the foundation for the concept of social cleavages. Voters may believe that members of their own social group are more likely to represent their interests, but there may be an expressive component to this belief as well. Simply having members of one's own social group in positions of political authority may make voters feel more connected to and better represented by the party in question. In fact, there is a wealth of data from the social psychology literature to support the possibility that such processes exist and may be further investigated (Heath, 2015).

2.3.7. Conclusion

Historical movements provided females the right to vote which then strengthened their status of an active citizen in a country. However, this right which suffices as one‟s right to claim the citizenship is influenced by many factors. Countries like Pakistan have critical social dynamics which makes it important to study different aspects of it. In term of female rights and specifically their right to vote, it is influenced by social forces which are indentified through the works of many, such as Badshah, Rehman, & Muhammad (2018) and Sheikh, Bokhari, & Naseer (2015) in different regions of Pakistan. The studies elaborately explain voting behaviour and indicates different types of social and political determinants. This prompts us to study these dynamics in the area of Hunza and especially Aliabad, which is missing in literature. The organizational change in political dynamics of Hunza occurred around 50 years ago, when the status of region from being an independent princely state ruled by *Tham* was annulled and was allied with the federal government of the country. These dynamic changes and citizen rights conferred by the state are required to be answered regarding an area that functions as the political hub, so that the holistic understanding of Hunza in reference to Pakistani context is achieved.

3. Research Methodology

The current study focuses on a qualitative understanding of female voting behaviour in Aliabad Hunza. In order to understand the female narrative of political choices and to document those narratives, qualitative research is carried out. The nature of the study directed towards results generated in themes, these results are discussed through thematical analysis to create arguments which highlight the relation and influence of social forces on female voting behaviour.

The data used for this study is collected by multiple research tools, primarily through in-depth interview guided by interview guides, field notes, observation, audio recordings and focus group discussions (FGDs).

The subsequent topics detail research design through brief explanations of different techniques and tools operationalized for the study. Responses of participants are collected through in-depth interviews, observation and recordings, while keeping the consent of the participant a foremost priority. Participants involved in this study are the females of Aliabad Hunza who are selected through non-probability sampling. A census of the area was obtained which led to draw categorizations such as, age, profession, marital status, education, and family structure.

Techniques and tools which are applicable for the current study are briefly explained hereafter:

3.1. Techniques

Techniques facilitates the research in creating favourable conditions for the research to be carried out. Some of the techniques applicable in this research are discussed further.

3.1.1. Rapport Building

According to American Psychological Association, rapport building is defined as, "a warm, relaxed relationship of mutual understanding, acceptance, and sympathetic compatibility between or among individuals" (American Psychological Association, 2022).

Rapport building is the very first and crucial step of the research. It involves wining the trust of people. It is necessary for the matter of authentic data. To ensure good

rapport with the participants multiple field visitations are carried out. This involved visitations in whole area for completion of census form during which consent to participate in research was ensured. Moreover, researcher was introduced to the community and an overview of the research was discussed with every individual who participated in the census form survey.

The second visitation involved meeting the selected candidates, so that the interviews can be scheduled according to the likeness and availability of the participant. This helped with further involvement of researcher in the community. After conducting interviews, the participants were contacted via phone calls and key informants for their availability to participate in focus groups discussions.

One major factor which ensured a strong rapport between researcher and participants is the introduction of researcher through a community member who is well-known in the area and possess some kind of a position in the community. Volunteer network is strong in Aliabad community, therefore, volunteer personnel that is women volunteer captain, supported and helped with introduction of researcher in different neighbourhoods *(Mohallahs)*.

One major factor which helped to build a strong rapport among candidates is similar language background. Language barrier is eliminated since both researcher and participants speak same language.

3.1.2. Key Informants

According to (Payne & Payne, 2004), key informants are personals from the research local who have special positions in locale which allows them to have knowledge about others and happenings of an area, that is not known to others in an area. These are individuals who are valuable source of information by providing details of indigenous knowledge to the researcher.

In order to get access to a locale, knowledge, and continual input during the collection of data for interpretation, researchers select informants early on in the study process. Informants are persons who have cultivated ties with others from inside a culture, have lived there for a while, and have knowledge of what other members may think, feel, and believe. If chosen based on the aforementioned selection criteria, informants should be well-versed in organisational procedures, culture, and environment. Insiders of an organisation or gatekeepers are other names for informants (Springer, 2017).

Human nature is a complex phenomenon to learn and requires multiple tools to provide a holistic idea. To make the research explicit and to maintain the authenticity of local narratives, multiple key informants are selected in different neighbourhoods. The selection criteria for key informant for the study is based on the community participation and personal relations of the person within the community. Key informants enabled the research to be inclusive and also provided a whole picture of women agency in the area, since it is submissive in political arena causing a huge gap of female's knowledge of the political structure. These restrictions cause absence of women working with political parties as agents or campaigners. To deal with such nuances, multiple key informants for a detailed closure of community.

Selected key informants belong to different social positions and are affiliated with different women organizations. One of the major institutes that mobilizes women in area is the Volunteer Organization. One key informant selected is part of this organization serving in the position of women volunteer captain in a mohallah. The second institute is the Girl Guides Association in which usually young females are associated. The second key informant selected in this research is part of this organization serving as a girl guides leader. The third organization is the Women *Tanzeem,* that works in financial matters of women. The third key informant selected is the head of the *Tanzeem* of one mohallah. Since these organizations are linked to every single woman of the area, the selected key informants are fully informed about the happenings of region. They know what kind of activities are happening for women in the region and where do women face major issues.

3.1.3. Sampling

Sampling is a technique used to draw a smaller population that is representative of a larger population. Sampling is used to narrow down population size in order to perform an effective study and to overcome time constraints. Aliabad is large area representing more than 1000 households. Since it is difficult to include a large population in the data collection, the current research is based on total of 28 of participants selected from different household. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which under certain categorizations i.e. age, profession, etc. have been used for the selection of respondents. As the research focuses experiences of women, the diversity could be found from different socio-economic backgrounds. To achieve

this purpose sampling is used to make the sample size more inclusive of general population and that the results could be generalized on the larger population of Aliabad.

3.1.3.1. Sample Size

Sample is the main element of the research which contributes to the outcome of the research. The stories provided by the sample are the ultimate results therefore, important for research design. The current study uses census form to get a demographic overview of the population. Based on census form, participants are selected on basis of the categories which are identified as, education level, marital status, profession, family, family structure, and religious background. The sample size that is extracted from the population is 28 through quota sampling technique. Keeping the diversity is the significant factor, the selected candidates are representative of the categories identified ensuring diversity in research sample.

3.1.4. Observation

The APA dictionary explains observation as, "the careful, close examination of an object, process, or other phenomenon for the purpose of collecting data about it or drawing conclusions" (American Psychological Association, 2023).

During research there are times when respondents give a biased information which challenges the authenticity of results. In order to overcome such biasness, researcher uses method of observation to closely look at situation and drive an unbiased information by analysing acts and events in natural settings. The change in behaviour and attitudes as well as responses of participants during multiple talking sessions are noted down to get insights about how an individual act in different scenarios. This helps to validate data and the filtration from misinterpreted or false data.

3.2. Tools

Tools according to (Ebrahim, 2016) are defined as the vehicles that facilitate research and its related activities. These enable researchers to collect data directly from a natural situation. These allow the researcher to organize, analyse and visualise research outputs. Tools that are applicable to current study are discussed hereafter.

3.2.1. Interview Guide

The information that researchers cover during interviews is summarised in interview guides. At one extreme, they may give relatively few instructions, which would result in interviews that are less organised (Given L. M., 2008).

Interview guide is prepared prior to conducting interviews to make sure that different aspects of the study are highlighted. These questions address research prompts and helps in probing during interviews.

3.2.2. In-depth interviews

The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods defines that, "in-depth interviews are interviews in which participants are encouraged and prompted to talk in depth about the topic under investigation without the researcher's use of predetermined, focused, short-answer questions" (Given L. M., In-Depth Interview, 2008). B2B international discusses that, "an in-depth interview is a loosely structured interview. It allows freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore additional points and change direction, if necessary" (B2B International a gyro: company, 2023).

In-depth interviews are carried out to collect data in which open ended questions are asked. These enabled the respondents to give an in-depth information and discuss their point of view regarding every research question. The open-ended questions are asked based on the interview guide prepared prior to the field work so that the objectives of the study are comprehensively addressed. To get to the bottom of the reasons and responses, probing is used in order to understand the perceptions and concepts in the locale.

3.2.3. Probing

Probing is a technique used by interviewers to produce further explanation from respondents. This technique is used in both individual or group interviews and focus groups. Probing helps to acquire detailed information about experiences, thoughts, and feelings of participants on a particular topic. This involves follow-up questions or requesting clarification on the initial responses. In qualitative research probing proves to be very influential to enhance the richness of data but the overuse of this technique

can lead to a decline in the validity of data because constant probing can cause the respondent to feel pressured and uncomfortable (Given, 2008).

During interviews and focus groups probing is used to get into details of respondents" stories to understand the underlying meaning of respondents" behaviour. At times when the respondents felt reluctant because they thought they are not educated enough, encouragment tactic is used to make respondent comfortable and to let them know that every single word shared holds great importance. Respondents are requested at time to know why they acted the way they did or how they decide to make their decision. This helped to gather responses and individual stories that participants remembered to share while discussing their overall experiences.

3.2.4. Recording

"The recording method of sound (typically speech) for the purposes of data collection", a definition explained by SAGE in research methods (Bloor & Wood, 2006). In addition to this, according to The Association for Qualitative Research, the recording is explained as, "the recording of participants' contributions to research in audio and visual media" (The Association for Qualitative Research: The hub qualitative thinking, 2018).

After acquiring consent from participants, the responses are audio recorded. This enabled the researcher to draw research result without missing out a single point while doing the analysis. At times when consent is not provided for recordings, notes are taken by the research in order keep intact research ethics and to maintain trust relationship between researcher and participant.

3.2.5. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The relationship between decision-making and socio-cultural forces is a crucial one. To explore this relationship, current study uses multiple tools for an in-depth exploration. Unlike interviews, focus group discussions are not one to one talk, rather it is a way through which researcher initiates a discussion among participants (O. Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). Researchers remains passive while encouraging participants to carry out the discussion among themselves.

Two focused groups discussions are carried out in the current research at different occasions considering the availability of participants. The idea behind conducting FDGs is verification of collected data. After 28 in-depth interviews, the saturation

points in data required examination of the data through another tool. Since human behavior is complex and there are many layers to it, multiple methods are required to uncover narratives that are true to the selected population. FGDs aids to navigate the collected data through discussions among participants and key informants. Focus groups are carried out with key informants and participants. First focus group included 8 participants from three mohallas and the second focus group included participants from remaining three mohallas with a total of 7 participants in each FGD. FGDs are also recorded after ensuring consent from each participant.

3.2.6. Field Notes

The qualitative tool known as field notes is most frequently applied in ethnography. Field notes, which are written observations made while or just after participant observations in the field, are important for comprehending the phenomena which participants face. Scratch notes, notebooks, and diaries are often paired with field notes. They are a type of data collection that may be used alone for analysis or in conjunction with focus groups and interviews. A researcher's observational experience in a particular area or environment is documented in field notes. To assist the researcher immerse themselves in the setting under observation, documents like written notes, reports, and items from the environment, including images, videos, and brochures, can all be employed (Tenzek, 2017).

Field notes are taken during multiple visits in the field. Since, it is not humanly possible to fully immerse in a conversation and constantly take detailed notes, therefore, field notes are used which include writing down key aspects observed during visits and interviews. After the visit, detailed observation is written to make sure that the details are not left out.

3.3. Limitations

The selection of respondents is a crucial aspect in the research. The current study is based on 28 in-depth interviews which cannot be generalized on a larger population. The responses obtained are not the generic understanding of locale but are individual responses and not explanatory of social structure, rather sometimes defensive arguments regarding male behaviour and attitude towards women participation in politics. Therefore, their responses cannot be treated as explanations and insights about barriers that hinder women political participation. Furthermore, no electoral

activity happened during the data collection which restricted researcher to observe the behaviour of participants in the electoral setting. Lastly, the respondents who are part of this study belong to one specific religious background therefore, the results cannot be generalized to general population.

4. Area Profile
4.1. Macro Profile: District Hunza

Gilgit-Baltistan is in the northern parts of Pakistan initially known as Northern Areas. Hunza is part of Gilgit division, originally part of Hunza-Nagar district. In 2015 Hunza district was established by dividing Hunza and Nagar regions.

4.1.1. Historical background

Hunza was known as *Hunukushal* in pre-historic times, which was later shortened to *Hunzu* by the natives. The history of Hunza goes beyond the time of Huns of China but the name *Hunukushal* indicates towards the Huns settlers as *Hunukushal* literally means village of the Huns.

Hunza was one of the princely states which shared its borders with China and Pamir. The capital of the state was Baltit, an armed fortress to protect the state, which is now known as Karimabad. Hunza remained an independent state for more than 900 years. After British came to subcontinent, they gained power over Hunza between 1889-1892 through military engagement. The ruler of the time in Hunza, Mir Safdar Ali Khan fled to China to seek political asylum. The British appointed Mir Nazeem Khan as the new *Tham* or *Mir* of Hunza under the rule of British Government. The state of Hunza remained an independent state after independence of Pakistan and was ruled by *Mirs* until 1974, when president of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, dissolved its independent status and annulled the rule of *Mirs*. It is now a part of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and is under direct influence of federal government (Travel and Culture, 2023).

4.1.2. Geography

Hunza is mainly divided into three regions, Upper, Central and Lower. The valley is connected to the rest of the country through Karakoram Highway which was known as The Silk Road in earlier times. Hunza is located amongst the Karakoram Range, one of the longest three mountainous ranges in the world. It is approximately hundred miles long and two miles wide. The area is connected to the rest of the country through Karakoram Highway (KKH). The road connects Islamabad to Pakistan-China border at the Khunjarab Pass.

Figure 2. Geographical Location of Hunza

(Source: Google Maps)

Figure3. Map of Hunza
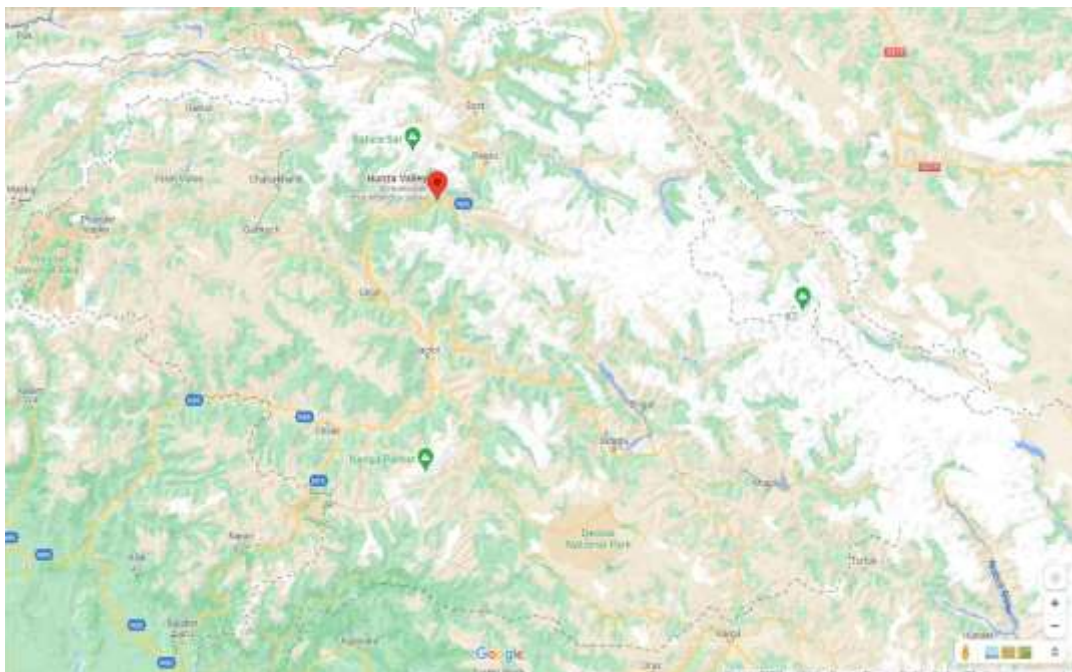
(Source: Google Maps)

4.1.3. Climate

Hunza has a moderate weather throughout the year, with temperatures rising to 25 degrees Celsius in summers and dropping as low as to 0 degree Celsius in winters. Throughout the year all 4 seasons are experienced in Hunza. The weather is cold for majority of the time and warmer temperatures are experienced in only June and July. Due to harsh weather conditions crops are grown once and sometimes twice yearly.

4.1.4. Languages

Hunza is home to three ethnic groups with their distinctive languages.

- The Lower Hunza stretching from Khizerabad to Nasirabad commonly known as *Shinaki* as the area is *Shina* speaking.
- The Central Hunza includes area from Murtazabad to Ahmedabad is majority *Burushaski* speaking and hence the inhabitants are known as *Burusho*.
- The Upper Hunza, areas from Shishkat to Khunjarab, is mainly *Wakhi* speaking, and the natives are also known as *Wakhi*.

4.1.5. Religion

People of Hunza are Muslims who belong to three specific religious groups. Majority of people are Ismaili, while other sectarian groups, Shias and Sunnis, comprise minor percentages particularly in central Hunza. Villages of Ganish and Murtazabad have higher percentage of Shia natives.

4.1.6. Occupations

Hunza has remained an agrarian community for the longest time. These practices are still exercised in the community. Development has introduced so many occupations among which teaching is opted by several people. Tourism being another integral source of income, Hunza is flourishing in business sector. Tourism and hospitality business has mushroomed in the recent years. Small businesses have been introduced to attract tourist from across the globe. Hence, business is the occupation opted by majority proportions.

4.1.7. Education

Literacy percentages have risen in recent times regardless of gender. The trend of providing education to young generation has increased after 1960s and currently the area's literacy rate is recorded as higher than 95% which is one of the highest figures

in the country. Both public and private educational institutions are functional in the regions which include many schools, colleges and a university. Gender disparities in education have lessened as compared to before. Women are encouraged to get university level education. The rising trend has opened different ventures for both men and women are seen across different platforms, both national and international.

4.1.8. Food Patterns

Hunza has been known for its healthy and organic food over the years. The people of Hunza have unique meals and are important part of their daily routine. People in region take five meals a day. The day starts with breakfast which is known as *"Subah mo chai"* in the morning. The breakfast includes local butter, *Arzoq* (Deep fried bread), *Khamali* (Roti) and *Fitti* (Baked bread). After morning tea, the locals take another meal around 10 or 11 (brunch), which includes a cup of tea and something light. From noon till afternoon, people take third meal of the day (Lunch). The evening tea is a necessary part of peoples" appetite and is deeply enjoyed by many after hectic days of work and labour. The day ends with the dinner, which includes full course meal. Items served in lunch and dinner varies from local dishes of Hunza to traditional dishes of Pakistan.

Additionally, Hunza culture has a very distinctive aspect of food patterns. Hunza has different life event specific foods. In a death situation locals prepare „*Harisa*" and in wedding events locals make „*Sharbat*". Other local foods which are purely organic include, *Mulida, Giyalin, Burus xy Berikuz, Burus Shapic, Diram Fitti* and *Hoi lo Garma*.

Since winter season has harsh weathers, people tend to store different fruits and vegetables for harsh weather. Fruits including apricots, walnuts, almonds, apples and mulberries are dried in the summers and are consumed in winters.

4.1.9. Dress Patterns

The dress pattern in Hunza is shalwar kameez for both male and female. One feature that stands out in both female and male is the local cap. The traditional caps worn by men and women are called *"Farxin"* and *"Iraaghi"* respectively. The winter attire of the region includes woollen coats traditionally known as „*Shuqa*", which is rarely worn by elders in cold seasons. Moreover, the current dress patterns are quite different

from the ones in the past. The traditional footwear called „*Hbocho*", made of leather are not used anymore.

4.1.10. Family Patterns

Hunza stands on the principles of togetherness and brotherhood like any other indigenous community. These principles are reflected in its culture and can be witnessed through how people live together. The collective culture impacts how people live together. A joint family system is practiced where 2 to 3 generations live together. Everything that a family owns is shared among every individual.

4.1.11. Marriage Patterns

Practice of endogamy was very usual in the past, but this has been replaced by exogamy in the modern times. The changes are due to many reasons, one of which is change in the social organization of the area. People tend to marry in other families to develop relations among each other and marriage helps to build these relations.

4.1.12. Culture, Customs and Traditions

Celebration of several traditional and religious events is a big part of Hunza culture. Along with

Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul- Fitr, Salgirahs are celebrated throughout the year. The traditional events include, *Ginani, Bo fao, Thumshaling* and *Novroz. Novroz* is celebrated on 21st of March which means new year. The area's historical connection with Central Asia is eminent in celebration of *Novroz* which is basically new year in Central Asian traditional calendar. *Bo Fao* literally means sowing of seeds, traditionally celebrated in the month of February signifying the start of new crops and an act of gratitude towards mother nature. *Ginani* is celebrated in the month of June to celebrate new harvests of bthe year. On 21st of December, on the longest night of the year, people gather in late hours to lit pyres which is a symbolic representation to reminisce the elimination of evil spirit *Shiri Badat.* These events hold precious importance for the people of Hunza and are celebrated with zeal and zest.

4.1.13. Tourist points/ Recreation spots

Hunza is home to many high-altitude peaks and glaciers which are famous around the globe. These attract international tourists for exploration of glacier passes and ski adventures in the months of April and May. The valley is also known for cultural

heritage spots which are preserved and transformed into attraction points. These include, Baltit Fort, Altit Fort, Inscriptions in

Haldeiskish, and Ganish Old Valley. Moreover, the recent incident of Attabad lead to the formation of lake known as Attabad Lake, where water sports is a huge attraction in summers and winter sports, like ice hockey, in winters.

4.1.14. Political Organization

Hunza is the part of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region which was once a princely state before its accession to Pakistan government in 1948. The constitutional status is in limbo since its accession because of its historical linage to Jammu and Kashmir territory dispute between Pakistan and India. The government of GB is directly administered to federal government and its administrative setup is totally different from that of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2009 the region was provided with GB empowerment and self-governance order by the then ruling government. As well as the name „Gilgit-Baltistan" was given which was previously known as Northern Areas. The talks of its legal constitutional status and conferral of "provisional provincial" status were presented in 2015, which requires a two third approval of the parliament. If the constitutional status is awarded, G-B will be the fifth province of country and will have constitutional rights like other four provinces (Noor, 2022).

4.1.15. Census Report and Elections 2020

According to the census report of 2017 obtained from the local administrative office, the total population is 51950. The total number of households recorded in the report is 8241. Total number of males recorded is 25724 and females is 25648. In the elections of 2020, the total number of votes that were cast was 43,603. Among the total votes 22,328 were male votes and 21,275 were female votes.

4.2. Respondent Profile: Aliabad Hunza

4.2.1. General Introduction of the Locale

The far north part of Pakistan is a mountainous region, home to several highest peaks of the world.

Aliabad is the urban area located in the centre of central Hunza elevated at the height of 2,206 m. Aliabad is also the commercial area in the district of Hunza. The area has developed over the years and several facilities have been introduced in the locale.

Aliabad is the centre of all political activities and is the hub of governmental institutes.

Figure 4. Map of Aliabad

(Source: Google Maps)

People living in Aliabad belong to the larger traditional society of Hunza with a culture diverse from all cultures of the world. The major practices witnessed among the people are agriculture related. Recent changes have resulted in rapid urbanization and development of the area. Moreover, tourism has become an essential part of local economy therefore many locals are working in hospitality business. Throughout the year both local and international tourists visit the place causing an increase in activities related to tourism and hotel businesses.

Figure 5. Aerial view of Aliabad from upper water channel

(Source: Field)

Aliabad is part of central Hunza and the language is predominantly *Burushaski* while a minority of people speak multiple languages. Aliabad is the hub of urbanized areas in the district; therefore, it attracts people from different regions of the northern parts of Pakistan. Because of the amenities and other career opportunities, settlers from Khyber Pakhtun Khuwa, Chitral, Ghizer, and Baltistan add to the diversity of the place. Moreover, people from lower and upper Hunza also settle for brief and longer periods. Considering this influx of people from other regions, languages spoken in minorities include, Pashtu, Khuwar, Balti, Shina and Wakhi.

4.2.2. Demographic Information of Respondents

This section explains different aspects of respondent on the basis of which the sampling for the sample size is carried out. This provides information about how different aspects of people influence their perception about different phenomenon.

4.2.3. Age of Respondents

For the current study a total of 28 respondents are selected from different age groups. The age group varies from 20 to 70 who belong to different mohallahs in Aliabad.

Table 2. Age of Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20- 30	7	25%
31-40	9	32%
41-50	6	21%
51-60	3	11%
61-70	3	11%

(Source: Field data)

The respondents selected from different age groups help to overcome generalizations made from a particular age group. Age contributes to the experiences of individuals therefore selecting respondents from multiple age groups provide a comparative explanation of individual experiences in social setups that have changed overtime.

4.2.4. Education

Education level determines the kind of knowledge one is exposed to, and kind of personalities individuals develop based on this knowledge. There is substantive difference in perception of those educated and illiterate and the way they analyse social happenings.

Table 3. Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	7	25%
Primary	1	4%

Secondary	2	7%
Matric	4	14%
Intermediate	2	7%
Graduate	3	11%
Masters	9	32%

(Source: Field data)

Data presented above shows educational level of the respondents. Almost every young female has graduation level education whereas, old women are mostly illiterate or have primary level education. Importance of education for women has gradually changed since people tend to provide education to their daughters more than the sons. Times of female learning household activities have long and are seen very active in academic field.

4.2.5. Marital Status

Sample size is divided into three categories, married, single and widow. These categories are made because of the differences in responsibilities and duties of married and single women that the culture confers. Married and single category improves the sample representation by incorporating diversity of respondents" social networks and comparative experiences of before and after marriage. A third category is also identified, that is widow, because elder women play important role as household heads in cases where the male family head is deceased. This is shown in the table below.

Table 4. Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	17	61%

Single	9	32%
Widow	2	7%

Of the total sample size, 61% are married. Women who voted more than once, one before marriage and one after marriage, are selected to analyse differences in their experiences. Widow women have unique experiences if they are elders in a family because then they will be family heads. Decision making of women as a household heads give unique perspective to the study.

4.2.6. Occupation

Based on the collected data, three major professions are identified. These include respondents working as teachers, housewives, and health worker. Other occupations included freelancing and small enterprise ownerships. Few of the respondents are also students. Most of the respondents are housewives, both educated and uneducated, meaning that family unit holds the utmost importance in a woman''s lives. Women who were working before becoming mothers but later chose to be housewives also indicate gender responsibilities that are associated to women in cultures.

Table 5. Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Teacher	5	18%
Housewife	15	54%
Health worker	2	7%
Other	6	21%

Additionally, apart from these three occupations, women are also working as freelancers and are also small enterprise owners, as well as few students are also

selected in the current study. After housewife, women usually opt for teaching occupation because of the availability of opportunities in the area. This could be because of the growing number of educational institutes in the area. This enables women to take a career path which does not affect their family responsibilities.

4.2.7. Family Background (Roam)

The major four families residing in Aliabad and respondents" information regarding their family background is provided below.

Table 6. Family of Respondents

Family (Roam)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Burong	7	25%
Diramting	9	33%
Khurutuz	6	21%
Barataling	6	21%

(Source: Field data)

The family norms are not much contrasting among these families. These are sometimes referred as the main tribes of Hunza. Respondents belonged to Diramting family are 33% which comparatively higher because of the larger number of Dirmating households as compared to other three families. Family systems and organizations is similar across all families. There is one representative of each family who oversees all matters within family. This representative is called *Numberdaar* who is responsible for the mitigation of any kind of conflict that may occur within family or among families. Selected respondents belong to any one of the subunits of these four families in Aliabad.

4.2.7. Family Structure

Family structure in Aliabad is either joint, combined family system or nuclear or singular family system. Due to tribal system people lived in joint families in earlier times which is no

w rapidly changing.

Table 7. Family Structure of Respondents

Family Structure	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Joint	11	39%
Nuclear	17	61%

(Source: Field data)

Above table shows that 61% belonged to nuclear family system because, the cultural setup of Aliabad is changing from collectivistic to individualistic culture. People prefer nuclear families where mother, father or both decide to live with one of their children or grandchildren. This changes family dynamics because people belonging to same family will have different authority figures. In a family where three or more generations live together, the elder will be the authoritative figure most of the time. Whereas, families which are nuclear, the authority figure will be the father most of the time.

4.2.8. Mobility of Women

Women are part of many local organizations. These include Local support organizations (LSOs), Volunteer System and *Tanzeem.* Women are also working in both government and private sector and in national and international organizations. The social organization allows women to participate in all aspects, social, cultural, economy, health, and religion. Women can freely access market spaces and all the facilities that are available in the community. Women are free to get education depending on the financial stability of the family. Females are increasingly participating in new ventures like, businesses, hoteling, mountaineering and other sports. Few are also seen as politically active or who strive to become part of politics but a large population community is still unaware of the basic ideas of the political domain. Female are not encouraged to become part of politics as much as they are encouraged to become part of other aspects.

4.2.9. Census Report and 2020 Elections Turnout of Females

According to the census report of 2017, the total number of households is 1001. The total population of the area is 6446 among which 3240 are male and 3206 are female. In the elections of 2020, a total of 4928 votes were cast. 2486 were male voters and 2442 were female voters. The record shows that no single vote was spoiled. Party winner in Aliabad was Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP).

5. Perception of Women Regarding Right to Vote and Political Decision Making

The current chapter analyses collected data through thematic analysis. Different themes are generated so that different aspects of data are documented in detail providing an in-depth understanding of situation and real-world experiences of respondents. These themes help us to answer our research questions and directs our study for a comprehensive detail of a particular locale.

The indigenous knowledge is important for the type of studies aimed towards understanding of cultural nuances and detailed anthropological reflections. The subject matter of Anthropology also gives importance to local knowledge and the studies conducted under the umbrella of Anthropology are qualitative in nature. The descriptive nature of research compels one to highlight what the cultural bearers believe to be true.

Women and their perception of vote and what they understand by political decision making is documented in this chapter. Multiple narratives of women are incorporated hereafter, that provide an illuminating aspect of a woman's life and the basic ideas that are cultivated in the culture.

5.1. Vote in Terms of Serving Nation

The perception about the vote and the right to vote is interestingly linked to the expectations of population towards the political leader. The idea of nation or „watan" is deeply rooted in the thoughts and spoken words of the people. This collective idea of progress is reflected in the perception of vote and voting rights among many of the women in area.

As one of the respondents, a 26-year-old student states that,

"Me gane besan k mere echi besan time e zarurat bla k nusy bishachaban", which is roughly translated into, „he will do something for us and our area according to the needs of time, so we vote for him".

Similarly, a 65-year-old housewife provides a similar explanation,

"Me eny numainda besan k mere echi, me watan yarkish echi nusy err vote bishachaban."

"The elected person will serve the area (watan) and will help to develop it, that is why we cast our votes."

5.2. Perception of Vote and Past Experiences

The past experiences of individuals affect the narrative because of lost hope and expectations. The attitudes of previously elected leader and criticism also lies within the understanding of vote which sometimes lead to females not motivated enough to cast their votes. Interestingly, these past experiences define what women mean by vote and for what it actually stands for.

Among many such statements, one goes like,

"Pichla in e deen besan etimi k mu khin e deen besan echai."

"The previous leader did nothing for use, what will this leader do for us."

Continuing further about the frustration towards vote, respondent stated,

"Me vote apishachaban et vote zaya maibla."

"We are not voting because we know it's a total waste."

A generic understanding of vote is likely to be linked with the outcomes rather than the operationalized meaning that is shared among masses in urban areas.

5.3. Vote and the Sense of Duty

Though past experiences are definitive in the meaning and perception of vote among women of

Aliabad, an interesting understanding is shared among some. There is also the responsibility and duty attached towards vote which women define it in terms of their civil duty. It means performing one's duty towards the country without any interest in elections or candidates.

A 62-year-old housewife and a grandmother mentions,

"Me watan mematy haq bla by, ye bs me meimo haq ada echaban."

"It is our duty towards our nation. We vote in order to perform this duty".

Elections turnouts result in fulfilment of expectations of some and disappointment of others. The results are not always as expected ones, but women tend to feel obliged to cast their votes putting their faith in a new candidate hoping for change to occur.

As multiple respondents mentioned with their desperate feelings indicating towards the absence of accountability of leaders in elections.

"Hai! Da bs bishayas maibla da bechan! Memo haq ada etas maibla."

"Ah! What can we do! We are supposed to cast our vote. We must fulfil our duty."

"Bs khudaye shuwa niyat ouchis, memar tou besan faidan omanila khulto kha. Bs me to memo haq ada etas bla me ada echan."

"May Allah give them conscience, but we never experienced great benefits from the previously selected candidates. It is our duty, so we perform our duties."

Pointing further towards the difference of national and local politics, respondents tend to mention how vote is powerful in context of cities and how it is not in their area.

"Mutomo halat barenumar vote e besan khass faidan tou api. Hunzo lo tou besan k qadr api. Ilji shehr lo kaman maimi besky ely sis hukumat mao etas omaiban, me etas amemayaban. Me melus meuwan court e hin xr nimi k en badnaam bai da enr saza maibla. Ety ny memar besan faida api guky votes xum. Laikin awa phir bhi k me hukumat e saath echichaban."

"Looking at current situations I think there is no importance of vote. In Hunza there is no value or importance. It may have a value in cities because people can make government accountable, we cannot do that. If our brother or a father approaches court, he is considered to be a bad guy. His reputation is questioned. Instead, the one who is questioning government is put into jail, and he is punished. So, we do not get any kind of benefit from these votes. Nevertheless, we support the government."

5.4. Vote in Terms of Civil Rights

When a person is a citizen of a democratic country they have certain rights to enjoy which are known as civil rights. Among these, right to vote is an important civil right of every individual. This is the basic element which ensures the civil participation of an individual living in a democratic state. If it is to be discussed from the perspective of females, there are many factors involved in their right to vote or decision making.

These multiple dimensions that are influential include, social, cultural, psychological, and economic. In some cases, cultural factors prove to be more influential. There are areas where cultural factors may be more influential. In terms of how women are not supposed to vote in certain areas. In remote and indigenous areas, women̓s right to vote is not understood in its actual sense.

"Bes k gus mo civil participation zero samjha echan cultural reasons e wajah ty."

"Vote is a civil right and women civil participation is negligible due to cultural reasons."

5.5. Vote in the sense of future investment

Among many subjective definitions and understanding of vote, one particular manner that deems to be important to cast vote is future benefits.

A 45-year-old housewife said,

"Memo faida nuparan bs bishayas."

"Right to vote is the choice through which we select someone, and we try to vote who might be beneficial for us in future."

"Tai chance an bla amit lo sis e ouimo qismat badal etas omaiban."

"It is chance through which people can change their destiny."

5.6. Vote as a Unanimous Decision

Vote as collective decision of groups is normally practiced as many families unanimously decide to vote for a single person in order to avoid division of votes or in other cases to support a family member. Usually, male members of family guide the decision for the whole group and sometimes the elder of the family decides on everyone̓s behalf. This is explained to avoid any kind of misunderstanding between family members. Other times females themselves feel compelled to follow the collective decision as they think their knowledge of voting is not enough and their elders have more experience and knowledge as compared to theirs.

Explaining the importance of collective decision-making women tend to feel satisfied in cases when their voted candidate wins. Whereas, when their voted candidate does not win the elections, women feel their votes are wasted thus lowering their esteem

for future elections. A young mother states her reason of unanimous decision and the satisfaction attached to it.

"Me har ouyon elections lo gati numa itifaq netan hin r vote bishawan, ja asaty api hik beshal me medim medim thum menr vote bishayas. Akhilaty vote bishayas shua na. Vote zaya k omaibla. Pichla elections lo k meyoun gati XYZ r vote bishawam, en shuwa jeet k manimi."

"I don't remember when our voting decision was individual. Our family collectively decides and it a unanimous decision to vote for a particular person. This way our votes never get divided. Likewise, in previous elections we collectively voted for XYZ person and fortunately he also won the elections."

6. Freewill of Women to Choose a Political Representative

The social dynamics of Aliabad Hunza are quite unique in matters of gender inclusivity and female empowerment. The area has seen massive change in gender roles of men and women, nevertheless, in one particular aspect these roles have not changed yet. The political rights and a female's choice of voting are influenced majorly by cultural values and family dynamics. The area is shifting towards an individualistic culture yet there are some aspects that are strongly collectivistic in nature.

One such aspect is the decision making for selecting a political leader. People are closely connected with each other, and every individual has some kind of family relation with the other in community. If not in smaller family units (*Roam*) they will surely have a connection in larger family units (Tribes). Such narratives are recorded explaining their views and perceptions of free will which indicates towards female body being governed by family institute.

A respondent mentioned,

"Awa me gati lum faisla maibla, khin shua bai besan k khidmat mere echi nusy."

"Yes, it is a collective decision. The person is good and will serve the community in one way or the other."

Additionally, there are many factors which add to strengthen freewill of a female. Among these, education, financial independence, political consciousness, family dynamics, and current changing trends are majorly highlighted.

A comparative understanding of educated versus uneducated is found among the participants where decisions taken by an educated female are deemed knowledge based and enlightened as compared to uneducated females. This understanding is quite common among women, younger and older, in the area.

"Ja khayal lo taalim e asar echibi hin gusan mo mui mo rai lo. Ete ka en guss mo muimo mudigarum dish e moslo balas or akhiri lo enmuly beruman siyasi agahi bla k. Agar hin gussan aqatanum bo k enmo muimo haq e baraty besky lail omaimi or vote k

tok mos e ka apishacho. Ety ny jar gasihila guky cheezing e farq echiyen enmo faisla lo.”

"According to my understanding, I think education factor influences a lot in decision making of a female to vote. Secondly, understanding of surroundings. And lastly, political understanding of the female. If a female is uneducated, she will not understand her right and will just perform a duty half-heartedly. Therefore, I think these are the factors which influence decision making of a female."

Times have changed a lot. And many aspects of cultural setup in Hunza have also changed. There was a time when household heads used to guide voting decision of women or every family member. People were sensitized about the goodness of a particular candidate and other attributes, like his status among higher ups and financial stability. We see change of such patterns in current era. As indicated by respondents, this is because of education and people are somewhat aware of political knowledge. Hence, where education is influential, family is not much influential in political decision making of women.

A 25-year-old respondent shares her experience and states,

"Besky jaly siyasi agahi bla, jar jaimo civil skills arlail bichan or jaar guty k lail bla k vote belaty bishayas bla. Ja ly taalim bla or jar jaimo area maslan arlail bichan, amik ja khayal lo common maslan bichan sis e. Tou amin candidate e ja masla ya dis e maslan hal etas emaibai k ja enr vote bishachaba. Ety ny ja failsa me haa ouwe besan osaiban. Khot ja jaimo personal decision bla amit ja aslo balum hisaab ty bishachaba. Yarne haa mafairtin asarandaz oumaibam laikin khot change manila mu.”

"Because I have political knowledge, I have civil skills, and I know on what basis I should cast my vote. I am educated and being a member of community, I face certain social issues, which are general problems in the area. Hence among the candidates which I believe can solve some of the issues in the area, I cast my vote for him. Therefore, in my voting decision my family is not influential, it is a personal choice based on my understanding and knowledge. Before elders were very influential in households but it has changed a lot now"

Women tend to favour that political decision should be an individual choice of females and they should be allowed to judge and select a candidate for themselves. When it is an individual decision, women tend to vote for one capable of solving their issues. Major issues pertaining in the area are related to water and electricity. Females are majorly concerned about water and electricity and tend to give priority to it while voting.

Narratives as below are shared by respondents both young and old.

"Ja vote bishayas e waja me area lo bijli k chill e masla bilum. Khok gushinanxe gany but masla maibla baren. Tou amin banda khada manuwam k eny wada etam k guky masla hal maar echan nusy"

"My reason to vote for a particular person was that our region has severe electricity and water issues, as you might also know. These become big issues for females. So, the candidate promised to solve these issues which compelled me to cast vote for him."

Freewill of women is strengthened by education. But cultural values are important and to support someone when asked is culturally essential.

"Me menr k beya senas amemayaban, me bs ouyonr seyaban k awa mamr vote bishachan. Da ya senas gunikish maibla na. Baqi to mee meslo maibla or me ety hisaab ty vote bishachaban"

"We cannot say no to anybody, we assure them that we will vote for them because we do not want to be rude to the person. But it is in our heart and we do according to what we want."

Interestingly, family dynamics are different among families even though cultural values are same for everyone. Families tend to be unbothered by voting decisions of other families and are open to everyone's opinions. These families are such in which political affiliations to political parties is very low.

A schoolteacher says,

"Me haly gushinanxe e ouimo rai maibla. Votings xum baad me haaly dugarusas k lail manimi k har hin thum thum menr k vote bishawam. Ja askus amin anpadh bo k eny k muimo rai ty vote bishabom"

"Female family members are free to take their political decisions. After voting we discussed about who we voted for. It turned out that every female in family voted for different candidates. Even my mother-in-law, who is uneducated, has voted according to her own will and choices."

In contrast to this, families who have some kind of political affiliations even if not strong enough, women are required to follow their spouses or men in family. Freewill of a woman then becomes a complex matter to study when it comes to understanding dynamics of every household, or the matters of freewill versus culturally expected behaviour. This expectation towards female to follow the family's decision is observed to be stronger when a candidate belongs to the same family. To support someone belonging to family is necessary because it may lead to disappointment because family means supporting each other.

As one of the respondents shared that,

"Q k naa gilaa echuman nusy. Ouwe saiban enr vote bishain en jeet emanish ya aemanish bs family banda r e vote bishayas bla. Ja k guty basis ty e vote bishayabayam"

"Here whenever we cast our vote, we are not looking at prospect of one winning the elections but rather cast vote to the person who belongs to the family or has any kind of family relation. I also voted on this basis. Because most of us think that our family members might be disappointed and complain that we are not supporting them"

When it comes to family versus a female's freewill, women tend to support family while ignoring their own willingness. Women may be educated and may be allowed to practice freewill but they themselves give priority to the cultural values. One of the respondents who is educated and is a working woman shared her experience as follows.

"Ja rai tou thuman r bilum pr khandan e wajah ty thuman r vote bishayas manimi. Bs khandan e chaga deemi k me da meimo rai r aparayaban. Ja right tou bla laikin maslain maimi nusy majbooran rai fatt etas maibla"

"I wanted to vote for someone else but due to family matters I had to vote for another. Because it is a family matter, we usually ignore our own judgments. It is our right to

vote according to our choice, but it might lead to issues in family, that is why so we ignore our willingness."

Apart from education, other factor that contributes for freewill of women in decision making is financial independency. Females who are working do have the privilege of deciding for themselves. This also includes voting decisions.

6.1. Form of Resistance

"Me vote apishachaban et vote zaya maibla."

"We don't want to cast our votes because they are waste no matter what you do."

The above statement mentioned by one of the participants indicates the idea of form of resistance where the members of community are not willing to cast their votes, as they think of this a waste of time.

"Ja ouyon r shuwa seyaba. Ett ullo nan jeke ja khudayer lail menr bishachaba k."

"I say yes to everyone. But it is between me and Allah to whom I actually vote for."

The fact that voting is done in enclosed areas leads to developing of such reactions of women who cannot openly defy powerful in the area. If the negation is done publicly, it causes disliking of particular one in public. The kind of resistance is shown in a voting booth where no one is judging anybody. It gives them a safe space where women can do whatever they want. Some of the participants expressed their agitation through statements like below.

"Et memo rai an maibla"

"It is our willingness to vote or not to vote."

"Demeyaljaban ouyon e par duro memo maibla"

"Listen to people but obey your conscience."

6.2. An Anecdote from the Field

Explaining the unique experiences related to voting and how others pressure women against their freewill during one of focus group discussions, a grandmother narrates her story as below.

"Thamini mo elections gour qissa echam. Akhi shaam an manilum barenas k jot eny aie dimi, beya mama vote bishayas bla yate band echan nusy. Ho mu amlr nichaba adumucho k akholjiyen esamar beya mama gaari dixaan gaari lo guchucham nusy achumi. Yate election e dish r niyas k gate band bilum. Ho ety vote abishayas gany bal an holy giyasan an juan dausin ullo vote dish r achuman. Vote e jemaler aei r eny gunxo bemar bo dugarushar mopchar axuu senamr, huru mama becha gudumus gukholjibi asimi. Ho barena da besan osas. Da en amin r vote abishawam k en kholy gan lo mila memanas k ayayanimi. Betas ho!"

"I will tell you what happened during last elections. I remember it was afternoon time, I was at home and my youngest son came home saying I have to go and cast my vote. I said I cannot go because my knees hurt. My son said not to worry because the party people have brought a car and will take me to the polling station. Because my son insisted, I got ready, and we went to the polling station only to find that the gates were closed. I thought we have to return home since the gates are closed but my son said no and made me cross the wall of building. My son and other guy helped me cross the wall just like a little kid and got me into the polling station. This is how I voted last time. After few days of this incident, I asked my son to take me to his aunt's home since she was ill and I wanted to visit her, my son replied saying I should not go because my knees hurt."

7. Social forces as determinants of voting behaviour of women in Aliabad Hunza

Cultural aspects and individual personalities result in complex situation in which analysis of determinants becomes a bit intricate. Therefore, to understand different social forces that determine voting behaviour of women, this theme elaborately discusses all those factors which are recorded in this study. Among these, the participants discussed, candidate's attributes, education, social media, family honour and integrity, and commitment of an individual towards their fellow community member. Moreover, there are other instances where women are unaware of these social forces and tend to remain uninterested about such matters. These will be discussed with supporting verbatims from field hereafter.

7.1. Candidate's Attributes

Women in Aliabad tend to give utmost importance to a candidate's attributes. The personality of candidate comes under scrutiny for many reasons. Voters tend to look at the personality of candidate that works as observable factor for many while deciding to vote. The attributes include candidate's education, age, communication skills, background (family, residency and religious), economic stability, community services, dedication towards the region, past behaviour, and repute among higher ups. For older women political experience is another important attribute as for young participants, their preference was for young and age-appropriate person.

Explaining dedication of candidate towards community, a respondent shared,

"Leader eny by amin emo zaati mufaad aparanum, tok area mufaad gany duro etish. Amit area lo diyechai k ety ouyon cheezing r nuparan, tok ouyon lead otas or eky maslain tok hal etas."

"For me a leader is someone who thinks beyond personal gains. One who thinks about collective gain of the region. I think my expectations towards my leader consists of both our material needs and social needs."

Another one shares,

"Watan xy jaak emanasan emansh."

"One who feels for the region."

Another respondent shares,

"Acha leader hona chahiye, dilair hona chahiye or parha likha leader hona chahiye"

"I think a leader should be a good one in terms that he should be well-educated, and valorous."

Communication skill is another attribute women tend to focus when choosing their leader. The way the person talks results in greater support as many respondents mentioned when asked about what they mean by a leader and what kind of attributes that they see as important.

"Chaga bar err juwasan emanish."

"The one who is able to do better communication."

In Aliabad ability to talk and building good relations with each other is a valued attribute. Women tend to value it more and are easily convinced through words of candidates when promises are made and solutions of current issues in area are presented as their main agenda. They think that as the member of the community their leader should draw solutions for the issues faced by the community, such as, inflation, education, and etc.

Responses such as below are recorded during research.

"Ja khayal lo eny banda pichla duro but ehmiyat oshibi. Eny chaga bar beshal echai or 57ad57an k elaqa gany besan echi. Sis ty guky chagaming e asar maibla or ouwe vote bishachan. Laikin ja khulto kha tai menan aichaba amin e elections jeet numa baad lo emo wada pura etish."

"I think the work of the candidate matters a lot. His talks about what they plan to do for the people. People are influenced by it and people do cast their votes for them. Until now I did not see a single candidate who won the elections and fulfilled his promises."

But sadly, their aspirations are never fulfilled which becomes a demotivating factor in future elections or when choosing a person that will represent the community.

"Akhurum kha dun meny kuli besan ayetan."

"Until now, no one did anything that they promised before winning."

Most of the times, candidates competing in elections intentionally discuss community issues of water and electricity in their agendas. This becomes a strong point for candidates if they want to mobilize a community in their favour.

Additionally, women even define leader as someone capable of thinking beyond himself. Therefore, when a candidate promises about progress of the area, women characterize him as the ideal leader for the region and cast their votes.

A 45-year-old housewife mentions,

"Ja khayal lo leader eny emaibai amin e emo sis yarkish ochan. En amin voting e zarya ty juchai k en watan gany zimedaar emaibai or sis e numainda emaibai amin e sis e doyaljan k."

"According to my understanding I think a leader is one who catalyses and runs a community. He is selected through voting and becomes responsible for the area. He is people's representative and people will listen to him."

Furthermore, a candidate should have the attribute to revere women of the community. The kind of respect give to him should be reciprocated. Hunza culture emphasizes on respect to women and most of the time an unknown woman is referred as mother or sister by men. This being another grounding principle of the norm of respect *„izzat'* and *„qadar"* in the culture. Women tend to define the term leader as one who respects everybody and are inclined towards such attributes when voting.

As respondents, young and old, educated and uneducated, provided statements such as the one noted below.

"Emi eyas mo qadar etasan emansh."

"One who respects his sisters and mother."

The young and educated participants tend to further narrow their perceptions and identify other aspects of the candidate to value him as reasonable person to vote for. Among such aspects, vision for the region, ability to make problem-oriented policies for the area, accountability, critical analysis, and understanding and knowledge of political structure are important.

"Zahir bla critical thinking, situation analysis besky err juwasan emanish. Tabhi enr lail maimi k system belaty gucharchila"

"It is obvious that I will vote for someone who knows situation analysis because then he will know how system works."

To gauge a person's situational analysis and his ability to handle situations for better outcomes, women then look the background or the past experiences of the person. If the candidate has proved to have such capabilities, young, educated women are sure to support him in elections.

As compared to young, older women also tend to look at past experiences of the candidate but they are more inclined towards the dedication of the person rather then his problem-solving skills.

A Grandmother aged 62 states,

"Eny iljum yarum 59ad59ana59 manumar ety hisaab ty k bareyaban. Merlail maibla baren k eny mer duro echiya by ayechi k nusy."

"We consider the background of the candidates when we choose to vote. Because we get know if he will work for us or not."

Since background is identified to be an important factor. Religious background of the candidates also needs to be analysed. Aliabad population is majorly Ismaili, a few settlers of other sects are temporary habitants. Candidates from other sects also compete in elections, therefore, it becomes important to study in the present. Priority of women is usually for candidates of same sect saying they might be able to understand critical issues of community and it might lessen the possibility of clash in future.

Narratives recorded as following,

"Besan khass reason an beya bs shuru xum han perception an duwasila baren k memo an r nusy."

"There is no big reason for preferring a person of same religious background, it is just an innate understanding which is very common that the person should be someone from within our group."

Adding to background of candidate, women are more inclined to ones who belong to same area as they think that a person who is native has an in-depth understanding of

the cultural setup and will lead them better and they can question him and make him accountable in future if he is unable to fulfil his promises.

With time people are changing their preferences. It is because of the experiences they get and the kind of changes that are experienced in the region. In current time, Aliabad is rapidly urbanizing with the minimum education of 14 years or above among new generation. Because of these changes, preferences seem to differ among different age groups. Young females tend to prefer young candidates because they believe that they relate to them better as compared to an elderly person as a leader.

A young female university student share,

"Ja last time vote PPP r bishayabayam. Jar lail bla PPP jab pehla jeet etam k ouwe beshki duro etam k area or besan khami bichum k. Laikin agar me age or education r barenuman k PPP e amnin candidate bam k en young k bam or kaafi educated bam. Ety xum jar ganimi k khin hin potential candidate bai me area gany. Or ety ka eny previous amik social or political activities duwasichan k area lo ett ouyon r lail bla. Tou guky reasons ty ja vote bishayabayam."

"In the previous elections, I voted for PPP. I am well aware of the previous terms when PPP won the elections, and I am well aware of their drawbacks. But if we consider education and age factor, previous candidate of PPP was a young and well-educated candidate. Therefore, I thought he is the potential and suitable candidate for the area. His previous social and political activities are very well known in the area. His actions resulted in desired outcomes, and these were my reasons to cast my vote for him."

Interestingly a low percentage of women are aware of federal government and usually vote for political party in the area thinking that it will benefit the region. The loyalty towards government through a single vote shown.

A 45-year-old health worker states mentions that,

"Mai ny socha k hukumat PTI ki hy mulk mai tou yahan bhi agr PTI jeet jaye tou hamary area k liye acha hoga taky area mai achy kaam ho."

"I thought PTI is ruling government of country so I should vote for PTI. I thought electing same party in region will prove to be beneficial for the area."

To sum it up, it is identified that women of Aliabad are inclined towards different attributes of the candidate. These range from physical attributes like age to social attributes such as his solidarity with the community. Women do judge to attain a decision that is inclusive of what they think is a standard to choose a political leader. This standard for selecting a leader varies from individual to individual depending on other factors like education and age of voters. The overall turnout of elections of 2020 which resulted in winning of PPP in Aliabad union directing towards the attributes of person's residence, education, age and religious background.

7.2. Education

Aliabad is one of highly literate areas in Hunza. Influences of education on the living of people is very evident currently. Education as one of the causes of change is interlinked with women's agency. To analyse voting behaviour of female in Aliabad, education becomes a key factor and guides us to the deeper understanding of vote among masses. The way education is important on part of the candidate, it is also important on part of voters since it also guides preferences of females.

According to the perspective of respondents, education helps people to know about rights and especially about political rights. It helps to identify right from wrong and helps in better judgement.

As one respondent states,

"Taalim hy tou sub kuch hy. Talim manumar jar lail maibla besan thk bla or besan ghalat or beshki decision an ganas bla k."

"Education is everything. If I am educated, I will know what is right and what is wrong, and I will know what kind of decisions I should make."

Another respondent shared her experience of her first time voting and second time voting.

"Ja dou dafa vote bishayaba. Pehla ety vote bishayam lo jar cheezing baraty lail apim or ja masters etas xum pehla bilum, dosra bishayam lo pura thum experience bilum. Pehla ety lo ja abbu e asum e hisaab ty bishayabayam. Laikin mu jar cheezing lail bichan or jaimo personal decision bilum. Pehla ett lo tai apim k abb uku e force etam, bs jar cheezing e lail apim tou ouwe asum hisaab ty vote bishayabayam."

"I have voted two times. In my first experience of voting, I was not aware of things and many political aspects, but the second time I voted it was a totally different experience. The first time was before my masters and since I did not know much about politics, I voted to the person my father told me to vote for. But this time it was a personal decision. I know about things now. I have understood many aspects. Additionally, it was not like that I was pressured by my father, I just followed his words because I didn't know much."

Comparing between difference of decision-making among educated and uneducated females, a respondent presents her case.

"Talim lazmi bla. Candidate gany k lazmi tou bla me gany k lazmi bla. Agar me gatanum k aqatanum haran barenuman k me gany terum farq ayechibi. Me vote bishamin eny jeet manish haar manish memar terum farq ayechibi. Gatanuman eny kaman vote baraty soch netan, yarmo k soch an netan ho vote bishacho by."

"Education is important. Well in terms of candidate, he must be an educated one. And in terms of voters, it really influences their political decision making. If we compare between educated and uneducated, it really never bothers us (uneducated), meaning that vote does not really matter for us. Our selected candidate might win or might not win, it is never a big worry for us. Whereas one who is educated she might consider the consequences of her vote and might take her decision based on it."

Another respondent shares her statement in a lightly manner expressing unthoughtful decision.

"Ye fatt e bs vote an bishaman!"

"We just cast our vote and that's it!"

In general, based on the responses collected in the study, education's role is to help identify problems. This will enable individuals to do critical analysis and situational analysis and finding out what needs to be done to solve the issues. Additionally, education helps to understand what civil rights are, how system works, how one chooses a leader, and etc. When an individual is mindful of such factors and is able to access knowledge, he or she will be able to choose a suitable leader for the community. This is how education is a major factor in voting choices. If we talk about females in Hunza, older generations are uneducated, and they do not have political

consciousness. They only know that they should vote for someone who might be able to fulfil their expectations. As per understanding of participants, females who are uneducated does not know about their choice and decision to vote. She follows whatever her family tells her. Because she is not connected to social media or another platform where she can enlighten herself about it.

Whereas one who are educated they consider what their needs are and then choose a candidate.

Those who are uneducated depend on their expectations to vote for a candidate.

As per one respondent,

"Hunza mai aksar auratein uneducated hain, un ko sirf ye pata hy k aik leader hoga jo k shaed un k expectations py utr ayega tou wo jaky usko vote dety hain. Yehi masla hy q k unko politics ka sahi sy kuch pata nae hota."

"Older age women are uneducated in Hunza. They only know that there will be one leader who might fulfil their expectations, so they vote for him. This is the issue here that they know nothing about politics."

7.3. Social Media

With current trends setting in the culture of Hunza, social media is drastically imprinting its influence on every aspect of culture. A few people, usually the older population, might not use social media, but every individual of every age has access to social media in these times. The elderly people are distant to such platforms, and a very few use such platforms in old age group. Contrastingly, youth of the area can access social media anywhere and anytime. Differences in access to social media among men and women are not very distinct. Women can access social media as much as men can. Thus, social media as a determinant to of female voting choices becomes an essential entity to analyse.

Women in Aliabad think that elderly people are not much concerned about social media and are not influenced as much as youth are influenced. Access of information among such groups is word of mouth and what they actually experience in community. Comparing to experiences of parents and her own, a respondent says,

"Me"u, ṁmi tou etum khitum chagaming ty e baraiban"

"Our father, mother tend to vote on basis of what they hear from and there."

Explaining her own experience, a 68-year-old mother expresses that,

"Me khok besky aparayaban by or istimal k ayechan. Eny khada manum e watan gany faida baya apai ety bareyaban. Eny chaga bar belaty echai, watan lo besan khidmat etai or sis e haq gany besan duro etai k ety bareyaban."

"Since we illiterates do not use social media very much, we tend look for candidates who might turn out beneficial for the region. We do not have access to information readily available regarding candidates on social media we choose while keeping human attributes as the scale of selection. These include his ability to speech, his services for the community, and one who works towards the rights of people of the region."

Comparatively, those who use social media and can access information regarding candidates and political structure, some of them also does not access it for voting purposes. They believe that voting decision is an instinct and belief that drives them to vote. In such cases social media turns out to be not influential for matters of voting and deciding a candidate.

Among young, educated and employed women social media and its influences does exist. For them it is a way to get insights of political situations and what is happening around the world. They draw their voting decision based on what is required of time as they understand best decision for themselves and the community.

A 35-year-old schoolteacher shares her insights,

"Social media is very much influential in decision making. Since most of the candidates use social media as a tool for their election campaign, they most likely put positive aspects of their personality and party. They highlight their previous work and contribution in the community. In general, every individual does not have the luxury to investigate their work. So yes, it does influence many including myself, when selecting a candidate. You feel like if he has done this, he might do something like this again."

What is noteworthy in her statement is that social media can be used to provide a positive image of candidate which mobilizes many to support in future. The belief that if a person has done something he is able to do it again and again. As this statement clearly states,

"Agar iss ny aisa kaam kia hy tou hosakta hy agli baar wo iss sy bhi acha kaam kary."

"If he has done this work before then there are chances that he might do better next time."

Even though when one is not sure of the previous work of candidate, social media provides a reflection of what was happening in the past. Those readily using social media are very much influenced and it becomes a way to convince public and build narratives in favour of candidates.

The diversity of experiences is majorly experienced in community of Aliabad. As for employed women working in private and public organization, social media turns out to be influential. But for women who are young but are not employed, social media proves to be not influential. For them voting is a collective decision prior to the voting day, and nothing affects their firm decision. Among many such statement, a housewife shares,

"Beya, social media tou besan asar ayetibi. Me amit faisla an maibla k ety shuru xum e han maibla or me ety faisla ty e vote bishachaban. Amin r me vote bishawam k me dish lum e bam, me yenam daltass ny."

"No, social media does not influence our voting choice. Our choice is confirmed from the very beginning and it's a firm decision that we stand by till the last day. We know the person that we voted for because he is belongs to our area."

Comparatively, a respondent who actively uses social media shares experience of how media shaped her views of political candidates and the way she decided to vote for a particular candidate based on the trending information available on twitter.

"Beshak asar bla. Ja pichla eky elections lo twitter but use echabayam or jar mu also balimi k asal tou tai bilyas e apim. Ely bixum eky propagations e wajah ty ja XYZ candidate r vote bishayabayam laikin mu arlail maibla k ett tok tou bs exaggeration

bilum. Jar mu also balichila k ett tou tok ghalat information bilum. Tou awa gushinanch ty k media asar echibi."

"Indeed, social media has influenced our voting decisions. I used twitter very much during last elections, and now I realize that it is not like that in the actuality. Because of media propagations I voted for a candidate, but now I realize all of that was just an exaggeration. I do understand now that I got the wrong information from the media. Therefore, I would say that social media does influence female voting decisions."

Effects of social media are experienced differently among different groups. Depending on individual's attributes social media turns out be a determinant for some and a neutral factor for others. As Aliabad's growing population is majorly employed and educated, and have easy access to social media, its effects in future elections could be prominent as compared to now and before. Candidates do use social media for their political gains, and they might increase their campaigning spheres to mobilizes larger groups in future.

7.4. Family Honour and Integrity

Family is the fundamental unit of a person's identification in Aliabad, Hunza. People tend to identify themselves from the larger group of family. Family unit in Aliabad consists of three generations and sometimes four generations living together. Several families live in Aliabad, but they trace back to one of the four ancestral tribes of the region. These tribes include, *Burong*, *Baratalin*, *Khurutuz*, and *Diramting*. Family dynamics are almost similar among these families. The collectivistic nature of culture is transforming to individualistic nature, but people have strong family relations and family is an essential part when one introduces himself or herself. The change in family dynamics and structure can lead us to analyse family honour and integrity which become major standard for choosing candidate in elections.

Family integrity becomes important determinant of voting decision because family is an essential part of individuals life and socialization. Family is a support system that helps individuals in multiple aspects, such as, economic, emotional, and social. These sentiments become underlining factors for what an chooses to do. Supporting one who belongs to family is a common feeling among people. If not close relation, distant relations are considered while voting. The influences of family integrity are in multiple aspects. Firstly, elders in every family do tell women to consider family

relations while voting. They are reminded of the duty towards their family and members. Secondly, women believe that to support a family member will prove beneficial for them. They can get incentives in future. It is another kind of future investment that they do. And lastly, it is the mindset that if a capable, educated member competes he needs all the support from the family. Women fulfil their family duties as well as think of it as an advantageous to support someone they know as compared to someone that they don't know.

Regarding family relations and to maintain peace among families. A respondent share,

"Besky baad lo narazgi maibla nusy bishchan. Haa Jamat bai besan na besan meir echi."

"Because if we do not vote it might lead to family conflicts. He is a family member, and he will do something for us."

Another one states,

"Khandani menan khudaye soch samba daltas echiman bai k, taalim epachi bla k, demagh dugunuman bai k eny gany chamat echaban."

"If there is an intellectual and educated person with a potential mindset in family, we try our best to make him win the elections."

No doubt, social media, education and all other aspects of change has provided freedom to individuals that they can choose for themselves. But the cultural aspects deeply rooted in behaviour of people guides them to never negate whatever their elders are saying. Such experiences are shared by many in during research. Women are advised about their worldly affairs, and as politics is not a cup of tea for women, men feel obliged to direct women's actions. Middle aged women in research sample, majorly give importance to family honour. Family honour in the sense what others will think if our family did not win the elections. Married women of middle-age expressed what they thought about such matters.

"Jawanyo tou mu ouimo rai maibla laikin darum tai khandan bichan amlo haa ouyum e chaga ouyon doyaljan. Eky hakichan lo hin banda rai but kaam maan echan."

"I think youth have enough sense now that they can decide for themselves. But there are still such families where each member must listen to the elder. Individual opinion is not welcomed in such households."

Besides this, young women are told that they have no experience and must listen to what their family head is telling them. A 24-year-old respondent who was political sciences students shares,

"Family honour and integrity is such a big factor. I have seen it and I have experienced it. When it was voting time, my father used to tell me that I should listen to him and vote accordingly."

Majority of the respondent shared how male head of family and others give their opinion. In majority cases, the elders one way or the other say,

"Memo bai khinyr e vote bishayas bla."

"He is our family; you must vote for him."

"Alto barum rishtedaar emaibai, mei k emaibai melus k emaibai"

"We share more than one relation with him, he is our brother and our nephew."

"Me haa jamat bai na"

"He is family member."

Another respondent shares that how family is an important factor for voting and in case if a family member is competing, they do their best to compel others to win election for him. In such cases, it is not an individual's competition but rather it is whole family's fight to win in elections.

"Awa na lazmi bla memo an emanas. Thamini mo eky elections lo me haa jamat k diye bam. Me memo mesh diusuman en ty"

"Yes, indeed it very important if a candidate belongs from same family. In previous elections, one of our family members was competing in elections and we tried our best to win elections for him."

The decision should be taken while considering the likes of family since, it is the primary group providing security and support in times of need.

"Khandan ka hurutas diyeyas bla na, ety ny me roam e soch ny ho vote bishachaban. Khandan lazmi bla phir ety xum baad lo bareyaban k amis party bi or eny banda iljium yarum nuparan ho vote bishachaban."

"When we take our voting decision, we always take into account the family/roam. Since we have to live with our family, therefore, it is very important to consider family first. After family we consider the political party to which the candidate belongs to. We have to consider the history of party in the area and personal character of the individual."

Families which have nuclear structure have different dynamics from that of joint families. The smaller number of elders and authoritarian figures give more space for women to practice their preferences. Similarly, working women also have relatively more freedom as compared those not working a job. A participant who is working as a nurse stated that,

"Khandan ka hy bol k nae dena chahye, balky ye sochna chahiye k awam ka faida kis mai hy."

"One should never think that he belongs to my family so I should vote for him. Rather we should all think about collective good of the public."

Another respondent adds,

"Khandan e izzat senas, tai chagan api. Amin e mer khidmat echai k, shuan bai k me enr bishachaban."

"It is not about family's honour. One who works for us and is a good person, we cast our vote for him."

Family dynamics matter to understand what the reaction of the family will be if the female member has different political opinion. In cases of working and financially independent women, facing restrictions is very unlikely. Factors such as education matter. Families where majority of members are educated, refusing opinions or forcing a single opinion to all the women of family are not experienced. Moreover, political consciousness of family members (male, female both) regarding Pakistan and previous elections or candidates, contributes to an open space where every member can discuss their opinion regardless of the gender.

In previous times when community of Aliabad was not exposed to a global world, family honour and integrity were deeply connected with womanhood. The meanings have transformed, and symbolism of family honour and integrity are linked with every gender.

Overall, voting for a family member is very common attitude that has deep roots in cultural understandings of „us"versus „others". People vote for their relatives because they are concerned more about family relations then the outcome of elections. In one way they do not want to offend the person because he might prove to be useful in future in many regards, both personal and communal.

7.5. Religion

Religion is the initial knowledge than humankind created. The basis of societies as well as differences among societies depend on the kind of religious knowledge that was available to people. Religion in our contemporary world has influenced every life aspect of humans, be it social, family, economic, health, education or political. Religion plays it part when defining gender roles for people, moreover it also directs the lifestyle of people.

The religious influence in political situations of Aliabad is also analysed so that influence of religion in worldly matters of people comparative to other regions of Pakistan is understood. Individual preferences are affected when choosing a candidate, because women tend to vote for an individual of same religious background. Inquiries about such preferences show that people want someone to present them. Overall, population of Ismailis is low as compared to other sects. Therefore, they want someone of their own to represent them in government. Moreover, women think that it is easy to make someone of their own accountable, but to question someone of other sect might lead to conflicts and issues. A grandmother discussed.

"Hukumat ka duang manas, thum mazhab ka thang manas char e ka thang manas maibla by"

"To question government or question a person of other religious background is similar talking to a stone."

Women feel very distant from government and think that they can access such spaces if there is no one to represent them. Other reasons could be religious conflicts that happen time and again in GB region. Moreover, religious teachings are such that restrict people to involve in politics of any kind. People are told that they must cast their vote and should be obedient to the state.

7.6. Commitment to others

The social relations in Aliabad have a complex structure. Every individual needs to confirm to cultural and social values so that he or she becomes a part of larger group where reputation of an individual signifies social position and acceptance of others. People have responsibilities towards each other which are not compromised. One of these responsibilities that people have towards each other is being present when one needs help. Promises are fulfilled no matter what. A similar scenario is experience in time of elections when people are approached for political campaigns and to boost the morale of public so that they vote for the party of campaigners. These campaigners are not necessarily political agents or party members, but also the relatives of a candidate. Women tend to ask each other in communal places and gathering. These women have some kind of family relation with the candidate for whom they advocate in their neighbourhoods. If a woman agrees to vote in favour of her fellow women, it becomes a sacred decision that she must fulfilled.

In elections of 2020, one of the respondents had a similar experience which she shares accordingly.

"Ja Jamatkhana lo akhat xum dusas e wajah ty XYZ r echiyam"

"I promised in Jamatkhana and said yes to vote for XYZ person."

She continues,

"Whenever I have voted it is because that he is a family relative, or someone who is well reputed and a capable person. Last time, since the ruling government was PTI, we thought that we should support PTI, but our sons and men of family decided that the person representing PTI is not an Aliabadi and decided to nominate a candidate from Aliabad and from our family. But I promised the person representing PTI and because of that I voted for him, and all other family members voted for PPP. Since I

am member of volunteer and I promised her in Jamatkhana I was bound to abide by my words and promise."

7.7. Associative Aspect of Social Structure (Patriarchy)

Hunza has remained a patriarchal society for a long time. Its effects are deeply rooted in behaviour and attitudes of people. No doubt that the literacy rate is higher in the region, and women have achieved freedom to some extent, there still remain matters of patriarchy which profoundly influence matters regarding females. Politics is totally a man's game that a woman cannot infiltrate. When the times of elections are near, so is the guidance and advice from men of the family readily available for women.

The social setup of the area guides a woman to be respectful towards her brother and father. To celebrate kinship is common even if someone is a distant relative. The norms also require women to support her brothers and father when the time demands. Elections is such a situation in which females are required to perform her duty and obedience towards her brothers and father. One such story is of a 37-year-old woman. She states,

"Jar yaad bla pichla eky elections lo me nana khada manuwam or me abbu e mesham k en khandan e bai tou memar, me area gany besan echi. Ety ny awa jar tai gaishila k amin hir haa sarbara emaibai k eny gushinanchy faisla ty asar maibla"

"I remember in last election, my uncle was also among candidates, and our father would normally talk and convince us that he is a family member, and he will do something for our area. So yes, I think female decision making is influenced by male heads of the family."

Additionally, due to reverence towards one's brother, females are very likely to support someone who belongs to their family. Being part of a collectivistic culture and strong family relations, in which every individual identifies himself or herself to the larger family unit (tribe) or smaller family units (*roam*). People respect both of their blood relations and affinal relations in both larger and smaller family units.

These norms are notable in narratives such as,

"Alto barum rishtedaar emaibai, meei k emaibai melus k emaibai"

"We have double family relations; he is our brother and nephew as well."

Interestingly, if there are candidates, one of whom belongs to a larger family unit and one to a smaller family unit, women tend to support those who belong to smaller family units.

When asked about such situation respondents stated that they will vote for one who belongs to smaller unit and larger unit will be their second priority.

As one respondent mentions,

"Khuroting e bai k Khuroting r bishachan, en apai k Burong e menan r bishachan"

"If the candidate is a *Khuroting* (family name), we will vote for him. If not, we will vote for someone who is a *Burong* (tribe name)."

Moreover, women themselves feel that politics is not a place for females and tend to vote according to what their fathers and brothers tell them.

As one of the respondents share,

"Vote k baray humay ziada pata nae 72ad72ana, mardun ko ziada pata hota. Bs humy ye pata hota k hum ny ja k vote dalna. Hum bs jaky vote dey kr wapis aaty hain."

"We do not know much about politics, men do. We just know that it is voting day today and we just go and cast our vote without giving much thought to it."

Female themselves feel that such experiences are not liberating and they are sometimes are unhappy with such decisions. They feel that their vote was a waste. A female health officer shares her experience and states,

"Ety jaar shuan ayaganam. Bs zabardasti nimixun vote mebishaman. Guty je shuan ayaganam, memar lail bilum en jeeta manas apai phir bhi k bishaman. Me vote bs zaya manimi. Family nusy vote bishayas sahi api."

"I didn't like it. We were pressured to vote for XYZ which was not a good experience because we already knew that he will not win the elections. Our vote was wasted. I think voting on basis of family ties is not good a stance."

While voting, the person can cast vote in total privacy. Women know about privacy, and as discussed earlier some use this advantage to vote for whoever they like. Further probing into the discussion clarified questions about why women still vote for one if they know there will no one to watch them. A respondent mentions in this matter that,

"Zameer e saath amechimi k elum tai nusy demewan da mu belaty thuman r beshachan nusy"

"During elections I remember that we, females, changed our minds regarding who we are voting for, but our conscience did not allow us to change our last moment decision."

The decision and selection of candidate is usually unanimous, and opinions of men majorly affect the decision as compared to opinion of women. The decision to vote for a person is decided prior to the voting day and is a shared decision of the family. Females usually never doubted the decision because men are usually decision-makers in families.

"Yarmuxum e hiri garichan by haly k besan ouyon lo tailaty eeljakash ochan gushinanch har dish lo"

"From the very beginning men have been deciding in every matter and due to this, women are always pushed back in every front."

Women are still not given this freedom or right to choose. They are not given the opportunity to judge and decide. Women are symbolized with cultural notions of weakness. Such as,

"Guss garkamux garuma ka gon maibla."

"If a hen crows in morning it does not mean its dawn."

The metaphorical essence in such statements communicate the position of women in cultural setup and how men tend to ascribe the authority to their own gender.

7.7.1. An Anecdote from Field

A female respondent aged 45 runs her small business in Aliabad market and shares her experience of last elections.

"Thamini mo elections lo olus deemi dukan tr, akhi netan ayas e jar vote bishacho nusy. Ett lo dukan ty jamat k bam. En kako PTI ganuy vote dumarchr deewam, ja jamat PPP ka bam. Kako e un menr bishcha k bisha ja ayas mo vote jar senas ka amlum dunya emosan netan tok guyas guwam muchu goka senimi. Ye terum 74ad kha hi hin r emos bilum."

"In last elections I remember when I was at my shop and my husband was also there and my cousin brother came to visit. Both my husband and brother were supporting different parties. My brother came to ask for vote and support. They were doing normal conversation during which my brother claimed that my vote will be for his party and that my husband can vote for whoever he wants. Upon saying this, my husband replied that my brother can not only take my vote but also take me back to my parent's home. My husband suddenly got angry. This was the level of rivalry and anger that people felt for each other."

8. Barriers for Active and Substantive Participation of Women in Political Arena

If person is a citizen of a democratic country, he or she holds rights which are called civil rights. Among these, right to vote of an individual ensures the civil participation. For a female, her right to vote or decision making is influenced by multiple dimensions, that include, social, cultural, psychological, and economic. There are areas where cultural factors may be more influential and where women are restricted to the four walls of her house.

8.1. Cultural Reasons

In remote and indigenous areas right to vote for women is likely not understood. The barriers for the active participation of women are noted as culturally embedded. As mentioned by (Rombough & Keithly, 2010) that socialization of gender roles become a huge barrier that restricts the effective integration of women in politics. Similarly, the gender roles socialization of Aliabad also does not allow a female to enter spaces of the politics. From the moment a female is born, she is sensitized to concepts that females are not fit for politics. There are better ways for females and politics is not one of them.

"Bes k gus mo civil participation zero samjha echan cultural reasons e wajah ty"

"Women participation is zero because of cultural reasons."

Additionally, the child's upbringing in such cultural contexts is crucial. A baby girl in Aliabad will never get toys apart from dolls and kitchen sets. As this participant says,

"Jot dasin an e beshal khel echubo k ety lo me enmur gurya muwas e concept bla"

"When a baby girl is playing, we tend to give her a dolls."

Women are usually told that they are not fit for politics just because of their gender. Men tend to comment on such matters which reflect a person's understanding of gender and how one gender is understood weaker and incompetent for political roles. Women shared what they hear commonly from men in their family.

"Un guss ba uny beyhaiba"

"You are a woman. What do you know!"

The persistent dogma that politics is not women is infused in cultural norms and values. People do not say it directly, but it exists as underlining factor of their thinking and attitudes. Moreover, men will never accept a situation where a woman leads and men have to listen to her.

Statements as following are recorded in this regard.

"Ouwe beshal k rai ayechuman k gusan e ouyate garish"

"They (men) will never want a woman to order them."

8.2. Bad Political Image

Pakistani politics does not have a positive image in the area which results in the reluctance to join a notorious institute. As women‛s honour is of high concern in culture therefore, politics is an ultimate question on females" honour and character. Females themselves have internalized such opinions. One respondent, who has graduation level education shares,

"Hin guss giyas an eky cheezing r niyas me mahol e hisaab ty shuan k akaishila."

"A woman going to such spaces (politics) does not fit with the cultural setup."

Politics is also related to corruption. People think that politics is not possible without corruption. Nobody wants to engage in activities where such stigmas are attached. Another participant mentions,

"Besky corruption bla, ouimo ouwe bs yarkish ochan."

"Because there is corruption and those in politics favour their own."

Honour and character come under scrutiny if a female ever tries to be part of politics. People start to question her existence. Therefore, women themselves are scared of such accusations because character and honour is source of prestige in the culture. A young participant of 29 age shares,

"Gushinanch ety xum k arr oumaiban k ouwe character assassination k maibla."

"Women are sacred of the character assassination."

Interestingly, connotations of „Badmaashi" (hooliganism) are attached to overall Pakistani politics in which one needs to be hooligan to become part of politics. Locals

think that one who becomes part of politics is ultimately a hooligan because polite people cannot survive political structure of Pakistan. As the narrative goes like this,

"Pakistan e politics khass politics an api, or me sis terum tez apan or badmaash manas k ayomaiban jis tarah Pakistan e politics e demand echibi k. Jar guty k issue an gaishila."

"Pakistani politics is not great, and I think our (Hunza) people are very polite and they cannot become *Badmaash* as Pakistani politics demand. This is another issues that I observe in the area."

8.3. Political Awareness

Among others, political knowledge and awareness is also mentioned by many females. They feel that women do not have interest because they do not have knowledge of the structure. Secondly, as women mention that the educational institutes never incorporate such kind of information for the emerging youth so that they get to know their political rights and importance of vote.

Another reason, that leads to political unawareness is individual interest. Women have access to media of all kinds and they can access information anywhere. But they themselves never feel to access such platforms. It is again because of the predispositions that females are not born to participate in politics.

Political awareness has remained an issue in all previous elections. Political parties try to use such issues to win their politics. A respondent shares an incident of previous elections in another region of Hunza.

"XYZ lo kala chor hik doyo nun gushinanch e votes khareeda etam. Abb sis politically aware oumanuman k akhi omaimi."

"In XYZ place, during elections partied bought votes of women by distributing shawls (Dupatta/Chaddar) among females. If people are politically aware such instances will not happen."

Young females are determined that issues of awareness will be resolved as young females are in education field. Their aspirations will be different from their elders, and they might contribute to gender and politics debate.

Of many social barriers which restrict a female's political participation, political awareness is the major one. Secondly, I think the education system in the area does not incorporate political education of the young. Most of the times it is medical and engineering which are prioritized in every educational institute. We do not have a course or any other way through which young are familiarized with dynamics of politics or political institute. Lastly, I think social media has somewhat provided a platform for females to politically engage. Then again, issue of female political awareness could be because we females do not take interest in any kind of political news, or we never watch such content on TVs.

Situation of female political awareness and activeness might change in the near future because every young female is educated and has access to social media.

My suggestion is that interested females should become part of it so that female issues in the area are solved. And I think it is the responsibility of females to diminish the barrier of male dominancy and enter the unreachable arena of politics. For this I think political awareness will be important. Those who are interested they need to be sensitized about situations and need awareness.

Political awareness in females is negligible in Aliabad. I think it is not of any importance because females are not interested in politics. In my experience I do not feel interested in politics because people use politics for their personal benefits and never fulfil their promises. Moreover, here in Aliabad, most of the time people vote for their relatives so females are not much interested in political dynamics.

"Nasirabad mai dupattay de k votes khareedy gaye"

"Gushinanch ety xum k arr oumaiban k ouwe character assassination k maibla

8.4. Personal Interest

Interestingly women themselves share same sentiments about politics and how it is of no interest for them because they know that people dislike such behaviour.

"Terum barriers to omaimiyen, gushinanch e ouimo interest omaimi ja khayal lo. Laikin awa beshal hin gusan politics ar niyas e rai echubo k hir sis e besky saiban. Besan lo shamil manuman k awa mu iljum gushinanch juan rallies r nichuman saiban. Sis e darum gunikish samjha echan." "I don't think there are any major barriers, females themselves are not interested in participating in elections. But yes,*

when female tries to enter political arena, men also say things like do get into politics. Even participating in campaigns, men were like now you will try to be like women in cities and be part of political rallies. People still think this is bad."

Women share how they are socialized in families and how they are told about spaces that accept women, and those spaces which does not. This socialization affects later choices of females. They themselves keep distance from politics because they also think it is inappropriate for their gender.

One reason that females are not interested in politics is because it is deeply rooted in our cultural values. Our socialization did not include political awareness. Secondly, I think when we grow old, we never get a company where such discussions are usual.

"Jot dasin an e beshal khel echubo k ety lo me enmur gurya muwas e concept bla"

Moreover, female think their children are their responsibility and they should focus on that rather than getting into politics. Working women feel there are time constraints as it is not possible for them to manage work and family responsibilities if they enter politics. Because politics demands engagement and time, they think they will be never capable to perform such kind of job or role.

Direct links between political awareness and personal interest are drawn as female think that personal interest leads to political awareness. Since females are not interested in politics therefore their political awareness is also low. It is also that families rarely want their members to opt this field that is why men also avoid politics and do not show any kind of interest. This is because of the notoriety of politics that exist in general population.

8.5. Financial Limitations and Lack of Support

Apart from the above discussed barriers one aspect that readily contributes to an individual freewill is the financial independency. Financial status majorly describes the social position of an individual and is therefore an important matter in political decision making. Beside social capital an individual requires financial capital for the political participation as candidate. Families do not show support to those who want to enter politics because it is also matter of finances. A young respondent shares,

"Politics ar niyas gany but maslain bichan. Gushinanch ety ny k niyas ayomaiban k elections gant butan paisa awaji. Men pehla politics r giwan k ouwaly paisa bim. Jeke

un juan middle-class family xum niyas rai etuman k en meny k support amochuman, enmo muimo khandan k beya besky acha khasa paisa awaji maimi."

"There are challenges faced by women to enter a political party. Females are unable to take part in elections since it requires financial stability. Few who were able to join politics they had strong financial backgrounds. A middle-class woman like me who desires to join politics, no one will support her, not even her family because it requires money."

Concluding the above discussion, barriers that restrict substantive participation of women can be summed up as, cultural reasons, bad political image in general population, political awareness personal interest, and financial instability. Women encourage other female to participate as candidate, but they rarely want themselves to become part of political arena. This is because of a woman's honour that is questioned on a minor inconvenience. Young aspirant women want to break this existing cycle by exploring this field but then it becomes matter of financial stability that is required to enter into politics. Based on the suggestions of the respondents, young and educated people of area (both men and women) can help with awareness issue regarding importance of vote. Even if women do not want to participate as candidate, a genuine decision of vote and personal willingness to choose a political leader can be communicated with masses. People need to know about the consequences of right decision and wrong decision. This could help with political empowerment of whole population regardless of any gender.

9. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of overall study and provides a brief conclusion.

9.1. Summary

The current study explores „social forces influencing female voting behaviour in Aliabad Hunza". The changing times require to study female empowerment in term of political freedom and how females have distinctive experiences as compared to her male counterparts. The studies around the world identify unique experiences of females which are majorly derivatives of cultural norms and values. To document these unique experiences this study collects data from 28 respondents selected on the base of the categories of age, education, occupation, family background and family structure with the help of in-depth interviews. The study carries out a qualitative research design to implore different narratives and provide a descriptive explanation of local narratives.

The study finds that perception of vote among females largely understood in terms of what the leader is expected to do. Vote for them is a way through which a person is selected who becomes the political leader and his core duty is to serve the community and work for the progress of the area. A comparable understanding of vote is found where some women think that vote is a civil duty and one must duly perform it whereas, few others think that it is a waste of time based on their previous experiences. The sense of duty is instilled among through many cultural and religious teaching where women or the overall population is told to be obedient to the nation or state. This submission is manifested in times of elections when women dutifully cast their vote without thinking of any personal gain. Moreover, vote is understood to be civil right of women and since its their right, they can use in ways they like. Women vote thinking of the personal gains and the expected future benefits that they might get from the elected political leader. It also incapsulates supporting federal government, meaning that women will vote to the candidate who represents federal ruling political party. This loyalty of people might be returned in favours given for regions in terms of development and progress of the area. Women sometimes use this civil right of theirs to show resistance which is not in open public spaces but rather in closed voting booths. Women to defy what they are told to do and vote for whoever they like once they are in the privacy of voting booth.

Voting among women of Aliabad is understood as a unanimous action to elect one who confirms to the collective social group interests to which they belong. This is very much clarified in the results of 2020 elections in which the majority votes were won by PPP candidate who belonged shared same attributes as people of Aliabad. The unanimous decision is influenced by the family unit to which the women belong. They will no doubt vote for the candidate to which they have close family relations.

Studying the freewill of women in political decision making, certain factors are identified that include, candidate's attributes, education of voters, family honour and integrity, religion, commitment to other, and social media. These describe how women choose to vote and they choose to vote. Besides these factors, patriarchal structure of community shows considerable effects on women voting choices. Men are part of politics and make it functional. To meet their needs and motives men mobilize women to decide their vote that favours their motive. The effects of patriarchy are not seen at surface level, but they have vivid influences on women on deeper level. The family integrity and honour that are usually connected with women participation politics provides details of this effect. The effects are manifolds, but the expectations in culture about how women should act in political arena is one of them. This structure ultimately becomes a barrier for the active participation of women in political arena.

Considering the gender roles and processes of socialization in culture women themselves try to keep a distance from politics. This gap then broadens the issues of political awareness that is considerably very low among females of Aliabad. Women end up thinking that politics is not a space for them but for men who they will support when they are asked for. Political awareness and personal interest are seen having reverse effects on each other. Women who do not have political consciousness tend to show no interest as they are recorded saying that they do not have political knowledge which affects their interest. Women also tend to explain that since they do not have interest in politics they are do not want or felt the need to get political awareness.

Though women are not linked to politics or have enough political awareness, nevertheless they are aware of Pakistani politics and its drawbacks. A bad political image of Pakistani politics is commonly shared among women. The solution the women think for this to avoid politics altogether so that remain out of the criticism of public. For women matters of female honour are utmost important as expressed by

cultural values, therefore, to attach themselves with a notorious institute is not worth it.

Lastly, the socio-economic status of people in Aliabad does not variates much. People do live a quality life with accesses to basic human needs however, financial stability remains a factors directly influencing the choices of women in the area. Families do support women in every aspect but a lack of support is experienced when it comes to support women in competing in elections.

9.2. Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that female participation in elections is impacted by a multitude of social factors, with patriarchy, family relationships, education, and the attributes of the candidate being the most significant influencers. Financial independence also has some effect, although it is not a dominant factor in determining such behaviour. Despite the fact that individuals in Aliabad belong to similar socio-economic statuses, there are variations in family dynamics due to differences in education, leading to divergent views on female autonomy. Although females have relatively similar experiences in elections, they are kept at a distance from the political sphere due to the negative perception of politics in the region. Cultural values that place a high emphasis on a woman's honour contribute to the significant disparity between women and politics. The outcome of the recent elections in 2020, which saw the PPP emerge victorious in Aliabad, highlights the fact that women in Aliabad are primarily convinced by the attributes of the candidate, particularly family background, residency, and education. There are some other factors which restrict freewill of choosing a candidate, to address these factors, a bottom-up and top-down approach study is recommended to deduce relevant steps from available evidence and existing results, ultimately aimed at promoting equal participation of both genders in the area.

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ANEXXURE 1
Glossary

1.	Mohallahs	Neighbourhoods
2.	Farxin	Male traditional cap
3.	Iraaghi	Female traditional cap
4.	Shuqa	Woollen coat worn by men
5.	Hoocho	Traditional leather boots
6.	Ginani	Cultural festive of harvesting celebrated on 21st June
7.	Bo Fao	Cultural festive of seed sowing celebrated in February
8.	Thumshaling	Cultural festive in remembrance of a tyrant king and the end of his rule
9.	Novroz	Cultural festive of new year celebrated on 21st of March
10.	Shiri Badat	The cannable king who was burnt by his own daughter
11.	Watan	Area/ Region
12.	LSOs	Local Support Organizations
13.	Roam	Smaller family unit within a tribe
14.	Baltit	Capital of Hunza State during Mir
15.	Karimabad	New name of Baltit
16.	Tham	Ruler of Hunza
17.	Mir	Title given to the ruler
18.	Burushaski	Local language mostly spoken in central Hunza
19.	Wakhi	Local language mostly spoken in upper Hunza
20.	Shina	Local language mostly spoken in lower Hunza
21.	Subah mo Chai	Breakfast
22.	Tanzeem	Community women organization related to finances of women
23.	Numberdaar	Tribal Leader

Census Report

S. No	Name	Age	Education	Contact	Profession	Marital Status	Relationship with Head of Family	Religious Background (Sect)	Family Name (Roam)	Family Structure (Joint/Nuclear)

Interview Consent

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research. I am a student of MPhil at the Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. I am conducting research on the topic of "**Social Forces Influencing Female Voting Behaviour in Aliabad Hunza**". I will be grateful if you can participate in this research with utmost honesty.

Your response will be highly appreciated. The information provided here will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. The data recorded will not be provided to third parties without your consent.

Please sign below for the consent of your participation in this research.

Interviewee Name:

Signature:

Best,

Ms. Huma Jehangir

Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

humaajehangir@gmail.com

Interview Guide

1. What do you think of vote?

2. How do you define vote?

3. Are you registered as a voter?

4. Did you ever cast a vote?

5. If yes, how many times?

6. What do you think of female voting?

7. How do you think female voting is different from male voting?

8. How you choose to vote?

9. Do you know anything about candidates before voting day?

10. Do you have access to information regarding different parties political campaigning?

11. How often do you participate in such political campaigns?

12. Can you go to any campaign of your own choice?

13. If not, what are the reasons?

14. Can you access any kind of information regarding political parties?

15. If yes, what are the sources?

16. What do you think is most intriguing in the available information?

17. How do these information pools represent your likes?

18. Does any kind of symbolism is communicated with you through such information?

19. What of think of party slogans?

20. Do you think they are relatable?

21. What influence does they have while you select to a candidate?

22. Does the information provided about the political candidates should confirm to your ideas to believe in it?

23. How do you see new candidates appearing in elections?

24. Should the new candidates follow particular norms to make their influence?

25. How would describe your political affiliation?

26. Does your family have any kind of political inclinations?

27. If yes, do you also share such inclinations?

28. If not, what are the reasons?

29. Does your family head have a say in every family members" voting decision?

30. Is it predetermined in your family to vote for a particular party?

31. Does your family consider opinions of the educated person in the family?

32. Is your family divided on basis of opinions and party inclinations?

33. How much authority to you hold regarding yourself?

34. Does this authority also determine your choice of a political candidate?

35. What if your choices are different from your family's decision?

36. Do you have autonomy to practice your choice?

37. Have you ever thought of participating in elections?

38. If yes, what is the driving factor?

39. If not, what you think is the reason behind it?

40. How to political parties treat you as voters?

41. Has anyone of them changed their agendas towards female?

42. What do you think what political awareness is?

43. How would you define it? (as layperson or as an educated one)

44. Do you think political awareness is important for every individual (male and female inclusivity)?

45. How does the information influence your choice?

46. Do you consider personal aspects of the leader before voting?

47. What are those personality aspects that you deem important?

48. Do you underline same personality aspects for both a male and a female representative?

49. Are there any expectations that you hold towards political candidates?

50. What might be these expectations when you consider a male representative and when you consider a female representative?

51. How would you want your political representative to act?

52. Do you think the way candidates represent themselves have changed over time?

53. If yes, which changes have you witnessed and you think are important to determine their eligibility as a candidate?

54. Which factors do you consider important to feel affiliated or connected with the candidate?

55. Would you consider a candidate who belongs to your family?

56. What about a candidate who does not belong to your family?

57. Do you think family or biradiri will be important factor while you choose your candidate?

58. If not, what might be the reasons?

59. What will be your choice when you have candidates from your sect and from other sects?

60. Would you consider a candidate who does not belong to your sect?

61. How would you define your relations with people of other sects?

62. Do you think religious background matters in a political sphere?

63. If yes, which of both (family and religious background) do you think is important to compete in elections?

64. How does male candidates reflect your knees during their campaigns?

65. Do you think a female candidate will be better than a male candidate to reflect your needs in community?

66. Do you think social capital determines your voting decisions?

67. How does your family's social capital influence your families voting decisions last time?

68. How does your family's political links influence your decision?

69. How did it affect your decision last time?

70. Does your occupation or anyone's in your family influence your choices?

71. If yes, how did it affect during last elections?

72. Do you think as a woman your choices are much very much influenced by your financial dependence or independence?

73. If yes, how do you experience these influences?

74. Does your other family members male spouse support your political decisions if you're not financially dependent?

75. What if you're financially independent?

76. Can you participate in political debates that might happen in your community or in family?

77. How do other fellow females react if you provide a political opinion of your own?

78. How does having a political opinion affect your position your family and in your community?

79. Do you think education can become a strong determinant of your political choices?

80. How does do you think education helps you in your choices?

81. Which of the following similarities that you share with the candidate, or the merit is important according to you?

82. Why do you think this factor is important?

83. What if you are provided with a chance to participate in elections?

84. How will that change your stance in community?

Picture 1: Focused Group Discussion, Sultanabad

(Source: Fieldwork)

Picture 2: Focused Group Discussion, Sina Khun

(Source: Fieldwork)

Mphil Thesis

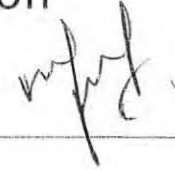| **4**%	**2**%	**2**%	**2**%
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