



## Impact of *Biradarism* on Local Politics of District Jhang and Chiniot

Syed Munawar Abbas<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Waris<sup>2</sup>, Hamid Iqbal<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

This paper aims at two objectives; first is to survey the geographical effects on the ethnography and politics, second one is the role of the non-physical bonds among “biradris”; as well as the part of “Asbiyah” factor on the politics of a region. This paper will describe the etymology of the words of Jhang and Chiniot which presently are two separate districts. Later on, it will through light on the origin, timely distribution of administration along with political, geographical and historical milieu of the area and it will also explain the genealogy and role of biradaris in this particular region. Conclusion will reveal how these biradaris are influencing the politics and why this area is either progressing or declining.

**Keywords:** Asbiyah, Biradarism, Factionalism, Ethno-Politics, Biradari-Politics

### 1. Jhang: An Overview

This paper presents socio-historical backgrounds of Jhang district generally along with district Chiniot, which was the largest tehsil of Jhang district before July 2009, particularly on its ethnography, history, demography, economy and its place in the politics of the Punjab province. The biradari politics and its role since its origin to the present situation are also focused. The name of Jhang originated from name of its headquarters and locally the word Jhang expresses its meaning as ‘a cluster of trees’. Apparently the bunch of coppice surrounded the city from all sides (Statistics Division, 2000).

The people developed themselves that resulted the growth and significance of city with the span of time. Presently, the west of the city still has old remains near the shrine of Nur Shah. It is also said that it was founded by Mal Khan in 1462 that was the ninth powerful ruler of this very region, and was from the Sials biradari. The name Jhang actually means a wood having name as Jhangi that is used for clump of trees in local use. The existing city was originated by Lal Nath, a Sanyasi Fakir during the reign of Aurangzeb in 1688. The city was inundated and occupied in 1805 by Ranjit Singh. Later it become a Tehsil then District, with its four tehsils named Chiniot, Jhang, Shorkot, Ahmadpur Sial and later on added tehsil Lalian (presently, Lalian has become a tehsil of Chiniot and Chiniot has become a district and has been separated from Jhang administration). The District has Layyah, Bhakhar and Khushab in its western part, Faisalabad and Toba Tek Singh lies in eastern side while south-western area is adjacent to Muzaffargarh. It covers the area of 8,809 square kilometers (Statistics Division, 2000). Previously, District Jhang belonged to Multan and Sargodha divisions and currently it is a part of Faisalabad division. Topographically Jhang is divided into three regions, i.e. Thal in western part of River Jhelum, fruitful land towards eastern side and areas in the sideways of Chaj Doab. This area has been densely inhabited. The population has many biradaris<sup>4</sup> (Eglar, 1960) composed on the basis of financial sources of landowners or industrialists or farmers and working class (Fukuyama, 2018) as well as on the basis of language, sect, and genealogical origins. All these biradaris play their role in the politics (via well-established biradarism) of the area due to their influences (Lieven, 2012). The major castes and biradaris in these districts; the Chiniot and Jhang are Sials Sahibzaadaaz, Jats, Gillotars, Balochs, Nissowanans, Maghianans, Khokhars, Lalis, Nauls, Qazis, Sipra, Syeds, Qureshis, Khojas (Sheikhs) and Rajputs (T.N.Madan, 1995).

### 2. History of Chiniot

Chiniot, which was tehsil headquarter of district Jhang upgraded to district in 2009 located at the eastern bank of Chenab River and 85KM away from Jhang city in northern part. In district gazetteer of Jhang, the description about this tehsil Chiniot is provided as significant town during ancient times but its origin and history is not well-known. Traditionally it is assumed that Chiniot was established by Chandan, the daughter of King and sister of Machi Khan when she was crossing the area during an expedition and she was charmed by site-hill, river and plain (Statistics Division, 2000). The town was built by her order so it was called as Chandniot and latterly this name was despoiled as Chiniot.

The city witnessed several changes and the prosperous era was the reign of Nawab Saadullah Khan who was appointed by Shah Jahan as Governor (Wasti, 1980) while the incursion of Nadir Shah Durrani and endless clashes between Sials, Misls and Bhangi Sardars during 18<sup>th</sup> century damaged this badly (Statistics Division, 2000). In 1856, the town got the status of tehsil of Multan division and after six years, in 1862, municipality was convened and administered by Deputy Commissioner, Tehsildar and eight nominated members (Statistics Division, 2000). Chiniot remained the part of Multan until 1959 and then subordinated to Sargodha while

<sup>1</sup> Deputy Director Colleges/Assistant Professor of History, Govt. Islamia Post-Graduate College Chiniot, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, GC University Faisalabad, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup> PhD Scholar, Department of History, GC University Faisalabad, Pakistan, [historianhami@gmail.com](mailto:historianhami@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> *Biradari* means tribe, clan or caste.

in 1982, it turned as Jhang's tehsil and in 2009 it has been given the status of district. Chiniot is connected with four districts including Hafizabad, Sargodha, Faisalabad and Jhang having the slope of low rocky hills. The city has three major parts, i.e. hills, urban area and the Thatti, majorly occupied by Sheikh Sulamana Syeds around the tomb of Hazrat Pir Sheikh Ismail Bokhari.

### 3. Towns of District Chiniot

#### 3.1. Rajoa

This area is famous due to Hazrat Shah Dolat (R.A.) of Uch Sharif who came for the preaching of Islam in 640 A.H and became permanent resident. The Rajoka Tribe was mainly inhabitants in this part so it was termed as Rajoa. Sardar Rajan Qatal Bukhari, a descendant of Shah Daulat got prominence and appointed as administrator during the period of Ghazi Khan Sial and later on Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar awarded him land. Currently it is known as Rajoa Saadaat due to Daultana Syeds (Thahim, 2005).

#### 3.2. Kurak Muhammadi

The town located at Jhang road in western part and firstly rose by Hazrat Imam-ud-din (R.A.). The area was named at this Sufi Saint and after his death called as the Kurak Imam Din and later on as Kurak Muhammadi. This was occupied by powerful tribes of Kangar, Chaddar and Jappah (Thahim, 2005).

#### 3.3. Bhowana

On Jhang-Chiniot Road in the west, Bhowana exists at 30KM away from city. Basically a fort under the control of Jappa tribe was known as Bhowana (Thahim, 2005).

#### 3.4. Lalian

Lalian is based on Chiniot-Sargodha Road with two historical traditional bases about its origin. Chiniot's history unveiled that a saint Hafiz Muhammad Siddique Lali established Lalian as his living place. Second tradition reports that town was made in 1772 by Hafiz Muhammad Siddique Lali during the era of Ahmad Shah Abdali (Thahim, 2005). Census report 1998 revealed that Lalian had majority of Lali and Nissowana biradaris (Statistics Division, 2000).

#### 3.5. Chenab Nagar (Rabwah)

Chenabnagar (old Rabwah) is situated on Chiniot-Sargodha Road on the bank of river Chenab distant from 100 KM of Jhang and 7 KM from Chiniot (Thahim, 2005).

### 4. Different Biradaris of District Chiniot and Jhang and their Pattern of Politics

This area has been inhabited by a large number of biradaris which play a vital role in the politics of this area. This includes Aheers, Arain, Awans, Bajwas, Balhar, Butt, Bloachs, Bhati, Bhuta, Tuklir, Thaheem, Tarars, Tiwanas, Jota, Joiya, Jappa, Cheemas, Chattas, Chughtae, Chauhan, Khojas (Sheikh), Dhaloon, Haral, Hanjra, Dhudi, Rajoka, Rajputs, Randhawa, Sajanky, Sipra, Sangra, Sudhan, Sials, Syed, Asi, Qazi, Kanju, Kalyaar, Kaang, Kathiya, Khral, Kamanger, Khokhars, Khichi, Gujar, Ghakar, Gloter, Luk, Lodhi, Langy, Lalis, Mekan, Mosalli, Mughal, Mathrumy, Nun, Noul, Nekokary, Nisowana, Waraich and Waish are import.

This setup of *biradaris* was instigated by British after the downfall of Sikhs in Punjab. The British supported those biradaris that were economically and socially strong. There were two types of biradaris, i.e. one Shah Daultana "Syeds" who were loyal to British while Sheikh Salamana Syeds were in opposition to Raj. They remained influential in all traits and even have socio-economic influence in current days. Syeds Shah Daultanas were benefitted by British due to their patronage. This trend played the main role in the future politics of this area and Syeds are still influential in Rajoa Saadaat. Apart of this Syeds of Shah Jewana based in Jhang, Chiniot, Shorkot are one of two clans of Syeds that enjoyed political and economic power (Chaudhary Gulzar Ahmad Chukiyah, 2016).

The Sheikh Salamana Syeds mostly concentrated the politico-economic upsurge in Thatti Bala, Thati Sheikh Imsail Bukhari and numerous other rural areas of eastern side. They are well-known for exceptional brick work that is also a hallmark of architect in city. Similarly, the major portion of land in Chiniot is still owned by these Syeds. Syeds considered as custodians of spiritual followers of their forefathers and under their umbrella, annual *Urs* (fairs) of saints, Isma'il Bokhari (R.A), Shah Dolat (R.A) and Shah Jiwana (R.A) held on their shrines.

Qazis of Chiniot is one of other famous clan in the city and their traces founded from Arab Qureshi tribes. They asserted themselves as heir of Abu Ayuob Ansari (R.A) therefore deliberated as the Ansari Qureshi in records as well. Nawab Wazir Khan, Governor of Lahore during Shah Jehan's reign and Qazi Muhammad Yousuf were notable characters among this clan. Emperor granted *jagirs* to them and they are still persuasive landowners in politics of Chiniot and Jhang (Ali, 2016). These areas are based on factionalism and major castes are *Syed, Sial, Sahibzadaz, Qureshi, Baloch, Sheikh, Lali, Qazi and Nissowanas* in current politics. The collaborative type politics is just because of relationship between these leading classes as well as the lower classes (Fukuyama, 2018).

The Nissowanas, Jat tribe known as Rajput are the residents of north of Chiniot coming between the Lalis, Galottars and Shahpur (Statistics Division, 2000). Their claim is that they are Khokhar Rajputs while report of Shahpur settlement revealed that they were infamous, kleptomaniacal, and unlegislated peoples. Only

15-20 families of Nisoowanans are based in Chiniot as landowners but their matrimonial relations with Lalties, Gondals and Middianans exerted massive influence in power politics. Nisoowanans basically belongs to Kandiwal, Babharana, Lola and Lalian (Lali, 2016). In the west of their lands Bhatti biradari lives and with their villages toward Chenab Lalties are settled. They claim that their origin is Khurasan and considered themselves as progenies of Aryans. Zaildar Muhammad Lali, G. M Lali and Siddique Lali were forefathers of this clan. Lalian transformed from a village to sub-tehsil of Chiniot, then tehsil of Jhang and now as tehsil of district Chiniot. Lalties are simple people but immense landowners of the region after Syeds and these 20-25 families of Lalis plays vital role in district politics of Chiniot (Lali, 2016).

These dominated classes have influential role in electoral politics since 1920. There were several prominent personalities of Shah Daultana Syeds that ruled as socio-political elites in three generations. These shahs included *Sardar Hussain, G. M. Shah, Muhammad Ali, Zulfiqar Ali, Sardar Tahir, Ghulam Abbas, Zafer Abbas, Fazzal Abbas, Hasan Mortaza and Abbas Ali*. From clan of *Sheikh Salamana Syeds, Gulam Ali, Altaaf Husain, Amir Husain, Muhammad Raza and Anayat Ali* played vital role in politics. *The Nissowanans has Muhammad Mumtaz, Kamran Mumtaaz and Zafer Abbas, Lalis has Muhammad Mohsin, Dost Muhammad, Imtiaaz Ahmed, Ghulam Muhammad and Riaz Ahmad Lali and Qazis has Maula Bax, Gulam Ali, Ghulam Murtaza, Ghulam Dastageer, Safder Ali, Ali Hasan Raza and Hasan Ali* (Haral, 2016).

Information collected from different *Patwars* disclosed that major land of tehsil Chiniot and District Jhang belongs to Syed, Qazi, Lali, Nissowana and Sheikh clans consisting of 8750 Sq. Ac. The area of tehsil Jhang and Shorkot occupied in same ratio by Sials and *Arif Khan, Najef Khan, Amir Abbas and Aun Abbas's families* and Rajhbana Sial owns 15000 acres. Janjiana Sials have prominent leaders Umer Khan (ex-MPA) and Mahadoo Lal Husain (ex-Nazim Shorkot) while Kammalana Sials, Sargana Sials and Khaathias also have hold in politics and land in Jammabandis or by direct possession.

The Awans and posterities of Sultan Bahoo (R.A) did not own much land but influences socio-political phenomena of area due to spiritual followings and its associated wealth. Rana and Araian biradari also exist in same context. Syeds, Bhangu and Mahangan of Shorkot are less persuasive while Quraishis are powerful in politics and holds land almost 18000 acres (Patwari, 2017). Some of famous Quraishis are *Makhдум Ghazanfer Abbas, Makhдум Shafique Husain and Makhдум Adil Husain* and in *Bharwana Sials, Shaheer Ali, Akhtar Abbas and Saima Akhtar* are notable in socio-political and economic perspectives. Despite of rigid social setup and ignorance, several female candidates including *Saima Akhtar Bharwana, Abida Hussain, Shughara Imam and Ghulam Bibi Bharwana* were elected as parliamentarians. The belongings of lands are given in following table:

**Table 1**

Biradari	Prominent Personalities	Owned Land (Mourabas)
Sials	Ghulam Haidar Khan, Aslam Khan, Ghulam-Bibi and Salim Bibi and their families	700/-
Jalal Khanana-Sial	Babar Ali and others	250/-
Maghyana Sial	Nawab Ammanullah Khan, Umar Hayat and Khurram Khan	700/-
Jabboanas	Ghazanfer Ali, Amjad Ali, Faisal Hayat and Zergham Abbas	----
Syeds	Syeds of Uch	800/-
	Syed of Shah Jewana	1500/-

Source: *Patwar Khanas*

The upper given table explores that major part of this area belongs to the said families while other big names are as follows:

**Table 2**

Biradari	Major Land Owners	Tehsil of Land
Bhatti	Taimur Bhatti	Jhang
Chila Sial	Akram and Azam Chila	
Gadi Baloch	Ghulam Ahmed	
Baloch	Iftkhar Khan and Alina Iftkhar	
Bussalana Sials	Sial family	
Naul	Amir Naul	
Sargana Sial	Sargana family	Jhang and Shorkot

Source: *Patwar Khanas*

There are some other prominent families are also present that does not own much lands but expanded their businesses and became able to make a strong hold in politics. This included *Sheikhs and Janjuas* with some famous names, i.e. *Muhammad Iqbal, Sheikh Akram, Sheikh Yaqub, Waqas Akram* in *Sheikhs* and *Mian Riaz*

*Hashamat, Mian Zahoor Sajid in Janjuas.* These clans are contributing in social, economic and political fields since colonial times.

It is the preeminent case of successes of these castes in terms of applied patterns and practices of establishing dominance, especially through collaboration and the consent (Gramsci, 1996). The ruling families and their electable already availed strong hold in local patterns and it was witnessed with the replacement of one electable with another in the same biradari. This can be exemplified as Rajoa's Muhammad Ali Shah who was replaced by Muhammad Tahir Shah and then Tahir Shah was replaced with Zulfikar Ali which was the son of Muhammad Ali Shah. These families even practice ancillary fierceness in electoral campaigns as well as on the day of elections to ensure their victories (Shah, 2017). In this regard use of religion in manner of sects, Gaddis and custodianship of tomb are used that blows the sectarianism as well.

The religio-spiritual legacy plays the thoughts of ignorant public so the disciples must elect their sect based electable in law-making bodies. Personal friendships, biradari attachments and socio-cultural recognition also help them to get the support of middle class. This situation never allows the winning of other biradaris that can be exemplified by Sheikh Salamana Syeds as they are much persuasive to middle class as *Mian Syed Salahoun Shah* defeated *Sardar Syed Altaf Hussain Shah* under B.D. system and this family perceptively safeguarded the backing of Syed biradari (Shah, 2017).

The dominant biradari does not tolerate the victory of any other middle-class family even belong to the same clan. The Syed biradaris and especially who have *darbars/tombs*, regularly celebrates the fairs/Melas at district and provincial levels and the twelve months progressive celebrations in the honor of Hazrat Sakhi Sarwar. Urs are arranged to promote innate ethos to strongly hold the economy, political, social and religious thoughts of people. Urs is a best strategy of election campaign by *Pirs/Gaddi Nasheens* that are religio-spiritual leaders of Mureedis too influences them to vote them concerned *Pirs*, otherwise they will be considered as *murtadd/kafir/infidel*. Even the mosques and concerned institutions are liable for election campaigns of their concerned leaders because *Moulvis* depends upon these feudal Lord.

The hold on religious elements in Jhang district can be witnessed in *Jabboana, Wassoo, Nikokara and Jassarat villages*. The whole election bases on masses because emotional wave by electable is already portrayed to them and it is their obligation to protect the esteem of concerned candidate or biradari. They amicably control any new political rival by supporting the candidate of biradari and this continuous activity made them successful to control all changes. The electable of these leading families join powerful socio-political institutions, political parties or any other institution that helps to maintain prevailing system of power like that Rajoa's *Hasan Mortaza* and Chiniot's *Qazi Ali Hasan Raza*. The unusual gentleman-ship image of electable helps them in biradaris and in electoral politics.

Subalterns generally vote to those contestants which are heads of clans or bulging characters or the guardians of concerned emotive, divine or collective identity as Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2018) identified the essence, environment and the experience as basic key factors. These electable are generally tight focused to lower class because of religiously and economically respect while broader in the meetings of elites. These situations lead toward respectful vote of voters to these castes by repeatedly revival of biradarism in slogans such as,

*Jan Rab Di*

*Vote Syed Da*

It means that over lives belongs to Allah Almighty but our vote would be only for Syeds. These biradaris which are basically elites do not bother emotional and silly conduct of common men and they never provide them any space because of their colonial sense of superiority. They even do not bother the needs and demands of lower class and focuses on their own economic gains. Instead of this, they stand successful in politics and consider their victories as legacy of their caste (Shah H. S., 2016).

To increase their societal appreciations, ideologically suppresses lower class by taking modern education and securing careers in administration. Their frenetic plans, improper progressive framework, joining the local contractors and bureaucracy for economic benefits, indirect increase in clashes, no efforts for education, usage of British policies, using the name of prominent persons of biradaris are the main tactics to not to upsurge the bourgeoisie. That is why the influential families of Jhang are still capable to uphold their social and dogmatic supremacy. The other aspects are absence of financial openings, illiteracy and lower social mobility. The collaboration between rulers and public as well as within biradaris is the reason. In the politics of Jhang, these kinds of alliances were traced from 1923 to 2008.

This can be exemplified by the collaboration of Qazi and Syed family in general elections of 2002 and Syed-Lali collaboration in local body elections of 2005 and Qazis and Sahibzaadaaz in Zila-Nazim elections. The alliance of Sials and Syeds of ShahJewana is more notable. The alliances are viewed against the rivals by major biradaris likewise *Zakir and Manzoor group, Moulvi and Sheikh group and Sipah-e-Sahaba* Pakistan in Jhang. Similarly, *Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh and Meher Muhammad Hayaat groups* faced alliances and alliance of *Moulvi* and feudal group, Balochs, Gadi-Balochs and Bhattis' alliance with Sials and Syeds also witnessed. *Moulvi group, Syeds and Sheikhs of Chiniot and Jhang*, the *Sials* are also in the same line (Shah H. S., 2016).

The political condition of Jhang revealed that major biradaris not only collaborated with their biradaris but with lower classes as well for their political agendas. The conjugal coalition is another fact for making powerful

biradaris as well as representation in politics such as matrimonies between Syed and Qazi biradari, Bhatti and Syed biradari, Nissowana and Lali biradari, Qazis and Lalis, Sials and Chaudaris and between Syeds and Sials. The results of elections since 1920 revealed that factionalism strengthened these castes in district politics. The continuous selection of same electable enhanced *biradari* politics instead of ideological politics. This work focused all kind of tactics of biradaris to maintain the hold in economic and political arenas. The study beheld that these biradaris have dominance in districts but *Fakhri, Arain, Janjua, Tagha and Rana-Rajput* also strengthened their position in indigenous economic and political domain that identifies the rise of new entities. However, these biradaris used religious card with sectarian mobilizing of Sunnis and Shias (Kamran, 2009). This factor cannot become able to replace biradarism but promoted sectarianism with the rise of theologian class like *Haq-Nawaz Jhangvi, Aazam Tariq, Zia ur Rehman Faruqi, Ahmad Ludhyanvi, Molana Muawiya Azam, Zahid Anwar Shorkoti, Asif Muawiya, Manzur Ahmad Chinioti and Molana Waris*. The sectarian divide once again paved way for biradaris. The phenomena observed in Jhang, Shorkot and Chiniot in the constituencies of Provincial Assembly where biradari was opponent to each other due to internal issues of families. The dominance of biradaris can be witnessed in all these settlements where they had won. The political behavior is still unchanged in rural areas while the partial sections of citizens in urban areas of Jhang, Shorkot and Chiniot leftovers with much limited exception to general pattern that is based on furniture industry, other business, education, inner glitches of clans, incessant course of egalitarian electioneering, exposure of new generations, print and electronic media and social media. Contrary to that, new compeers of elite class once again focused on collateral politics as Antoni Gramsci pointed out that education and sources of propagation are for the poor and elites always remains at upper layers. The post-2008 political condition revealed that Jhang and Chiniot once again under the leadership of elites and they secured their identity in politics, culture and economy. In all these times, biradaris successfully dominated the politics on the basis of factionalism and biradarism remained successful.

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