



Fari Journal of Social Sciences And Law

Vol: 03 Issue: 01
2026

<https://journals.fari.org.pk/index.php/FJSSL/>
<https://doi.org/10.47205/fari.2024.fjssl.145>

P-ISSN: 3079-2649
E-ISSN: 3079-2657



British India and Caste System: How the Caste Identity was transformed into Political Identity

Dr. Nabeila Akbar

Professor in Political Science, teaching as visiting professor in Punjab University, Lahore. Pakistan

Email: nabeelaakber13@gmail.com

Abstract: Developing communities in South Asia are dominated by an emotional value system rather than a rational one. As a result, the politics in such a society appear to be heavily influenced by emotional values with several dimensions, both outwardly and inwardly. The diversified cultural society of South Asia is critical, as the caste system has an emotional attachment and a strong hold on politics. South Asian culture is mostly defined by social groups as Baradari system. These are social and cultural identities, which were turned into socio-political identity when the British rulers introduced democratic institutions to the Indian peninsula. During the political development process in the continent, the British rulers implemented such strategies that not only increased their authority over the Indians, but also shaped the political system and identity politics in India, from the grassroots to the national levels. This study has investigated certain questions like how the social identity of caste system did was transformed into political identity, during British rule in, India? What were the policies, they adopted to manipulate the 'caste emotions' of the locals? The objective of this research paper is, to explore the link between the caste system and democratic institutions introduced in British India, and their entrance in the corridor of power politics. The research methodology used is historical, descriptive and analytical. The research paper concludes that such legal and administrative laws were implemented by British rulers which manipulated the 'Caste Emotions' of the Indians and caste institution became an important pillar of power politics.

Keywords: Social Identity, Caste System, Political Identity, Caste Emotions, British Laws

Introduction

Caste Emotions have played a significant role in the construction of social and political identities in South Asia. It has divided the society into numerous social groups and this segmentation is based on the functions and professions that individuals perform in the society. This social categorization of individuals as caste system in the Indian continent was recognized as their caste



identity and was placed in a hierarchical structure in South Asian culture. It was not politicized until the arrival of British masters. Many conquerors have ruled the Indian continent for ages, but none attempted to modify the social structure of this land. They conquered this region for economic and political motives, and kept the social structure of caste system parted away from the ruling system. The British Empire imposed its authority in 1858 through British Parliament Act. In order to reign over Indian people, the new rulers initiated several legal and administrative laws. They established a democratic political system and institutions in old Indian civilization which was primarily based on one-man rule known as "monarchy or kingship." The British authorities desired to install a Western democratic system on traditional India with the help of India's existing social structure. As a result, a political development process began in British India, transforming the country's social structure and identities into political ones. During this transformation process, the local people's 'caste emotions' were politicized. Emotions, associations, feelings, and loyalty connected with social identity groups (or castes) were exploited to establish the democratic institutions and resultantly caste system became a part of the political power structure. Caste emotions helped to form and enhance the political development process in South Asia. Throughout this political process, caste identities were transformed into political identity in British Indian society.

1. Political Development in South Asia: Theoretical Perspective

The concept of political development may be traced back to the mid-1940s, following the end of World War II and the independence of several African and Asian governments from colonial powers. Political scientists disagree on a clear definition of 'Political Development'. Samuel H. Beer emphasized the relevance of time in the idea of political evolution. He assigned three dimensions to this notion. First and foremost, it refers to a directed movement or trend. Second, this directional shift occurs in phases, and third, each stage is followed by the previous one-"several successive stages of an entity, each caused by the preceding stage, with the whole process showing a trend (Beer, 1974)." According to Lucian W. Pye, "It is a process of social distribution, of adapting, fusing, and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands," and considers the development of the nation-state system to be the primary step in the gradual dispersion of world culture through all civilizations (Pye & Verba, 1965). Pye, who was a leading figure among the early writers, analyzed the concept of political development in depth. He has stated that political development targets the origins of people's views, perceptions, and attitudes about politics and rivalry among social and political groupings (caste, baradari, tribe). It may occur in the entire population, at government level, and in the organization of political system. The political development in South Asia during British rule has followed this process of political evolution and has targeted the belief, perceptions, feelings and associations of people towards caste and baradari to shape western politics in India.

1.1 History of Caste System in South Asia

South Asia is a densely inhabited and agricultural region with a history as long as human civilization on Earth. Before 50000 to 12000, humans in this area lived in caves and were dispersed. Then, certain wild tribes known as 'Australoid' reached South Asia in quest of food, as this cultivated land was abundant (Jilalpur, 1999). A tribe known as the 'Drawarr' visited the



subcontinent around 29000 B.C. and built the first civilization on the Indian subcontinent, but they were conquered and scattered by the powerful Arian civilization, which brought with it a caste structure in South Asia. The term 'Caste' comes from the Spanish and Portuguese words 'Casta', which indicate "race, lineage, pure, or breed". After the Spanish colonized the New World, they used the term "clan or lineage," but the Portuguese first used it in the contemporary sense after arriving in India in 1498, where Indian civilization was based on endogamous, hereditary social groups. Caste is a system of dividing individuals into groups in a society based on birth, occupation, language, endogamy, and hereditary transmission of lifestyle, habits, values, norms, and traditions. It is a social identity of individuals within a culture. Membership in such a group is determined by birth, and individuals cannot leave it, making it a closed group (Ahmad & Fozia, 2011).

Caste systems occur all across the world, but the classic form is found in Indian civilization, where it dates back to prehistoric times. After World War II, the United Nations recognized subcontinent India as South Asia, which included Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, and Bangladesh (after 1971). The origins of the caste system in South Asia may be traced back to ancient Indian history. Anthropologists and sociologists utilize the Indian caste system as an analogy for studying caste/baradari. It is a sociocultural group that promotes specific ideas, beliefs, and values and uses them as a source of socioeconomic and political power for their own purposes and goals. It may be characterized as a strict social structure in which a social hierarchy is passed down from generation to generation and there is no opportunity for advancement beyond one's birthplace (Ahmed, 2004). Castes are further split into sub-castes (zaat), which have a greater effect on people's everyday life. The descendants of an ancestor belong to the same caste, and the collection of castes is known as baradari. Those who belong to the same caste or Zaat constitute a Baradari, a distinct large socio-cultural unit in which caste laws are followed. The caste system is well-known in practically all human cultures, whether in the East or West, and it may be characterized as individuals grouping based on class, language, profession, specific location, clan, and socioeconomic segregation. Baradari means "brotherhood" and it is frequently asserted that "primordial" group identities, such as family, kinship, and caste, or membership (Ian, 1996) in a village faction, have a greater influence on voting behavior in the subcontinent than personal political preferences (Wilder, 1999). In essence, caste is a social institution, but the removal of the line between "civil society" and "political society" following the social contract theory (Locke, 1980) has caused caste to influence political institutions from their very beginnings. Caste as social identity enters politics and manipulates people's emotions, thoughts, mindsets, and feelings in order to gain power and achieve a hegemonic position and power is defined as "the ability to influence or be influenced by others" (Mingst, 2000).

1.2. Caste Classification in South Asia

Since the entrance of Aryans from Central Asia, the caste system in South Asia has existed (Kulk & Rothermund, 2004). In order to dominate and manage the indigenous population, the Aryans entered South Asia and instituted a caste system. They separated people according to their roles and important contributions to society. In a hierarchical framework, the individuals were divided into four main groups based on the various functions they were allocated. At the pinnacle of the social hierarchy are Brahmins, or priests; Kshatriyas, or warriors; and Vaishyas, or merchants and landowners, who make up the third tier. The Suders, untouchables, Harijans, and Dalits are at the bottom of the social scale. This caste system eventually extended throughout what is today known



as South Asia. The expansion of the Hindu religion in South Asia or the Indian continent is connected to the history of the caste system or its progression. having association with their sociocultural feelings. People remained loyal to their caste system even if many were turned non-Hindu or adopted other religions in this land. The complex phenomena of the caste system's genesis in India have been vehemently discussed by historians. They all agree that it was formed following the Aryan invasion. The Aryans took their own gods, Indra, Aghni, and Vayu, with them when they conquered the Indian continent from Central Asia. As time went on, Aryan monarchs also embraced the native Indian gods Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma. Some indigenous tribes were challenging to integrate, despite the fact that the Indus Valley civilization was totally destroyed (Havel, 1918). The new religion known as Hinduism developed when these indigenous tribes were converted to Aryan faith. The indigenous or aboriginal tribes were assigned low status duties, such as servants or slaves, and were labeled as Sudra. The Aryans took on the roles of Brahman, Kshatriyas, and Vaishya. Further invaders from Central Asia, including the Scythians, Huns, Mongols, and others, also occupied this area. After settling here, these individuals progressively integrated into Hindu society (Manz, 1996). A person's upcoming generation was expected to follow the career path that their forefathers had left them. The caste system was based on a job or profession allocated by birth. Indian society was distinct from other societies throughout the world in this way. For those in lesser castes or strata, it has reduced their chances. Over time, Brahman and Kshatriyas were selected from the native Dravidian people, which dominated the southern Indian area.

Many local people became Muslims once Islam arrived on the Indian peninsula and Muslim governance was established. It started a new phase of adaptation and cultural integration (Bose & Jala, 2004) but people's sentiments, affiliations, emotions, and devotion attached to the caste system remained unaffected in spite of this religious conversion. The Muslims also followed the values, customs, and traditions of their relative caste though it is prohibited in Islam. When the Britishers colonized Indian continent, they intentionally adopted such legislative and administrative measures which politicized the caste system at all levels (Mann, 2015), to exploit and control the indigenous people. The democratic system was imposed taking help from caste sentiments of the populace. The political loyalties were won by manipulating their sociocultural feelings. In colonial India, politics of emotions developed and was associated with cultural foundations.

The caste system in India was adopted by the other South Asian nations, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, and the Maldives. The social stratification models are comparable to those seen in India. Although various constitutional amendments have diminished its significance, it continues to have symbolic significance in South Asian politics and religion. Ethnic groups in Sri Lanka have been subject to the caste system from ancient times. In Sri Lankan society, there are three main caste systems that run parallel to one another: Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, and Indian Tamil. In Sri Lanka, the caste system gives the ruling class access to the state rather than being connected to religion. Based on the classical Hindu model of social stratification, the caste system in Nepal is composed of four social classes, or Varna: Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudra. The caste system was historically prevalent in the Hindu Aryan society of Khas, Madhesi, and Newars, but it is no longer as strict as it once was. In 1962, the Nepali government passed a law that forbade discrimination against any other caste as unlawful, and all caste groups were treated equally.



Bhutan is situated between China and India in the Himalayan highlands. It has a complicated caste structure, much like Nepal. Bhutan is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, including migrants from Tibet, Nepal, and Mongolia, and essentially does not have a caste system. The 1990s saw ethnic strife with the Buddhist majority as a result of the Hindu Nepalese population's mass migration to Bhutan at the close of the 20th century. Policies for the cultural integration of the surviving Hindu minority in Nepal were implemented by the state. Hindu Nepalese consequently left the nation and took sanctuary in camps in India and Nepal. The Maldives does not have a caste system in the traditional sense, unlike other South Asian nations like India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan. Compared to cultures with caste differentiation, it has a great potential for uniformity. Although there are indications of caste-like groupings (status groups) in Maldivian culture dating back to the 17th century, the history of social stratification in the Maldives is not fully described (Kulikov, 2014).

1.3. Caste System and British Punjab

From the northwest to the southeast of the subcontinent, the area is said to as a place of diverse religions and civilizations, which were introduced by immigrants from throughout the globe. Before the Aryans arrived in the subcontinent in 5000 B.C., a group known as the "Drawers" did so around 29000 B.C. The earliest civilization on the Indian subcontinent was founded by them. Later, Aryan civilization fought them and scattered them. In South Asia, the Aryan people introduced a caste system. Compared to the "Drawers," the Aryan caste system was more structured and disciplined, and it gave rise to the Arian Civilization. The caste system that the Aryans brought with them from the northwest of the Indian continent is still in place in every South Asian state. Aryans arrived in Punjab from the Himalayas. Since the Aryan people were proud of their supremacy, the word "Aryan" means "pure" and "superior." In essence, they were farmers, and after capturing this territory, they either enslaved the locals or referred to them as "Suders," or lower castes in their caste system (Fiski, 2000; Ali D., 1998). The foundations of Punjab's caste system and structural social organization were passed down from Arian tribes, who first settled close to the western Punjab and the right bank of the central Indus River.

During Khalifa Umer Farooq, Islam was introduced to the Indian continent when Muslims traveled there for trade. Muhamad bin Qasim then conquered the Indian continent through the coast of Sindh in 712 A.D., and Muslim rulers from Central Asia took control of South Asia until 1857. Although they divided the lands among numerous tribes and castes to minimize the power and influence of powerful Hindu leaders with dominant castes, the Muslim rulers did not monopolize or politicized the social institution of caste or Baradari in South Asia (Talbot, 1998). The Muslims have their own a social classification system that corresponds to the Hindu-Arian caste system. Those who descended from Arabs, Iranians, Afghans, and Mughals are seen as superior races. Punjab's Muslim community was structured according to caste, baradari, and tribal norms. Similar to Hindu Rajput, Jut, and Gujar castes, Muslims were likewise categorized as such and continue to hold similar social, tribal, and political significance. In actuality, Baradari rituals, values, and norms were more closely linked to social and tribal values than to religion (Ibbetson, 2001). Muslims ruled India for a millennium following Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest, and they did not exploit the prevailing caste system. Instead, caste identity strengthened their hold on power. Because of the Rajput caste's divide, Mahmud Ghori conquered Prithvi Raj Rajput in 1190. (Ali I. 1990) Despite being liberated from caste and patriarchal restrictions and duties, the Hindu converters to Islam were unable to shake their feelings of caste affiliation. Thus, caste and the baradari system have persisted throughout Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent. Muslims



were also divided into tribes, castes, and baradaris, with a concept of superior and inferior castes prevailing still today. This sense of connection or belonging to ancestors was not lost with the conversion to Islam. Meeds, Turks, Afghans, Lohar, Shahia, Ghagher, Rajput, Chohan, Mongol, Gory, Bulbin, Mughal, Khiljee, Syeed, Lodhi, Gojar, Rangharr, and Dogar were among the significant castes throughout the Muslim era (Ikram,1993). Even the Sikh ruler Ranjeet Singh (1799–1839) did not monopolized the social structure and caste system of the Punjab (Gough, 1986). Sikhs were likewise divided into high and low castes, despite Baba Nanik's opposition to the caste system and desire to end Brahman dominance in society. High castes of Sikhs, like Khatron, Arora, and Jut, were further divided, while inferior castes in Punjab were referred to as Kammi Sikhs. In Nankana Sahab, it is still illegal for a Zamindar Sikh to marry a Kammi caste member. In 1849, the British overthrew Sikh sovereignty in Punjab and consolidated British authority across the Indian subcontinent.

Following Britain's acquisition of Punjab in 1849, the new government enacted several laws and policies to reinforce caste-based identity in the state and regulate it for its own interests. Rajput and Jut were two major influential castes throughout Punjab during British control. These two castes had several sub-castes, and its members were strong followers to their respective caste traditions. Marriages with members of other castes were restricted and prohibited in order to maintain caste unity and power. The Muslims of Punjab were likewise divided into organized tribes and castes, and they adhered to Sharia law or religion in addition to the customs and values of their respective castes. The caste system was exploited by the colonial authorities to get the loyalty of the influential castes and tribal leaders, and to strengthen their own rule. Through the various significant baradaris, they wanted to exert influence over the local populace. For the first time in the Indian continent, the colonial government collected the data about different castes throughout Punjab and prepared a report on significant and powerful castes and tribes. In the British Indian Government, cultivated castes were given a quota to oblige them; this was seen as a way to identify the rural populace more than religion. The Reforms Act of 1919 established distinct seats for rural and urban regions, and only members of the Zamindar or cultivator caste are eligible to run for office in rural areas. Rural and urban regions were managed and governed in an organized manner through these statutes and reforms (Talbot, 1998). Castes were taken into consideration when the British authorities proclaimed districts, Tehsils, and constituencies. In order to exert political control over the local populace; they converted social identity into political identification.

2. Inclusion of Caste in Politics and British Legislation

The Aryans brought caste sentiments into harmony with them by dividing themselves into three distinct social groups: the Vaishya (the managers of money and administration), the Khashtsriys (the kings and worry-makers), and the Brahmins (the guardians of the temples). The caste system has persisted in India ever since, serving as the foundation and fundamental differentiation in Hindu sociocultural, political, and economic life (Stein, 1998). Throughout Hindu history and mythology, the caste system was a constant and unchangeable emotional structure that was passed down from one generation to the next. Herbert Hope Risely directed the first census in 1901 and collected all the "jatis" (communities, groups) under "varnas" (class based on occupation) (Risely, 1915). The British enacted legislation in colonial India that transformed caste from a social institution to a political one. The caste system was incorporated into the main government structure, which included district and local politics. Even after gaining independence from Britain



in 1947, this indirect caste identification law continued to hold sway over government institutions. Even though the governments of India and Pakistan promised to create, integrate, and develop their countries, the complex web of patronage bolstered the caste-emotional structure that dominated politics and bureaucracy. In both states, this complicated network has hampered the process of political development and nation-building.

After a fight with Ranjeet Singh, the British eventually seized Punjab, the biggest region, in 1849. Punjab was split up into 27 districts by Britain (Nijjar, 1989). After capturing such a vast territory, Britain's first priority was to maintain law and order and to raise money. In order to govern Punjab, Britain must establish a new system of authority. The existing social and political conventional order in Punjab was altered through the policies they put in place and the authority structure they constructed in order to preserve their control (Cassan, 2014). This complex shift replaced the dominant social structure with newly enacted political laws, newly created organizations, and new people in charge of them. Everyone took part in Punjab society's socio-political transformation. In Punjab, Britain's more experienced colonial administrators were able to effectively adopt and execute new policies. British officials like as D.F. McLeod, Robert Montgomery, Richard Temple, the Lawrence brothers, and Robert Napier were successful in establishing British rule in Punjab. A powerful middle-class and rural class was required from the existing social structure to serve as a mediator between the ordinary people and the British monarch. The aforementioned rural prominent elite in colonized India were formed from pre-existing caste identified system. By adhering to persuasive policies, such as land distribution, commercial, and irrigation policies, that benefited these identified caste groups, it was possible to win over these prominent local figures and caste groups. With their support, the British officers were able to maintain control over vast strips of Punjab and its populace despite having a tiny army and a weak administrative structure. These powerful individuals were typically the leader and chief of their respective tribes, castes, and baradaris. According to Charles Metcalfe, the Indian caste system served as social glue between the populace and the British Raj (Lawrence James, 1997). In order to collect money, the British paid special attention to village's social organization of caste system. They used a strategy of conciliation and pressure. Many Sardars in Punjab ceased their seditious activities as a result of the coercive approach, which also included the deployment of sizable soldiers in Punjab upon annexation and the swift suppression of uprisings with harsh penalties. However, the British also pursued a strategy of collaboration and conciliation with indigenous peoples and local communities. An organization or framework that could connect the colonial state to indigenous society was necessary for that. They purposefully pursued a program of representation and involvement for native loyalists who might assist them in ruling people without facing any rebellion, in addition to their strict administrative regulations. The ancient Indian village caste and baradari system emerged as a necessary social organization for British officers to accomplish their goals in such a setting (Wilder, 1999). Caste and baradari institution regulate the conduct of a person. In order to manage district administration and oversee the income received through this social identification organization (caste), the commissioner, deputy commissioner, and assistant commissioner had judicial and executive jurisdiction.

The caste, baradari, clan, and tribal social structures were exploited and politicized by the British monarch to strengthen their power. They enacted such laws and regulations that increased Punjab's discrimination based on socio-economic class. For instance, the political germination of caste politics based on caste feelings and emotions was initiated by British policies to govern Punjab. During Punjab's colonial control, social identity (of caste) was converted into political identity.



The Britishers promised autonomy to the masses (villages) through a powerful local figure in order to safeguard colonial interests and facilitate effective communication between the ruled (native people) and the ruler (British). The official posts like Lumberdars, Zaildars, Ala-Lumberdars, Honorary Magistrates, and Municipal Committee Men were established to collect revenue and to manage local government. They were rewarded with financial incentives and honor for their efforts to make colonial control successful and acceptable to the masses at the local level, or in villages (Paul, 1979). Each of these powerful men, or collaborators, was chosen by the local caste or baradari. Thus, in order to accomplish certain objectives, the caste system was strengthened and integrated into politics. In order to complement the colonial ruler and enhance the landed power, the colonial ruler also declared "The Land Alienation Act 1901." Through this law, a social institution (of caste) was incorporated into the political system. The preservation of law and order and revenue collection was the top priorities for the policymakers. Caste politics, therefore, is a legacy of colonial rule, and the leaders of particular castes and baradaris collaborated with the British government to govern India. A new ruling class consisted of landowners and chieftains were created to safeguard the British Raj.

2.2. British Punjab Settlement Policy and Caste Identification's legal status

In order to recruit soldiers and to establish a support for the British administration, the settlement policy was implemented. The land became private property, and the landowner was listed in the land registry. Originally, land holders were identified in government records based on their caste, tribe, clan, religion, residential village, and land holding status. This served as the basis for classifying rights based on (caste) social groupings. The settlement policy included a genealogical tree or record, known as "Shajranasab," for every estate, spanning up to four generations, together with the village's whole history and constitution (R. C. Bolster, 1916). The area was divided between the villages of Pattidari and Bhaiachara. The British authority wanted to learn as much as they could about the populace that were dominated in both rural and urban places. Therefore, in Punjab, the cooperation of powerful class was necessary to implement the administrative policies among the urban and rural population. In order to protect colonial interests, local elites and powerful individuals (caste) helped to establish an effective connection between the colonial ruler and the ruled. To improve the effectiveness of British Raj, the offices of Zaildar, Ala-alamdar, Honorary Magistrate, and Municipal Committee members were the collaborators. Through them, British rulers gave people and localities a great deal of autonomy. The British officers were dependent on the association of this new ruling elite class (identified by their caste name) to support their administration under colonial authority. Chaudharis and Lumberdars, two prominent local figures, were the headmen of their respective caste group. During the Sikh era, this group's loyalty or help was also utilized through revenue-free donations called 'Inams', and the British carried on this practice to govern and run Punjab province. 'Inam', or five percent of the money gathered in their particular villages, was given to Lumberdars and Chaudharies (1936, Punjab Districts Gazetteers). The Deputy Commissioner nominated the village headman, or Lumberdar, who was in charge of helping to collect taxes and keep the local crime rate under control. The headmen were to be supervised by a chief headman, also known as an Ala-Lumberdar. Ala-Lumberdar was approved by the Deputy Commissioner after being chosen by a private body. He was given orders after representing the headmen's body to the government. In their various castes, tribes, or baradaris, the Ala-Lumberdar and Lumberdar were respected persons or leaders who had significant influence in their respective area and caste community.



A new system of government agencies and institutions was created to serve as the foundation for this shift to connect the powerful local elite with the ruler or administration. The Zaildar System, with a Zaildar officer in command, was introduced in 1860. It was first used in central Doab districts where police were powerless and theft, particularly of livestock, was out of control. After the Punjab Law Act of 1872, Zaildar's responsibilities were expanded to include both tax collection and police officer duties. Initially, his only responsibility was to report crimes to the police station. In the local caste, tribe, and clan, the Zaildars held leadership positions as well. The British appointed Zaildars and Zamindars in each Zail (an area governed by a zaildar)—a collection of forty to one hundred villages—to represent the local ruling elites whose faithfulness to the British authority was undisputable, “The early practice in the selection of zaildars called for elections among the Zail’s Lumberdar, village headman, whose vote though not binding, was intended to guide the choice” (Gilmartin, 1989).

Thus, the British rulers created a new kind of government through the settlement policy, in which the local leaders (of influential caste group) were introduced for effective management. Under the newly formed structure of governance and its institutions, they choose higher elites, castes, tribes, sardars, and jagirdars. Prominent landowners chosen from the top caste and baradari in the area were known as zaildars. By using a prominent local landowner who is a member of a significant caste, tribe, or baradari in the area, the Zaildari system aimed to strengthen the ties between the ruling masses and the governing structure (Saunders, 1873). In order to prevent any conflict based on caste, tribe, or baradari, it was attempted to define or demarcate a Zail such that the people having same caste, tribe or village would be included in same Zail. In order to minimize the presence of disagreeing components, each Zail should have "people of one tribe or villages which have some connection or affinity" (Douie, 1930). There were prominent castes that claimed to be the main tribe in Zail, such as the Qazilbash caste. Although the position of zaildar was not inherited, sons were often chosen to succeed their fathers. By giving Punjabi zaildars sizable areas of land in canal colonies, the British also enhanced them economically. In 1914, Sir Michael O. Dwyer established a land grant program that gave land to "landed gentry" in the colony of Lower Bari Doab. Consequently, some zaildar rose to the position of landlord and emerged as Western Punjab's powerful rural elite and leaders (Gilmartin, 1989). These rural elites were influential in politics before and after 1947, as well as in British India's District Boards and Provincial Legislatures. British authorities created a new official post in the village called Ala-alamdar (Ala-numberdar), which means chief head man, to have strong hold over rural regions. According to Prinsep, each village had a chief head man chosen for the effective operation of the existing system and the enforcement of instructions, and in 1866, elections for Ala-alamdar were held in each village. Ala-alamdars were chosen from their baradaris to serve as representatives of the villages. Ala-alamdar was to be granted free land, 1% of village income, and other privileges not before that granted (Saunders, 1873).

The same superstructure of government was put in place in urban regions to manage the urban people and to deal with matters pertaining to urban revenues and taxes. In Indian Council Act 1861, British monarch declared a municipal government that included an honorary magistrate and a municipal committee, which was similar to the Zaildar system in rural districts. Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim Panchayats were to elect members of the municipal committee every year. Their responsibilities included overseeing city administration, regulating municipal taxes, and ensuring the health and welfare of the populace (Chronicles, 1864). Members of powerful, rich, and devoted families were appointed to the Board of Honorary Magistrate. Their support to British

administration throughout the Sikh wars and during the absorption of Punjab served as the foundation for their loyalty. The British also employed various tactics, such as honor, prizes, and titles, to gain the allegiance of powerful urban families, baradaris, and elites. The British ruler created rational policies to work with the Indian elites who supported their objectives and interests, from the highest levels of administration down to the governed masses (Talbot, 2006). In order to administer Punjab, efficiently and economically, the colonial rulers seek to create a connection between themselves and the governed people. They politically established the baradari, caste, and tribal groupings in both rural and urban regions and they won the loyalty of influential caste groups to maintain colonial control.

Conclusion

A new phenomenon known as "Politics of Emotions" emerged in South Asia as a result of the emergence of some specific caste group in British Indian politics. Political power dynamics and economic resource management have been significantly influenced by Indian caste system, which have gained access to the corridor of power. Through the process of institutionalization and democratization, the colonial rulers brought about a number of structural changes which led to socio-economic and political differences based on caste identity in Indian society. For their economic motives (to collect taxes) and to impose their rule in British India, the colonial rulers used, manipulated, and transformed the caste, baradari, or tribe from a social institution (identity) into political institutions(identity). They exploited the caste sentiments of the native population in order to reinforce their rule over India.

References

- Ahmad, M., & Fozia, N. (2011). Social System influences Political System: A Comparative Study of Sub-Continent. *Burkely Journal of Social Sciences*, 1-12.
- Ahmed, M. (2004). Faisalabad Division keSiasat per BiradarismkayAsraat. Multan: Ph.D Thesis, Unpublished, Bahudin Zakriya University.
- Ali, D. (1998). *Gulami aur Nasal Parasti*. Lahore: Fiction House.
- Ali, I. (1990). *History of Punjab*. Lahore: Salman Publishers.
- Beer, S. H. (1974). *Modern Political Develioment*. New York: Random House.
- Bose, S., & Jala, A. (2004). *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cassan, G. (2014, October 26). Identity Based Policies and Identity Manipulation: Evidence from Colonial Punjab. Retrieved December 18, 2018, from https://www.aeaweb.org/aej/pol/app/0704/2013-0290_app.pdf
- Chronicles, L. (1864). *Report of Munciple Committee, 1863-1864*. Lahore: Government of Punjab.

- Douie, J. M. (1930). Punjab Settlement Manual. Lahore: Government of Punjab.
- Fiski, G. (2000). Pakistan ki Qumeetain translated by Mirza Ishfaq Baig. Lahore: Fiction House.
- Gilmartin, D. (1989). Empire and Islam: Punjab and Making of Pakistan, Lahore: Oxford University Press, P-116.
- Gough, C. (1986). The Sikhs and the Sikh War. Delhi: Gian Publishing House.
- Havell, E. B. (1918). A history of Aryan Rule in India. New Delhi: Hasrap & Compny.
- Ian, M. (1996). Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics. New York: Oxford university press.
- Ibbetson, D. (2001). Punjab Castes. Lahore: Sang-i-Publications.
- Ikram, S. M. (1993). History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan: A Political and Cultural History. Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture.
- Jalalpuri, A. A. (1999). Rawayat-e-Tamadan-e-Qadeem. Lahore: Fiction House.
- Kulikov, L. (2014). Traces of Castes and other socila strata in Maldives: A case study of Socila stratification in a democratic perspective . Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie , 199-213.
- Kulk, H., & Rothermund, D. (2004). A History of Indi, 4th ed.,. New York: Routledge.
- Lawrence James, R. (1997). The making and unmaking of British India . New York: St.Martin press.
- Locke, J. (1980). Second Treaties on Civil Government, ed.C.B. MacPherson Indianapolis. IN: Hackett.
- Mann, M. (2015). South Asia's Modern History: Thematic Perspective. New York: Routledge.
- Manz, B. F. (1996). Central Asia in Historical Perspective. Lahore: Vanguard.
- Mingst, K. A. (2004). Essentials of International Relations 3rd edition. New York: Norton & Company.
- Nijjar, B. (1989). Punjab Under British Rule (1849-1947)Vol.3. Lahore: Mustafa Waheed Publisher.
- Paul, G. D. (1979). Tribe Land an Religion in the Punjab: Muslim Politics and the Making of Pakistan. Berkely: Phd thesis, University of California.
- Pye, L. W., & Verba, S. (1965). Political Culture and Political Development. NJ: Princeton University Press.
- R. C. Bolster., (1916). Final Report of the Fourth Regular Settlement of the Lahore District – 1912-1916. Lahore: Printed by Government of Punjab.
- Riseley, H. (1915). People Of India. London: Spink and Co.
- Saunders, L. S. (1873). Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Lahore District of the Punjab, 1865-1869. Lahore: Government of Punjab.
- Stein, B. (1998). A History of India. New York: Black Well Publishers.
- Talbot, I. (1988). Provincial Politics and The Pakistan Movement: The Growth of The Muslim League in North-West and North-East India 1937-47. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Talbot, I. (1998). Punjab and The Raj (1847-1947). New Delhi: Riverdale Company.
- Talbot, I. (2006). Tareekh-e Punjab Urdu translation as" Punjab and the Raj"1849-1947 by Tahir Kamran. Lahore: Takhliqat.
- Talbot, I. (2015). The Democratic Phase . In R. D. Long, A History of Pakistan (pp. 455-470). Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Wilder, A. R. (1999). The Pakistani Voter: Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour in the



Fari Journal of Social Sciences And Law

Vol: 03 Issue: 01

2026

Punjab. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

