

**YOUTH VOTER BEHAVIOUR: EXPLORING KEY ISSUES IN PUNJAB****Navneet***Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh  
navneetneetu44@gmail.com***Abstract**

*With its varied socio-cultural terrain and intricate political dynamics, Punjab acts as the miniature version of the larger opportunities and challenges facing democracy in India. With the increasing political awareness and participation of young voters, especially in the context of higher education institutions, it becomes crucial to understand the factors shaping their political choices. The present study investigates the issues in Punjab that shape the voter's decisions and their involvement in the electoral process. Through a survey across universities in Punjab, the research investigates key issues such as unemployment, drugs, agriculture bills, corruption, migration, inflation, sacrilege and development and their impact on youth. The study highlights the growing importance of understanding youth voting behaviour in Punjab, as it can offer valuable insights into the broader electoral trends and the future political landscape of the state. This paper empowers political parties to create more relevant and targeted policies that resolve the issues in Punjab and address the specific needs of young voters. This research contributes to the broader discourse on electoral studies and youth participation in democratic processes.*

**Keywords:** Youth, Punjab, Issues, Voting behaviour

**Introduction**

The behaviour of young voters has become an increasingly important area of research in examining voting dynamics, especially in the context of evolving democratic processes. In Punjab, where young people form a major chunk of voters, understanding their voting patterns is crucial for policymakers and political parties. The political context in Punjab is heavily driven by socio-economic, regional, and cultural issues, which have an impact on the participation of youths in the election process. The youth voters are not only motivated by traditional issues such as caste and religion but also by contemporary issues such as employment, education, and development at the regional level (Choudhary, 2020).

Voting is an essential element of contemporary democracies, representing the decision of citizens in forming their government. People express their consent or dissatisfaction of policies, decisions made by the government, and the abilities of the candidates who contest elections by casting their vote. This critical democratic act is an empowerment of a citizen and participations in the political process. The participation of the youth in the electoral process is instrumental in guaranteeing democratic dynamism and the representation of various interests. Political parties that are responsive to concerns of the youth gain more support from the youth electorate. This research seeks to investigate what matters in youths' voting behaviour in Punjab, targeting primary local issues determining their electoral choices.

**Literature Review**

Youth electoral behaviour has been one of the topics of interest within political science, especially in light of changing trends in political participation

and engagement (Patel, 2018). Some research has aimed at examining the changing trends in political participation among Indian young voters with particular reference to socio-economic factors, education, and media. As per Singh and Arora (2019), the youth of Punjab is strongly affected by local concerns like unemployment and state economic development. The economic woes of the state, such as the agrarian crisis and unemployment, have led to disenchantment among the youth, affecting their vote (Bhatia, 2021).

Additionally, studies by Sharma (2020) indicate that education is also significant in determining political opinions among young voters. University students and other learners are usually exposed to various perspectives and are increasingly making use of online platforms such as social media to interact with political information. Online participation has, in return, transformed political campaigning, with young voters playing a greater role in political debate through online means (Verma, 2021). Additionally, caste and religious identities, while gradually declining in importance, continue to influence young voters' behavior in Punjab, as parties attempt to find common ground with these traditional allegiances (Reddy & Kumar, 2017).

Recent research has also put a spotlight on the youth political movements and the urgent necessity for youth-oriented policies to increase political participation (Yadav, 2018). Political parties are now realizing the critical role of youth in determining electoral results, and hence have come up with strategies that focus on reaching out to young voters more effectively. The increasing participation of young people in the electoral process in Punjab can be referred to as a move

towards a newer, more active, and issue-based electorate.

**Methods**

This study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather primary data. 400 students from two Punjabi universities, 200 from Punjabi University, Patiala and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar were surveyed. The survey took place between December 2022 and December 2023 in two rounds using Google Forms. The questionnaire employed closed-ended questions with a 5-point Likert scale

of response. Six demographic factors- age, gender, caste, religion, region and locality are analysed on various issues affecting youth voter behavior in Punjab. Data was digitized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were utilized for data analysis, using a 95% confidence level. Chi-square tests were utilized in testing association between variables with significance at  $p < 0.05$ . Where differences were significant, mean values of Likert scale items were used to compare variation in opinions.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab	A very great deal	Quite a lot	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
Unemployment	56.0%	21.3%	12.3%	7.0%	3.5%
Drugs	57.5%	21.5%	11.5%	4.5%	5.0%
Migration	27.8%	28.5%	24.3%	9.5%	10.0%
Inflation (Rise in prices)	43.3%	36.0%	13.0%	4.3%	3.5%
Corruption	52.0%	27.5%	11.8%	4.0%	4.8%
Development (Education, Health, Roads)	54.3%	25.8%	11.5%	4.5%	4.0%
Agriculture bills	37.8%	26.5%	21.5%	9.0%	5.3%
Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege	46.5%	26.3%	14.0%	8.5%	4.8%

Sources: Computed by Author

According to Table 1, majority of the youth, with 57.5 percent, believe drugs and 56 percent believe unemployment are the most important issues that affects their voting choices. Following closely, secondly the majority of the respondents with 54.3 percent prioritize issues like road development, education, and health. Corruption ranks third, as 52 percent consider it important while voting. While

issues like Guru Granth Sahib Sacrilege, inflation, and agriculture bills are crucial, but there have been diversified opinions among youth. Many respondents to a close number state that they don't affect them to a very great deal. Migration is seen as the least affected issue as only 27.8 percent of respondents consider it important.

**Table 1.1: Cross-tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with age distribution**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Age						Chi square (p value)
		18-23 years		24-29 years		30-35 years		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal	120	49.8%	85	63.4%	19	76.0%	17.909 (0.022)
	Quite a lot	65	27.0%	18	13.4%	2	8.0%	
	Somewhat	33	13.7%	14	10.4%	2	8.0%	
	Very little	16	6.6%	10	7.5%	2	8.0%	
	Not at all	7	2.9%	7	5.2%	0	0.0%	
<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	136	56.4%	78	58.2%	16	64.0%	8.759 (0.363)
	Quite a lot	56	23.2%	27	20.1%	3	12.0%	
	Somewhat	31	12.9%	13	9.7%	2	8.0%	
	Very little	6	2.5%	10	7.5%	2	8.0%	
	Not at all	12	5.0%	6	4.5%	2	8.0%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	64	26.6%	38	28.4%	9	36.0%	10.278 (0.246)
	Quite a lot	71	29.5%	37	27.6%	6	24.0%	
	Somewhat	58	24.1%	36	26.9%	3	12.0%	
	Very little	23	9.5%	14	10.4%	1	4.0%	
	Not at all	25	10.4%	9	6.7%	6	24.0%	

<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	98	40.7%	58	43.3%	17	68.0%	12.571 (0.127)
	Quite a lot	86	35.7%	54	40.3%	4	16.0%	
	Somewhat	36	14.9%	14	10.4%	2	8.0%	
	Very little	12	5.0%	3	2.2%	2	8.0%	
	Not at all	9	3.7%	5	3.7%	0	0.0%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	119	49.4%	70	52.2%	19	76.0%	7.578 (0.476)
	Quite a lot	72	29.9%	36	26.9%	2	8.0%	
	Somewhat	28	11.6%	17	12.7%	2	8.0%	
	Very little	10	4.1%	5	3.7%	1	4.0%	
	Not at all	12	5.0%	6	4.5%	1	4.0%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	129	53.5%	68	50.7%	20	80.0%	9.611 (0.293)
	Quite a lot	64	26.6%	38	28.4%	1	4.0%	
	Somewhat	27	11.2%	17	12.7%	2	8.0%	
	Very little	10	4.1%	7	5.2%	1	4.0%	
	Not at all	11	4.6%	4	3.0%	1	4.0%	
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	87	36.1%	56	41.8%	8	32.0%	7.313 (0.503)
	Quite a lot	71	29.5%	28	20.9%	7	28.0%	
	Somewhat	51	21.2%	30	22.4%	5	20.0%	
	Very little	19	7.9%	15	11.2%	2	8.0%	
	Not at all	13	5.4%	5	3.7%	3	12.0%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	103	42.7%	71	53.0%	12	48.0%	10.115 (0.257)
	Quite a lot	68	28.2%	31	23.1%	6	24.0%	
	Somewhat	38	15.8%	14	10.4%	4	16.0%	
	Very little	21	8.7%	13	9.7%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	11	4.6%	5	3.7%	3	12.0%	

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Age		
		18-23 years	24-29 years	30-35 years
		N	N	N
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal (5)	120	85	19
	Quite a lot (4)	65	18	2
	Somewhat (3)	33	14	2
	Very little (2)	16	10	2
	Not at all (1)	7	7	0
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>4.14 (Quite a lot)</b>	<b>4.22 (A very great deal)</b>	<b>4.52 (A very great deal)</b>

Table 1.1 highlights a significant variance in opinions among respondents of different age groups concerning the issue of unemployment, evidenced by a chi-square value of 17.909 and a p-value of 0.022. The study indicates that a majority of respondents, 49.8 percent of those aged 18-23, 63.4 percent of those aged 24-29, and 19 percent of those aged 30-35 believe that unemployment affects them very greatly. Using a Likert scale to analyze the opinions, mean values were calculated. Notably, respondents aged 30-35 with the highest mean value of 4.52, indicates a strong influence of unemployment on their voting decisions. Meanwhile, those aged 24-29 with a mean value of 4.22 and 18-23 with a mean value of 4.12 also consider unemployment as a significant issue. This data underscores that respondents in the 30-35 age groups and 24-29 age groups are more affected by unemployment issue in Punjab than the 18-23 age group. However, for other issues, the p-values exceed the 0.05 significance level, which indicates no significant difference in opinions across different age groups.

**Table 1.2: Cross-tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with gender**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Gender				Chi square (p value)
		Male		Female		
		N	%	N	%	
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal	113	56.5%	111	55.5%	4.928 (0.295)
	Quite a lot	42	21.0%	43	21.5%	
	Somewhat	19	9.5%	30	15.0%	
	Very little	17	8.5%	11	5.5%	
	Not at all	9	4.5%	5	2.5%	

<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	117	58.5%	113	56.5%	6.400 (0.171)
	Quite a lot	43	21.5%	43	21.5%	
	Somewhat	17	8.5%	29	14.5%	
	Very little	9	4.5%	9	4.5%	
	Not at all	14	7.0%	6	3.0%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	69	34.5%	42	21.0%	10.366 (0.035)
	Quite a lot	53	26.5%	61	30.5%	
	Somewhat	45	22.5%	52	26.0%	
	Very little	14	7.0%	24	12.0%	
	Not at all	19	9.5%	21	10.5%	
<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	86	43.0%	87	43.5%	11.669 (0.020)
	Quite a lot	63	31.5%	81	40.5%	
	Somewhat	27	13.5%	25	12.5%	
	Very little	13	6.5%	4	2.0%	
	Not at all	11	5.5%	3	1.5%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	104	52.0%	104	52.0%	1.914 (0.752)
	Quite a lot	52	26.0%	58	29.0%	
	Somewhat	23	11.5%	24	12.0%	
	Very little	9	4.5%	7	3.5%	
	Not at all	12	6.0%	7	3.5%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	109	54.5%	108	54.0%	2.484 (0.647)
	Quite a lot	49	24.5%	54	27.0%	
	Somewhat	25	12.5%	21	10.5%	
	Very little	7	3.5%	11	5.5%	
	Not at all	10	5.0%	6	3.0%	
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	82	41.0%	69	34.5%	2.601 (0.627)
	Quite a lot	48	24.0%	58	29.0%	
	Somewhat	44	22.0%	42	21.0%	
	Very little	16	8.0%	20	10.0%	
	Not at all	10	5.0%	11	5.5%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	114	57.0%	72	36.0%	28.321 ( $<0.001$ )
	Quite a lot	54	27.0%	51	25.5%	
	Somewhat	17	8.5%	39	19.5%	
	Very little	9	4.5%	25	12.5%	
	Not at all	6	3.0%	13	6.5%	

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Gender	
		Male	Female
		N	N
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal (5)	69	42
	Quite a lot (4)	53	61
	Somewhat (3)	45	52
	Very little (2)	14	24
	Not at all (1)	19	21
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>3.70</b> <b>(Quite a lot)</b>	<b>3.38</b> <b>(Somewhat)</b>

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Gender	
		Male	Female
		N	N
Inflation (Rise in prices)	A very great deal (5)	86	87
	Quite a lot (4)	63	81
	Somewhat (3)	27	25
	Very little (2)	13	4
	Not at all (1)	11	3
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>4.00</b> (Quite a lot)	<b>4.23</b> (A very great deal)

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Gender	
		Male	Female
		N	N
Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege	A very great deal (5)	114	72
	Quite a lot (4)	54	51
	Somewhat (3)	17	39
	Very little (2)	9	25
	Not at all (1)	6	13
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>4.31</b> (A very great deal)	<b>3.72</b> (Quite a lot)

Table 1.2 shows a significant gap between male and female perspectives on the 'Migration' issue, as shown by a chi-square value of 10.366 and a p-value of 0.020. The study's results show that the majority of men, 34.5 percent of respondents, are impacted by the issue while voting, while the majority of females, 30.5 percent, are influenced. On average, men with a mean value of 3.70 claims it affects them a lot, whereas females with a mean value of 3.38 feel it impacts them somewhat while voting. The data clearly reveals that females are less influenced by migration and are more likely to migrate to foreign countries. Furthermore, a chi-square value and p-value of 0.035 show a significant difference in male and female opinions on the 'Inflation' issue. According to the survey, the majority of men, 43 percent and females, 43.5 percent, believe that inflation has a

significant impact on their voting decisions. On average, male respondents with a mean value of 4 affect quite a lot, while female respondents with a mean value of 4.23 affect a very great deal. This suggests that the inflation problem impacts women more than men in Punjab while voting. In addition, there is an extensive spectrum of views on the Guru Granth Sahib Sacrilege issue. The chi square value of 28.321 and the p-value of less than 0.001 support this. The majority of male respondents with 57 percent and female respondents with 36 percent indicate that this issue has a significant influence on their voting preferences. On average, male respondents with a mean value of 4.31 affect a great deal, while female respondents with a mean value of 3.72, affect quite a lot. This suggests that the sacrilege issue affects men more than women in Punjab while voting.

**Table 1.3: Cross-tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with caste**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Caste								Chi square (p value)
		General		OBC		SC/ST		Others		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Unemployment	A very great deal	131	57.2%	32	61.5%	61	52.6%	0	0.0%	15.227 (0.229)
	Quite a lot	47	20.5%	12	23.1%	23	19.8%	3	100.0%	
	Somewhat	28	12.2%	4	7.7%	17	14.7%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	15	6.6%	2	3.8%	11	9.5%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	8	3.5%	2	3.8%	4	3.4%	0	0.0%	

<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	132	57.6%	32	61.5%	64	55.2%	2	66.7%	9.077 (0.696)
	Quite a lot	49	21.4%	10	19.2%	26	22.4%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	30	13.1%	7	13.5%	9	7.8%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	7	3.1%	2	3.8%	9	7.8%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	11	4.8%	1	1.9%	8	6.9%	0	0.0%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	62	27.1%	20	38.5%	29	25.0%	0	0.0%	18.329 (0.106)
	Quite a lot	62	27.1%	14	26.9%	38	32.8%	0	0.0%	
	Somewhat	59	25.8%	13	25.0%	24	20.7%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	18	7.9%	2	3.8%	17	14.7%	1	33.3%	
	Not at all	28	12.2%	3	5.8%	8	6.9%	1	33.3%	
<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	97	42.4%	26	50.0%	50	43.1%	0	0.0%	16.648 (0.163)
	Quite a lot	90	39.3%	15	28.8%	38	32.8%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	28	12.2%	8	15.4%	15	12.9%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	9	3.9%	2	3.8%	6	5.2%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	5	2.2%	1	1.9%	7	6.0%	1	33.3%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	124	54.1%	30	57.7%	53	45.7%	1	33.3%	14.213 (0.287)
	Quite a lot	60	26.2%	12	23.1%	38	32.8%	0	0.0%	
	Somewhat	26	11.4%	6	11.5%	13	11.2%	2	66.7%	
	Very little	8	3.5%	1	1.9%	7	6.0%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	11	4.8%	3	5.8%	5	4.3%	0	0.0%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	129	56.3%	30	57.7%	58	50.0%	0	0.0%	19.178 (0.084)
	Quite a lot	63	27.5%	8	15.4%	31	26.7%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	21	9.2%	10	19.2%	14	12.1%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	10	4.4%	1	1.9%	6	5.2%	1	33.3%	
	Not at all	6	2.6%	3	5.8%	7	6.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	100	43.7%	24	46.2%	27	23.3%	0	0.0%	41.437 ( $<0.001$ )
	Quite a lot	68	29.7%	7	13.5%	29	25.0%	2	66.7%	
	Somewhat	40	17.5%	15	28.8%	31	26.7%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	15	6.6%	4	7.7%	17	14.7%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	6	2.6%	2	3.8%	12	10.3%	1	33.3%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	111	48.5%	27	51.9%	48	41.4%	0	0.0%	14.719 (0.257)
	Quite a lot	61	26.6%	11	21.2%	31	26.7%	2	66.7%	
	Somewhat	33	14.4%	6	11.5%	17	14.7%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	16	7.0%	6	11.5%	12	10.3%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	8	3.5%	2	3.8%	8	6.9%	1	33.3%	

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Caste			
		General	OBC	SC/ST	Others
		N	N	N	N
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal (5)	100	24	27	0
	Quite a lot (4)	68	7	29	2
	Somewhat (3)	40	15	31	0
	Very little (2)	15	4	17	0
	Not at all (1)	6	2	12	1
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>4.05</b> <b>(Quite a lot)</b>	<b>3.90</b> <b>(Quite a lot)</b>	<b>3.36</b> <b>(Somewhat)</b>	<b>3.00</b> <b>(Somewhat)</b>

According to the data in Table 1.3, the research indicates that respondents from various categories of caste have considerably diverse views on the issue of 'Agriculture bills'. This is supported by the chi square value of 41.437 and the p-value of less than 0.001. The majority of respondents in the general category, 43.7 percent in the study are the most affected. In contrast, 46.2 percent of OBC share the same perspective, with the majority believing that agricultural bills influence their voting choice. While the majority of the SC/ST, 26.7 percent, believe to some extent that it influence them. On average, it has been shown that respondents belonging to the general caste,

with an average mean value of 4.05, and those belonging to the OBC caste, with an average mean value of 3.90, get their voting choices affected quite a lot. Respondents from the SC/ST caste, with an average value of 3.36, and respondents from other castes, with an average value of 3, are both affected by this issue to some extent but not entirely. It demonstrates that voting choices in the general and OBC categories have a greater impact of agricultural bills in Punjab than SC/ST or other castes. In the remaining statements, there is little variance in the perspectives of youth raising issues from various castes.

**Table 1.4: Cross-tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with religion**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Religion										Chi square (p value)
		Hindu		Sikh		Christian		Muslim		Others		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal	60	52.6%	156	57.6%	3	60.0%	4	57.1%	1	33.3%	14.778 (0.541)
	Quite a lot	29	25.4%	52	19.2%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	
	Somewhat	15	13.2%	33	12.2%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	7	6.1%	19	7.0%	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	3	2.6%	11	4.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	61	53.5%	158	58.3%	4	80.0%	5	71.4%	2	66.7%	11.580 (0.772)
	Quite a lot	29	25.4%	56	20.7%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	Somewhat	17	14.9%	26	9.6%	1	20.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	4	3.5%	14	5.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	3	2.6%	17	6.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	24	21.1%	82	30.3%	2	40.0%	2	28.6%	1	33.3%	10.994 (0.810)
	Quite a lot	30	26.3%	80	29.5%	2	40.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	35	30.7%	59	21.8%	1	20.0%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	12	10.5%	25	9.2%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	13	11.4%	25	9.2%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	54	47.4%	113	41.7%	2	40.0%	4	57.1%	0	0.0%	15.377 (0.497)
	Quite a lot	40	35.1%	97	35.8%	3	60.0%	2	28.6%	2	66.7%	
	Somewhat	13	11.4%	38	14.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	5	4.4%	12	4.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	2	1.8%	11	4.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	59	51.8%	141	52.0%	3	60.0%	4	57.1%	1	33.3%	12.515 (0.708)
	Quite a lot	36	31.6%	72	26.6%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	12	10.5%	31	11.4%	2	40.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	4	3.5%	11	4.1%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	3	2.6%	16	5.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	68	59.6%	141	52.0%	5	100.0%	3	42.9%	0	0.0%	20.683 (0.191)
	Quite a lot	23	20.2%	75	27.7%	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	2	66.7%	
	Somewhat	15	13.2%	31	11.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	Very little	4	3.5%	12	4.4%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Not at all	4	3.5%	12	4.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	

<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	38	33.3%	105	38.7%	4	80.0%	4	57.1%	0	0.0%	13.540 (0.633)
	Quite a lot	31	27.2%	71	26.2%	1	20.0%	2	28.6%	1	33.3%	
	Somewhat	27	23.7%	57	21.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	12	10.5%	24	8.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	6	5.3%	14	5.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	38	33.3%	146	53.9%	1	20.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	79.152 ( $<0.001$ )
	Quite a lot	28	24.6%	76	28.0%	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	Somewhat	26	22.8%	22	8.1%	2	40.0%	5	71.4%	1	33.3%	
	Very little	13	11.4%	19	7.0%	1	20.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	
	A very great deal	9	7.9%	8	3.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Religion				
		Hindu	Sikh	Christian	Muslim	Others
		N	N	N	N	N
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal (5)	38	146	1	1	0
	Quite a lot (4)	28	76	1	0	0
	Somewhat (3)	26	22	2	5	1
	Very little (2)	13	19	1	1	0
	Not at all (1)	9	8	0	0	2
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>3.64</b> (Quite a lot)	<b>4.23</b> (A very great deal)	<b>3.40</b> (Somewhat)	<b>3.14</b> (Somewhat)	<b>1.67</b> (Not at all)

Based on the findings in Table 1.4, the research indicates that respondents from various religious backgrounds have considerably diverse views on the 'Guru Granth Sahib Sacrilege' issue. The chi square value is 79.152, and the p-value is less than 0.001. The majority of respondents who belong to the Sikh religion, 53.9 percent believe that the sacrilege issue has a very great impact on their voting decision. In contrast, 33.3 percent of Hindus also believe the same, whereas respondents from Christian, Muslim, and other religions believe that

this issue affects them to some extent only. On an average, it has been found that Sikh respondents with a mean value of 4.23 get affected to a very great deal. Hindus with a mean value of 3.64 are affected quite a lot. Whereas, Christians with a mean value of 3.40, Muslims with a mean value of 3.14 somewhat, and other religions with a mean value of 1.69 are not at all affected by this issue. The Guru Granth Sahib Sacrilege issue affects Sikhs more than other religious groups in Punjab.

**Table 1.5: Cross-tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with region**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Region						Chi square (p value)
		Majha		Malwa		Doaba		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal	88	58.7%	111	54.4%	25	54.3%	4.306 (0.829)
	Quite a lot	28	18.7%	47	23.0%	10	21.7%	
	Somewhat	20	13.3%	22	10.8%	7	15.2%	
	Very little	11	7.3%	14	6.9%	3	6.5%	
	Not at all	3	2.0%	10	4.9%	1	2.2%	
<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	97	64.7%	115	56.4%	18	39.1%	16.146 (0.040)
	Quite a lot	28	18.7%	47	23.0%	11	23.9%	
	Somewhat	15	10.0%	24	11.8%	7	15.2%	
	Very little	4	2.7%	8	3.9%	6	13.0%	
	Not at all	6	4.0%	10	4.9%	4	8.7%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	47	31.3%	49	24.0%	15	32.6%	4.622 (0.797)
	Quite a lot	40	26.7%	61	29.9%	13	28.3%	
	Somewhat	37	24.7%	51	25.0%	9	19.6%	
	Very little	14	9.3%	21	10.3%	3	6.5%	
	Not at all	12	8.0%	22	10.8%	6	13.0%	

<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	59	39.3%	94	46.1%	20	43.5%	5.809 (0.669)
	Quite a lot	60	40.0%	64	31.4%	20	43.5%	
	Somewhat	20	13.3%	28	13.7%	4	8.7%	
	Very little	7	4.7%	9	4.4%	1	2.2%	
	Not at all	4	2.7%	9	4.4%	1	2.2%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	85	56.7%	101	49.5%	22	47.8%	6.770 (0.562)
	Quite a lot	36	24.0%	61	29.9%	13	28.3%	
	Somewhat	15	10.0%	24	11.8%	8	17.4%	
	Very little	8	5.3%	8	3.9%	0	0.0%	
	Not at all	6	4.0%	10	4.9%	3	6.5%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	84	56.0%	112	54.9%	21	45.7%	7.075 (0.529)
	Quite a lot	40	26.7%	49	24.0%	14	30.4%	
	Somewhat	17	11.3%	22	10.8%	7	15.2%	
	Very little	7	4.7%	10	4.9%	1	2.2%	
	Not at all	2	1.3%	11	5.4%	3	6.5%	
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	57	38.0%	75	36.8%	19	41.3%	5.026 (0.755)
	Quite a lot	42	28.0%	56	27.5%	8	17.4%	
	Somewhat	29	19.3%	45	22.1%	12	26.1%	
	Very little	16	10.7%	17	8.3%	3	6.5%	
	Not at all	6	4.0%	11	5.4%	4	8.7%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	80	53.3%	89	43.6%	17	37.0%	12.533 (0.129)
	Quite a lot	35	23.3%	54	26.5%	16	34.8%	
	Somewhat	20	13.3%	28	13.7%	8	17.4%	
	Very little	9	6.0%	24	11.8%	1	2.2%	
	Not at all	6	4.0%	9	4.4%	4	8.7%	

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Region		
		Majha	Malwa	Doaba
		N	N	N
<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal (5)	97	115	18
	Quite a lot (4)	28	47	11
	Somewhat (3)	15	24	7
	Very little (2)	4	8	6
	Not at all (1)	6	10	4
	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>4.37</b> (A very great deal)	<b>4.22</b> (A very great deal)	<b>3.72</b> (Quite a lot)

According to the data presented in Table 1.5, respondents from the Majha, Malwa, and Doaba areas have different opinions on the 'Drugs' issue. This conclusion is based on a chi-square value of 16.146 and a p-value of 0.040, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. 64.7 percent of respondents in Majha, 56.4 percent in Malwa, and 39.1 percent in Doaba feel that this problem influences their voting decisions. The average mean value of 4.37 and 4.22, respectively, among respondents from the Majha and Malwa regions indicate their importance of this issue while voting.

Additionally, respondents from the Doaba region, with a mean value of 3.72, believe it impacts them quite a lot. It indicates youth from the Majha and Malwa regions get more affected by this issue while voting than those from the Doaba region in Punjab. However, there is no disparity in the viewpoints of respondents from different regions on the other issues. But, it is found that Malwa region respondents are affected by the inflation issue and not by the migration issue in comparison to the other two regions.

**Table 1.6: Cross tabulation of Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab with locality**

Issues affecting the decision of voting in Punjab		Locality				Chi square (p value)
		Urban		Rural		
		N	%	N	%	
<b>Unemployment</b>	A very great deal	97	55.7%	127	56.2%	2.094 (0.718)
	Quite a lot	39	22.4%	46	20.4%	
	Somewhat	20	11.5%	29	12.8%	
	Very little	10	5.7%	18	8.0%	
	Not at all	8	4.6%	6	2.7%	
<b>Drugs</b>	A very great deal	102	58.6%	128	56.6%	2.672 (0.614)
	Quite a lot	39	22.4%	47	20.8%	
	Somewhat	21	12.1%	25	11.1%	
	Very little	5	2.9%	13	5.8%	
	Not at all	7	4.0%	13	5.8%	
<b>Migration</b>	A very great deal	48	27.6%	63	27.9%	3.107 (0.540)
	Quite a lot	44	25.3%	70	31.0%	
	Somewhat	49	28.2%	48	21.2%	
	Very little	16	9.2%	22	9.7%	
	Not at all	17	9.8%	23	10.2%	
<b>Inflation (Rise in prices)</b>	A very great deal	84	48.3%	89	39.4%	3.521 (0.475)
	Quite a lot	59	33.9%	85	37.6%	
	Somewhat	20	11.5%	32	14.2%	
	Very little	6	3.4%	11	4.9%	
	Not at all	5	2.9%	9	4.0%	
<b>Corruption</b>	A very great deal	99	56.9%	109	48.2%	5.322 (0.256)
	Quite a lot	44	25.3%	66	29.2%	
	Somewhat	21	12.1%	26	11.5%	
	Very little	4	2.3%	12	5.3%	
	Not at all	6	3.4%	13	5.8%	
<b>Development (Education, Health, Roads)</b>	A very great deal	95	54.6%	122	54.0%	2.853 (0.583)
	Quite a lot	48	27.6%	55	24.3%	
	Somewhat	18	10.3%	28	12.4%	
	Very little	5	2.9%	13	5.8%	
	Not at all	8	4.6%	8	3.5%	
<b>Agriculture bills</b>	A very great deal	62	35.6%	89	39.4%	3.549 (0.470)
	Quite a lot	53	30.5%	53	23.5%	
	Somewhat	35	20.1%	51	22.6%	
	Very little	17	9.8%	19	8.4%	
	Not at all	7	4.0%	14	6.2%	
<b>Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege</b>	A very great deal	83	47.7%	103	45.6%	0.835 (0.934)
	Quite a lot	42	24.1%	63	27.9%	
	Somewhat	26	14.9%	30	13.3%	
	Very little	15	8.6%	19	8.4%	
	Not at all	8	4.6%	11	4.9%	

The information in Table 5.19 (6) shows that there isn't a statistically significant difference in the responses of respondents from different localities with respect to the issues while voting, as the p value for all statements is higher than the 0.005 level of significance. However, it has been found

that migration affects respondents from rural areas quite a lot more than respondents from urban areas.

**Conclusion**

The political behaviour of the youth in Punjab is influenced by a multifaceted interaction of socio-economic, cultural, and political forces. The salience of concerns like unemployment and the

drug menace indicates the pressing issues confronting the younger generation, which directly affect their political choices and inclinations. These issues underscore the need for targeted policy interventions and reforms to enhance the socio-economic status of the youth in the state. Second, the range of issues highlighted by respondents suggests the complex nature of governance in Punjab with citizens balancing a mix of socio-economic, religious, and cultural considerations while casting their electoral votes. It is only by comprehending these subtle viewpoints that political parties and policymakers can develop more sensitive strategies that appeal to the youth vote. Ultimately, it is crucial to address these issues in order to ensure greater youth participation and consolidate the democratic process in Punjab.

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