

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

THE ROLE OF FEUDAL LANDLORDS IN SHAPING NATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN PAKISTAN

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Shafique Ahmed, Saima Safdar, Dr. Abida Hafeez, Dr. Muhammad Javed, Dr. Muhammad Sher Juni. The Role Of Feudal Landlords In Shaping National Governance In Pakistan -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 20(2), 1347-1357. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords; Feudal landlords, National governance, Political power, Democracy

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores how feudal landlords have influenced the governance of Pakistan. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study examines the political and economic power wielded by feudal landlords, their interactions with state institutions, and the consequences of their power on public services. The findings demonstrate that feudal landlords possess significant sway over the state apparatus and exert a profound impact on public services within Pakistan. The study argues that the persistence of feudalism poses a substantial obstacle to the consolidation of democracy in the area. Drawing from these findings, the paper puts forth several recommendations for policy and practice, including the necessity for institutional reforms and measures to address the power disparity between feudal landlords and other stakeholders. The study concludes by acknowledging the research limitations and proposing avenues for future investigations into this subject matter. Overall, this research contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge on feudalism and national governance in

Pakistan, providing a valuable foundation for future research endeavors and policymaking initiatives in the region.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's provinces have a long-standing tradition of feudalism, characterized by the dominance of powerful landlords. These feudal lords have wielded significant control over the general population, exerting their influence over various aspects of regional economic, political, and social progress. These families hold immense wealth, influence, and political power, granting them extensive authority over the lives of ordinary individuals. This article specifically examines the impact of feudal landowners on the formulation of public policies and the availability of essential services in Pakistan.

Attempts to promote social justice and human rights have been hampered by the region's continued reliance on the feudal system. The landlords have been accused of adopting coercive means to silence criticism and resistance, which they allegedly do with the help of their riches and power. They have been blamed for encouraging a corrupt and dishonest atmosphere by diverting public funds for private use (Jaffrelot., 2015). Still, there are academics who believe the Waderas/Chaudhari's can contribute positively to national administration despite the difficulties faced by the feudal system. They may, for instance, mediate between the government and the local populace, improving the efficiency with which public services are provided and resolving conflicts (Khan., 2011). They might also advocate for community improvement projects like new facilities for healthcare and education (Ali, 2014).

We hope to accomplish this by taking a critical look at the influence feudal landlords have on democratic institutions, human rights, and public service delivery in Pakistan. Primary data from interviews and surveys with key stakeholders will supplement information gleaned from the existing literature. This study's findings will enlighten us about the intricate web of interconnections between feudalism and national governance, illuminating the obstacles to and prospects for advancing social justice and democratic accountability in Pakistan.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Determine the level of feudal landlords' political and economic dominance and the strategies they use to retain it in Pakistan, as well as the way they have influenced policymaking processes and public service delivery in the region.
- The goal of this study is to examine the benefits and drawbacks of feudal landlords serving between for the government and the populace.
- Reforms to the political and economic systems, as well as recommendations for fostering democratic accountability and social justice and human rights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research technique for "The Role of Feudal Landlords in Shaping National Governance in Pakistan" is a methodical strategy for examining the topic at hand. We will conduct a systematic literature review of works dealing with feudalism, national government, and social justice in Pakistan to identify knowledge gaps and new research concerns. Once we have that information, we may select a research approach that is tailored to our objectives and well-grounded in the findings. Members of the local populace who have been impacted by feudalism, as well as government officials and civil society representatives, will be chosen to participate in a representative sample.

Data will be analyzed using a variety of quantitative and qualitative tools, including content analysis, theme analysis, and regression analysis. The most important trends, themes, and connections in the data must be identified and analyzed so that conclusions can be drawn that are consistent with the research objectives.

The study's goals will be discussed alongside a summary of the research findings and some recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. Finally, the results will be disseminated through various means, such as scholarly publications, conference presentations, and other mediums, to ensure that the findings are seen by the right people and add to the policy discourse on national governance in Sindh.

This project will use a thorough, open, and impartial research approach to produce credible findings that add to our knowledge of feudal landlords' influence on Pakistan national governance.

Origins of Feudalism in Pakistan:

Pakistani feudalism can be traced all the way back to pre-colonial times in South Asia. Understanding the impact of feudalism on Pakistani politics requires looking at how it evolved over time. The Mughal Empire and other area kingdoms encouraged property and labor rights, which may have contributed to the establishment of the region's feudal economic and social structure. During the colonial period, feudal structures were strengthened.

The period of British colonial authority in the Indian subcontinent had a major impact on the development of feudalism in Pakistan. British land settlement policies helped solidify the position of feudal lords. Social inequalities were entrenched and strengthened by the Permanent Settlement of 1793 and the revenue regimes that followed. Pakistani feudalism is defined by a strict social order. The zamindars are at the pinnacle of society, with extensive power and control over the land. The zamindars were the top tier of the feudal system, with the lowest classes consisting of tenant farmers and landless laborers. Landlords of the feudal era worked with the British to keep society under control throughout the colonial era. They consolidated their dominance by land grants and special privileges. Pakistan's feudal landlord class maintained substantial power and influence after the country gained independence. In Pakistan, land and income remain concentrated among a small number of feudal elites. The

political, governmental, and social-economic dynamics of society are still heavily influenced by feudalism despite the advent of urbanization and industrialization (Ahmed, 1991)

The Relationship Between Feudalism and National Governance

The feudal past and its modern national government are inextricably linked. In feudalism, a small number of landowners wield sway over most political and economic decisions. For generations, a tiny number of landowners in Sindh and Punjab have exercised political and economic dominance over the province through their ownership of vast swaths of land (Jaffri, 2014).

The national government has been profoundly affected by the consolidation of power in the hands of the feudal lords. Lords of the feudal aristocracy have historically held influential positions in regional governments. As a result, fewer people are fairly representing the population at large in positions of authority.

The provision of public services and the operation of state institutions have also been influenced by feudalism (Iqbal, 2015). This has had a negative impact on the overall governance and development of the region. The feudal lords' consolidation of power and wealth has resulted in unequal access to public services and infrastructure, as well as widespread neglect and underdevelopment. Because of this, regional growth and administration have suffered.

In addition, political and economic structure has been criticized for its ties to feudalism, corruption, and nepotism. Trust in government institutions has suffered as a result (Khan, 2016). preventing the development of democracy and accountability. There has been a lot of difficulty for policymakers and academics in Sindh when trying to understand the connection between feudalism and national governance. To solve this problem, we need to learn more about the origins and evolution of feudalism in the region and make it a priority to advance democratic accountability and social fairness.

The Political and Economic Power of Feudal Landlords

The feudal landlord class in Pakistan has historically wielded substantial political and economic power, which has influenced regional administration and growth. They have exploited this authority to further entrench themselves in power and increase their grip on the local population (Zulfiqar, 2020).

According to research, feudal landowners have had a significant impact on political environment, with many serving in influential roles in the government and politics (Jaffri, 2014). For instance, in many rural areas, feudal lords play the role of local leaders, supplying essential services and resources. As a result, fewer people are fairly represented in positions of authority, and power has become concentrated among fewer people.

In addition, the economic influence of feudal landlords in Pakistan has been crucial to the growth of the area. Faction lords in Pakistan hold sway over vast

areas of territory, which they employ to their financial advantage (Khan S. A., 2017). Because of this, a select few have amassed vast fortunes at the expense of the majority who continue to live in abject poverty.

The development of democracy and accountability in Sindh has been hampered by feudal landlords' connections to corruption and other forms of malpractice (Khan, 2016). As an illustration, feudal lords frequently utilize their political and economic influence to get access to lucrative government contracts and to shape how resources are distributed. The region's development and administration have suffered as a result.

Impact of Feudalism on National Governance in Pakistan

Legislative Politics, policymaking, and the distribution of power in Pakistan have all been profoundly influenced by the country's feudal past. The primary ways in which feudalism affects national governance are analyzed here.

Especially in rural areas, feudal landlords wield influence over local administration through the nomination of officials. This helps them preserve their influence among the general populace. The dominance of feudal landlords in local administration gave them the ability to affect the actual implementation of policies. They tend to put their own needs first, which results in uneven development and poor allocation of resources (Siddiqui, 2014).

Patronage networks and clientelism play a significant role in feudal landlords' ability to win elections and maintain power. They maintain their power in politics by showering their constituents with favors, resources, and protection in exchange for political allegiance. Electoral Manipulation Landlords in feudal societies frequently use vote-buying, extortion, and intimidation to influence election outcomes in their favor. The legitimacy of the voting process is being compromised (Kim, 2020).

Feudal landlords wield considerable sway in the legislature, shaping legislative decisions and blocking reforms that could endanger their interests. This impedes the implementation of fair policies and restricts the scope of progressive lawmaking (Ayesha Siddiqa Tariq, 2016).

Landlords' interests are typically served by feudal influence in the form of laws and subsidies pertaining to land ownership and agriculture. As a result, inequality in wealth is entrenched.

The impact of Feudalism on State Institutions and Public services

Even in the present day, the influence of feudalism continues to have a significant impact on state institutions and public services in Pakistan. The concentration of power and wealth among a small group of feudal landlords hinders the development of regional institutions and services, as well as efforts to foster democratic practices and effective governance. One of the major consequences of feudalism is the consolidation of power in the hands of a select

few individuals, which has greatly constrained the state's capacity to provide essential public services and foster economic advancement (Jaffrelot, 2016).

Historically, feudal landlords have used their political power to acquire access to government contracts and influence resource distribution, which has led to widespread corruption and inefficiencies in government service delivery.

Due to the economic power of feudal landlords, public services in Pakistan have also suffered. Feudal landlords have vast properties and reap large profits from them, but they have not made any improvements to public services or contributed to the local economy (Ali, 2014). This results in many areas of Pakistan being cut off from vital resources like healthcare, schools, and clean water.

Further, feudalism has helped explain why democratic institutions in Sindh are so underdeveloped. Efforts to improve accountability and democracy have been hampered by feudal landlords' use of their authority to influence elections and to maintain control of local government (Jalal, 2014).

State institutions and public services in Pakistan have been significantly impacted by feudalism, contributing to corruption, inefficiency, and underdevelopment. To solve this problem, we need a wide-ranging strategy that prioritizes democratic accountability, good governance, and resource equity.

Resistance and Challenges to Feudal Domination in Pakistan

Various social, political, and grassroots movements in Pakistan have presented formidable challenges to and resistance to the continued dominance of the feudal system. The main kinds of opposition to and difficulties with feudalism in the country are discussed below.

- **Farmer and Worker Uprisings: The Peasant Uprisings:** Movements have been formed by peasants and tenant farmers to advocate for land reform and equitable distribution of resources. Their goal is to force feudal landlords to stop exploiting their tenants and to distribute land more fairly (Siddiqi, 1990).
- **Unions of Farm Hands:** Unions have formed to represent agricultural employees to safeguard their rights and interests while performing their work on feudal grounds. These unions campaign for higher pay, safer workplaces, and more secure employee rights (Iqbal, 2014).
- **In Pakistan, there have been significant socialist and leftist political movements that have actively opposed the dominance of feudalism and advocated for land redistribution and social equity. These uprisings have sought to dismantle the existing social and economic hierarchy and challenge the authority of feudal lords. The primary objective of these movements is to bring about a more egalitarian society by addressing the entrenched power dynamics and privileges enjoyed by the feudal class.**

- **Democratic and Socialist Parties:** The Awami National Party (ANP) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) are prominent examples of progressive political parties in Pakistan. These parties have actively campaigned for land reforms, social justice, and fair governance. They have been at the forefront of the struggle against the prevailing feudal system, aiming to reduce its dominance and create a more balanced distribution of power. The ANP and PPP have consistently advocated for policies and measures that aim to address the inequalities stemming from feudalism, with a focus on promoting a more equitable society.
- **Organizations within the civil society (also known as "CSOs"):** Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have played a crucial role in challenging feudal dominance through various means such as education, advocacy, and mobilization. These organizations have emerged as significant forces in the struggle for social justice by advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, particularly in terms of land ownership. CSOs actively promote and support initiatives that aim to address the power imbalances inherent in the feudal system. By raising awareness, engaging in advocacy campaigns, and mobilizing underrepresented groups, CSOs contribute to the ongoing fight against feudal dominance and work towards a more equitable society (Nayyar, 2011).
- **Communities Without Land and Social Margin:** Historically, individuals and communities lacking land and occupying marginalized positions in society, particularly in rural areas, have been at the forefront of resistance against feudal dominance. These marginalized groups have organized protests, engaged in land occupations, and spearheaded social movements to assert their rights and challenge the dominance of feudal landowners. These acts of resistance serve as powerful means for these communities to address the entrenched power structures and inequalities perpetuated by the feudal system. By mobilizing and advocating for their rights, these marginalized individuals actively participate in the struggle for social justice and strive to create a more equitable society.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Landlords in Pakistan feudal system hold a disproportionate amount of political and economic power, which they employ to their advantage in ways both large and little.
- Corruption, incompetence, and underdevelopment have all persisted in Pakistan because of the institutions and public services being hampered by the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a tiny minority of feudal landlords.
- Feudalism has contributed to the underdevelopment of democratic institutions in Pakistan by reducing opportunities for citizen participation and participation in government.

- To effectively combat feudalism in Pakistan, it is necessary to use an integrated approach that prioritizes fostering democratic accountability, good governance, and resource equity.
- Overall, the impact of feudal landowners on Pakistan national administration is a barrier to the region's progress toward democracy and economic growth. Government, civil society, and international partners must work together to advance equality, justice, and good governance in Pakistan if this problem is to be resolved.

Implications of the study for National governance in Pakistan

Major implications for the region's political destiny are found in this study of feudal landowners' influence on the national government of Pakistan.

Good governance in Pakistan is impossible until feudalism is abolished. Due to a small number of feudal landlords controlling most of the region's wealth and power, the region's state institutions and public services have been hobbled, leading to widespread corruption, ineffectiveness, and underdevelopment.

The only way to address the issues caused by feudalism is to strengthen democratic accountability. Good governance is predicated on openness, responsibility, and adherence to the rule of law; these qualities can be nurtured through democratic institutions and procedures (Raza, 2018). For the feudalism issue to be resolved, it is also essential that people have equal access to resources (Mansoor, 2016).

The fight against feudalism in Pakistan requires a wide range of strategies and the coordination of actors on multiple scales (local, national, and international). Efforts in this direction can include making more resources available, increasing accountability, and instituting more democratic reforms. Investigation of the role of feudal landlords in national government demonstrates the critical need for concerted effort to stamp out the system. To advance democratic accountability, efficient government, and equitable resource distribution, a holistic and cooperative strategy including numerous actors and initiatives is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Based on what was found about the impact of feudal landlords on national governance in Pakistan, the following recommendations were developed:

1. **Boost Agricultural Reforms:** Too much of Sindh's and Punjab wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few feudal landlords. The goal of these reforms is to redistribute land to small farmers and promote justice in land distribution by increasing transparency in land transactions.
2. To counter the challenges created by feudalism, democratic institutions and processes must be fortified. This can only be achieved by ensuring free and fair elections, promoting transparency in government, and arming citizens with the means to hold their leaders accountable.

3. To fix the problem of underdeveloped public services in Pakistan, more money must be allocated to sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This can only be achieved if the government is committed to adequately funding these sectors and ensuring the public receives high-quality services.

4. To reduce the power of feudal lords, it is necessary to promote economic growth that is shared by all citizens, not just the wealthy. This necessitates making it easier for businesses to start up and succeed, expanding people's access to credit, and funding growth-promoting infrastructure projects.

5. The problem of feudalism in Pakistan cannot be solved without the participation of government, civil society, and international partners. Collaborations of this sort can increase the efficiency with which resources, information, and expertise are applied to the difficult problems plaguing the area.

6. Policy and practice suggestions based on the study's findings stress the importance of coordinated, all-out campaigns to advance democratic accountability, sound administration, and fair distribution of the Pakistan resources. Adherence to these suggestions calls for ongoing work and dedication by regional and global actors.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

While this research did shed light on how feudal landlords in Pakistan influenced national administration, it was not without flaws.

First, the social and cultural aspects of feudalism in Pakistan were neglected in favor of an examination of the monetary and political influence of feudal landlords. The continued existence of feudalism and its effects on national governance are interesting topics for future study and should be investigated in greater depth.

Second, the findings can only be extrapolated so far because the study was conducted using a qualitative method. To gain a deeper knowledge of the problem, future studies may employ a mixed-methods strategy, which integrates qualitative and quantitative data.

Third, the study was limited to a particular setting and might not generalize to other countries or locations. To further understand the effects of feudalism on national governance, future studies should look at its impact in different contexts.

Finally, the study used secondary sources of information rather than conducting interviews with people in the affected areas, highlighting the need for more primary research.

Several directions for future study can be proposed considering these restrictions. In the first place, it would be interesting to see how feudalism affected various industries in the past and present. Second, studies might investigate how gender, caste, and other social distinctions influenced feudal power relations. Third, further study needs to be done to see how the continued existence of feudalism influences the likelihood of provincial democratic consolidation.

Although this study adds to our understanding of feudalism's impact on national governance in Pakistan, more investigation is required to draw firm conclusions.

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