

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF LAND TITLE DISPUTES ON LITIGANTS: A
PERCEPTION SURVEY IN THE LAHORE DISTRICT



By

Amina Qureshi

Thesis submitted to the Lahore School of Economics

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MPhil Development Studies

2021

Supervised by

Mr. Javed S. Malik

Abstract

The socio-economic circumstances of land owning individuals are closely tied to the security of their land rights. The positive impact of such rights has been widely addressed in previous studies. However, there is relatively less focus on how insecure land titles can affect an individual's social and economic conditions.

This study analyzes the effects of delayed land title dispute resolutions by courts of law on litigants' socio-economic conditions. The research is basically qualitative in nature where we use the tool of survey questionnaires to explore the socio-economic impact of prolonged litigation on the welfare of the litigants. We particularly investigate such effects on litigants with poor means and limited resources, as well as bring out aspects of inefficient court and administrative processes that contribute to worsening the adverse conditions being faced by litigants.

We find that a litigant faces a multitude of issues due to the weak institution of property rights in Pakistan, and a defective system of dispute resolution that is marred by superfluous delays. This affects individuals, especially from the lower income strata, in a multidimensional manner. The purpose of the study is to sensitise policy makers to the plight of the vulnerable and poor citizens engaged in land titles litigation and to emphasize the importance of efficient court management and the land administration system, which ensures a strong property rights system in Pakistan.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. Javed S. Malik for his constant mentorship and support. I am grateful to the Lahore School of Economics which provided me the platform necessary to carry out the research for this thesis.

Special thanks to the civil courts' lawyers and staff where we interviewed litigants; they provided us with space to conduct our research, and I offer my gratitude to all litigants who voluntarily became a part of this study. I am also indebted to my family for its constant support and encouragement.

All praise for the Almighty.