Structural impediments in social mobility: pakistan

Social Mobility is an all-encompassing concept that includes but is not limited to economic prosperity. Social mobility is concerned with a relocation of individuals and groups to a class they aspire to be in. Economics is a big but not the only determinant of moving to the aspiring class. The state is dependent upon its structural development to promote the wellbeing of its population. The structure of the state is then determines the policy formulation and most importantly its implementation. A state not only requires strong structures but adequate ones too. Apart from formal state structures, the Pakistani society also includes informal social structures such as cast, creed, and political influence, connection to power bases (military and bureaucracy). In this case then, structures both formal and informal interact to ultimately determine and influence policies that determine the wellbeing of the masses. Structures do not survive in vacuum and are therefore dependent upon political and policy stability. Structures should also be designed to maximize autonomy and decentralization for people to make choices in how the state should best meet their needs . Social mobility in Pakistan is subject to the state's policies that promote it such as education, health, housing, spending taxes effectively. Lastly social mobility as a state policy can only be achieved if both formal and informal structures form a conducive atmosphere for the policies.

1. Introduction

There is no dearth of literature and research on poverty alleviation and improving governance in Pakistan. While there is no doubt about the excellent quality and in-depth research, there is however not enough attention being given to determining what are the impediments in the way of

implementing these programs. These specific constraints that emerge as structural issues that discourage social mobility are a topic of new interest amongst various social scientists. The purpose of this research is then to describe these impediments in hope that policy makers can understand the problems properly and draft policies that tackle these issues and eventually ease the implementation of their programs. While there can be little or no argument against the merits of tackling these issues, it is however still questionable as to what prevent policies designed specifically to address these issues, to actually overcome these.

The term social mobility has seen to been a great interest amongst sociologists and other scholars. Various definitions and meanings have been giving while the concept itself has evolved throughout the years. However this paper describes social mobility as the movement of individuals from one class or status group to another. Horizontal social mobility corresponds to the social status changes of individuals, having no influence on their material welfare, employment. Absolute social mobility occurs when the majority of the individuals in the class move from one social status to another. While various academics have studied various facilitators for social mobility this paper will mainly focus around issues that fall under governmental and public sector structural purview such as rapid economic growth, performance of public sector institutions and effective policy design and implementation. Cheema and Sial (2012) record the incidence of poverty as high as 23% of the total population in Pakistan. Various reports on the poverty conducted show that the poverty is double in rural area than that in urban Pakistan. The World Bank defines governance in terms of how power is exercised in the

management of a country's economic and social development. However the term governance is often interchangeable and carries different meanings in different contexts. Under most contexts governance is the rules and the subsequent practice of directing public affairs. In simpler terms governance can then be seen as the art of conducting matters that affect the state of the public. Governance is only made possible through institutional structures that implement the decisions. According to (Haq & Zia 2009) governance is then determined by the quality of institutions and how decisions are executed. It is with this view that defines governance as the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and social actors interact to make decisions (Hyden, Court & Mease 2003). Governance is highly subjected and dependent upon public sector institutions and structures. The public sector institutions works with other societal organizations to develop public policies and programs that bring about people's welfare and more specifically reduce poverty. Policies that increase welfare and realize other positive public and societal goals are the intended function of governance.

2. Research Methodology

Purpose of research

This study will be undertaken to ascertain how government functioning and structures discourage social mobility in the economically poor class of Pakistan. This research will help all stake holders identify how and what parts of government are responsible for increasing poverty levels and how difficult it is for people to get out of the poverty trap.

3. Method of research

Research Design:

Philosophy

The philosophical approach to this research is the " critical approach". The reason for selecting this approach is that this philosophy studies society in terms of a conflict of different groups and how tensions of one group eventually lead to a confrontation and a change in society. Although positivism would also be suitable for studying this topic, but it is the feeling of the researcher that it may ignore to explain why such structures might behave the way they do. Here the conflict approach will examine the structural imbalances and explain how status quo keeps the Pakistani society in a state of monopolised resources.

Approach adopted

An inductive approach is then suitable to study how these structures impose themselves upon society. This approach also leaves room to develop alternative explanations and meanings as to why the structures discourage social mobility.

Strategies

This research study falls under the broad category of descriptive research further narrowing down in to case study research; one of the many available qualitative strategies. This study looks in to how formal and informal structures have hindered the marginalized population's effort to step out of their class. It means to pronounce no judgments or one-sided definite conclusions aiming at becoming an interpretive case study led endeavour.

Choices

Research choices being present in much variety gave way to purely mono method standards being chosen for this study, namely qualitative befitting the genre of the topic. A mixture of methods or only a quantitative methodology was deemed unfit because of the wide array of opportunities to create a logical understanding, space and flexibility qualitative research provides.

Time Horizon:

Cross-sectional in form, this exercise was a onetime investigative effort in to the subject of the study conducted over a brief period of time although a longitudinal study covering more aspects depending on the interest of the researcher is possible.

Techniques & procedures:

Data collection techniques involve at first existing secondary sources that point in the direction of the themes selected for investigation. Procedures used for analysing secondary data in this case, include coding, sorting and sifting at first that leads to a typological stage which requires a taxonomic or hierarchical depiction of the typological categories established to better ensure clarity of the concepts and themes of research. Also because the definitions of what constitutes good structures and bad structures is not universally acknowledged , it must be created in the context of Pakistani society and whether the said structures promote equal opportunity for all . It must be noted that analysis of secondary data is treated similarly to that of primary data within the qualitative paradigm.

With this comes the next step, and the qualitative technique used to comprehend and convert all collected data into a whole being logical analysis, allows the development of an all-encompassing analysis and discussion. With respect to the genre of this study, discourse analysis could have been selected as a qualitative procedure of analysis but that would have required expertise in the selected area as a pre-set condition and a further in depth study of available discourse requiring more time along with the establishment of other philosophical and historical parameters which would have expanded the scope of this project. However, no choice of procedure is better than the other and logical analysis if anything, allows the development of a more cohesive interpretation and understanding of the topic at hand.

Measurement/ Instrument selection

Data will be collected from secondary sources such books and research papers which will aid the analysis of this paper based on accurate and established constructs and themes. Primary data collection would involve a longer amount of time and require greater expertise to extract information.

Variables

Qualitative research allows one the space and flexibility to not have variables to start with and this being a case study can do without propositions also. However, the former will remain absent not the latter because the idea behind this research project is to look in to what define formal and informal structures, and what elements govern them in the context of Pakistani society. Variables, if identified will further narrow down the focus of research by placing the study of structures the background and

isolated variables in the foreground making them the subject of study , thus a disconnect will be avoided . In this descriptive case study, the idea is to identify and then describe the structural functioning in Pakistani society to highlight their role in social mobility in an effort to better understand them. Thus there is no need to use variables.

Definitions for structures and social mobility used

Structures, which are also known as institutions are a very subjective concept. However scholars tend to generally define structures as the development of an organised action that seeks to establish norms, enforce rules and guide practices in society. Structures can then be classified into formal or informal. The formal structures come together by the effect of laws promulgated, contractual agreement, or other codified artefacts (Prell et al. 2010). Prell et. al furtherises his argument by stating ” structures that are informal refer to practices that have become conventional in a society and produce groups of people in an organized collective. Beliefs, social networks, cultures and norms are responsible for developing these informal structures. These informal structures than exist side by side, challenge or sometimes even reinforce formal structures.”

In the case of Pakistan the clan system, bridari, connections with power bases such as military, bureaucracy or politicians, jobs in state institutions and family connections are some of the informal structures that are a focus of this research. Informal structures are not organizations, as they are not backed and recognized by the state. Moreover there authority has no bases in law and are not a separate identity than their patrons. Meaning that without its members, informal structures cannot exist. Formal structures are

known as organizations because they are not dependent on their members to survive. They are recognized by the state as separate entities that can be run by different people. There by continuity and membership are the two distinguishing characteristics of formal structures (Prell et al. 2010). Secondly informal structures manifest in social relations and rather social networks. Social networks a then the ultimate regulatory tool in the functioning of these structures. There is no law backing the functioning of informal structures. But where both cases converge is the constraints and incentives for individuals to think and/or act a particular way is provided.

Social mobility measures the equality of life opportunities for groups in a society. These opportunities allow groups equal access to areas through which they can climb economic and subsequent social ladder. Thus social mobility is the fluidity afforded to marginalised groups to move vertically in the class system. While there is a sociological and an economic definition for social mobility, in this research paper the researcher will be using social mobility in the economic sense. The debate of social mobility and its relationship with inequality and economic growth is of great interest to scholars. Research undertaken by Nunn et al. (2007) shows that high levels of inequality of resource distribution constrain the potential for movement within the social hierarchy, leading to a double-bind of high income inequality and low mobility. On the other, high levels of inequality and mobility might be thought to be good bedfellows, suggesting that sufficient incentives are built into the social structure to allow the economy to make the best use of its resources, allocating talented labour to high value jobs (Nunn et al. 2007). However most evidence favour the cyclic nature of high

income inequality leads to low mobility which closes access to resources to climb out of the poverty trap.

The State's role is widely acknowledged to maximize access to resources to all segments and provide avenues of social mobility. The state and its structures are then fundamentally responsible for correcting an imbalance of access to resources. For this reason, the structures of the state are empowered to make policies and decisions that provide maximum benefit to the marginalized. It is in this paradigm, the study of the structures of Pakistan and their role in social mobility will be undertaken.

4. Data analysis

The data gathered from secondary sources would be categorized using axial coding and then divided in to groups according to the categories recognized in the discussion of structures and social mobility. Once sorted, the data during this initial process has been sifted, edited and tailored to match the research objectives. The data will be analysed in categories in a hierarchy. This will then help to show demonstrate level by level the relationships between various structures and their role in promoting or discouraging social mobility. This will provide for the flow, interconnectivity and congruence of the data collected. Lastly this will be backed by scholarly research on similar topics.

Research Ethics

During the course of the research, utmost care was taken to treat the study as ethically as possible. In order to properly follow the pre-set code of conduct and ethics for any research process, several measures were taken.

At the developmental stage of this research it was ensured that all prior literature reviewed and referred to at any instance in the research report, be properly acknowledged with citations and full-length references. Furthermore, proper attention was also given to the fact that most of the literature and resources used for this study derived from the internet, or otherwise came from authentic sources.

5. Literature Review

Shafqat (1999) undertook the study on Pakistan's bureaucracy and its role in governance and institutional structures. Shafqat noted that while initially the country's bureaucracy was seen as the instigator for the engine of growth, development and an agent of change, in the later years it was seen as a highly corrupt group striving for maintaining its grip in status quo. Shafqat credits the various movements against the authoritarian to highlight the repressive role of the bureaucratic machine. Bureaucrats were then seen as being inimical to their own vested interests (Shafqat 1999). Corruption, inefficiency, absence of accountability, and maintenance of the status quo were portrayed as the manifestations of bureaucracy (World Bank Report 1993, as cited in Shafqat 1999)

Husain's (1999) work on governance and institutions of Pakistan highlights problems specific to Pakistan and the local decay of state. He argues that weak institutions and the emergence of informal groups at the expense of the state authority work in a cyclic pattern in Pakistan, with weak institutions formulating inadequate policies and failing to implement them. Hussain (1999) then argues that well designed public institutions must be seen as investments for a country and help to improve resource allocation,

comparative trade advantage, productivity, market allocation efficiency and distribution of benefits of growth.

Husain's research focuses on how power is exercised by bureaucrats in the management of the country. He argues that economic and social resources have been plundered thanks to the flexibility available to bureaucrats in pursuing arbitrary action. He then goes on to highlight the collusion between different structures both formal and informal in saving each other from accountability. Finally he maintains that accountability is not anchored in the core of the state institutions and that power remains fixed within the hierarchy of the bureaucracy and elite instead of counter checking institutions like the judiciary. He therefore argues that the power afforded to the bureaucracy and elite tilts the balance as the political process in the country has been unstable and has produced politicians and leaders that are ill equipped to deal with matters of governance.

Hussain's (1999) view is supported by Hussain and Hussain (1993). The authors maintain that the impediments in governing Pakistan arise from a sluggish bureaucratic system. They maintain that despite some economic growth social policy making has been fundamentally flawed. The bureaucratic strain has tilted the states favours on the side of the connected and powerful. Governance is then subservient and accommodating to only a few and ignores the wellbeing of the population. Hussain and Hussain attribute this to nonprofessional training of the bureaucrats as the main reason why governance and institutions remain inadequate for pursuing pro poor policies with current resources available. Hussain and Hussain clarify that state policies and institutions are limited in providing relief to the

already well to do and operate on patronage and favours. The authors conclude that social mobility is highly restricted for people who cannot access power through personal connections.

Haq and Zia (2009) studied the ability of governance structures to effectively formulate and implement sound policies that promoted welfare for the poorer segments of society. The focus of their research is on the poor input given by the bureaucracy at various stages required for the government to be able to produce and implement good policies. They also noted the failure or deliberate inadequacy of the bureaucracy particularly in the role of regulatory bodies that developed and implemented market friendly policies such as price control and adequate public funds supervision, excessive regulation in area such as foreign trade and business development.

Haq and Zia further studied the structural dimension of governance. They found many instances where exercise of public power was curtailed in favour of private gains by top officials. They also found instances of bureaucracy colluding with politicians to control corruption measures and in some cases limit charges under anti-corruption laws. The aspects of corruption in the structure ranged from the occurrence of additional payment to get things done to grand corruption in the electoral arena and the capture of state resources. Haq and Zia conclude that since lawmakers and law implementers colluded with each other it was a simple case of " a lack of respect on the part of both the corruptor and the corrupted for the rules that govern their interaction, thus representing a failure of governance" (pp. 39).

Ghani et. al's (2006) study found that people across the third world aspire of gaining access to the lifestyle enjoyed by citizens in developed countries. It found that their exclusion from these benefits by the powerful fuel the resentment of the population. A structurally weak and flawed governance state, instead of providing resources and mobility out of poverty, becomes an instrument for repressing the many by the few. States like Pakistan then by comparison fail to acquire the range of functions routinely associated with state-capacity (Ghani et. al 2006). The monopoly on state resources and power then are seen as the failure of governance and structures of Pakistan.

Pasha (2002) undertook the study focusing on the segments that benefited the most during Pakistan's economic growth periods. His study found that despite periods of good economic performance the lack of social security policy framework prevented most of the poorer segments of society from climbing up the economic mobility level. Pasha found that countries who focused on the development of social safety nets together with growth managed to sustain social mobility. Pasha emphasized that even if one was missing the other would not be enough to reduce poverty. Pasha concluded by stating that public policies in Pakistan can be even influenced by bureaucracy to generate and distribute income for persons in favour to them.

Pasha's (2002) work is supported by the findings of Hussain and Hussain (2009). They highlight the patron-client model of governance in bureaucracy in the Ayub government has somewhat still continued till today. The bureaucracy granted licenses and contracts to favoured individuals in the private sector within a highly regulated economic regime (Hussain & Hussain

2009). Government postings and appointments were then made to establish a network for the patronage of bureaucrats and military ruling elite. During the 1960s, the government systematically encouraged import substitution industrial growth, and nurtured an industrial elite dependent on state patronage.

6. Research Questions

What are the informal and informal structures in Pakistan?

Do informal structures prevail over formal state structures?

Do informal structures ultimately determine the fate of the marginalized in Pakistan?

7. Propositions

(P1) The Pakistani state has inadequate structures to address the need of social mobility in the marginalized groups

(P 2) The informal social structures of political influence and connections with power bases override state authority across all levels

8. Discussion

The foundations of governance are built on the smooth functioning of the state structures. Pakistan's governance and its structures were inherited from the British in 1947. These state structures have since then been subject to rules that have ranged from complete dictatorship to a weak hobbling democracy. Unfortunately as transition period for governments has been far removed from smooth, the structures of the state have not progressed in terms of responding to challenges. This has made the atmosphere for

implementing pro poor plans very difficult. The instability of the political scene has caused various structures within the formal framework to be ill equipped to meet challenges of the country or lacking in real autonomy and transparency. The bumpy transitions have also meant that economic and social policy plans have been cut short or even in some cases reversed by the preceding government. Thus the true functioning of the state structures in equalizing resource access and plugging wastage has been sabotaged due to the uncertainty that prevails in the countries governance. While Pakistan's governance has shifted between dictatorship and democracy, the sufferers have been the people of Pakistan.

While governments come and go, a structure has worked with and facilitated governance regardless of who was at the helm of affairs. The bureaucracy and its state structures have worked with both dictators and the politicians. The bureaucracy inherited the skills that the British left them with to govern the Indian sub-continent. As the bureaucracy managed the day to day affairs, it was the British who they reported to and thus best represented their interest. Being answerable to a parliament was something that was alien to this structure. The bureaucratic formal structure is then an important and a crucial component in the state of Pakistan. The structures role has largely been facilitators of the current ruler. The structure has also the ability to then link its main and core function policy formulation directly to the personality in power rather than a system or a vision. The reason for this is has been the structures past where answering to the viceroy were the procedure. This structure is also crucial as it plays a major role in developing social programs and implementing them. While it has been colluded with

both formal and informal structures, its role is central to understanding the problem of social mobility in Pakistan.

There is a great consensus amongst Pakistani sociologists and political scientists that the military plays a great role in the functioning of the state of Pakistan. Some go as far as declaring the military structure as the final authority in Pakistan. What makes the military an important part of the state is its economic dimension. The Pakistani military has an industrial component, which includes fertilizer companies, cereal manufacturing, cement and etc. The second component is the share of the defence expenditure in Pakistan's budget. The military structure has been the main player in the country's 65 years of existence as far as the state is concerned. Dominant till the 1971 war and omnipotent from the 1980s, the military structure has a fundamental role in all aspects that govern the land of Pakistan. Its role has been more than what is defined in the constitution and laws of Pakistan. Primarily still a fighting force; it has administrative, economic, and political functioning. This has made it the important player in any and all affairs of other structures. The military structure then supersedes all other structures by sheer force.

The political structure of Pakistan is the last of the formal structures that play a major role in drafting policies that promote social mobility. While periods of democracy puts the structure in spotlight, political organizations as they are legally known, have maintained varying amounts of influence on the state of Pakistan. The political structure has largely been a victim of unstable governance. With periods of democracy peppered on a series of dictatorships, Pakistan's political structures have been weak, divided and un-

evolved. Structurally weak, the politicians have then maintained ties with the aforementioned bureaucrats and military to stay relevant. While formulated by law, political setups have been always at the mercy of bureaucrats for implementing their decisions and the military for the functioning of democracy.

Lastly the large business and land owning class has been a somewhat formal and an informal structure in Pakistan. This is a somewhat stable structure that consists of a heterogeneous class. The structure although is not formally recognized by the laws of the land, has made its presence felt by attaching itself to formal structures through relations, patronage and networking. This class has economic interests in the state, and therefore works across all structures to further their interest. The structural make up of this class makes it dependent on who ever best facilitate its objectives. This has led to the growth of power of this structure dependent on its relations with all formal and informal structures.

What is interesting to note however is the informal structure that cuts across all the mentioned formal state structures? Largely based on personal connection, kinship, relation or belonging to clan system, the informal structures of Pakistan permeate across all structures of society. Largely still an agriculture based society, Pakistan has a population that still values these traditional structures over formal ones. The bridari system will connect army generals to politicians. Bureaucrats belonging to the same ethnicity tend to favour each other. Connections to power base i. e.: the military, bureaucracy and the political class is also a major part informal structure. The connection of this structure eventually determines the access to resources for the

population. As these three bases use the power granted to them vis-à-vis the formal structure to further their personal agenda. The presence of this structure is largely documented, but its role in formal structures and eventually policy making has not been explored fully. The question then remains do informal structures eventually prevail over formal state structures.

Influence and personal connection play a significant role in the upward mobility in Pakistan. The informal structure through network and relation play a large role in the inadequate governance response to social mobility issues. Interest groups operate with impunity via these informal networks and are not held accountable. This is because of their client-patronage method of dealing with the very structures on which the state is built on. The interest groups serve their economic objectives through licenses and permits etc. that are easier to come by if one knows the right people. Hence groups and individuals who wield influence are able to gather wealth and move upwards in social mobility. This locks out the rest of the population from accessing resources to use in the increase of their social and economic status. Social and economic inequality is then closely linked. As a consequence of personal connection with the right structures, poverty, economic power and political dominance are then inter-connected. Control over economic resources via personal influence is then central to social dominance. Thus the informal structures ability to socially exclude groups results in social inequalities and prevents social mobility. It is due to this that even if the country passes through the period of economic growth, wealth might not trickle down because the informal structures maintain exclusive

control over economic resources and political influence. The economic dependence of a tenant and agricultural laborer on their landlord, or that of a small business man on a politically connected man for license, helps to perpetuate these very informal structures. The informal structures act as monopolies and keep power and economic resources in the hands of already dominant groups and thus making social mobility for other groups a distant dream. The final question that must be answered is that do informal structures ultimately determine the fate of the marginalized in Pakistan.

The Pakistani attitude towards employment in the public sector as compared to the private sector demonstrates the influence of informal structures in society. While employment in both private and public sectors of economy are perceived as an important source of upward mobility in the rest of the world, public sector employment is more prized because of the power and influence involved with holding the office. The other route to private sector employment is only accessible through education. It is no surprise then, that Education is too leads to upward mobility. The meagre spending on education in the budgets and lack of a robust education policy for 65 years in evidence that individuals in the formal structures are not connected to the marginalized. The disconnect that exists, because of the economic interests of individuals