



**EXPLORING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EJECTMENT AND PEASANTS'
MOVEMENT IN NORTH HASHTNAGAR, DISTRICT CHARSADDA, PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

The current study titled ‘Exploring the Association Between Ejectment and Peasants’ Movement in North Hashtnagar, District Charsadda, Pakistan ‘ aimed at exploring the causes of Peasants’ Movement in North-Hashtnagar and its socio-economic impact on peasants’ community. Data for the study were collected through the interview schedule from 380 sampled respondents belonging to landlords, peasants and labourers community. The study variables included both independent variable (ejectment) and dependent variable (peasants’ movement). Likert scale was used for the measurement of variables, and the chi-square test was used to test the association between independent and dependent variables. With the introduction of modern agricultural machinery, landlords’ dependency on peasants was reduced. Tractors, thresher, pesticides and fertilisers brought a significant change in agribusiness as a result manual labour was replaced by automated machines. In order to get more money from their field landlords decided to cultivate their land themselves. Therefore peasants were ejected from their lands that accelerated peasants uprising. As the peasants’ movement progressed, peasants were no more evacuated from the lands. Before the peasants’ movement, landlords used to settle the lease matter with strict terms and conditions. However, after the peasants’ uprising lease matters are settled mutually in a lenient way.

Similarly the practice of landlords to use private guards and police for evacuating peasants from their lands was abolished after the successful uprising of peasants.

Keywords; North-Hashtnagar; Peasants' Uprising; Eviction; Ejectment

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of modern agricultural machinery led to the eviction of peasants from lands as now their labour was no longer required. Consequently, to earn their livelihood, they had two options left: first was to remain part-time labour while the second was to migrate to cities. Landlords favoured the first option because farm mechanisation was not complete yet and still some work needed to be managed manually. It takes 5 to 20 days for sowing and harvesting to complete, in order to maximise profit landlords reduce the lands on tenants, so to use them in the harvesting season (Ahmed, 1972).

Landlessness results in vulnerability to debt subjection and fear of eviction for landless tenants entangling them in countless years of slave-like exploitation. Across decades, there has been a dizzying array of attempts to redistribute land ownership to the poor, to protect landless tenants from eviction, fix tenancy rates, formalise land records to protect peasants and extend land ownership to females. Despite such activities, the security of land ownership remains a dream for most peasants, rendering them highly vulnerable to exploitation. Land policies tend to favour large landholding owners (Kara, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Land reforms of Ayub Khan in 1959 sensitised landlords to announce their land as self-cultivated. They began to utilise modern machinery and ejected peasants from their land. Under the initiative of Mazdoor Kisan Party, the ejectment was pronounced unlawful; also *begar* (unpaid service) to landowners was denied. Conflicts between landowners and peasants started. Feudal lords' private militia alongside state apparatus was utilised to suppress the peasants (Farhad, 1970). In 1960 and 70s land reforms were carried out for legitimised circulation of land, access to assets, reduction in poverty and the abolition of exploitation. Likewise, regulations and the relationship between peasants and landlords were reformed. As indicated by a few investigations in Pakistan, 9% landowners possess 42% of the land, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not exempted (Naqvi et al., 1989).

The *Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP)* came into the national spotlight in the mid-1970s, while opposing the ejectment of peasants and initiates a mass struggle against the feudal lords in North-Hashtnagar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Numerous landlords and peasants were

assassinated in the resulting conflicts, and *Bangash's* name turned into a phantom which troubled the feudal lords. The MKP's impact quickly spread to the working class in particular to the peasants' all over Pakistan. *Afzal Bangash* loathed the possibility of a radical hypothesis without performance and consistently laid immense accentuation on the radical struggle. He withstood extraordinary troubles to teach his battling units ideologically, and decipher a book on Historical Materialism into Pashto Language (Ahmed, 1986).

The red flag of MKP's with a solitary installed white star turned into an image of protection from the primitive masters in Hashtnagar (Charsadda), Peshawar, Mardan, Swat and Malakand. It drew bolster from the inhabitants as well as from white-collared individuals like legal counsellors. Even Wali Khan's nephew Faridoon Khan raised the MKP flag in his dad's home and left the lavish life as a landlord to join the peasants' movement. After an occupant, Sardar Shah raised the MKP hail as a test against his proprietor Usman Ali. Because of an expulsion request of Wawa Khan, the scene was set for a mass uprising in Northern Hashtnagar, and a furnished battle followed. The peasants' movement kept going through three consecutive governments, including that of the National Awami Party (NAP). Alongside its coeval Naxalite, Peruvian and

Nepalese peasant uprising that tailed it, the Hashtnagar peasants' movement gives a fascinating contextual investigation at a time when urban fascists were endeavouring to assert the mantle of being unsympathetic to the feudal system (Taqi, 2012).

In January 2002, in a joint operation done by the police and Frontier Constabulary, inhabitant peasants were evicted out of the land in South Hashtnagar Hamlet. Amid the procedure, 16 peasants were seized by the police. As indicated by the data, the peasants had forcefully taken 750-Kanal agrarian land that belongs to *Liaquat Ali*, who was from *Umarzai*, District Charsadda since 1970. The landlord, *Liaquat Ali*, who was serving as Senior Superintendent of Police in Mardan, moved toward the Supreme Court of Pakistan and was allowed a decree to confiscate the peasants. Complying with the order of the court, the nearby district revenue officer issued the eviction warrant. Before dawn, the police and FC held out an attack on the hamlet and began eviction of the peasants. In resistance, the ranchers put three tractors on fire that belong to Ali because of whom the operation party opened fire, harming an agriculturist, named *Wazirzada* (Ali, 2002).

On 11th September 2011, eight peasants were injured in *Gangodher* area when they resisted their eviction by an old servant of the landlord. The incident

occurred in the jurisdiction of *Kalu Khan Police Station* when *Mir Mohammad*, (who claimed to be an employee of *Dost Mohammad Khan*) a landlord who lived in London previously, tried to expel the tenants from the land and houses. The peasants alleged that *Mir Mohammad*, accompanied by a group of mobsters, ordered them to vacate their houses; however, they refused to do so due to the absence of their landlords. Officials reported that the exchange of harsh dialogues between the supporters of *Mir Mohammad* and peasants ignited a clash, resulting in injuries of the eight tenants. The injured were taken to local hospitals for treatment, and two of them were stated to be in severe condition (Dawn, 2011).

On 5th December 2017 in Charsadda district, the tenants reportedly set on fire two tractors of the landowners and besieged their houses in North Hashtnagar to oppose their eviction by police and FC. Contingents were sent to *Ijara Kallay* to evict tenants from 100 acres land of *Akram Jan Khan and Hashim Jan Khan* on the directives of Peshawar High Court. However, the enraged tenants made announcements through loudspeakers and ask people to take arms and resist the operation. Owing to law and order situation, further re-enforcement of FC and police with armed personnel vehicles were sent to the area to control the situation.

Both tenants and security personnel took positions. However, local elders held talks with the administration to avert any untoward incident. It was decided during the talks that FC would be withdrawn while Tangi and Mandani police would keep a vigil on the situation (Dawn, 2017).

METHODS & MATERIALS

The present study explores the association between ejection and peasants' uprising in North Hashtnagar, District Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. The data was collected from the selected villages of Tangi Tehsil in Charsadda district. Which was purposefully selected, keeping in view the nature of the study. The peasantry movement remained in this part of the area due to significant landholdings and absentee landlords. Villages of North-Hashtnagar comprising *Kuz Behram Dheri, Bar Behram Dheri, Shodag, Marghan and Shakoor* hamlets was the universe of the study. A sample size of 380 respondents was taken through stratified random sampling. From these villages based on the stratified random sampling technique, the sample was drawn according to their population. The strata included landlords, peasants, *Mazdoor* (labourers). Primary data were obtained through a pretested questionnaire which was developed based on study objectives, conceptual framework and other required information. The secondary data was obtained through,

research papers, books and reports in the news. After collecting the data, it was entered into SPSS software. The data was processed and explored through SPSS to know about the results through frequencies and percentages. Further, in order to assess the association between the dependent variable (peasants' uprising) and independent variable (ejectment), the Chi-Square test was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of the sampled Respondents about Ejectment as the cause of Peasants' Uprising.

A majority of 95.5% respondents viewed that peasants were ejected from their lands by landlords before the movement similarly 95.5% agreed that the ejection of peasants from lands stopped after peasants movement, in addition, 96.1% respondents affirmed that reason for peasants' evacuation by landlords was that they wanted to cultivate the land themselves using modern agricultural machinery. Land reforms of Ayub Khan in 1959 sensitised landlords to utilise modern machinery and ejected peasants from their land. Under the initiative of Mazdoor Kisan Party, the ejectment was pronounced unlawful; also begar (unpaid service) to landowners was denied (Farhad, 1970).

The results further show that a majority of 94.5% respondents agreed that before the peasants uprising landlords used

to settle the lease matter, however, lease matters are settled mutually after the movement (94.5%). Similarly, 94.5% of respondents agreed that private guards of landlords and police are not used for peasants' evacuation after the movement. Besides, 94.2% respondents agreed that during the movement landlords were evacuated from their lands and homes by peasants, 95.5% reported that peasants formed communes to bring an end to forced evictions and 95.5% respondents reported that previous evictions of peasants by landlords caused migration to cities. The results show that seesaw of power never remained in the balance as initially the migrants were treated inhumanely and forced to leave the land and migrate. However, the peasant's unity and land reforms of the 1970s strengthened the peasant group. The group organised armed communes to safeguard their interests and eject the landlords. The peasant class, despite slave-like exploitation, lead their life in the area while depending on arable lands. Fear of landlessness due to evacuation and vulnerability to debt subjection created a do or die like situation for the peasants (Kara, 2014). They were organised into communes and were ready for armed revolt against the landlords (Ahmed, 1972; and Dawn, 2017).

Associations between Ejectment and Peasants Uprising

Modernisation had a mix of positive and negative effects on society. It increased unit production, reduced production cost and fulfilled growing population needs on one side; however, on the other side, it reduced the demand for unskilled labour. The landlords, as a result, made an authoritative decision to eject peasants from their lands. The decision created resentment among peasants, and they revolted against the landlords and ejected them in turn from lands and destroyed their property. To test the association between ejection and peasant's movement, the perception of ejection was limited to a few statements as given in Table 2.0 and explained below.

The result shows a highly significant association between peasants were ejected from their lands by landlords before the uprising and peasants' movement. Furthermore, a highly significant ($P=0.000$) association was confirmed between presently peasants cannot be evacuated from their homes by landlords and peasants' movement. Once again, a significant association ($P=0.002$) was found between landlords wanting to cultivate the land themselves using modern machinery and peasants' movement. Agricultural reforms in the name of the green revolution brought drastic changes in the agricultural production system. Introduction of innovative technologies

reduced the need for unskilled labour and their subsequent ejection movement. The landlords also feared the growing strength of the peasants and wanted to retrieve their arable land for self-cropping. The political wisdom of peasant leaders sensed the conspiracy and initiated a movement to safeguard the peasants' rights. This movement stopped landlords from the accomplishment of their designs. Farhad (1970) viewed that land reforms of Ayub Khan in 1959 sensitised landlords to utilise modern machinery and ejected peasants from their land. Under the initiative of *Mazdoor Kisan Party*, the ejection was pronounced unlawful. Also, begar (unpaid service) to landowners was denied.

Moreover, a significant (0.001) association was found between landlords used to settle the lease matter before the agitation and peasants' movement. Again, a significant (0.001) association was found between lease matters are settled mutually after the uprising and peasants' movement as their saviour. Once again, a significant (0.001) association was found between private guards of landlords and police are not used for the peasant's evacuation after the uprising and peasants' movement. Peasants' movement brought a significant shift in the landlords' attitude. Landlords once deciding the fate of peasants ruthlessly are now on the back foot after peasant movement. The private militia

engaged for controlling peasants have become ineffective, and the peasants are no-more or less powerful than landlords in decision making. The landlords now are obliged to sit beside peasants in making land-related decisions. The results show that seesaw of power never remained in the balance as initially the migrants were treated inhumanely and forced to leave the land and migrate. However, the peasant's unity and land reforms of the 1970s strengthened the peasant group. Fear of landlessness due to evacuation and vulnerable to debt subjection created a do or die like situation for the peasants (Kara, 2014; Ahmed, 1972; and Dawn, 2017).

Conversely, non-significant association ($P=0.075$) was found between landlords' evacuation from their lands by the peasants and peasants' movement. Again a non-significant association ($P=0.0851$) existed between peasants formed communes to bring an end to forced evictions by organising armed resistance and peasants' movement. Likewise, a non-

significant association ($P=0.0851$) was found between evictions of peasants by landlords caused migration to cities and peasants' movement.

The results help to conclude that ejection of peasants from the lands has its roots in the modernisation of agriculture and desire for land. Due to mechanised agriculture, the unskilled labour became a liability, and the landlords wished to self-crop their fields. The poor labour class was ordered by the authoritative landlord to evacuate the land and settle somewhere else. This unidirectional decision of ejection created resentment in the peasants and organised them into peasants' movement. The organised peasants overpowered the private militia of the landlords, destroyed their properties and residencies and made them flee. In the post peasants' movement scenario, the landlords-peasants power was balanced, and the landlords started negotiation with the peasants.

Table 1.0: Perception of Sampled Respondents about Ejection

S/No.	Statements	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree
1.	Peasants were ejected from their lands by landlords before the movement.	11(2.9)	6(1.6)	363(95.5)
2.	Peasants cannot be evacuated from their homes by landlords after the movement.	11(2.9)	6(1.6)	363(95.5)
3.	Reason for peasant's evacuation by landlords was that they want to cultivate the land themselves using modern agricultural machinery.	11(2.9)	4(1.1)	365(96.1)
4.	Landlords used to settle the lease matter before the movement.	10(2.6)	11(2.9)	359(94.5)
5.	Lease matters are settled mutually after the movement.	10(2.6)	11(2.9)	359(94.5)
6.	Private guards of landlords and police are not used for peasant's evacuation after the movement.	10(2.6)	11(2.9)	359(94.5)

S/No.	Statements	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree
7.	During the movement, landlords were evacuated from their lands and homes by peasants.	10(2.6)	12(3.2)	358(94.2)
8.	Peasants formed communes to bring an end to forced evictions by organising armed resistance.	10(2.6)	7(1.8)	363(95.5)
9.	Evictions of peasants by landlords caused migration to cities.	10(2.6)	7(1.8)	363(95.5)

Source: Survey

Table 2.0: Associations between Ejectment and Peasants Movement

S.No	Attribute		Disagreed	Uncertain	Agreed	Chi-square test
1	Peasants were ejected from their lands by landlords before the movement.	Disagreed	4 (36.4)	0.0	7 (63.6)	x ² =18.325 P= 0.001
		Uncertain	1 (14.3)	0.0	6 (85.7)	
		Agreed	19 (5.2)	3 (0.8)	340 (93.9)	
2	Peasants cannot be evacuated from their homes by landlords after the movement.	Disagreed	0	0	11 (100)	x ² = 31.36 P=0.000-
		Uncertain	0	0	6 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.3)	3 (0.8)	353(92.9)	
3	Reason for peasant's evacuation by landlords was that they want to cultivate the land themselves using modern agricultural machinery.	Disagreed	0	0	11 (100)	x ² =2 1.194 P=0.002
		Uncertain	0	0	4 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.6)	3 (0.8)	338 (92.6)	
4	Landlords used to settle the lease matter before the movement.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² = 41.700 P= 0.001
		Uncertain	0	0	11 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.7)	3 (0.8)	332 (92.5)	
5	Lease matters are settled mutually after the movement.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² = 41.700 P= 0.001
		Uncertain	0	0	11 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.7)	3 (0.8)	332(92.5)	
6	Private guards of landlords and police are not used for peasant's evacuation after the movement.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² = 41.700 P= 0.001
		Uncertain	0	0	11 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.7)	3 (0.8)	332 (92.5)	
7	During the movement, landlords were evacuated from their lands and homes by peasants.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² = 1.786 P= 0.775
		Uncertain	0	0	12 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.7)	3 (0.8)	331 (92.5)	
8	Peasants formed communes to bring an end to forced evictions by organising armed resistance.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² = 1.361 P=0.851
		Uncertain	0	0	7 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.6)	3 (0.8)	336 (92.6)	
9	Evictions of peasants by landlords caused migration to cities.	Disagreed	0	0	10 (100)	x ² =1.361 P=0.851
		Uncertain	0	0	7 (100)	
		Agreed	24 (6.6)	3 (0.8)	336 (92.6)	

Source: Survey

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that ejectment of peasants from the lands has its roots in the modernisation of agriculture and the desire for land. Due to mechanised agriculture, the unskilled labour became a liability, and the landlords wished to self-crop their fields.

The poor labour class was ordered by the authoritative landlord to evacuate the land and settle somewhere else. This unilateral decision of ejectment created resentment in the peasants and organised them into peasants' movement. The organised peasants overpowered the private militia of

the landlords, destroyed their property and residencies and made them flee. In the post peasants' movement scenario, the landlords-peasants power was balanced, and the landlords started negotiation with the peasants.

RECCOMENDATIONS

For a sustainable peace and harmony among peasants, labourers and landlords of North Hashtnagar the researcher recommends; Establishing village level organisation having a membership of landlords, peasants, elected representatives of local bodies and agricultural department for integrated and participatory agricultural development and safeguarding rights of both peasants and landlords. Similarly the inclusion of peasants in the farm-related decision in terms of deciding land rent, items produced, and procedure of production can be beneficial. It can be attained by giving them membership at village-level organisations and highlighting their say in such decisions democratically are some of the policy recommendations in light of the study.

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