

A CASE STUDY ON POLICY TRANSFER PROCESS

**Land Record Management
Information System in Punjab**

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Land Record Management Information System In Punjab

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Introduction

Policy transfer is defined as a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting' (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000. P.5). In this paper, I will talk about the transfer of the Computerized Land Record Management Information System (LRMIS) to Punjab the largest province of Pakistan with the technical and financial assistance of the world bank.

According to World Bank's Project Appraisal Document on Punjab Land Record Management Information System, LRMIS is built on similar experiences as the "Thailand Land Titling Program' and computerization of land records in the Indian state Karnataka as well as other regions. Punjab adopted this policy of digitalization of land records as a universally acknowledged best practice to improve land record service delivery which will contribute to tenure security and more efficient operations of the land market (WB 2006). The LRMIS project was approved by World Bank in 2006 with an initial estimated cost of USD 45.65 million completed in 2006.

Stakeholders of Policy Transfer Process

Many agents take part in the policy transfer process. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.10) point out nine main categories of actors who play a role in the policy transfer process, 'elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs and expert, transnational corporations, think tanks supra-national governmental and non-governmental institutions and consultants.

Evans (2009, pp.246-247) points out that actors like World Bank play a key role in the transfer of policies and policy instruments across the globe. In the current case, political executives, politicians, top bureaucrats from the Board of Revenue, Planning & Development Board, Finance Department Punjab, and officials of Project Management Unit (PMU) LRMIS Punjab worked in collaboration with the experts from the World Bank. Apart from financial support, World Bank played a major role in the design of the LRMIS project, technical support of the PMU officials in troubleshooting issues in the implementation of the project.

It is not mandatory that complete policies are transferred from one political system to another political system depending upon a requirement or issue involved. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, pp.353-354) point out eight different categories of components that can be transferred. In the case of Pakistan, policy goals, structures, and policy instruments were transferred to effectively implement the LRMIS project.

Parts of Policy Transfer Process

The policy transfer process is not 'one fits all' sort of a thing. It may come in many combinations. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.13) argue that the policy transfer process sometimes involves, 'copying or emulation, mixture, and inspiration, 'from the policies

already in vogue or their adaptation into a workable model as per the requirements of the new setting. Secondly, the policies transferred may further be transferred vertically as from IFIs to client states and horizontally as from one administrative unit to another in the same state. Horizontal transfer of policies is also called 'peer-to-peer transfer.' (Betsill and Bulkeley 2004) In the context of Pakistan, the LRMIS program is a mixture of emulation of similar experiences as mentioned above and inspiration. Secondly, horizontal transfer of the LRMIS policy instrument is going on in two other provinces of Pakistan. The province of Sindh and KPK have initiated the LRMIS project on the Punjab LRMIS model.

Challenges in Implementation of Policy Transfer Process

Policy transfer is a complex process and it has to pass through myriads of obstacles. Benson and Jordan (2011, pp.372-373) highlight that many impediments and constraints crop up either before the start or during the policy transfer process and claim that complex policy problems carry with them their impediments. These impediments may range from institutional resistance to breaking the status quo, technological, economic, bureaucratic, and political incapacity to implement policies transferred. The transfer of the LRMIS project in Punjab was not smooth sailing. Shehbaz Sharif, the Chief Minister of Punjab, has pointed out that there was a strong and organized nexus between land mafia, Qabza groups, and corrupt land revenue officials (Sharif 2016, p.6). All these groups tried their tooth and nail to forestall this project. However, they failed to forestall it. (Bokhari 2016, p.2).

As it is mentioned afore the policy transfer process is not always smooth. Sometimes it fails completely. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.17) enumerate reasons that potentially cause the failure of policy transfer. They point uninformed, inappropriate, incomplete transfer are potential reasons for policy transfer failure. However, the LRMIS Transfer process was well-informed, intentional, and well thought out.

Conclusion

In my assessment, the LRMIS Policy transfer process may be termed successful as the new system has successfully replaced outdated and inefficient colonial land administration system (Qasim 2016, p.7). World Bank Implementation Status and Results Report 2016 issued on 11 November 2016 states that LRMIS centres are operational in all 144 sub-divisions of Punjab (WB 2016). As per a report published in The Nation, it is stated, 'it is no doubt that this computerized system has made the delivery of services quite efficient as now the landholders are getting 'Fard' (ownership deed) in just 30 minutes whereas the process of mutation has also been made very efficient' (Qasim 2016, p.7). In my view, the policy transfer process succeeded to achieve its objectives because it was well thought out, politically owned, and non-coercive.

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