

The role of local governments in the political and socio-economic development of Pakistan

Hashmat Ullah Khan*¹ | Chen Yiling² | Wu Kerui³

1. School of International and Public Affairs, Jilin University, China.
2. College of Humanities, Jilin University, China.
3. School of Marxism, Jilin University, China.

*Corresponding Author Email: hashmat.kpk@gmail.com

Abstract

Pakistan is a federal state, and an essential feature of federalism is decentralising power to the grassroots level in the shape of local governments. The primary objective of this study is to know about the role of local governments in Pakistan's socio-economic and political development. Decentralisation of power plays an important role in political and socio-economic development as it helps people socialise politically and solve their underlying problems at their doorsteps. This system also directly brings socio-economic planning and developmental projects at village and street levels, leading to socio-economic development at the grassroots level. Conversely, the developmental projects only remain in the hands of the members of National and Provincial assemblies to whom very few people have access. Thus, only a distinctive class of society enjoys the benefits of developmental projects. It also brings politics to the grassroots level, therefore working as a nursery for future politicians, helping to end dynastic politics and strengthen democracy in Pakistan, a significant problem in the country and a leading cause of inefficiency in politics. Therefore, there must be an uninterrupted party-based local government system in Pakistan. This study is conducted on qualitative and descriptive methods.

Keywords: federalism, local government, decentralisation of power, political development, democracy, socio-economic development, community services, good governance.

Article History

Received:
Dec. 10, 2021

Revised:
March 26, 2022

Re-revised:
June 22, 2022

Accepted:
June 23, 2022

Published:
July 16, 2022

How to Cite: Khan, H. U., Yiling, C., & Kerui, W. (2022). The role of local governments in the political and socio-economic development of Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 6(1), 307-320. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/6.1.19>

Publisher's Note: IDEA Publishers (IDEA Journals Group) stands neutral with regard to the jurisdictional claims in the published maps and the institutional affiliations.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s), published by IDEA Publishers (IDEA Journals Group).

Licensing: This is an Open Access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

1. Introduction

The United Nations explains local government as a political setup at a sub-divisional level in a country, established by law to control and manage local administrative affairs of that particular administrative unit. The governing body of such an administrative unit or council is chosen by the votes of the concerned local people (Khan, 2006). It is the lowest unit in a democratic setup that transfers ruling and administration power to the locals. These councils, comprised of local elected representatives, are authorised to make decisions about local affairs on behalf of their concerned constituencies (Ahmad & Bano, 2019). These local representatives work for the public's wellbeing (Sarwat *et al.*, 2021). Like many other democratic federal countries, Pakistan also has a local government system. Articles 32 and 140-A of the constitution of Pakistan provide for the creation of local governments across the country. According to the 18th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan, it is a provincial subject. The provincial governments are the authorities to create local governments and transfer them administrative, political, and financial powers and responsibilities (Cheema, 2018).

The introduction and establishment of the local governments at each district, tehsil, municipality, union council, and neighbourhood levels offered a better chance for autonomy and self-governance in Pakistan. Thus, this feature of the local government system has many prospects for the political and socio-economic development of the country because the local representatives better know about local problems and their solutions as well. It brings political socialisation, a system of check and balance at the grassroots level, and developmental work. At the same time, it is also facing many challenges and flows especially economic management which leads to its abolitions from time to time (Khan, 2010). Local governments provided a stricter accountability mechanism, making it more effective and work oriented.

A governing body's composition is normally established through free and fair elections supervised by an independent authority. Different democratic ideals may be used as guiding principles in the management and growth of local governments. This system was designed to provide services in specified geographic regions, mainly because of the central government's difficulty in addressing all of society's needs that a government institution in detail must meet. Thus, the presence of the system of local governments has always been maintained because it is a crucial element of democracy and increases public engagement in the decision-making process. Despite the frequent disruption and other underlying challenges faced by local governments in Pakistan, it has played a vital role in political and socio-economic development. The mass participation of people in the process of the local governments shows its importance for common people. Therefore, it is necessary to explore and analyse the prospects of local governments for the socio-economic and political development of Pakistan.

2. Literature review

The local governments are an essential element of every state and administration; therefore,

scholars thoroughly conduct research studies on the subject concerned. The aims of local government, according to Nwankwo (2002), are to bring democracy to the grassroots level, deliver basic facilities and services at doorsteps to people, enable local people to resolve the problems of their community on their own, enable local administrative units to construct roads, bridges, basic health units, public toilets, motor parks, public libraries, support farmers through providing high-quality seeds and farming machines, and other elements of local importance. Therefore, local governments need administrative autonomy and a minimum set of capabilities and authorities to do necessary legislation regarding the formulation and implementation of the development projects as well as about different administrative affairs of the unit (Agboeze *et al.*, 2021). Local governments also play a role in many countries' health sector, climate change and sustainability practices (Ji & Shin, 2021). In some countries like China, local governments also play an important role in controlling environmental pollution (Fan *et al.*, 2021). Lin *et al.* (2022) results show the positive outcome of local government audits on municipal debt risk in China. Likewise, the findings of the study by Huang (2022) show that local government debt mitigates future crash danger. The findings show that companies situated in areas with an advanced level of local government debt are expected to have fewer stock value crash risks. Hadiz (2004) has analysed decentralisation in the light of the neo-institutionalist explanations in Indonesia and the issues leading to constraining its objectives. According to Masuda *et al.* (2022) local governments also facilitate sustainable development partnerships.

Most of the studies about the local governments in Pakistan are conducted on their structure, failure causes and comparison of different local governments established by different regimes since 1960 when for the first time, President Ayub Khan introduced this system in Pakistan called "Basic Democracies." The study of Cheema *et al.* (2005) detailed the local government system introduced by President Musharaf in the early 2000s called the decentralisation plan. This study highlights the major aspects of the local government introduced by Musharaf and analyses the development of the system in a historical framework. It helps to know the potential reasons behind his decentralisation plan. The evaluation of the local government system is very important to understand because some of such decentralisation plans further made the centre more centralised politically rather than decentralised. The study by Malik and Rana (2019) shows that decentralisation plans in third-world countries failed mainly because of an insufficient framework of the local government system, ineffective execution and gaining control of the system by the interest groups. However, in Pakistan, the local government systems have failed due to their manipulation by dictators for their political objectives from time to time.

Choudhry (2008) argues that the legacy of local government was inherited from British rule in Sub-continent. In Pakistan, it is always used by the central government to strengthen its authority or legitimise the regime. Fundamentally it did not work for the political and socio-economic development of Pakistan. Local governments failed to get sustained, stable, and self-governing in the country. It is indispensable for the actual role of local governments in the political and socio-economic development of the country that it must be sustained, stable and

self-governing. Likewise, the study by Haider and Badami (2010) analysed that municipal facilities, infrastructure, and public services have waned in the country over the years. With the fast growth of urbanisation across the country, the necessity for an efficient and effective system of local governments is much more necessary now than ever. The record of its contributions in Pakistan shows the poor state of municipal and public services provision. In the past, different regimes have utilised local governments to produce a devoted group of politicians who could easily use them for their political objectives. With the restoration of the democratic regime in the country, the system of local governments was mostly derailed. Another aspect of local government has been studied by Khan and Syrett (2022). It analysed the power dynamics in the local government system, which have implications for the results of decentralisation. It shows how the power and agents operating shape interactions between informal and formal institutions.

Many local government systems were introduced in the country from time to time. Some new changes in the structure were always brought, but very little attention was given to improving its performance and its role in society. Keeping in view its importance for socio-economic and political development, the democratic forces of the country need to understand the value of local governments for democracy and their potential role in Pakistan's political and socio-economic development. Very little attention has been given in the literature to these aspects of the local government system. This study is organised to conceptualise the whole phenomenon and explore the prospects of the local governments for the political and socio-economic development in Pakistan.

3. Methodology

This study is designed on the descriptive and qualitative methods of social sciences to evaluate the phenomenon of local governments in Pakistan and its prospects for the political and socio-economic development of the country. In social sciences, the descriptive methodology is used to find out the answers to the research questions of the study concerned. This descriptive methodology helps answer the how, what, when and where types of research questions. This method in the study of Social Science disciplines focuses on thorough observations, detailed documentation, and in-depth analysis and investigation of the research problem. These steps, as mentioned above, are principally based on scientific methods which are precise and replicable. Analytical technique is a kind of research that involves the practice of critical thinking skills and the investigation of evidence, data and information related to the research problem being investigated. Researchers use this method to identify the utmost related material. A researcher determines dynamic evidence through analytical enquiry to produce renewed concepts in its study. Data, facts, information, and other related evidence about the research problem are gathered from different sources. Once the required research material and data were collected and evaluated, the sources have been used to confirm a hypothesis or support a concept.

The analytical research can be carried out in several methods. Therefore, a research study done through this method is comparatively more reliable, consistent, and comprehensive. An analytical research approach of social sciences is adopted in the exploration of the political and socio-economic prospects of the local governments and concluding the whole research problem. To conduct this study, data, facts and figures are collected from secondary sources, including books, articles, and reports. Attainment consciousness of the method and technique of an explorative research study is essential for the researcher. Among the various approaches and procedures of data collection, the investigators selected the technique of secondary sources. The above sources are consulted for obtaining data, facts, figures, and relevant information.

4. Prospects of local governments for political development

Local government plays a vital role in the successful democracy and political development of a nation. An effective democratic system depends on a dynamic connection between democratic practices both at national and local levels. The local government institutions are the nurseries and training centres of the national-level politicians. It cultivates democratic norms and principles at grassroots levels. Therefore, the continuity of the local government system is necessary to strengthen and consolidate democracy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Therefore, Oluwatobi (2019) says that states should assign more legislative power to the local governments to accomplish various tasks and public services related to the local citizens. Federal and provincial governments cannot respond promptly to issues at grassroots levels, but local governments can perform their best in this regard. The system of local governments is also an instrument for helping mass political participation and grassroots answerability, which leads to the formation of good governance in the country. Good governance and decentralisation in developing countries are important subject matters in their economic arenas (Nadeem, 2016). The essential aspects of good and effective governance, like mass political participation and grassroots accountability, are about entirely dependent on the manner of elections in the development of the system of local governments (Ahmad *et al.*, 2017).

Local governments are also playing an important function in community services of the state, which is defined as a process that happens when citizens fortify the bonds in their localities, establish social systems and establish their associations to deliver a long-term capability for issue solutions (Rubin & Rubin, 2007). Those community members who can do something to improve the standard of life of their people are described as having the capability to think, plan, and decide to act in shaping their lives (Rahim & Asnarulkhadi, 2010). Such people actively participate in the local government system because it satisfies their orientations. Decentralisation of authority in the shape of local governments in Pakistan also can significantly contribute to good governance and improve the delivery of different facilities and services to the community (Khan *et al.*, 2012).

Conversely, in the absence of local government, control of the works, as mentioned above, remain in the hand of bureaucracy. At the same time, access of ordinary people to bureaucrats

is difficult. They also remain unaccountable to people; therefore, they do not work according to the wishes of the people. The elected representatives of people working with bureaucrats make the whole system more effective and capable. In the local government system, the people's elected representatives also bridge the gap between people and administration related to activities of political nature, like elections, formulation of rules, developmental works, the debate on public issues and addressing the grievances of people.

In such democratic countries where the local government system is well established provides a good way for local political leaders to move forward and become national leaders. Alongside providing for better local governance, it also provides enthusiastic and passionate workers to political parties who are the soul of stable and successful democracies. Also, it is developing and providing young and energetic political leadership to the nation. Another very important contribution of local governments in the context of Pakistan is that political parties in the country are highly centralised and hereditary in nature. Therefore, their leadership holds extensive command over the political affairs, decision making and nominations of candidates. However, the local governments can minimise the centralisation of authority and hereditary leadership in the political parties. In democratic states, remarkable successes of local leaders in local governments open a way for them to proceed to national-level politics. It is a primary basis of candidates who became national and provincial level leaders after showing their skills and abilities of popular consent at the local level.

On the one hand, their frequent disruption has influenced the composition and performance of political parties in the country. On the other hand, a well-established local government system can strengthen democracy and democratic norms in Pakistan. A well-established party-based local government system is very necessary. Most importantly, party-based local government institutions are also helping political parties to get active members and supporters at the grassroots level, whose energies make strong political parties at all levels. It ultimately strengthens democracy and democratic institutions in the country (Cheema, 2018). Most of the time, the local government system was based on a non-partisan basis. Political parties cannot improve their image and performance if the local government system is non-partisan. As a result, democratic competition to enhance local government was compromised.

Another benefit of local governments is that it helps to fill the governance gap resulting from the central government's weakness and bad governance. Though there is a general fear, mainly due to the tribal social system, that decentralisation can deteriorate the existing ethnic and regional discriminations. It can be prevented if it is supplemented by equalisation procedures (Crook, 2003). The efficient implementation of decentralisation actions lessens and depresses the forces of racial, territorial, financial and socio-political fragmentation (Sukma, 2003). The local government system has usually been endorsed because it is an essential component of the democratic procedure and the deepening of widespread involvement in the process of decision-making. Without this system, no political system can be called democratic and effective. The objective of local government is two-fold. First, to deliver services and goods in the concerned

administrative unit; second, to involve local people in determining public needs at the local level and how these needs could be fulfilled.

In federal systems like Pakistan, the local government is the third administration level after provincial and central governments. It was established to bring governance closer to citizens and give them a sense of participation in politics that influence their daily life cycles. The democratic system refers to a representative system in which people have a voice not only in the matter of who rules them but also in the policies that the administration implements over them. Sometimes, no political structure can be called democratic in the absence of local governments. Local governance and politics have been major elements in developing democratic politics. Pressures for democracy have resulted in a renewed focus on municipal government below the national level. Localities now have an alternative to national capitals due to the emergence of the international political economy. Even though the designs of local governments are similar to those of provincial and municipal governments, the drive for democracy will give local politics a more decisive role in issues of peace and prosperity than has been the case over the long era of nation-state rise in power (Teune, 1995).

The local governments can also better help rebuild the legitimacy of the central administration of Pakistan in the remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, which are badly affected by terrorism and militancy. Therefore, it is said that in the post-conflict condition, the establishment of local governments can give a chance to re-build the public's trust and legitimacy by offering them authority at the grassroots level through their representatives at their doorsteps. Moreover, the local government's participatory process helps reduce the disagreement over resource distribution by offering equal opportunities and a win-win position. Despite many potential prospects, the local government system has also worked to weaken democracy in Pakistan in some cases. In the past, military dictators have used local governments as a political tool to strengthen their hold on administration and obtain political support for their regime. It also provided legitimacy to military regimes. Notably, they formed local governments on non-party bases to counter the influence of political parties. Moreover, in Pakistan, the local governments were interrupted again and again. This interruption has also weakened democracy in the country.

5. Prospects of local governments for socio-economic development

The system of local governments also performs a significant role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Across the world, the advancement of local economic growth is extensively observed and increasingly significant interest and the task of local governments, particularly in developed countries (Ward, 1990). For socio-economic development of an area, public's involvement in the making decisions and accountability of officials is too necessary. At the same time, the local government system is also instrumental in increasing the possibilities of quick accountability and alertness of government officials and increasing the voices of people in decision-making. It helps the people solve their underlying problems at the

local level through their representatives and directly brings developmental projects to the village and street level. On the other hand, in the absence of local governments, developmental projects fully remain in the hands of national and provincial assembly members to whom very few people have access. Most of the time, they focus on surrounding areas where they have strong vote banks rather than the whole constituency. Thus, only a specific class or area of society enjoy the benefits of developmental projects. While in the local government system, almost every village and street have representatives who bring the developmental projects and their unit's problems to the notice of the concerned authority. Therefore, it has many prospects for socio-economic development at the grassroots level.

The local government system provides authority, power, and adequate capital for tackling societal injustices, differences and inequalities. It also ensures a comparatively fair distribution of resources, creating an institutional mechanism for the government. It also leads to the participating administration, which offer prospect to the public how to acquire consciousness and have their rights, vote on local matters like schooling, health, social welfare, streetlights, garbage cleaning, creating funds and tax choices, encourage discussion, negotiation, issue resolving, acquire leadership and democratic skills and conflict solution related to common matters of the community (Brinkerhoff & Azfar, 2006). This system of local governments also plays an important function in fulfilling communal, social, and financial requirements of the people and the units where it works by introducing new reforms and supervision of management, planning and integration of the progress procedure to prioritise the basic requirements and the advancement of socio-economic growth of their units (Ofori, 2011). It also guarantees the proper establishment of basic infrastructure and public services comprising roads, health care, electricity, water and waste management services. These are the sectors in which local governments can do a better job directly associated with the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

At present industrial symbiosis is another very fast-growing feature of developing societies. Local governments are also detrimental in overcoming barriers to industrial symbiosis, improving their infrastructure and making policies for industrial symbiosis (Södergren & Palm, 2021). Pakistan is in the way of industrialization, and local governments would help to manage the related affairs.

The politics and countrywide dialogue in Pakistan mostly remain on narrow regional and provincial problems and deprivation, accusing some ethnicities, regions and provinces of manipulating the other ethnicities, regionals and provinces and the resources found in their respective regions. This caused a feeble sense of nation-building and national integration. People believe that the politicians of the country's federal government are engaged in dirty politics of dragging one another down and are not concerned about their problems. They are not working honestly to develop and provide basic services to poor citizens. On the one hand, the local government system helps to minimise such feelings by empowering them. On the other hand, with the assistance of their local chosen representatives solving their complaints,

basic services are easier. It seems that infrastructure at the local level is also developed mainly by local governments. The local representatives identify problems of the society and have room for improvement speedily compared to provincial and federal level representatives. These fast solutions to local issues have a more significant effect on the local modernisation and service industries. The citizens get community and municipal services and other related goods and facilities at their doorsteps. Thus, it results in increased backing and endorsement of the public for the state and government. Moreover, it also has many other prospects for improving the capability of the local facilities and delivery of public services.

It also better works for local concerns by bringing the underlying issues to the notice of high ups authorities. As it is closer to the public than provincial and federal governments, it is believed that local governments can more effortlessly detect the public's desires and needs and accordingly provide convenient essential services. Local administrators have a comparatively better understanding and experience of people's issues and problems, making more suitable and appropriate decisions. Decentralisation of power and authority can significantly decrease the chances of corruption, especially large-scale corruption. This thing also has many prospects for the financial growth of the nation. Likewise, decentralisation also plays a vital function in receiving foreign aid as it is one of the key requirements of international donors to provide developmental aid. Democratisation is the main idea introduced by donor states and global financial institutes in developing countries (Malik & Rana, 2019).

The twenty-first century's economic difficulties are severe. In recent decades, many national governments have delegated authority for various state duties to municipal and regional governments (UCLG Policy Paper, 2016). Locally planned and controlled economic development also helps a community capitalise on its distinct assets, including natural resources, geographic position, and human capabilities. This system struggles to bring decision-making and delivery of services closer to people. It helps governing bodies become more answerable to the people of the concerned constituents, advance the significance of facilities, services, and public goods to local requirements, and provide the residents more chances to participate in decision-making process that changes their living conditions. Along with socio-economic benefits, these things also contribute to democracy and political stability. The profits of the combination of social, infrastructure, environmental, and financial strategies at the local level are a powerful economic justification in favour of decentralisation. These local systems interact, overlap, and impact one another in practice. Pakistan is an agricultural country. Rural farmers, for example, require not only seeds, water for irrigation of their lands and medicines for crops but also agricultural machinery, transport services to market, technical help, and economic facilities.

Basic infrastructure, raw materials, a skilled labour force, access to public facilities such as education and health services, food supply and a smooth transport system are all necessities for urban commercial and industrial firms. Rural and urban economies are interconnected, and no economic sector can be considered independent. Productivity is contingent on all sectors

functioning cooperatively. These systems can all be considered local production systems. Analysing, planning, and controlling them as a single system makes decisions about essential objectives easier. It encourages cross-sector collaboration by allowing participants in different systems to understand their positions regarding one another. It also enables planners to pinpoint the areas of the system with the most room for innovation and quality improvement.

In developing countries like Pakistan, most individuals make a living in the informal economy, defined as an economic activity that is not regulated, taxed, or monitored by the government. If a local government is in these locations, it can control these illegal economic activities. Street food selling, small craft manufacturing, home-based textile work, pedicab driving, garbage disposal, domestic service, and labour are just a few of the activities that make up the informal economy. The informal sector does not offer a way out of poverty for the millions of individuals who rely on it to live. Most of the jobs in the informal economy pay relatively little and are in highly competitive industries with low efficiency. Most employment in the informal sectors pays very little and is in highly competitive and inefficient industries. Through various methods, local governments may assist and strengthen informal sector businesses. The easiest way to determine which initiatives will be most successful is to question the participants in the informal sector. This is best accomplished by including its representatives in the planning procedures of local governments.

In Asian, African, and Latin American countries, state-centred policies connected to socio-economic growth are essential traits. Developing countries have emphasised the devolution of developmental programs and strategies to local organisations due to growing recognition that the central government cannot fulfil all administrative responsibilities alone. Socio-economic progress necessitates active citizen participation, resource utilisation requires local initiatives, and the decentralisation of authority is a prerequisite for elected authorities. Despite recent policy changes toward liberalisation and deregulation and the growing assignment of state functions to market forces, local organisations play an important role in achieving people-centred development in developing countries like Pakistan. As the state's participation in programmes like poverty eradication, job creation, basic education, and necessary public health has dwindled, local organisations importance in meeting local societies requirements has grown. However, because of the critical role of local administration in socio-economic activity, local institutions and their leaders must be responsible to the local population (Haque, 1997). Accountability makes local governments more effective and work oriented. The representatives of the people try their best to satisfy the people.

6. Conclusion

The local governments are very important for a federal democratic state like Pakistan. The local representatives have better knowledge about the local issues and thus can better effort for the well-being and improvement of the public. It plays a decisive role in a society's socioeconomic and political development. There are several reasons why the local government system is

imperative to Pakistan's political and socio-economic development. Residents elect and expect their local elected representatives to be honest and utilise their taxes wisely and efficiently. People want elected bodies to perform as best as possible to optimise their use of taxes. It is constructive in infrastructure development, provision of basic facilities, municipal services, community problem resolution, opportunities creation, management of local administrative and utility affairs, mass political mobilisation and participation, make strong democracy, help to end dynastic politics, and provide fresh and trained political workers and leaders to political parties. All these are the pre-requests for the political and socio-economic development of a developing country like Pakistan.

Effective democracy depends on a dynamic relationship between democratic politics at the local and national levels. However, the continuity of local government in Pakistan is not persistent; therefore, it failed to achieve its objectives. Many times local governments have been installed in Pakistan, but mainly, they failed to gain the main objectives because of the lack of powers and authority, lack of interests of provincial and federal governments in local governments, non-partisan, using unfair means in elections which stop the real representatives of people to be elected, voting behaviours of people and the manipulation of elections on the bases of the feeling of brotherhood, families, and villages as well as the socio-economic status of a candidate is also working as a decisive determinant in the results of the elections. All these things are negatively impacting the local government system in Pakistan. Though local governments have many prospects for political and socio-economic development in Pakistan, the system of local governments is never successful. Unfortunately, the central and provincial governments and political parties do not want to decentralise power and authority. Almost all political parties' manifestos might promise to create a local government system. However, the parliament always found it more convenient to keep debating the plans of the local government system rather than implementation.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest(s) with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

References

- Agboeze, M. U., Eze, G. C., Nweke, P. O., Igwe, N. J., Imo, O. C., Okop, E. O., ... Otu., M. S. (2021). Role of local government in community development projects in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria: Implication for adult educators. *Sage Open*, 11(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211026634>
- Ahmad, N., Bano, A., & Rehman, A. U. (2017). Impact of the informal institutional forces on the local government elections in Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal*, 1(1), 62-70. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/1.1.7>
- Ahmad, N., & Bano, A. (2019). Women's political empowerment through local government in the patriarchal society of Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal*, 3(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/3.1.1>
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Azfar, O. (2006). *Decentralisation and community empowerment: does community empowerment deepen democracy and improve service delivery?* US Agency for International Development, Office of Democracy and Governance, Washington DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH325.pdf
- Cheema, A. (2018). *Reforming local government in Pakistan*. Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives. <https://ideaspak.org/blog/reforming-local-government-in-pakistan/>
- Cheema, A., Khwaja, A. I., & Qadir, A. (2005). Decentralisation in Pakistan: context, content, and causes. *KSG Working Paper Series*, RWP05-034.
- Choudhry, I. A. (2008). The search for a local government system in Pakistan. *Local Government Studies*, 22(4), 245-261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003939608433843>
- Crook, R. C. (2003). Decentralisation and poverty reduction in Africa: the politics of local-central relations. *Public Administration and Development*, 23(1), 77-89. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.261>
- Fan, W., Wang, S., Gu, X., Zhou, Z., Zhou, Y. & Huo, W. (2021). Evolutionary game analysis on industrial pollution control of local government in China. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 298, 485-499. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2021.113499>
- Hadiz, V. (2004). Decentralisation and democracy in Indonesia: a critique of neo institutionalist perspectives. *Development and Change*, 35(4), 697-718. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0012-155X.2004.00376.x>
- Haider, M. & Badami, M. G. (2010). Urbanisation and local governance challenges in Pakistan. *Environment and Urbanization Asia*, 1(1), 81-96.
- Haque, M. S. (1997). Local governance in developing nations: re-examining the question of accountability. *Regional Development Dialogue*, 18(2), 1-25.

- Huang, S. (2022). The unintended consequence of local government debt: evidence from stock price crash risk. *Finance Research Letters*, 50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2022.103296>
- Ji, H. & Shin, H. (2021). Health benefits of local government sustainability efforts: a social cognitive perspective. *Ecological Economics*, 190, 1-17.
- Khan, A. U. (2010). The enigma of local government institutions in Pakistan. *Journal of Law and Society*, 40(55&56), 159-170.
- Khan, M. S. & Syrett, S. (2022). An institutional analysis of ‘power with in’ local governance: a Bazaari tale from Pakistan. *World Development*, 154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105882>
- Khan, N. U., Kundi, G. M., Shah, B., Khan, A. U. & Kamal, S. (2012). The prospects of new local government system: an empirical study of the local government in District Dera Ismail Khan. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 4(2), 42-49.
- Khan, S. U. (2006). *Local government and participatory rural development: the case study of district government in North-western Pakistan*. PhD Dissertation, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan.
- Lin, X., Chen, S., Cheng, X. & Wang, J. (2022). Local government audit and municipal debt risk: evidence from audit reform in China. *Finance Research Letters*, 50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2022.103198>
- Malik, N. & Rana, A. (2019). The history of local governance in Pakistan: what lessons to learn? *Journal of International Politics*, 1(3), 26-35.
- Masuda, H., Kawakubo, S., Okitasari, M. & Morita, K. (2022). Exploring the role of local governments as intermediaries to facilitate partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2022.103883>
- Nadeem, M. (2016). Analysing good governance and decentralisation in developing countries. *Journal of Political Sciences and Public Affairs*, 4(3), 209–227. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-0761.1000209>
- Nwankwo, B. C. (2002). *Authority in government*. Abbot Books.
- Ofori, E. O. (2011). *The role of local government in local economic development promotion at the district level in Ghana: a study of the Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly*. PhD Dissertation, Technical University of Dortmund.
- Oluwatobi, O. A. (2019). Local government administration in Nigeria: a historical perspective. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 9(2), 161-179.

- Rahim, M. S. & Asnarulkhadi, A. (2010). Community development through community capacity building: a social science perspective. *Journal of American Science*, 6(2), 68-76.
- Rubin, J. & Rubin, S. (2007). *Community organising and development* (3rd ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Sarwat, T., Sohaib, M. & Gohar, S. (2021). History of local government from subcontinent to Musharraf era. *Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 18(10), 2404-2414.
- Södergren, K. & Palm, J. (2021). The role of local governments in overcoming barriers to industrial symbiosis. *Cleaner Environmental Systems*, 2, 100-114.
- Sukma, R. (2003). *Conflict management in post-authoritarian Indonesia: Federalism, autonomy, and the dilemma of democratisation*. In D. Kingsbury, & H. Aveling (eds.), *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia* (pp. 64-75). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203060292-11/conflict-management-post-authoritarian-indonesia-federalism-autonomy-dilemma-democratisation-rizal-sukma>
- Teune, H. (1995). Local government and democratic political development. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 540(1), 11-23.
- UCLG Policy Paper. (2016). The role of local governments in territorial economic development. *The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, Spain*. https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/the_role_of_local_governments_in_territorial_economic_development.pdf
- Ward, S. V. (1990). Local industrial promotion and development policies, 1899–1940. *Local Economy*, 4, 100-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02690949008726035>