

# State Authority

## **Objectives:**

1. Conduct field experiments to assess the logic behind citizens' interaction with dispute resolution forums.
2. Design interventions which increase citizens' interaction with state resources.

The provision of public goods and services by the state and state institutions is critical for the overall economic and social development of a country. In view of this important role that the state plays in resource provision to its citizens, this project investigates various hypotheses about what drives the decision to access public services through the state and how citizens interact with state institutions and representatives.

The project aims to determine how different levels of exposure to dispute resolution forums, ranging from information dissemination to practical engagement with said forums, results in change in perceptions towards state service providers.

The project conducts field and lab experiments in rural areas of Pakistan to assess the logic behind citizens' interaction with state resources and the representatives that provide these services. The pilot study was utilized to determine that dispute resolution forums would be further investigated to ascertain the reasons behind citizens' decision making when deciding which forum to choose. In addition, a field survey with behavioral lab experiments has been designed and tested which will result in a larger scale study that will measure perceptions of service delivery on a wider scale across various populations in Pakistan.

The first phase of said scale-up commenced in spring 2015 to gather data on the first type of intervention: Information provision. This measures the change in perceptions with regard to dispute resolution forums when only a piece of specific information is shared with a respondent and collected through our field survey and experiments.

## **Policy Implication**

Pakistan presents an excellent context in which to test these ideas. In recent years, there have been an increasing number of incidents where State Authority has been challenged in different domains by non-state actors, such as religious organizations, mafias, tribal groups and the landed elites.

## **Project Evaluation**

All respondents participated in a field-based experiment to examine the effects of information treatments, which provide fact-based information on the behavior and ideology of state actors, on the level of trust and respect citizens hold for these state actors. The intent of the games in the initial phase was to identify the influences on citizens' trust in state and non-state actors. According to our research, the number of disputes arising across baradaris and across villages has increased significantly in Sargodha

district. Where in the past the panchayat was effective in resolving 70% disputes; now that number has dropped to 35%.

Trained legal professionals made calls to our sample treatment population based on data from 15 police helpline in order to provide legal advice that can prove useful in moving forward with taking an incident through the proper state channels.

Our empirical design assigns respondents along three treatment dimensions: the first is the simple information the respondent receives from the enumerator; the second, is a piece of information which is further demonstrated to be credible and accessible; and the third involves more tangible access to legal advisory assistance which could help respondents in navigating their way through the dispute resolution process through state forums.

The final usable number of observations achieved in the roll-out phase was 2204. These respondents as mentioned are randomly assigned to either treatment or control group. The randomization is done on the back-end through the ODK software that is being used for this project.

The main sample for the pilot phase was randomly selected households (HHs) in the district of Kasur. The survey tool was exhaustively tested in many different variations: Investment Game (IG) and Fund Dictator Game (FDG). Surveys were also conducted with women but it was ascertained that they did not have as much direct experience with the state or non-state forums and the data was not showing significance; in addition it was harder for them to grasp the concept of investment. Therefore, we narrowed our sample population down to those male respondents between the ages of 20-65 who were either HH heads (first preference), or in their absence, any male member of the HH who was also a decision maker. The norm for CERP is to outsource to a survey firm who deal with scale-ups however, due to the complexity and uniqueness of this survey instrument (which includes behavioral games), we decided to build our own field team. This involved hiring, training, testing and managing a field team to conduct surveys in Sargodha.

The first phase of the survey has been completed in Sargodha district.