ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.03 No.04 (2025)

EVICTION LAWS UNDER THE SINDH RENTED PREMISES ORDINANCE, 1979: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract
In Sindh, the regulations governing landlord-tenant relationships are based on the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance (SRPO) 1979, which outlines eviction laws. The aim of these laws is to reconcile property expectancy with safeguarding tenants, but, in practice, there are serious ethical and legal issues. Issues such as abusing reasons of eviction, lengthening litigation, corruption of rent management, and unequal access to justice are critical. Landlords often use personal bona fide need and default in rent as weapons of eviction, with or without causing harassment and unlawful pressure methods. This is highly prone to the tenants, especially in the low-income communities, due to a lack of legal consciousness and enforcement. Although SRPO 1979 has been fairly specific in favoring fair rent, eviction proceedings, and the authority of Rent Controllers, there is an inherent inefficiency of the system that hampers the implementation of the law. This paper critically evaluates the ethics, legal, and procedural aspects of eviction by SRPO 1979 and rediscovers the avenues of how it can be reformed to be more just, transparent, and fair when it comes to tenancy.

Keywords: challenges, historical context, laws, opportunities, theoretical context

Introduction

Eviction laws play a critical role in regulating the relationship between landlords and tenants, particularly within a growing urban environment, where there is always a demand for housing proportional to the demand and supply (Rasinkangas et al., 2024; Siddiqe & Amin, 2023). The legislation that governs eviction in the said circumstances is vital in stabilizing the social system, protecting vulnerable communities, and staying unbiased by the rental framework (Coulson et al., 2025). The protection of the law needs to be balanced since forced eviction, in their view, destroys families and produces negative consequences related to the possibility to obtain the basic rights (Tiwari & Shukla, 2024). The lack of any enforceable mechanisms also speaks of the fact that the tenants are more vulnerable, and the sphere of housing policy augments housing insecurity (Shuibhne et al., 2023). Based on the urban governance literature, predictable and transparent eviction that ensures legal predictability and helps stabilize the situation in rent markets can be enhanced (Hagan et al., 2025).

The process of urbanization has been exerting strain on the housing supply, especially in big cities like Karachi, specifically in Sindh (Daechsel, 2015; Tassadiq, 2024). The increase in property values and the unavailability of housing to the low-income tenants have spawned increased property-tenant battles and, finally, controversial evictions (Rizvi, 2019). Economic analyses have discovered that housing poverty directly affects the income stability and financial stability of families worldwide (Gnamura et al., 2025). Research indicates that residential displacement has a great impact on the school attendance and performance of children globally (Hepburn et al., 2025). Secure tenure according to sociological studies, also facilitates social cohesion and stability of a neighborhood (Spencer et al., 2023). The Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979 (SRPO) is the major legislative tool to govern eviction

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within this setting. It, therefore, needs to be critically reviewed in terms of its effectiveness and method of enforcement in order to consider its ability to respond to the modern day housing issues in the city of Sindh.

Research Justification

Eviction cases of Sindh are one of the most prevalent types of civil litigation, and it is therefore important to examine the ethics and legal issues that were entrenched in the SRPO 1979. A high number of tenants, especially in the urban centers, are at risk of eviction without the necessary legal knowledge or representation, which is regarded as problematic as far as access to justice is concerned. At the same time, there are usually landlords who have problems with tenants who can use the opportunities to escape paying rent, and it is true that a system should be developed on the basis of which both sides will be just. Eviction law is a critical area of research, given that it lies at the interface of economic pressures, population increase, and increasing rental demand.

Further to this, the implementation of SRPO 1979 itself demonstrates certain shortcomings of the system, like corruption, utilization of spurious reasons like personal bona fide need, and a lengthy court process. An analysis of such problems aids in determining areas of inconsistency between the desired intent of the law and its practical application. With the contemporary discussions about the reforms of the judicial system and protection of tenancy in the context of Pakistan, this study is highly relevant and indeed required. It contributes to the body of legal research by evaluating how ethical standards, procedural fairness, and clarity in the text of the laws affects the outcomes of eviction and how such issues can enhance of fair landlord-tenant relationships.

Literature Review

The development of the eviction systems based on the notions of fairness, proportionality, and procedural justice remains emphasized in global scholarship (Siddiqe & Amin, 2023; Tassadiq, 2024). Ultimately, the research on human rights highlights that the domestic eviction legislation should correspond to the international legal norms, to ensure housing stability and human dignity (Coulson et al., 2025). Comparative urban research shows that the lack of legal insurance is not compensated to households belonging to a low-income group, and causes them to find themselves in a challenging position of being displaced and socially disadvantaged (Shuibhne et al., 2023). Policy research suggests that judicial uniformity increases with the clarity of regulations and imparts greater trust in the legal institutions by tenants (Rasinkangas et al., 2024).

The economic research describes the scenario in which financial instability in the long term exists with eviction, leading to the loss of income stability and the inability of the household to invest (Gnamura et al., 2025). Educational research indicates that forced residential mobility disrupts continuity of schooling, besides exposing children to increased risk of dropping out (Hepburn et al.,, 2025). Sociology indicates that steady housing tenure assists them in building their neighborhood connection and assimilating (Spencer et al., 2023). Urban policy reviews also indicate that stable housing models facilitate sustainable development of communities (Tiwari & Shukla, 2024).

The other line of scholarship is concerned with the institutional issues of the enforcement of evictions (Daechsel, 2015; Rizvi, 2019) . The legal literature points to complexity in the procedures and lack of access to legal services as a weakness in the protection mechanisms protecting tenants (Hagan et al., 2025). The housing governance literature confirms that the uneven disposition of judicial practices results in uncertain eviction results (Rasinkangas et al., 2024). According to socio-legal studies, open adjudication systems lead to fairness and its acceptance more openly. Comparative policy analysis also places additional emphasis on the fact that robust regulatory institutions diminish the conflict and stabilize the

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CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
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rental markets (Tiwari & Shukla, 2024). These views give a solid analytical ground for the evaluation of the strengths and weakness of the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979 .

Historical Context of Eviction Laws Under the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979

Historically, the evolution of eviction laws was based on the shift of legal regimes in which landlord property rights were predominant towards laws that acknowledged housing as a critical social and economic need (Daechsel, 2015). This analysis of human rights emphasizes the fact that the norms in international law more firmly underpin modern eviction laws, appropriate procedural fairness, and proportions in rulings that will lead to displacement (Tassadiq, 2024). According to a comparative study on housing policy, the rapid urbanization has forced governments to revisit the eviction legislation as a tool to ensure less exposure to the tenants as well as reduce homelessness (Rizvi, 2019). Such an example is also the case of urban governance, where urban stability in the long term has a direct correlation with legal housing rights (Tiwari & Shukla, 2024).

The migration tendencies post-independence in Pakistan had led to the acute lack of housing in the large cities, which caused the necessity to establish the establishment of formal control of the relations between the landlord and the tenant (Daechsel, 2015). The Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance replaced the preceding laws in 1979 and established the terms of the legitimate eviction processes and established Rent Controllers to adjudicate disputes (Rizvi, 2019). Other similar reforms that were part of the comparative policy research sought to reduce the state of power imbalance between landlords and tenants (Tassadiq, 2024). International economic literature insists that full best practice of universal regulation should be adopted on how to establish socioeconomic resiliency through enacting domestic eviction law pursuant to international regulatory best practice (Coulson et al., 2025). The given historical process also emphasizes that it is time to rethink the SRPO when it comes to modern housing issues.

Theoretical Context of Eviction Laws

The eviction laws' legal developments are based on broad sentiments and belief concepts of evictions, which are based on the broad concepts of justice, rights, and ethical governance. Deontological ethics is concerned with the established legal duties in such a way that landlords and courts need to honor the eviction grounds as laid out by law without resorting to coercion or illegal actions. Utilitarianism is the theory of judging the consequences of eviction based on the maximizing benefit of society, property rights versus social stability, and tenant protection. The virtue ethics emphasizes the personalities of legal participants, and the advocates and the Rent Controllers must exhibit fairness, impartiality, and integrity in the course of action.

In legal theory, the principles of justice proposed by Rawls, especially fair equality of opportunity, can be used to analyze the practices of evictions. It is fair procedures that do not give an unfair advantage to one of the parties because of wealth, influence, or social position. Even the procedural justice theory is not to be overlooked, which emphasizes openness in decision making processes, the speed at which decisions are reached, and exhibiting respectful behavior for both landlords and tenants. These theoretical analyses would offer valuable insight as to why the eviction laws should not just be legally valid, but actually put into practice, in a responsive manner that would protect the vulnerable populations as well as offer them a sense of trust in the judicial system.

Laws Regarding Eviction Under the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979

A legal framework, the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979, has laid down various laws to control the eviction of tenants in urban Sindh. The idea of the law is to harmonize the rights of tenants and their landlords because illegal dispossession should be prevented, and

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landlords should be able to take possession on legal and valid grounds. Eviction must not be carried out so as to be a direct action, but through the Rent Controller. The subsequent subsections describe the important principles, protection, and processes associated with eviction.

Section 13: It indicates that no tenant shall be evicted contrary to the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979. This means that the tenant would not be dispossessed by his/her landlord personally, and the proper eviction order would have to be provided by the Rent Controller in the legal environment following the correct procedure. It provides due process and protects tenants against unjust or unlawful eviction.

Section 14: It provides some further protection to tenants, particularly where the landlord is attempting to evict them on the basis that they themselves have a personal bona fide need of the premises. The law calls a two-month notice prior to filing of such eviction proceedings as a requirement. It also makes special attention to widows, minors, and government employees who are landlords. In addition, a seizure by a landlord to serve his/her own purpose or rebuilding a building, but subsequently re-letting the property within one year, or the inability to bring the building down within six months, is subject to punishment as per Section 15-A.

Section 15: It identifies the primary reasons upon which a landlord may seek eviction. These encompass: default in performing rent, subletting without the owner's permission, misuse of property, damage, creating nuisance, denial of title to the owner of land, bona fide personal need, and necessity of reconstruction or a new building. The Rent Controller makes a case and, by suitable inquiry, might issue an eviction order allowing the tenant some time to move out; this time is normally between 30 and 45 days.

Section 15-A: It fines landlords who abuse their grounds, such as personal need or rebuilding, to gain possession. In case the landlord re-lets the property within one year of obtaining possession, or even where he or she has not demolished or reconstructed within six months of eviction, the Rent Controller may impose a fine of up to one year of rent and may even reinstate possession of the property to the tenant. This will make sure that eviction grounds are performed honestly.

Section 16: It has to do with defaults of rent, and the tenant is required to lodge arrears of rent with the Rent Controller. Since the tenant does not pay the outstanding rent as per the notice, this will enhance the case of the landlord to evict him under the ground of default that is imposed by Section 15.

Section 17: It safeguards tenants against harassment where they are entitled to claim compensation in case a landlord has made a false, frivolous, or vexatious application based on the eviction. In case this malicious intent is established, the Rent Controller can direct the landlord to pay compensation to the tenant.

Section 21: It gives the right of appeal. An appeal that the board may have against an order of the Rent Controller can be submitted to the District Judge by any party which is aggrieved at an order. This will provide a check and balance to ensure that eviction decisions are reviewable and can be redone in case any legal mistake is made.

Challenges for Eviction Under the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979

Eviction under the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance 1979 is adversely affected by various structural, procedural, and ethical problems. The number of cases being dealt with by rent courts makes them much pressured, and hence the cases are almost invariably adjourned, leading to years of dragging disputes. These delays can be carried out in a planned manner; the landlords may pursue tenants to evict them, and tenants may prolong the legal proceedings in order to evade the eviction process.

ISSN E: 3006-1466
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CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
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The abuse of the rent adjudication system through corruption also calls into question fairness. There are reports that litigants have been known to offer back door payments in order to alter the course of a case or its results, which is very unethical. These practices undermine citizen confidence in the justice system and disfavor those who do not have the means. The second significant challenge is the abuse of the "personal bona fide need. Although it is designed to give the landlords real access to their land, in most cases, the landlords invent reasons to eject tenants who lease their property in the long term, who then occupy the property with higher paying tenants. Equally, the defence of default in rent is often made in cases where tenants are contending over the amount of rent to pay through an unregistered agreement or undue increments.

Low-income families and tenants in general do not know their rights and are susceptible to illegal eviction or harassment. Out of the law, illegal dispossession, intimidation, utility disconnection, or coercion tactics are commonplace. On the other hand, there are also tenants who are abusing the aspect of law by taking advantage to ensure that they stay longer even when the landlord is claiming the property. The problem is exacerbated by weak enforcement of eviction orders. Police aid is frequently slow or ineffective, even following the eviction order given by a Rent Controller, and thus, any party can break the legal procedures without facing any consequences. In general, various legal ambiguities, corruption, lack of effectiveness, power asymmetry, and socio-economic differences are all factors that contribute to the complexity of the issues and bias the ethical quality of an eviction process.

Opportunities for Reform

Nevertheless, amid all these difficulties, SRPO 1979 does offer a few possibilities to work around enhancing eviction ethics and legal effectiveness. Capacity-building and augmentation of staff in Rent Controllers can lead to a substantial decrease in delays made in eviction proceedings. To enhance transparency and reduce adjournments, rent benches equipped with digital tools to track cases can be established.

The other opportunity is through advocating alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The other opportunity is through advocating alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The integrated mediation centers in the rent tribunal can assist the landlords and tenants to find a satisfactory solution to a given problem, particularly those brought about by misconstructions or modifications of the rental agreement. ADR can be a positive way to speed up and make more courteous resolutions and reduce the workload on courts. An essay on this technology will have tremendous value. If the tenancy agreement and rent receipt can be digitized, then there will be a possibility that the arguments will be reduced, pertaining to rent default, about raising illegally, and about an unregistered tenancy agreement.

In some countries, a tenancy registration system should be established online as follows that will make the legal tenancy documentation better and diminish the parties' interest claims. It is possible to help empower tenants and landlords through campaigns for legal awareness and ensure that harassment and/or false cost of increase is not practiced. In addition to legal aid clinics and civil society providers, there are other initiatives that can be valuable in educating communities about their rights and responsibilities. Judicial training oriented towards procedural fairness and ethical decisions can enhance the rent adjudication. Principles of Rawlsian Fairness, procedural justice, and monitoring corruption are crucial in reinforcing institutional integrity.

Finally, the vague terms of the law – such as the definition of "good faith" and the increased consequences of illegal eviction – can be clarified by clarifications of the statutes. These reforms will provide a chance to revise SRPO 1979 and establish just landlord and tenant relationships based on changed social and economic realities.

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Discussion

The legislation on evictions in SRPO 1979 brings to light the complicated connection between the legal procedures, moral duties, and socio-economic reality. The provision of the ordinance for a proper legal eviction is very clear, but in practice, very few inadequacies exist in the system, which render it less applicable. Corruption, abuse of legal causes, and delays are some of the causes that make the landscape of justice unbalanced, with people mostly relying on their financial capacities and power, instead of on the goodness or badness of the case. Legal ignorance and the high cost of representation place tenants (especially those in a vulnerable socio-economic situation) in a disadvantaged position.

The business ethics of Rent Controllers and legal practitioners are extremely crucial in granting fairness. However, a large proportion of cases and limited institutional support hinder adequate decision-making. Tenants, however, can also rightfully grumble that landlords exploit legal provisions in order to delay some of them, in the view of legal experts, which presents a possible case of an ethics problem on both sides of the rental arrangement. This way, the escapades of eviction of Sindh speak to institutional problems of the justice system in Pakistan. To improve the outcome of eviction, efficiency, transparency, and ethics reforms are necessary. These concerns can be addressed to enhance the credibility of the judiciary system and improve the justice and efficiency of the rental system.

Conclusion

The eviction under the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979, is a legal process that aims to have a mode of balancing the rights of both tenants and landlords. However, in reality, there are a number of factors that have a significant impact in hindering its effectiveness, such as procedural delays, corruption, misuse of the grounds of eviction, and unequal access to justice. This means the tenants, particularly the low-income tenants, remain vulnerable to harassment, substandard or illegal eviction procedures, and unfair court hearings. At the same time, landlords are struggling to address tenants who exploit these “loopholes” in procedures to keep them living longer.

All these challenges highlight the importance of reforms directed towards transparency, transparency in practice, and reinforcement of institutions. Despite these weaknesses, SRPO1979 constitutes a good regime to start from in order to regulate tenancies. A more equal eviction system can be established by better enforcement, training of the judiciary, digital reforms, and better legal awareness. Finally, with respect to justice/ social stability/trustworthiness of citizens towards the rental housing system in Pakistan, a well-balanced and transparent approach when evicting is very important.

Recommendations

There are a few reforms needed in order to enforce eviction ethics under SRPO 1979. Firstly, special training needs to be imparted to the Rent Controllers on an ethical approach to decision-making and on Rent Controller Case management. Ch schedules reduced by sense dictated timetable procedure can go a long way in efficiency enhancement. Secondly, it will be possible to digitize tenancy agreements, rent slips, court records, and so on, making this process more transparent and minimizing fraud. Third, mediation centres may be established at the rent tribunals, to facilitate the co-ordinated and quicker reaching of mutually agreeable solutions, thus avoiding outside protracted litigation.

Fourth, the minority landlords and tenants need to be educated on their rights and their roles in accordance with the law, reducing the incidence of illegal evictions and misconceptions Fifth, legislation should be amended to clarify the personal bona fide need and duties provisions and the punitive provision against illegal eviction, and to ensure that they are in line with the increasing absurdity.

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Fifth, legislative amendments should be made to revise the provisions on personal bona fide need and duties provisions, and the punitive provision against illegal eviction, to make them increasingly absurd. Unethical behavior can be discouraged by having definitions that are established and tougher penalties in case of misconduct. Lastly, there should be accountability measures in rent courts, perhaps in the form of monitoring arrangements (under the umbrella of oversight committees) or corruption reporting facilities. These proposals will produce a more equitable, easier, and more effective eviction system.

Research Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. First, there is only limited empirical evidence on the eviction disputes in Sindh because most of them are either resolved informally or are not reported. The absence of transparent and centrally located data limits the possibility of generalizing findings. Second, there is a huge difference in the rent litigation in cities and in the countryside, and thus, it is challenging to draw uniform conclusions. Third, available literature or perspectives of participants may be affected by political and social sensibilities on property rights.

Moreover, the fast-evolving urban environment, in particular Karachi, implies that the issues emerging in the area of law are changing fast and demand constant changes so as not to lose their topicality. The comparative depth of the research is also limited by limited academic studies that particularly focus on the analysis of SRPO 1979. Such limitations note the fact that further more detailed empirical research and government-led data gathering on tenancy conflicts should be conducted.

Research Implications

The research will help further enlighten on eviction ethics and process according to SRPO 1979. It points out the weak points in the system that affect the results of evictions and attract media focus on socio-economic inequalities in access to justice. The findings underscore that institutional change is needed with a focus on transparency, judicial education, and support for tenants. This study provides policy pointers to policymakers on how regulatory changes can achieve this, resolving ambiguities and enhancing the tenancy laws of Sindh. To legal practitioners, it draws common pitfalls faced in eviction litigation and mentions the values that should be upheld by members of the legal profession in the practice of ethics and professionalism. To academic researchers, the work provides a basis on which future empirical research and studies in the area of landlord-tenant dynamics, procedural justice, and housing rights in Pakistan can be based.

Future Research Directions

There is a need for further study to include empirical studies of evictions in major cities, such as Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur, to try to establish some basic patterns and system delays. Comparative observations with other provinces, e.g., the Punjab, Rent Act 2009, could give an idea of the other regulation frameworks. The authors also have to study the way a digital tenancy system can help to reduce conflicts and improve transparency. The current availability of mediators and arbitrations in rent matters can be explored as a viable alternative to litigation. Also, socioeconomic research about the impact of eviction on low-income families would assist policymakers in comprehending the human dimension of the existing legal practices. Lastly, further interdisciplinary studies between law, sociology, and urban planning would help in coming up with more holistic reforms that are in relation to both legal and structural issues encountered in the rental housing sector in Pakistan.

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