



# **Women Rights in FATA Pakistan: A Critical Review of NGOs' Communication Strategies for Projects' Implementation**

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**By**

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## **Declaration form**

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

**Signed: Noor Akbar**

**Date: 28/05/2010**

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## **Abstract**

The over all image of Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) is not very positive in Pakistan, particularly in rural tribal areas. Many negative perceptions are attached with NGOs, especially those which work for women rights. The very word ‘women rights’ incites many wrong-perceptions. In such non-favorable working environment NGOs evolve different communication/implementation strategies. The research study is aimed to analyze the communication strategies and different methods of project implementations, NGOs develop for women rights projects in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. How they develop communication strategy, where they find an entry point and how they implement the women rights projects?

It does not mean that the study is trying to develop a comprehensive communication strategy and tactics which, by following, can guarantee successful implementing of women rights projects in FATA. But it is an attempt to analyze the strategies NGOs are adopting and which are acceptable to the tribal communities. And to get an understanding the work of NGOs and views of the beneficiaries/tribal people in regard to women rights projects in FATA.

**Key words:** Communication, FATA, Strategy, implementation, NGO, women rights

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## Chapter 1

No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live. Mohammad Ali Jinnah Founder of Pakistan, 1944

### 1. Introduction

The new social, economic and political realities in Pakistan are creating new vulnerabilities for women who are at the receiving end, suffering the most because of their already disadvantaged social positioning and violation of basic rights in the society. The war on terror and the on going militant activities have not only increased the number of these vulnerable groups, it also created a new category of the vulnerable; the widows, orphaned children, and families abandoned by the *Taliban* who left their homes<sup>1</sup>.

There are also contradictions in the articles of Constitution of Pakistan regarding equality of rights for men and women. While the Article 25 of the Constitution stipulates that “there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone”, several laws in the statute that negate equal rights to women such as the *Hudood Ordinance*<sup>2</sup>, the Law of Evidence, *Qisas and Diyat*<sup>3</sup>, the Citizenship Rights, etc. “When equality of rights is not even established in the constitution of the country, how can we expect the same in practice<sup>4</sup>”? (Farzana Bari)

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<sup>1</sup> Farzana Bari, Dr. Rights without rights <http://criticalppp.org/lubp/archives/7017> (accessed 18/04/2010)

<sup>2</sup> The Hudood Law was intended to implement Islamic Shari'a law, by enforcing punishments mentioned in the Quran and sunnah for Zina (extramarital sex), Qazf (false accusation of zina), Offence Against Property (theft), and Prohibition (the drinking of alcohol).

<sup>3</sup> Under the Qisas and Diyat law (Q&D), the victim or his heir has the right to determine whether to exact (qisas) retribution or compensation (diyat) or to pardon the accused. If the victim or heir chooses to waive qisas, or qisas is judicially held to be inapplicable, an offender is subject to *tazir* or discretionary punishment in the form of imprisonment. It is alleged that in these instances, judges not only have the power to determine the extent of punishment but also to decide whether to punish the offender at all.

<sup>4</sup> Farzana Bari, Dr. Rights without rights <http://criticalppp.org/lubp/archives/7017> (accessed 18/04/2010)

After independence, elite Muslim women in Pakistan continued to advocate women's political empowerment through legal reforms. They mobilized support that led to passage of the Muslim Personal Law of Sharia in 1948, which recognized a woman's right to inherit all forms of property. They were also behind the futile attempt to have the government include a Charter of Women's Rights in the 1956 constitution. The 1961 Muslim Family Laws Ordinance covering marriage and divorce, the most important socio-legal reform that they supported, is still widely regarded as empowering to women<sup>5</sup>.

In the 1990s when there came an upsurge of national and international NGOs in the country, they were faced with four major women rights issues in Pakistan 1) increasing practical literacy, 2) gaining access to employment opportunities at all levels in the economy, 3) promoting change in the perception of women's roles and status, and 4) gaining a public voice both within and outside of the political process.

Two issues that are promotion of women's political representation and accommodation between Muslim family law and democratic civil rights came to dominate discourse about women and socio-legal reform. Discourse about the position of women in Islam and women's roles in a modern Islamic state was sparked by the government's attempts to formalize a specific interpretation of Islamic law. Although the issue of evidence became central to the concern for women's legal status, more mundane matters such as mandatory dress codes for women and whether females could compete in international sports competitions were also being argued.

### **1.1. Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)**

The Federally Administered Tribal Area is strategically located between the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the settled areas of the North West Frontier Province-now renamed as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province. FATA had a distinctive administrative and political status tracing back to British Colonial period in the sub-continent but in 1893, however, a demarcation was raised with Afghanistan called Durand Line<sup>6</sup>. The FATA are bordered by: Afghanistan to the west and the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province (formerly called NWFP), Punjab to the east and Baluchistan to the south.

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<sup>5</sup>[http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh\\_pakistan\\_women.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh_pakistan_women.htm) (accessed 18/04/2010)

<sup>6</sup><http://www.fata.gov.pk/> (accessed 15/04/2010)



The total population of the FATA was estimated in 2000 to be about 3,341,070 people, or roughly 2% of Pakistan's population<sup>7</sup>. Only 3.1% of the population resides in established townships. It is the most rural administrative unit in Pakistan. The Tribal Areas comprise seven Agencies, namely Khyber, Kurram, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, North and South Waziristans and six FRs (Frontier Regions) namely FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Banuu, FR Lakki and FR Dera Ismail Khan.

The colonial rulers controlled the area through a combination of effective political agents and tribal elders, while leaving the people with their traditions and internal independence. Pakistan inherited this system, and more or less continues with it even today, upon her independence in 1947. Under the Constitution of the country, FATA is included among the “territories” of Pakistan (Article 1)<sup>8</sup>.

Since independence, FATA has not been brought at par with other parts of the country in terms of development process. The development initiatives and allocations in FATA followed a compartmentalized approach, concentrated around sectoral facilities and benefiting few influential and politically active sections<sup>9</sup>. This neglecting approach deprived large segments of the FATA population from social uplift and economic empowerment, particularly women.

The main Pukhtoon tribes that inhabit the areas are independent but, until friction following the fall of the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan, the tribes had friendly relations with Pakistan's central government. They are represented both in Pakistan's lower house and in its upper house of parliament. Previously, tribal candidates had no party affiliations and could contest as independents, because the Political Parties Act had not extended to the tribal areas. They were, however, given the right to vote in the 1997 general elections despite the absence of a Political Parties Act.

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<sup>7</sup> Census Report of Pakistan 1998

<sup>8</sup> Constitution of Pakistan 1973

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/> (accessed 15/04/2010)

Distinctive tribal customs and traditions are an integral part of the Pukhtoon tribal society. Pukhtoon cultural values are reflected in a code of ethics called simply Pukhto and/or Pukhtoonwali (the way of the Pukhtoon). A combination of conventions, traditions, and a code of honor known as "Pukhtoonwali" govern the social system of Pukhtoons. Through this unwritten code, the basic thread of the Pukhtoons' social fabric, Pukhtoon societies around the region lead a diverse and yet dynamic way of life.

### **1.2. The role and status of woman in Tribal society**

The culture of FATA communities is strongly influenced by religious belief, particularly when it comes to honor whereas a woman is considered to be the center of honor for tribal people. Driven by local custom rather than a proper reading of religion, the victims of this honor culture are often women, who lose out. Women in FATA are vulnerable to economic poverty. A recent survey conducted by Shinwari (2008) revealed that majority of people of FATA believes that women should be allowed to get an education and access to better healthcare. But they are against the idea of women working or increasing their power.

### **1.3. Non-governmental Organizations in FATA**

Due to its peculiar way of living entrenched in customs and tradition, poverty and human rights issues FATA remains a point of interest and entrepreneurship for national and international NGOs. FATA are considered to be 'infamous' for women rights violations, which attracts many nonprofit organization's and donor agencies for variety of projects. Before the security problems, many local, regional, national and international organizations were involved in development and human rights projects in different parts of FATA. The exact number of organizations working in FATA is not found, but according to leading NGO member the total number of registered NGO and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) ranges between three to four thousands. The number of small unregistered organizations can not be found.

#### **1.4. Problem statement**

In recent years the cooperation among non-governmental organizations, women rights organizations and state agencies increased. They led campaigns and lobbied for development and human rights in general and women rights in particular. They are calling for affirmative action for women's rights and their empowerment. The positive outcome is that women are comparatively aware of their rights and empowered in areas where they had never so. One of the areas is the newly enfranchised FATA (The people of FATA used the right of vote in 2001 first time. They gained the right of universal adult suffrage in late 1990s. Before that only the elder of the family was entitled to vote on behalf whole family). Despite militant opposition couched in politico-religious language, NGOs involvement ensured that a sizeable number of women are registered as voters and many were able to vote for the first time in the political history of the country.

But the case was not like this just a few years back. More generally, due largely - though not exclusively - to the efforts of NGOs, there is a growing public awareness of the need for women's rights and empowerment through out the country in general and FATA in particular. They advocate for women's greater participation in democratic process and decision making. Changes are visible in slowly changing patterns of political behavior of females, e.g. the increased practice of registering votes, literacy rate and increased awareness of different issues related to women. NGOs claim this improvement in women life in FATA as a result of their activism, rather than State actions.

The support mechanisms established by NGOs (shelters for women, legal aid initiatives, small loan micro-credit facilities, interventions for women's education and training, etc.) have helped to increase the decision-making capacity of women they reach, and to promote acceptance of these choices in their communities and ultimately empower them. The impact of these initiatives is, however, curtailed by their limited outreach, mostly to low income and far flung rural women.

Besides their visible achievements in development and human rights, there are many negative perception attached with NGOs. In tribal areas, particularly, NGOs are perceived as the agents of United States, European countries and Israel, “who came in the garb of development workers for diverting people from Islam, destroy the existing traditional set up and spoil the prevailing culture of piety”<sup>10</sup>. This perception gets stronger when any NGO claims to work for women related issues. I will discuss this issue in more details in coming chapters. Many incidents of kidnapping the NGO personnel, snatching vehicles and attacking their offices have been reported in recent years. It is particularly more difficult and objectionable for female NGO workers.

### **1.5. Aim of the study**

Having such non-welcoming environment coupled with many other concerns including militant’s displeasure, carrying out development and human rights projects for NGOs is a difficult task. In communities where NGOs are considered agents of USA, Israel and Europe and women rights as liberating women and giving them freedom to revolt against the religious, cultural and traditional values, the NGOs need to be very cautious and take much care. The research study is focused, and an attempt, to analyze the communication strategies (project implementation strategies) and different methods of nongovernmental organizations for women rights projects in those areas. How they contact potential community stakeholders and audience? It is about their implantation activities. How they develop communication strategy, where they find an entry point and how they implement the women rights projects?

Does it mean that the study is trying to develop a comprehensive communication strategy and tactics which, by following, can guarantee successful implementing of women rights projects in FATA? No, rather it’s an attempt to analyze the strategies NGOs are adopting and which are acceptable to the tribal communities. And to get an understanding of their working principles, and views of the beneficiaries/tribal people of women rights projects in FATA.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Tribal Elder (14/04/2009)

The present conflict situation in the tribal areas strengthens the assumption that international community will direct its attention to the development of the area in near future; some have already started funding development projects. This assumed influx of international funding for development projects increases the applicability of the research study. It will provide an understanding, based on the analysis and study of selected NGO's strategies and of working principles for future NGO workers who are interested in women rights and empowerment in FATA.

## **1.6. Key concepts**

### **Communication**

Communication in this study has been referred to the contacts of NGO's with beneficiary communities, donor agencies, media and/or any other organization. NGO's role is multifaceted; it is a sender, channel and receiver as well. Donor agencies use them as channel to convey their message to communities. Similarly donor agencies are sender and receiver simultaneously.

### **Strategy:**

Strategy refers to a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. The word is of military origin, deriving from the Greek word *strategos*, which roughly translates as general (Oxford Dictionary 1989). In the present research it is used to refer to the NGO's plan of activities and implementation of projects.

### **NGO:**

Non-governmental organization (NGO) is a term that has become widely accepted as referring to a legally constituted created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government. Unlike the term intergovernmental organization, "non-governmental organization" is a term in general use but is not a legal definition. In many jurisdictions these types of organization are defined as "civil society organizations" or referred to by other names as well (Anheier 2001).

**Women Rights:**

The term women's rights refer to freedoms and entitlements of women. These rights may or may not be institutionalized, ignored or suppressed by law, local custom, and behavior in a particular society (Hosken, 1981 P 1-10). Women and their supporters have campaigned and in some places continue to campaign for the same rights as men (Lockwood, Bert B 2006). In this study “women rights” means the rights of women granted in the United Nation’s conventions and declarations. The study will also throw some light on the local definition and understanding of the term.

## Chapter 2

### 2. Pukhtoon Social Structure and status of women

The Pukhtoon loves fighting but hates to be a soldier; loves music but has a great contempt for the musician; is kind and gentle but hates to show it; loves his new rifle and his old wife; is hot-blooded and hot-headed; is poor and proud with strange principles; might be a loving friend or a deadly enemy; in general, he is very simple but very complicated in his simplicity.”

Ghani Khan: Pukhtoon poet and philosopher

#### 2.1. Social hierarchies in Pukhtoon (tribal) communities

Pukhtoons are considered to be one of the largest ethnic groups of the world today. Despite the difference in dialects, areas and castes, Pukhtoon homogeneity is ensured by their common culture, the code of Pukhtoonwali. These cultural traits of Pukhtoonwali somehow remain, above the scrutiny of religion as well, although loyalty to Islam resides as an integral factor of pride for Pukhtoons. Interestingly enough, Pukhtoons form a homogeneous group of people, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, mountainous and residents of plain areas, where all are equal Pukhtoons, each individual fully independent in his own right, and all are ideally integrated into the larger fabric of the society (Hassan & Ali 2005).

Known for its egalitarian nature, Pukhtoons often debate if their societies are hierarchical or not. History tells that Pukhtoons liked to class themselves as Pukhtoons only, but allowed professional classes, like the ironsmith, the carpenters, the clergy, and the shoemakers as part of their social tenancies. These professional groups, despite their second grade status, were assured liberties and freedoms available to rest of the society but were not allowed to call themselves pure blood Pukhtoons, rather are referred to with respective professional class i.e. goldsmith, ironsmith, shoemaker etc. With the passage of time the social fabric changed and the distinction among pure blood Pukhtoons and professional classes became less and less visible, while continuously attempting to adhere to the code of Pukhtoonwali, or generally called Pukhto.

Whereas the tribal order discourages social hierarchy, it defines social nearness and distance. Pukhtoons use their tribal order to mark lines of conflict and solidarity. If I see two men fighting I am supposed to side with the one who is “closer” to me, i.e. the one with whom I share the nearest common patrilineal ancestor, mainly first cousin. In such cases patrilineal kin is preferred over matrilineal kin, as these men are not classed as relatives in a strongly patrilineal tribal society

## **2.2. Pukhtoon social structure (Pukhtoonwali)**

Distinctive tribal customs and traditions are an integral part of the Pukhtoon society. Pukhtoon cultural values are reflected in a code of ethics called simply Pukhto and Pukhtoonwali (the way of the Pukhtoon). A combination of conventions, traditions, and a code of honor known as "Pukhtoonwali" govern the social system of Pukhtoons. Through this unwritten code, the basic thread of the Pukhtoons' social fabric, Pukhtoon societies around the region lead a diverse and yet dynamic way of life.

Any argument that doesn't make sense in a particular situation can be conveniently challenged as non-Pukhto, thereby insisting that Pukhto, the culture of Pukhtoons is highly sensible and is equally sensitive to logic. The most common argument is that of holding onto old traditions, whether right or wrong. This flux between advancement under logic and restraint under fear exercises a great influence on the actions of Pukhtoons and has been held sacred by them for generations (Hassan & Ali 2005).

According to Pukhtoons, this unwritten code of Pukhtoonwali existed before the introduction of Islam in to Pukhtoon society. Pukhtoonwali (referred to as Pushtoonwali as well) codifies the myth and legend of Pukhtoon (Pashtun) ethnicity by creating an additional and clearly recognizable group boundary (Horowitz 2000, P-70). With passage of time, Pukhtoonwali incorporated aspects of Islam within the code and the two functions in tandem today. Most Pukhtoons believe that Pukhtoonwali follows Islamic laws and norms but Islamic scholars see significant conflicts between the two (Barfield 2007, P-8). For Pukhtoons, Islam and Sharia law represent a moral code while Pukhtoonwali represents a code of honor that supersedes the moral code and is paramount to establishing and maintaining personal integrity and thus personal, family and community identity. “By adhering to the rules of



Pukhtoonwali, Pukhtoons gain honor and are afforded the rights, protection and support of the community (Kakar 2007 P- 3)". A loss of honor results in expulsion from the community and in the rugged, sometimes hostile environment of the tribal belt, expulsion equates to social and potentially physical death (Barfield 2006, 6).

Pukhtoonwali is consisted of considerable uniformity in fundamental principles although there are minor variations in details from tribe to tribe and geographical areas. The tenets of Pukhtoonwali are numerous covering every aspect of social as well as personal life of a Pukhtoon in the society. The more basic principles, however, are 1) *Jirga*<sup>11</sup>, 2) *Nang* (Honor/ Chivalry), 3) *Melmastiya*--openhearted hospitality, or *Melmastiya*, is one of the most cherished features of Pukhto. It is closely associated with the notion of asylum. Hospitality means not only the service of food and other needs, it also means automatic assurance of an environment of security and peace prevalent in the host's household. There is quite some symbolism attached with the phenomenon of hospitality. Pukhtoons, when asked about their social traits, usually name hospitality on top of the list.

4)"*Teega*, literally means stone, but it is defined as a truce which is declared by the parties or by the *Jirga* in order to avoid further bloodshed between two rival factions. Symbolized with marking of a stone, *Teega* represents a ground rule and defines transition from violence to peaceful negotiations between the conflicting parties, 5) *Nanwatey*, it means repentance over past hostility or inimical attitudes and the granting of asylum. Walking down to someone under *Nanwatey* means having an expression or attitude of submission—a combination of humility, sorrow, and apology—and giving space to the other person to respond with "grace", so precious to Pukhto" (Hassan & Ali 2005).

The aforementioned social traits are universally accepted by all Pukhtoon tribes although some of the tribes have their own "*Narkh*" (Customary Law for implementing the principles of Pukhtoonwali). Originally, the customary law was implemented on the basis of tribal affiliation irrespective of territorial location.

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<sup>11</sup> *Jirga* is a tribal assembly of elders which takes decisions by consensus, for the resolution of conflict and other issue in the Pukhtoon belt of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

One of the most important tenets of Pukhtoonwali is the legislative council or “Jirga” because it is the executing body of Pukhtoon code of conduct. All conflict and related issue are resolved by the Jirga. Jirga members, influential people and usually of ‘impeccable’ character, are selected for their honorable status within the community and are usually older male members or “whitebeards” (Barfield 2007, 3). Jirga provides an advanced conflict resolution mechanism without the aid of courts, jails or prisons, lawyers or law schools, policemen, judges or guards. They do it without resorting to vigilant justice or disintegrating into anarchy and they do it with an estimated 95% success rate (Johnson 2007, 61). Jirga, although is very important element; honor in Pukhtoonwali is the core for almost every issue.

Adhering to these elements of the code of Pukhtoonwali, regardless of setting, maintains the honor of the individual, the family and the community. Living with honor and according to the code of Pukhtoonwali is very important in a Pukhtoons social and personal life. It is generally believed that Pukhtoonwali or the Pukhtoon code of honor embraces all the activities from the cradle to the grave.

In a broader sense, hospitality, nobility, gallantry, honesty, decency, loyalty both to tribe and country, love and devotion are the essential features of Pukhtoonwali. Pukhtoon heritage and Pukhtoonwali is transmitted through oral traditions passed down from parents and elders to the coming generations.

### **2.3. Tribal (Ethnic) Identity**

In Pukhto language (interchangeably used with *Pushto* and *Pashto*) people, ethnic group and tribe are called *qawm*<sup>12</sup>. It reflects the traditional view that ethnic groups and tribes are structured in a similar way--genealogical links. Sub tribe or clan is *khel* or *khail* in Pukhto, but it may also be called *qawm*, as any tribal unit may be seen as a tribe or sub-tribe at the same time, depending on the level of ramification it is viewed from.

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<sup>12</sup> Qawm is a term that can refer to affinity with almost any kind of social group. It essentially divides “us” from “them” and helps to distinguish members of one large ethnic or tribal group, or one clan or village, from another.

Thus a sub tribe or sub-clan of a *khel* is also a *khel* down to the village level. A frequent suffix of names of larger tribal units is *-zai*, e.g. *Mandozai*, meaning "Son of Mando", plural form *Mandozi*, "Sons of Mando", and *-khel* for the sub-units. The suffix *-zay* indicates in most of the cases a southern or western origin (e.g. the *Yousafzai* of Swat), whereas most of the eastern tribes lack this typical tribal suffix, such as the Afridi, Mohmand and Shinwari etc.

#### **2.4. Family relationship**

The relationships among immediate family members in a household or home come first i.e. son, daughter, sister, brother, husband, wife, grandparents and grand children while next comes the relatives of patrilineage side. A general appreciation of the relationship between parents and children is founded on two key main factors. Firstly, the male children will ensure security to the family and will be the main source of earning. Secondly, the children will serve as pillars to their ageing parents, while the relatives from the patrilineage are relied upon mostly at times of conflict.

Male children grow up with the assignment to become a source of income for the collective household; to provide food, shelter, clothing, and medicine and to improve their standards of living. To earn a livelihood, they would go to other countries and for years live alone while their parents would look after the daughters-in-law and their grandchildren.

#### **2.5 Individualism and collective aspects of the Pukhtoon society**

Tribal people, like others, have rights both as individuals and as society as whole but balancing these individual and collective rights in a Pukhtoon society is a complicated issue. While security of the individuals and families is a personal issue, all other factors of social life are subject to scrutiny by the community, usually lead by Jirga. Hassan and Ali (2005) argue that an individual detached from society is a non-entity, but to preserve one's own character, a man has the right to challenge the structures of the social order.

Pukhtoonwali provides individual adequate liberties for asserting himself in times of need. At times when “honor” is at stake, a Pukhtoon would not hesitate to take up arms, not as a privilege given by the society, but as a legitimate birth right conferred upon as member of Pukhtoon society. However, the same society would control the liberties of the individual when it comes to conformation to the code of Pukhtoonwali. Popular belief is that the individual outside community has nothing to live for.

## **2.6. Status of woman in Pukhtoon society**

Pukhtoons have a strong patriarchal society, where women stay in veils, behind the curtains, and in the backdrop. In the rural areas, however, women engage extensively in agriculture and cattle’s breeding, as well as child rearing and other household activities, particularly in tribal areas women enjoy more liberty in this regard, though their labor is unpaid in cash. In the urban areas and among well off families, women stay at home, raise their children, and look after the kitchen affairs.

Derived from religion and culture Pukhtoon men have special sanctity for all social, political and economic affairs of the family and the society is lead by men. Talking to men about women brings a feeling of shyness, and cultural respect prevents people from talking about women. A sardonic remark about one’s women family member i.e. wife, mother, sister, or daughter can lead to a high degree of rage: a legitimate and rightful reason to get violent. This segregation between men and women also breeds a special culture of female groups in which women enjoy a certain level of autonomy in various social activities like arranging marriages (this does not mean selection of a man by woman to get married).

Men revert to consult women on major decisions of life such as issues of the household, children, and even decisions about external business. But most men deny being influenced by such consultations. A recent survey conducted by Shinwari (2008) revealed that majority of people of FATA believes that women should be allowed to get an education and access to better healthcare. But they are against the idea of women working or increasing their power.

## **2.7. Woman and the concept of honor**

The Pukhtoon have codified the honor system in the Pukhtoonwali, which revolves around different concepts vested in 'honor'. A man's property, wealth and all that is linked with is a sum total of his honor value. Woman is also considered to be an object of value and therefore is center of honor for a man and his family, even tribe. Therefore when the rights over a woman are transferred from a father to the man she is marrying, the guardianship of honor shifts as well. Perceived as the embodiment of the honor of their family, women must guard their virginity and chastity. By having (or blamed of) 'dishonorable' behavior a woman challenge the order of things, undermines the ownership rights of others to her body and indirectly challenges the social order as a whole. Behaviors considered to be 'dishonorable' are many and can include a woman wanting to marry a man of her choice; wishing to seek employment outside the home; publicly disobeying the family patriarch; being accused of having illicit relations or seeking a divorce.

Women's bodies must not be given or taken away except in a regulated exchange, affected by men. Their physical chastity is of uppermost importance and by the merest hint of 'illicit' sexual interest a women losses her inherent value as an object worthy of possession and therefore, in most cases her right to life.

## **2.8. Violation of women rights**

In tribal societies women often have their legal rights curtailed in favor of their husbands or male relatives. For example, though women are officially allowed to vote in Pakistan, many have been kept away from ballot boxes by men. Traditionally, Pukhtoon women have inheritance rights, but in most cases these are violated and their right in ancestral property has been kept by brothers. Another tradition that persists is *Swara*, the giving of a female relative to someone in order to rectify a dispute. This tribal tradition has been declared illegal in Pakistan in 2000.

In regard to education right, tribal people admit the importance of education and willingly send girl's children to schools. The education for girls, though, longs till high school in most cases. One of the reasons of not sending girls for further education is extreme lack of college and universities in tribal areas and it's financially becomes difficult for parents to send them to other areas.

But despite obstacles, many Pukhtoon women have begun a process of slow change. A rich oral tradition and resurgence of poetry and compulsory reading of the holy Quran has inspired many Pukhtoon women seeking to learn to read and write.

## Chapter 3

### 3. Administrative structure of FATA, legislation and the work of NGOs

#### 3.1. Administrative structure of FATA

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, FATA was constitutionally included among the ‘territories’ of Pakistan (Article 1)<sup>13</sup>. It is represented in the National Assembly (Lower house) and the Senate (upper house) but remains under the direct executive authority of the President (Articles 51, 59 and 247)<sup>14</sup>. Legislations framed by the National Assembly do not apply in FATA unless so ordered by the President, who is also empowered to issue regulations for the “peace and good government” of the tribal areas (Khan 2010). Today, FATA continues to be governed primarily through the Frontier Crimes Regulation 1901<sup>15</sup>. It is administered by Governor of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), renamed as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Province, in his capacity as an agent to the President of Pakistan, under the overall supervision of the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions in Islamabad.

Under presidential order in 2002 a Secretariat was set up, headed by the Secretary FATA for handling the day-to-day matters. Before that decisions related to development planning in the tribal areas were taken by the FATA section of the NWFP planning and development department, and implemented by government line departments. In 2006, the Civil Secretariat FATA was established to take over decision-making functions, with an Additional Chief Secretary, four secretaries and a number of directors. Project implementation is now carried out by line departments of the Civil Secretariat FATA. The NWFP Governor’s Secretariat plays a coordinating role for interaction between the federal and provincial governments and the Civil Secretariat FATA<sup>16</sup>.

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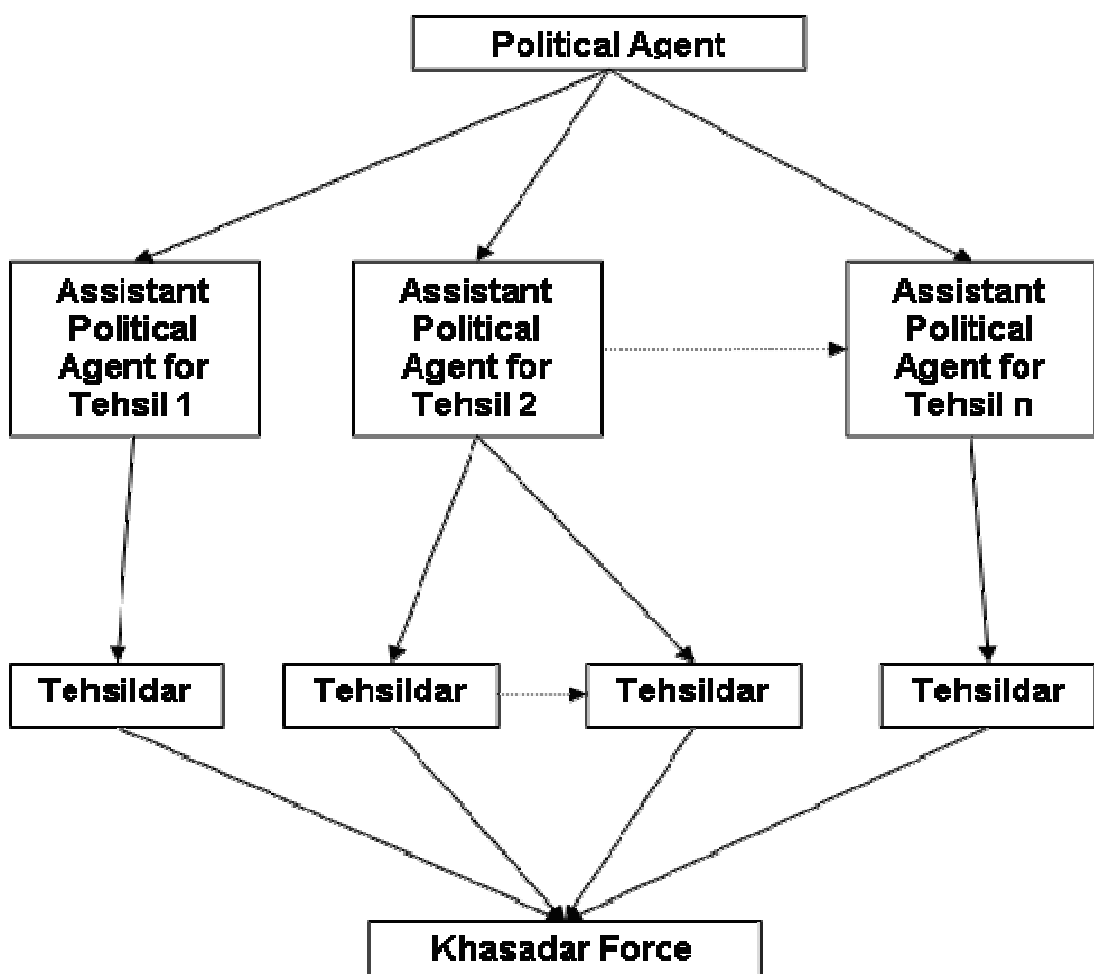
<sup>13</sup> Constitution of Pakistan 1973

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) comprises a set of laws enforced by the British Colonial Rulers in the tribal areas at the Northwest British India. They were specially devised to counter the fierce opposition of the Pukhtoons to British rule, and their main objective was to protect the interests of the Colonial Empire.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/> (accessed 28/04/2010)

The seven Tribal agencies are administered by a political agent each, assisted by a number of assistant political agents, *Tehsildar* (administrative head of a *Tehsil*) and *Naib Tehsildar* (assistant *Tehsildar*), as well as members from various local police (*khassadars*) and security forces (levies, scouts). As part of his administrative functions, the political agent oversees the working of line departments and service providers. He is responsible for handling inter-tribal disputes over boundaries or the use of natural resources, and for regulating the trade in natural resources with other agencies or the settled areas.



Administratively FATA has been divided into two main categories i.e. ‘protected’ areas, are regions under the direct control of the government, while ‘non-protected’ areas are administered indirectly through local tribes<sup>17</sup>. In protected areas, criminal

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/> (accessed 28/04/2010)



and civil cases are decided by political officers. The Political Agents and other officers are vested with judicial powers as well. After completing the necessary inquiries and investigations, cognizance of the case is taken and a Jirga is constituted with the consent of the disputing parties. The case is then referred to the Jirga, accompanied by terms of reference<sup>18</sup>. The Jirga arranges pre-mediation meetings with the parties, investigate further, examines evidence and issues a verdict which is usually unanimous. The political agent, or an official appointed by the political agent for this purpose, examines the verdict in the presence of parties to the case and members of the Jirga.

If the verdict sounds contrary to the Pukhtoon tradition (customary law) or there is suspicious of inclination in favour of any party, a re-examination is ordered, either the case may be remanded to the same Jirga or the verdict may be rejected and a fresh Jirga constituted. Where the verdict is held to be in accordance with customary law and free of irregularities, it is accepted and a decree is issued accordingly.

In non-protected areas, conflicts are resolved through a local Jirga. Jirga members first intervene to achieve a truce (locally called *Tiga*) between parties in a violent conflict, or to obtain security (*muchalga*)<sup>19</sup> in cash or kind for violent conflicts. Later on the parties have three options to arrive at a consensus i.e. 1) Pukhtoonwali/Customary law 2) arbitration of the Jirga and 3) Sharia (Islamic law).

Execution of the Jirga verdicts in non-protected areas is the responsibility of the tribe, who are responsible for the day-to-day affairs of their respective area. . The Jirga may announce punishment to an offender, imposing a heavy fine. Occasionally, more serious measures may be taken such as expelling an individual or a family from the area, and confiscating, destroying or setting fire to homes and property. In such cases, the entire tribe bands together as a *lashkar* (local volunteer army) to enforce the decision.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/> (accessed 28/04/2010)

<sup>19</sup> It is the amount of money the Jirga put on parties as security and confiscated if any party doesn't coincide with the temporary truce.

Tribal customary law operates within a system founded on two main concepts: equality and autonomy (Kakar 2005, 12; Johnson 2007, 60). Power structure is bottom up and established by councils of males, equal in authority and power. All community members have a representative on the Jirga and decisions are binding. The Jirga process is final because it is an arbitration process that is voluntarily enjoined by all parties. In this way, social order is maintained in the absence of a central government (Barfield 2007, 8).

Self-autonomy is maintained by the localized interpretation and execution of the concepts of Pukhtoonwali. Because autonomy and equality are so precious to the Pukhtoons, they reject “a central authority that operates from a distant place” while having complete “confidence in the ability of local leaders to provide protection to their communities and to provide an environment in which they can live according to their own laws and practices” (Nawaz 2009, P-6). This belief in the superior nature of cultural practices is common among ethnic identity groups, especially when a group begins to feel threatened by external actors (Horowitz 2000, 70).

Irrespective of all the aforementioned government administrative procedures, interference in local matters is kept to a minimum and they observe full respect to the local way of life. The tribes regulate their own affairs in accordance with customary rules and Pukhtoonwali, characterised by collective responsibility for the actions of individual tribe members and territorial responsibility for the area under their control. The government functions through local-level tribal intermediaries, the *Maliks* (representatives of the tribes) and *lungi* holders (representatives of sub-tribes or clans), who are influential members of their respective clan or tribe (Shinwari Naveed 2008).

Jirga works as an assembly for the tribal areas and the first point of contact for any interference, irrespective of nature. Even if the government plans any development project in FATA, they make the first contact and sometimes consult with Jirga for the implementation of that project. This applies to NGOs or other organizations as well. Jirga is the first and important point of contact for any organization to carrying out development or women rights project. It is, although, not obligatory for NGOs to

contact Jirga for development projects but in case of any sensitive subject i.e. women rights, it is very helpful to take the Jirga in to confidence. In recent years NGOs made efforts for the social uplift and development of this relatively less developed area of the country.

Due to its peculiar traditional way of living, poverty and human rights issues FATA remained a point of interest and entrepreneurship for national and international NGOs. It is considered to be not only one of the least developed part of the country but the condition of women rights is not very favorable as well. All these attributes attract many nonprofit organizations and donor agencies for a variety of projects. Before the dilapidated security situation, many local, regional, national and international organizations were involved in development and human rights projects in FATA. The exact number of organizations working in FATA is not known, but according to a leading NGO member the total number of registered NGO and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) ranges from two to three thousands<sup>20</sup>. The number of additional small unregistered organizations can not be found.

### **3.2. Legislative basis of NGOs in Pakistan**

There are more than 45,000 National Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and around one hundred international NGOs (INGOs). The key interface between the government and the NGOs is registration. Registration provides the opportunity for NGOs to clarify their roles and objectives and inform the government of their activities. On the other hand, registration is sometimes viewed as an attempt by the government to regulate and control the NGOs as in case of non compliance government can cancel the registration or refuse to renew it<sup>21</sup>.

Registration of NGOs is mandatory in Pakistan and there exist several rules and regulations under which NGOs may be legally registered. Some of these rules were prepared before the independence of Pakistan by the then British government. The registration rules and regulations are six and these are: The Societies Registration Act (XXI), 1860, The Trust Act, 1882, The Charitable Endowment Act 1890, The Cooperative Societies Act, 1925, The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies

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<sup>20</sup> Haji Nawaz Khan Afridi (Interviewed on 12/04/2009)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/documents/How%20to%20Control%20the%20Money%20Flow%20for%20FATA%20Projects.pdf> (accessed last time 20/04/2010)

(Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961 (XLVI of 1961)<sup>22</sup>, and The Companies Ordinance under Section 42 of 1984<sup>23</sup>.

### **3.3. The problems relating to the work of NGOs in the FATA**

The concept of NGOs is relatively new for the tribal people and in the purely traditional set up of tribal areas they are considered to be an outsider element. Besides their visible achievements in development sector, human rights protection and promotion, there are many negative perceptions attached with NGOs. In tribal areas, particularly, NGOs are perceived as the agents of United States, European countries and Israel, “who came in the garb of development workers for diverting people from Islam, shatter the existing traditional set up and spoil the prevailing culture of piety”<sup>24</sup>. This perception gets stronger when any NGO claims to work for women related issues.

It is considerably more difficult for NGO’s female workers to work in tribal areas. The first question they ask, says Ms. Sayed, what is your relation with the accompanying male worker. Every other relation than brother and husband is considered to be suspicious. There is no or very limited tolerance and understanding for female working in NGOs<sup>25</sup>. On the obvious reasons of these negative perceptions, she said that it is part of the negative propaganda against NGOs throughout the country. The severity of negative perception and reaction of the tribal people depends on the contacts of the organization with local people. If the organization has established contacts with local people and gained their confidence, they are less scrutinized.

Friday sermons in a large number of mosques preach how the west is out to undermine the Muslims and the Islamic world and for this purpose NGOs are one of their medium to achieve this goal. Even if they allow the NGOs for carrying out any development project, they are urged either not to include female workers or keep it to the minimum.

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<sup>22</sup> Report of Department of Social Welfare Government of NWFP

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Tribal Elder (April 2009)

<sup>25</sup> Ms. Nazira Sayed, Advocacy and Project Manager *Khuwendo Kor* (Interviewed 01/04/2010)

With the militant upsurge in the tribal areas, NGOs became one of the most targeted groups. They are even “threatened for helping the internally displaced persons (IDPs), who came from different parts of the province due to militant activities in their areas<sup>26</sup>. They were sacked from the area. Many incidents of kidnapping the NGO personnel, snatching vehicles and attacking their offices were reported in recent years.

There are various reasons for these negative perceptions. The NGOs consider it, firstly lack of awareness regarding development and human rights issue in the country. Secondly some factions of the community don’t want the people to be aware and empowered, so that they can continue their influence over. Thirdly, some believe that the local communities in Pakistan are feeling jealous because of the facilities of NGO’s personnel i.e. higher salary package, new vehicles and technological equipments etc. On the other hand the local communities blame NGOs of working on “foreign agenda” and that they do not respect the prevailing cultural boundaries, thus resulting in an interference with the traditional life style.

On close examination and observation it is revealed that there is a communication gap between NGOs and local communities, specially traditional and religious elders. Religious and community leaders consider NGOs as a threat to their authority in the community matters, where they have/or had considerable voice in decision making. They perceive that NGOs want to replace them in their communities. In other words, when the community is empowered to make decisions themselves they will disregard the authority of religious and community leaders. In response the NGOs consider the religious and traditional leadership is unaware of the new trends of development. They also blame that they don’t want the communities to be empowered.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Mr. Khan Muhammad Chief Executive Center for Excellence in Rural Development (01/04/2010)

### **3.4. The dilemma of “universalism and cultural relativism”**

One of the most significant issues in the field of human rights is the conflict between two different ideologies of human rights on a national scale, universalism, and cultural relativism. Universalism holds that more “primitive” cultures will eventually evolve to have the same system of law and rights universally. Cultural relativists hold an opposite, but similarly rigid viewpoint, that a traditional culture is unchangeable<sup>27</sup>.

In universal approach to human rights, an individual is a social unit, possessing inalienable rights, and driven by the pursuit of self interest. In the cultural relativist model, a community is the basic social unit. The concepts of individualism, freedom of choice, and equality are secondary to community. “It is recognized that the community always comes first”<sup>28</sup>. States and even communities have exploited this dogma of cultural relativism. They criticize impositions of western rights as cultural imperialism and disrupt their social fabric, as well. Majority of women right, therefore, violations are defended under cultural relativist doctrine.

This conflict of universalism and cultural relativism creates big hurdle for NGOs when they work for women rights in FATA. It is indeed a “big dilemma for NGOs because FATA is a traditional society with no understanding for universal approach to human rights<sup>29</sup>”. It is because the international donor agencies, which fund the project, have an understanding of universalism and sign the contracts with NGOs under this understanding while in the field where NGOs implement projects are mostly believe on cultural relativism.

### **3.5. Tribal conflicts and family enmities**

Tribal communities are divided in to different ‘*Khels*’ (sub-clans) who live in geographical packets all over the FATA. When the NGOs are working in one geographical area it runs smoothly but the problem arises when it has activities in two different areas with conflicting *Khels* (sub-clan). The tribal and family conflicts in the area create hurdles for NGOs in carrying out its project activities because one party

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<sup>27</sup> <http://library.thinkquest.org/C0126065/issuniversalism.html>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mr. Javed Akhtar Chief Executive JPI (28/03/2010)

does not, usually, allow the organization to enter its area if it has already conducted activities in other party's area.

### **3.6. The problematic concept of “women’s’ rights”**

Pakistan is the signatory of United Nation’s Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), whereas it is morally obliged to abide by all articles and provisions of the convention. The degree of awareness regarding human right and particularly women rights in the country is minimal. Women are one of the vulnerable groups in violation of their rights. In most areas of Pakistan, especially FATA, generally people claim that hey have given women more rights than any other society or culture in the world. While saying so, they also refer to the teaching of Islam about women rights.

The term “women rights” is generally considered to be NGO’s attribute rather than the state. It is one of the most misunderstood terms with many perceptions attached from local people. The “first thing comes to mind on hearing the term is liberating women, making them revolt against their family norms, religion and the existing culture of piety<sup>30</sup>”. Even some of the NGOs do not clearly understand women rights. In asking about their projects regarding “women rights”, they usually refer to separate projects instead of calling them women rights i.e. project about maternity health, girl’s education, women skill development and so on. There can be two possible reasons for this nomenclature firstly either they do not understand the term or they want to avoid it because of its conflicting nature. All these reflect the lack or little knowledge of universal human rights including women rights.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

## Chapter 4

### 4. Research Methodology

#### 4.1. Methodology for the research study:

This chapter will account for the types of sources that are used in collecting the data and the research methods that have been applied in analyzing the collected data. The choice of sources and methods are mainly guided by the research questions and the aim of the study. The research is based on variety of sources of data, 1) interviews with NGO personnel 2) interviews with project beneficiaries, tribal people 3) NGO reports, pamphlets, brochures and other printed materials 4) internet websites. The printed material consists of literature studies, such as published books, articles and institutions/organizations reports in the subject field of women rights, FATA and NGOs. In the face of the growing importance of internet as a tool of communication and disseminating information, particularly in NGO sector, web based resources and NGO's websites have been used in this research study.

I have supplemented the sources by reflecting with my personal observation of living at the brink of tribal areas and working experience of six years in the NGO sector, particularly women rights projects including the most sensitive issues of violence against women and honor killing.

The reason for selecting of this variety of research methods is to allow scope for triangulation<sup>31</sup>. "Triangulation occurs, as Geertz argues (1973), when researcher use different sources of data to get a range of perspectives (particularly useful in qualitative research) and so achieve a more rounded picture, or 'thick description' of what researcher is looking at".

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<sup>31</sup> Triangulations are the use of more than two methods for double and sometimes triple checking results



## 4.2. Interviews

Qualitative data is obtained primarily through interviews. It opened the opportunity to discuss, in depth with the various stakeholders, NGOs and their work in relation to women rights projects in FATA. In order, however, to establish a framework around the interviews, and to focus on specific issues with different interviewees, the interviews were structured with questions prepared beforehand, but the interviewer/researcher was open to new issues and follow different, associated leads depending on the responses and willingness of the interviewee.

For knowing the structure of Nongovernmental organizations in Pakistan, I have conducted intensive, but structured and semi-structured interviews with the selected NGO's personnel in person and telephone. A total of 8 people were interviewed, including the following staff member;

1. One staff member from each organization on managerial position who is actively involved in communication strategies (four potential organizations have been identified and selected for the study). These managers were Chief Executives, board member or other responsible positions.
2. One staff member from each organization who is involved in field activities (the actual work of implementing women rights project).

Originally the number of interviews was six staff members of three organizations but later on the number of selected organization increased to four and interviewees to eight respectively. The aim behind selecting these two categories of NGO personnel as the first group was to help the researcher understand the policy matters regarding their plan of action for women rights projects in Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, while the second group's (field staff) interviews were their narrative of reality in FATA regarding women rights.

Similarly the beneficiaries/audience of the projects, tribal people, was also interviewed. Due to security constraints and access problem to FATA, those tribal people were selected for interviewees who live in settled areas (other parts of the province). Six people were interviewed from different tribal agencies.

### **4.3. Document/Content analysis**

Secondary source of data collection, in the form of NGO documents and other written material, were also applied to form part of the analysis. The secondary data came from a variety of documented sources;

- NGOs Constitution
- Communication strategy (if any available in written form)
- Yearly plans and reports
- Working principles
- Publicity materials
- News stories

These documents coupled with the interview data, assisted the researcher in providing a rich picture of women rights projects in FATA. The method of content analysis (a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts), has been used to understand the meaning of the content of communication strategies, both in written form and interviewing with the NGOs personally. The aim was to see how they address issues of women rights in federally administered areas of Pakistan. It helped to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts.

### **4.4. Observation based on work experience in FATA**

Both primary and secondary data is supplemented with my observation during my work in FATA for women rights including violence against women and honor killing—one of the most sensitive issue in relation to women in Pakistan in general and FATA in particular. This work experience helped me to reflect upon not only during the interviews but also document analysis. It helped me understand the structure and role of NGOs. I have used the notes taken in focus group discussion during our project for ending violence against woman and honor killing.

#### **4.5. Sample of the study**

In the face of scope of the study, time limitation and access to data four nongovernmental organizations were studied 1) Aurat Foundation 2) Just Peace International 3) Community Appraisal Motivation Program (CAMP) and 4) *Khuwendu Kor*. The reasons for selecting these organizations are that Aurat Foundation is the leading and the largest organization that works for women rights throughout the country. CAMP is a relatively new organization run by local tribal people who are aware of the local culture, tradition and perception of women rights in FATA. Just Peace International is working in the field of conflict resolution and peace building. They are working on the most sensitive issue of “honor killing” in different parts of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and FATA.

##### **4.5.1. Aurat Foundation**

Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation (Aurat Foundation/AF), founded by few local minded persons from different walks of life, was registered in 1986 as a non-profit society under the Societies’ Registration Act 1860. AF has its Head Office in Islamabad, and four regional offices in the provincial capitals (Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta). It also has a countrywide network of voluntary citizens’ groups and individual activists. These groups include Citizens Action Committees (CACs), Resource Groups and Aurat Foundation Resource Centers (AF-RCs) and Information Network Centers (INCs).<sup>32</sup>.

AF is a civil society organization working for women’s empowerment and citizens’ rights with the collaboration of citizens’ groups and organizations to provide information, build capacity and undertake advocacy for women’s issues and for good governance in Pakistan.

##### **4.5.2. Just Peace International**

Just Peace International, a non political, non religious, nonprofit, civil society initiative, aims to work for JUSTICE & PEACE through conflict Transformation methods in order to protect and promote constructive peace by assisting, advocating and empowering the grass roots communities, organizations, governments and the

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.af.org.pk/mainpage.htm> (accessed 17/04/2010)

civil society to enable them to allow judicious, sustainable and productive interaction to realize maximum human potential in an environment of peace, justice and dignity.

It is registered under registration & control ordinance 1961 (Reg. No.DSW/NWFP/2509), social welfare Directorate Govt. of NWFP, Pakistan. The organization works for the “Promotion of building a just civil society based on justice and peace through conflict transformation methods & harnessing the creative energies of the poor and underprivileged”. This aim is achieved with the close collaboration of partner communities and organizations through a participatory, demand responsive, gender and poverty sensitive integrated development approach in the North-West Frontier Province. JPI is founded by two Pakistani Fulbright scholars along with like minded friends in USA in 2001<sup>33</sup>.

#### **4.5.3. Community Appraisal and Motivation Program (CAMP)**

Community Appraisal and Motivation Program (CAMP) is a Peshawar-based non-profit and non-governmental organization. It is established and registered under the Societies Act of 1860 (Registration No. 192/5/2946), since then it has been working in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and NWFP of Pakistan. The sectoral interests include Human Rights, Peace and Security, Community Development and Disaster Management, with an approach that is based on close cooperation with local communities and relevant stakeholders from the outset and relies on detailed assessments to identify and prioritize needs<sup>34</sup>. The organization is found by like minded tribal people.

CAMP is committed to improving the appalling health indicators for FATA and NWFP, whilst also addressing the underlying causes: poverty and poor nutrition; limited access to clean water and sanitation; limited understanding of fundamental health and hygiene concepts; high levels of endemic diseases; gender inequity; and limited resources (infrastructure, equipment, personnel and drugs) within the government health system.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://justpeaceint.org/> (accessed 17/04/2010)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.camp.org.pk/> (accessed 20/04/2010)

#### **4.5.4. Khwendo Kor (Sisters Home)**

Khwendo Kor (KK) is a non profit, non government and non partisan organization striving for development of the women and children, strong families and communities' progressive society. KK is a Pushto word meaning Sister's Home. The organization came into being in February 1993 and is registered under Societies Registration Act. 1860. KK drawing its strength from communities' active involvement in need driven development process through a participatory development initiative<sup>35</sup>. Ms. Maryam Bibi, the Chief Executive of the organization was the driving force in the establishment of KK.

Despite its avowed mission for women, KK seeks to work with men rather than against them. Its success reflects this inclusiveness which is embodied in its purposes. These are to achieve:

- Rights for All;
- Empowered communities, especially women and children;
- A just and equitable Society.

#### **4.6. Framework for data analysis**

After obtaining the empirical data I have described what has been collected and then analyzed the data, producing what is called 'empirical research findings'. The overall research findings, in effect, are the combination of literature review work and empirical findings. As Bogdan and Biklen ( 1982, P. 145) define it as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what researcher will tell others".

#### **4.7. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of the research study has been deduced from the model of Communication for Social Change (CFSC). The model of Communication for Social Change describes an interactive process where "community dialogue" and "collective action" work together to produce social change in a community that improves the life

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.khwendokor.org.pk/> (accessed 21/04/2010)

of all of its members. It is an integrated model that draws from a broad literature on development communication developed since the early 1960s. Likewise, theories of group dynamics, conflict resolution, leadership, quality improvement and future search, as well as the network/convergence theory of communication, have been used to develop the model<sup>36</sup>.

The guiding philosophy of communication for social change can readily be traced to the work of Paulo Freire (1970), who conceived of communication as dialogue and participation for the purpose of creating cultural identity, trust, commitment, ownership and empowerment.

The model of communication for social change is not linear model of communication rather, it is cyclical process and relational that leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change. It perceives communication as dialogue rather than monologue-a process of information sharing which leads to mutual understanding, mutual agreement and collective action. This alternative model serves as the foundation upon which the Communication for Social Change Model is based<sup>37</sup>.

#### **4.8. Ethical issues in research**

In this research, like most other researches, three parties are involved: the researcher, the academic institution, and the respondent, which are NGOs and tribal people especially, women. The interaction of each of these parties with one or both of the other two identifies a series of ethical questions. Consciously or unconsciously, each party expects certain rights and feels and certain obligations towards the other parties.

As a researcher I have paid considerable attention to respect the culture of the tribal areas as the issue of women rights is considered to be sensitive. Due to specific cultural issue the researcher keep the list of interviewees off the record and have mentioned only those names in the references that did not object it. Those who specifically requested for their names to be kept off the record, their request is honored.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf>  
<sup>37</sup> <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf>

#### 4.9. Literature Review

Most of the work, already taken place on the issue, is mainly about the social and political structure of the FATA, or a specific topic like “honor killing<sup>38</sup>” a prevailing tradition in some parts of the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Francine, Suzanne and Caroline in “Ending violence against women: a challenge for development and humanitarian work (2001)” emphasize on the role of development organizations. They argue that development organizations have been generally slow to realize the centrality of the issue to their work. By addressing violence against women, development workers go to the heart of how members of communities relate to one another and how they are able to shape their own lives. They discuss the current momentum around the issue, and ask why development organizations have been slow to take up the struggle to end violence against women. It also focuses on strategies to counter violence against women and support the survivors.

The above study is aimed on the general condition and environment for development worker throughout Pakistan with emphasize on violence against women. It is not specifically conducted in FATA. Two main reasons make the present research study different and important. Firstly there is no exhaustive literature available on the subject and secondly, if any, it is very general and cursory, only giving a generalized picture of women rights, NGO condition and issues in Pakistan.

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<sup>38</sup> The murder of family or clan member by a family member, where the murderer (s) believe the victim have brought dishonor upon the family, clan, or community. This perceived dishonor is normally the result of (a) utilizing dress codes unacceptable to the family or (b) engaging in certain sexual acts. These killings result from the perception that defense of honor justifies killing a person whose behavior dishonors their clan or family. Honor killing is mostly widespread in Islamic countries or countries with predominantly Muslim populations.

## Chapter 5

### 5. Communication strategy and project implementation by selected NGOs

#### 5.1. Communication strategy

Communication strategy articulates, explains and promotes a vision and a set of well-defined goals. It creates a consistent and unified voice that links diverse activities and goals in a way that appeals to the project stakeholders. Communication strategy is different from tactics or the concrete steps and techniques used in implementation of projects. Tactics can be chosen based on a pre-existing strategy<sup>39</sup>. The selected NGOs, however, interchangeably use project implementation strategy and communication strategy. Communication strategy needs to be in place in all phases of any project. From problem identification to evaluation of the project a relevant and effective communication strategy helps the successful implementation of the project and its sustainability (Figueroa, Lewis, Kincaid and Rani 2002).

In project related activities communication does not just automatically happen: It must be planned, organized and implemented. In addition, a communication strategy needs to be continuously updated regularly to respond to the changing local and organizational needs.

In organizations “policy research and formulation are given their due as tough, demanding areas of an organization’s work plan, communications is seen as ‘soft’. While program development and practice are seen as requiring expertise and the thoughtful consideration of best practices, communications is an ‘anyone can do it if you have to task. It is time to retire this thinking. Doing communications strategically requires the same investment of intellect and study that these other areas of non-profit practice have been accorded” (Hershey 2005).

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.unescap.org/stat/disability/census-ws/Session5-Media.pdf> (20/05/2010)



A communication strategy, therefore, should be evolved by identifying the following:

- Clear goals
- Target audiences
- Messages adapted according to the various target audiences
- Identification of transmission channels
- Knowledge that the audience received the intended messages

In women related projects in FATA the goals for communication strategy can be creating awareness regarding women right's, the audience are the local tribal people, messages can be the content used for awareness, channels of transmission can be different kinds of contacts, interpersonal communication, NGO's pamphlets and other publications, training and other meetings with people, while the evaluation and impact assessment of the project can be the feed-back from the beneficiary audience.

Communication strategy/project implementation in women rights projects usually has the following components:

### **5.1.1. Identification of problem**

Identification of the problem is the first phase in every project. The identification can be planned activities with need assessments and surveys in a particular area or subject, it can, however, also be an abrupt event coming in to surface due to a particular event or statement, which trigger action. For example, women rights projects can be planned because of a sudden appearance of a severe case of violence against women, honour killing maternity health issue or female education. These actions, generally published in news media, urge donor agencies and NGOs for developing women related projects. For example a number of women's rights projects were initiated on different women related issues throughout Pakistan after the infamous Mukhtar Mai<sup>40</sup> case surfaced. Many projects, on the other hand, are a result of a long-term planning/strategy as well, and can be the continuation of earlier projects undertaken successfully with visible impact on the communities.

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<sup>40</sup> Mukhtar Mai, aged 30, is gang raped allegedly on the orders of a village council in the southern Punjab village of Meerwala in Pakistan

### **5.1.2. Data collection/facts finding**

Once the problem is identified the next phase is data collection for a project. A mapping of particular areas on a selected subject is conducted. This mapping may include an overview of the existing maternity health situation, for example, if the project is about women's health rights. Data is collected through surveys and other means for initiating a project and relevant activities. In FATA, however, this is a very difficult task because people are usually not willing to give information about their household or family. It becomes even more difficult when the data is intended to be collected is related to women. A relevant and effective communication strategy along with other tactics, formulated respecting the local culture, helps in data collection about women rights projects.

### **5.1.3. Formulation of plan/message**

The third phase for a communication strategy in relation to women rights projects is the formulation of plan/message. In the light of collected data the project activities are carefully planned. Activities may vary from project to project. It can be capacity building trainings, initiatives for skill development, provisions of education, creating awareness about women's rights and violation of those rights. In women's rights projects NGOs carefully select the message and medium for dissemination. In their written materials, about women's rights they mostly refer to the religious injunctions and cultural values in favour of women's rights.

### **5.1.4. Implementation/execution**

Implementation is the operational phase where NGOs apply its communication strategy in carrying out its project activities. These activities vary from project to project but usually are awareness sessions, focused group discussions, capacity building trainings, alliance meetings, skill development and micro credit enterprise. These activities are agreed with the donor agency during the preliminary phase of the project but later on minor changes can be made for adjusting according to the unforeseeable circumstances. Communication strategies are developed according to the nature of the project activities.

### **5.1.5. Evaluation/feedback**

During the evaluation, organizations assess the impact of a particular communication /implementation strategy, and receive feedback from the audience/project beneficiary community. They conduct follow-up activities to assess which activity worked effectively or otherwise. It is like data collection, a difficult task for NGOs. The evaluation methods are different and used according to the nature of project activities. Evaluation is carried out at different stages of the project. A mid-project evaluation is undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of strategy and adjust it accordingly if it's not running smoothly.

## **5.2. The communication/project implementation strategies of selected NGOs**

Non-governmental organizations in FATA interchangeably use the terms implementation strategy and communication strategy. During this research study it is observed that they have communication strategy for implementation of their projects yet they usually don't term it so or they are referred collectively under project implementation strategy. They, although, follow all the steps involved in a communication strategy. The communication department is generally run by the planning and program department without any personnel with a specific qualification in communication studies.

The selected organizations had staff members with academic background in communication but they were not specifically working on the development of communication strategies. Rather they were working on other activities of the organizations or managerial positions. It is also found that very few national or local NGOs have communication strategy in written form.

### **5.2.1. Aurat Foundation (AF)**

Aurat Foundation works primarily with the collaboration of civil society organizations and also acts as a support organization for them. AF sees these organizations as channels of communications, as local support groups assisting women to be proactive at the community level, as citizens' groups with the potential to play a vital role in advocacy and action for women's issues and for citizens' rights in Pakistan.

In addition to the informal partnership networks that exist at all levels for the work of Aurat Foundation, more structured networks with partners exist at different levels for collaboration and project implementation. AF is one of the leading organizations that solely works on women related issue throughout the country including FATA. It has established different networks and alliance to reach the beneficiary communities. The Information Network Centers (INCs) are the institutional structures of the Information Program for Grassroots Action and Organization, through which the Foundation reaches out directly to 36,400 women in 2600 rural and urban communities throughout Pakistan. Around 680 local organizations provide support to the INCs at the local level<sup>41</sup>.

#### **Strategy areas of AF:**

Aurat Foundation has had the benefit of being an experienced organization and is able to implement innovative projects that have brought recognition for the Foundation. It has developed into an over-arching Program for ‘Strengthening Civil Society for Women’s Participation in Governance in Pakistan’<sup>42</sup>. This program is operationalized by the key program themes of the Foundation:

- **Information** for women to build their capacity for decision-making and action, and information about women’s issues and concerns to decision makers,
- **Capacity building** of citizens groups, public authorities and public representatives to support women’s participation in decision-making and their activism, as well as to enhance their access to opportunities and facilities at the local and district levels.
- **Advocacy** for developing an enabling environment for women’s empowerment and participatory democracy in Pakistan<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.af.org.pk/aboutaf.htm> (accessed 08/05/2010)

<sup>42</sup> Interview with a staff member (30/03/2010)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.af.org.pk/aboutaf.htm> (accessed 09/05/2010)

AF's women rights interventions are carried out throughout Pakistan without any discrimination towards a particular geographical region yet they put FATA in a relatively more vulnerable group in terms of women's rights. Aurat Foundation relies on its networks and alliance groups in FATA for implementation of women rights projects. Their main point of contact is the Information Network Centers, Citizen Action Committees and other local alliance member groups. "We believe on partnership and collaboration in implementing of women rights projects because it practically involves the communities, which gives a sense of ownership to the local communities and sustainability to the project<sup>44</sup>".

Thus their implementation strategy is not a direct intervention rather via their local partners in the different areas. AF shows "respect for the local culture and tradition but believe on the universality of human rights<sup>45</sup>". AF is one of the few national organizations which strongly believe on the universality of human rights and undertake project within this framework

The organization's project activities and efficacy for empowering women in different parts of the country have been acknowledged by the concerned donor agencies. The AF's overall program is "conceptually and strategically brilliant in bringing together at the district level and in networks volunteer groups of citizens, activists, councilors, professionals and government officials, which give AF's program its vital political development energy. Few organizations in Pakistan or elsewhere achieve this" (Robert Mitchell CIDA).

According to the organization's statistics the ratio of success in women's rights projects in FATA is satisfactory without having faced any harsh reaction from the communities.

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with a staff member who insisted on anonymity

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

### 5.2.2. Khwendo Kor (KK):

Khwendo Kor is working to improve the “well being of women and children in the conservative areas of North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan”<sup>46</sup>. Its efforts are primarily centered on improving the education, health, micro enterprise, advocacy and training opportunities available to women and children in the region. Creating awareness about human rights promotion and protection are the general goals of KK. The organization has successfully implemented various projects in different parts of the province including tribal areas.

KK has established regional offices in different geographical areas. It believes on community’s active involvement in all phases of development and human rights related projects. In FATA they have established village organizations and other community based networks for men and women, where they intervene via these local branch offices. It has community members as volunteer activists in the areas, some of whom are employed by the organization as well<sup>47</sup>. It was not that easy a few years back to enter and implement projects smoothly in these tribal areas because of the cultural constraints and negative perceptions attached to the NGOs.

The perception about NGOs is not very positive over-all; especially the female NGO workers are targeted for creating ‘vulgarity’. Even a lot of women of the local communities do not have a positive image of female NGO workers. One of the first questions they ask to female NGO workers, during the meetings, is generally ‘are you married?’ This is the criteria they use to judge the concerned female staff. In case if a female worker is closer to 30 years of age or above, she might be suspected of having loose-character if she is not married. It is so because there is the tradition of early age marriages. It has happened to one of KK’s staff when she visited the tribal area for conducting a survey. As the culture does not allow a girl to stay alone in a hotel, she was hosted by a local family. The women at that house were asking questions about her marital status and that what’s her relation with the accompanying male staff member<sup>48</sup>?

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<sup>46</sup> Nazira Sayyed Project Officer Khuwendo Kor (Interviewed 01/04/2010)

<sup>47</sup> KK Annual Report 2009

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

To a certain level, the behavior of some NGO workers in the past has contributed towards creating this negative perception. Failure in giving due consideration to local culture and tradition while, developing the communication strategy might have been one of the reasons as well. Even last year KK's staffs were asked to stop activities in one of the areas adjoining tribal belt. "It took longer to develop contacts with local people, win their trust and prove our dedication for the development of that area. The most difficult task was to assure them about our identity that we are not working for any foreign agenda, misleading the women to revolt against the tradition or any intention of missionary activities<sup>49</sup>".

The level of awareness in FATA about human rights is comparatively lower than other parts of the country. They are "culturally bound, which they respect and value, and following a thin rigid religious line which does not allow them to look at things from a broader perspective. Men don't want and women can't dare to discuss even the minor issues relating to 'women's rights'. But the situation in some parts is, however, changing now because the silence about women rights has been broken with civil society's interventions, and people started talking more about rights<sup>50</sup>".

KK's strategy is, therefore, to engage men of respective areas for women rights projects. Due to the social status in the tribal society, the inclusion of men in women rights projects has multifaceted importance. Firstly, in tribal society, rights flow from the authority of elderly men of the family. They are the decision makers on behalf of women. Before marriage father and brothers and in their absence paternal uncles are entitled, while after marriage, the responsibility is transferred to the husband and his family. Secondly, the inclusion of men minimizes the chances of a negative reaction from the community as a whole. Thirdly "it is very difficult and sometimes even impossible to contact women directly in FATA.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Staff member of Khwendu Kor (interviewed on 31/03/2010)

In areas where men have awareness about human rights (women rights in particular), there has been considerable and positive change in belief systems and practices. Even in far flung areas like *Karak, Banu, Dir* and *Waziristan*, who in past have stopped NGOs to enter the area, have now have the awareness about human rights<sup>51</sup>.

The establishment of local networks and community based organizations are key elements for the implementation of women rights projects in FATA, because they have access to local people and different stakeholders. And above all, being known to the community, local people usually trust them, which is the most important in community work. These networks and community based organizations work as a catalyst-an “interactive process that starts with a “catalyst/stimulus” that can be external or internal to the community. This catalyst leads to a dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem<sup>52</sup>”.

### **5.2.3. Community Appraisal and Motivation Program (CAMP):**

CAMP is a national non-profit and non-governmental organization working since 2002. It works mainly with the underprivileged communities in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Province (formerly NWFP) of Pakistan; responding to emergencies, improving access to quality health and education, creating livelihood opportunities and working closely with communities and government departments to promote human rights, peace and security<sup>53</sup>.

The organization has deep roots in the FATA as the founder members of the organization are the local tribal people. It gives the organization a degree of trust and reliability within the rural and tribal communities of FATA. Its technical expertise and capacity to manage projects has helped build a good working relationship with the government departments, international donor agencies and has won the support and trust of the local communities. The indigenous NGO’s importance in the FATA region is based on its knowledge base on local tribal dynamics and culture, transparent and efficient policies, rapport within the local population, representative

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf> (accessed 14/05/2010)

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.camp.org.pk/> (accessed 10/05/2010)



community institutions, and excellent working relationship with the FATA Secretariat.

CAMP's main thematic areas/projects in FATA includes: counter human trafficking, advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities, communities for change, emergency health care program, community midwifery program and the Literacy, Numeracy, Life Skills Training Program. In the service delivery sector, CAMP has its bases in Mohmand Agency, Khyber Agency, Orakzai Agency, Frontier Regions (FR) Kohat and Peshawar while its research and advocacy projects cover the entire FATA region.

Because it originates from and essentially comprises of the local people the NGO, has access to, and has contacts in the far flung tribal communities. This indigenous background makes it comparatively easier to implement its women rights projects in FATA. CAMP believes on effective partnership among institutions and dialogue based intervention in their project areas. Having awareness of the local culture and tradition, they take the local community stakeholders into confidence prior to their project activities.

Its project implementation strategies vary. The government policies for FATA are made at the Federal level, leaving very little scope for the regional organizations. The government, although, is taking steps to increase development spending in FATA, there is a need to facilitate and create a sustained and viable grassroots movement, which would assert and protect the social, political and economic rights of the people. For providing a platform for tribal people to participate in the policy matters CAMP has started a project named "Communities for Change".

The project has formed and strengthened a sustained network of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) of local leadership in FATA, and builds grassroots level capacity to tackle issues that are contributing to poor governance, underdevelopment, and violation of human rights, through partnership and networks<sup>54</sup>. The foundation of the project was laid by identifying the CBOs where they already existed, and formation of new in areas where they did not exist.

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.camp.org.pk/node/29> (26/05/2010)

In other projects they take direct intervention for creating awareness, promotion and protection of women rights. “Besides, having local background CAMP observes all professional and ethical measures in women rights projects in FATA, including respect for the culture. Because in case if they were found deviating from the cultural norms the consequences for CAMP, would be more severe than the other non-tribal NGOs<sup>55</sup>”. In the “Community Midwifery Project” CAMP has identified 20 women from Khyber Agency with necessary qualification, motivation, the requisite ‘family support and backing for training.

At the beginning of any project related to women they “contact the local community elders and discuss the purpose and planned activities in any particular area. If the elders raise any concerns, it is addressed or an attempt is made to obtain their tacit agreement for go-ahead. Sometimes elders are also enthusiastic and promise any assistance possible as well<sup>56</sup>”.

This process of taking the initial consultation and/or agreement of the elders give a greater acceptability, remove the chances of any future wrong-perception and pave the way for a smoother implementation. The consultation remains intact in every phase of a project. Consultation with the local people works as a catalyst for the recognition of the women’s rights violations in the area; it also helps identifying the future community leadership. Through a “process of sequential networking (going from house to house) or small group meetings, the present leader(s) identifies other opinion leaders and resource persons<sup>57</sup>” which can help in the project implementation.

#### **5.2.4. Just Peace International (JPI):**

While the JPI sectoral program interventions are implemented in the central, southern and northern districts of North West Frontier Province and FATA, in institutional development, human rights advocacy and awareness raising the focus of JPI shifts from local to national level. The thematic areas include: human rights, women’s rights, violence against women and honor killing, primary health, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with staff member

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Human Rights Officer of CAMP (23/03/2010)

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf>

JPI develops various strategies for implementing women's rights projects in FATA. In its project about "Violence against women and honor killing", they contact and discuss with religious leaders and traditional leadership of FATA to seek their help for creating awareness regarding violence against women and honor killing. The organization recognizes the authority of the Jirga and social status of its members. It understands the importance of this institution in the area. From the phase of the inception of any new project they contact the local Jirga, traditional/religious leadership and present the intended project. The purpose of "communication with the Jirga elders is to seek their guidance and support because they know more about the area, culture and their help will make the project activities easier"<sup>58</sup>.

JPI stresses on the importance of communication among NGOs, traditional/religious leadership and local Jirga. Because, says Mr. Javed, it "clarifies many misunderstandings which developed negative perceptions and blaming each other. In the absence of any contact between NGOs and community stakeholders the gulf only broadens. It is reported that in the implementation of projects by any organization without prior briefing and consultation with local influential people, the projects were not successful. Some of them were left incomplete as well.

For gender related and women's rights projects JPI tries not to use the term "women" rather refer to the specific relations, like for example in gender equality projects they don't use the terms "men and women" rather son and daughter, brother and sister, mother and father etc. It has two merits, explained a JPI staff member, firstly it avoids the use of the contradictory and inciting term "women's rights", secondly tribal people care for relations more and the awareness raising session with them are more effective in this manner.

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<sup>58</sup> Mr. Javed Akhtar Chief Executive JPI (30/03/2010)

The organization has developed a “strong network of local community organization in different parts of the FATA, which assist it in different phases of women’s rights projects”<sup>59</sup>. Thus develops a sense of “collective self efficacy” in the tribal communities.

### **5.3. Different communication strategies:**

Evidently all these four organizations employ different communication/implementation strategies for women’s rights projects in FATA. These tactics depend on the capacity of the organization’s expertise, its roots in the local communities, degree of trust from tribal people and understanding of prevailing culture and tradition. Depending on the nature of project and geographical area organization evolves different strategies for conducting the project activities successfully. These “strategies are not right or wrong, rather they are appropriate or inappropriate”. Like for example, a successful strategy in one part may not be that successful in another part of tribal area.

One of the common strategies in these organizations is having contacts with different stakeholders and local community elders. Thus initiating a process where “community dialogue” and “collective action” (Figueroa, Lewis, Kincaid and Rani 2002) work together to creating awareness about women’s rights in FATA’s people. This kind of collective engagement increases their collective ability to engage in dialogue. On the other hand they identify future leadership for respective communities.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid

## Chapter 6

### 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 6.1. Conclusion

In terms of projects implementation in FATA the last two years were the most difficult because of the security problems. But NGO's task was never easy when it comes to women related issue in tribal areas. The support mechanisms established by NGOs (shelters for women, legal aid initiatives, small loan micro-credit facilities, interventions for women's education and training, etc.) have helped to increase the decision-making capacity of women they reach, and to promote acceptance of these choices in their communities and ultimately empower them. Due to NGO's work a slow but consistent change process has been started even in the far flung rural areas of FATA.

Besides their visible achievements in development and human rights, they are severely criticized and blamed for working on foreign agenda. Even they are suspected as agents of United States, European countries and Israel. The degree of these allegations against NGOs gets stronger when an organization claims to work for women related issues. The very term "women rights" incites many suspicious like for example liberating women and giving them freedom to revolt against the religious, cultural and traditional values, even it is considered as disseminating "vulgarity". In case if something, that is considered to be against Muslims or Islam, happens on international level (in US, Israel or Europe), the NGOs in Pakistan are the first ones to face the wrath of the public demonstrations.

In such unfavorable environment it becomes very difficult for NGOs to pursue its mission of charity and community work. They have to take many things in to serious consideration and adopt strategies which are acceptable or less objectionable for the local people and which help in implementation of their projects. Different organizations develop different implementation/communication strategies for women's rights, depending on the nature, contacts and 'reputation' of a particular organization in any part of FATA.

Some have established branch offices with local volunteer activists; some believe on having strong contacts with traditional and religious leadership, others consider it important to establish local community based organizations and train them for implementation of projects. But irrespective of the nature, type or size of the organization and/or project, a communication/implementation strategy, to be successful, would have some pre-requisites.

## **6.2. Pre-requisite of communication/implementation Strategy in FATA**

During the study it is observed that irrespective of the organization capacity, nature of project and any geographical area within FATA the compulsory components of a successful communication/implementation strategy include:

### **Involvement of local leadership**

Involvement of local influential people because of their social status in community is considered to be a strategic asset for the NGOs. Contacts with these people make the organization acceptable for the rest of the community and its task easier. It also minimizes the communication gap between NGOs and other community/religious elders. In case, the NGOs do not involve local influential people, a sense of competition for authority by the NGOs in the community develops, or at least it is perceived to be so by the local community elders. Religious and traditional leadership considers NGOs, a threat to their authority and social status in the area. On the other hand NGOs perceive those leaders a hurdle in their work. Thus the involvement of local leaders increases the chances of success of the project.

### **Respect for culture/tradition**

The organizations which have successfully implemented women's rights projects without any particularly adverse reaction from the community, credit their success to their respect for local culture and tradition. Those organizations that have deviated or worked against the local tradition faced various hardships in project activities. It is the basis for initiating any project in FATA as without understanding and respecting local tribal culture NGOs can not get an entry to the area.

Those local people who are involved in the project clarify in the beginning and ask the NGO's staff for understanding and respecting the local culture. If "the NGO's staff show respect for the local culture it is considered an indication that they are not working on any foreign agenda or came with any malicious intentions<sup>60</sup>".

### **Observing dress codes**

As part of the culture, observing dress code is also the important component NGOs take in to consideration while planning a strategy. Dress code is specially mentioned for the female NGO workers. Observing dress code reduces the 'alienation' of the NGO's staff in traditional tribal areas. Communities in FATA are specifically concerned with female NGO's worker dress codes as according to them it " might provide misleading example for the tribal women who live in a closed traditional environment with strict observation of dressing codes" (Afridi 2010). There are few reported cases when the local people sacked female NGO workers because they were not dressed in a locally acceptable manner.

### **Usage of local language**

The usage of local language is not an obligation rather it's a need for the smooth running of organization's activities in tribal areas. It also increases the NGO's staff cohesion with local community. In tribal areas NGOs employ those staff members who have "local language as their mother tongue and are well aware of the local culture<sup>61</sup>". The usage of local language makes it easier for both, the NGOs and beneficiary communities, in the course of project activities. As the "literacy rate is deplorably lower than other parts of the country the usage of other languages than local one decreases the number of project beneficiaries<sup>62</sup>" At present majority of the NGOs, however, use Urdu, the national language, in majority of their publications, although, Pashto (or Pukhto) is the native tribal language in these areas.

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<sup>60</sup> Local human rights activist

<sup>61</sup> Mr. Javed Akhtar Chief Executive JPI

<sup>62</sup> Interview with a local human rights activist

### **Revert to religious teachings**

Another important communication strategy tool for women's rights projects, which is observed during the study, is reverting to religious injunctions or process of gaining religious backing for the project goals. Tribal people are comparatively more religious, that's why organizations make references to religious injunctions about women's rights and other human rights during their campaigns for the promotion and protection of these rights in FATA. In women's rights projects on violence against women and honor killing, organizations base their main activities in conjunction to religious teachings. "Better connection with religious leaders in FATA and gaining their support and thereby religious backing helps to greater extent in the successful and smooth implementation of projects. They can be otherwise if not tackled tactfully"<sup>63</sup>.

### **Avoid using of the term "women rights"**

In stark contrast to Europe, the use of the term "women rights" has a negatively perceived connotation for local people. The organizations, when asked about their projects for women's rights, refer to the specific projects they are working in the FATA i.e. girls education project, women's reproductive health project and skill development etc. it can have two reasons, either the NGO's personnel are not conceptually clear themselves about the definition of women's rights in UN declarations and conventions or they want to avoid using the somewhat 'controversial' term of "women's rights". The use of language/terms that gives a greater acceptability among the local community is another essential requirement in developing any communication/implementation strategy.

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<sup>63</sup> Mr. Haji Nawaz Khan Afridi founder of a local tribal NGO (28/03/2010)



## **Establishment of community based organization**

Establishment of village and other community based organizations is a pre-requisite for the successful implementation of women rights projects in tribal areas of Pakistan. It is very “important because it not only helps the NGOs to implement the projects successfully but also empowers the community to tackle the local issues by its own. In other words it’s like the Chinese proverb of teaching the person how to catch a fish instead of giving him a fish<sup>64</sup>”.

## **6.3 Recommendation**

### **Policy Recommendation**

The vision and purpose of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN conventions have a universal approach. It is based on a universalistic stance with certain basic, inalienable rights for all humans that are applicable across barriers of geography or culture. But during this dissertation it has been observed that certain cultural constraints in Pakistan challenge the implementation of this universal ideal of human rights. The state, however, has introduced certain legislations lately in relation to women rights; the execution of these laws has loop holes. Thus it is equal to tacit endorsement of these cultural constraints. The state should, therefore:

- Introduce policies which guarantee basic human rights to all, including women without any geographical discrimination
- Should take special measure for the awareness, promotion and protection of human rights, particularly women rights in FATA

### **Practical and Research Recommendation for NGOs:**

1. Establish a specialized communication department in NGOs, with staff qualified in Communication studies
2. Preparation of Communication strategy in written form with the participation of local tribal representatives.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid

3. Research on the success and failure of communication strategies in FATA
4. Compile a handbook/publication on the successful communication strategies for future reference.
5. Take insight from Communication for Social Change Model in developing communication strategies.

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# Appendix 1

## Map of Major ethnic groups in Pakistan



504491 5-80 (545359)

**Appendix 2**  
**Map of the Tribal belt between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

