THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

# A CRITIQUE OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

**Being a Thesis Submitted for the Degree of**
**Doctor of Philosophy**
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**By**

**Johar Ali**
**(M.Phil- University of Peshawar, Pakistan)**


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*Dedication*

**To the memory of my father, Muhammad Zaman,**
**Who always advised me to read and read.**

**Also to my wife, Safia Joher, who**
**suffered a lot due to my absence**
**for so long a period, but**
**prayed and wished**
**for me to comp-**
**lete this project**
**successfully.**

## ABSTRACT

This study, a critical analysis of participatory development, was empirically conducted within a participatory development NGO in Pakistan, namely the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP). It critically analysed participatory development in relation to micro and macro level forces, such as government, bilateral and multilateral donors and local power structures.

The study found the ideal of participatory development to be infeasible. The government undermined participatory development by controlling and co-opting the SRSP, which is a government initiated NGO, to perform its dictated functions. The government arranged funds for its activities from its own established fund, backed by bilateral and multilateral donors, namely, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund.

Donor agencies impeded participatory development by requiring the SRSP to attain a pre-determined target in a given time. Donors' restrictions prompted the SRSP to follow the quantitative target by sacrificing its documented and idealized participatory development theory. Furthermore, at the micro level, the local power structure not only hijacked the SRSP's activities but also discouraged women and poor men from representing their actual needs. Hence, all these macro and micro-level forces, instead of adopting facilitative structural changes, reinforced each other and co-opted the SRSP for their own inherent objectives. The SRSP's position, constrained by the macro level forces in particular, made it a 'subcontractor' carrying out its activities without following the required process of structural transformation

Furthermore, the study found that participatory development has lost its critical edge over the earlier development theories as a result of by being co-opted by the modernization theories at the theoretical level, and by donors, states and local power structures at the practical level. This co-option, under the neo-liberal agenda, at both levels, reduced it to little more than fashionable lip service.

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## ABBREVATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ABD | Abbottabad |
| AKRSP | Agha Khan Rural Support Programme |
| BADP | Barani Area Development Programme |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CCB | Community Citizen Board |
| CO | Community Organization |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| FGI | Focus Group Interview |
| FSO | Female Social Organizer |
| GAD | Gender and Development |
| GMO | Gender Monitoring Officer |
| GONGO | Government NGO |
| GoP | Government of Pakistan |
| HPR | Haripur |
| MCO | Male/men Community Organization |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NGORC | NGO Resource Centre |
| Novib | Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation |
| NWFP | North West Frontier Province |
| PCP | Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy |
| PD | Participatory Development |
| PI | Productive/Physical Infra-structure |
| PPAF | Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund |
| RSP | Rural Support Programme |
| SO | Social Organizer |
| SOU | Social Organization Unit |
| SPDC | Social Policy and Development Centre |
| SRSP | Sarhad Rural Support Programme |
| SSO | Senior Social Organizer |
| TVO | Trust for Voluntary Organization |
| WCO | Women Community Organization |

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a critical study of participatory development based on in-depth empirical study of a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan, namely the Sarhad[1] Rural Support Programme (SRSP). The Sarhad Rural Support Programme is a participatory-based NGO whose stated aims are to enable all community members to equally participate in and take responsibility for development. In this respect, the Sarhad Rural Support Programme claims to adopt a holistic approach to participatory development in which the mobilization and empowerment of individuals to take control of each stage of a specific development project's cycle - from inception through to planning, execution and evaluation - is seen as but one stage in the overall process of engendering wider social transformations.

The study critically examines participatory development in relation to the wider macro and micro level factors that influence its feasibility. Among the macro level factors, it critically explores the bilateral and multilateral funding agencies- which provide funds to the SRSP- and their role in influencing the materialization of participatory development. Furthermore, it investigates the role of Pakistan's government in influencing participatory development by examining the different methods it applied to encourage, control and manipulate the SRSP. In addition to these macro level factors, the study also examines the role of community-level power relations in influencing the SRSP's pivotal principles, such as social transformation and empowerment of the impoverished sections (including men and women) of society.

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[1] '*Sarhad*' literally refers to boundary but here it is used to refer to the *Urdu* (Pakistan's national language) name used for North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Keeping in view the influence of these micro and macro level factors, the study examines the SRSP's internal deficiencies that affect its efforts to materialize participatory development. In addition to these determinants, the study also critically analyses the theoretical principles of participatory development in addressing the diversity-based local realities.

### 1.1 What motivated me to research this topic? My personal account

What initially motivated me to evaluate the role of NGOs in implementing participatory development (henceforth PD wherever suitable) is quite an interesting story, because it was not a sudden or chance event; rather, it caught my attention gradually at various stages. The primary impetus came from my students, whom I was teaching a module, entitled, 'Community development' at the University of Peshawar, Pakistan. This module, besides other topics, addressed participatory development and the role of NGOs in implementing it. While I was teaching about participatory development NGOs, some student raised the questions: Are NGOs successful in implementing PD? Do they truly empower the local people to make all the decisions by themselves? These questions led to a debate among the students in the classroom and various questions relating to these issues started coming to the fore. Some of the students straight away marked the implementation of PD as idealism, while some noted the urgent need for an empirical study to evaluate NGOs' efforts and their claims of success in pursuing participatory development. The urgency, in fact, was genuine because in Pakistan participatory development NGOs have been evolving for around a decade, but have not been empirically studied in relation to their claims. This study is, therefore, the first effort concerning Pakistan-based participatory development NGOs.

The second motivation was from my experience as a part time resource person with the SRSP. My experience with the SRSP drew my attention to this topic in two ways. Firstly, the organization's slogans, such as 'we work to hand over the stick of

decision-making to the poorest of the poor', 'we sensitize gender and develop a gender-balanced society', made me ask, Are its claims true? Secondly, the same question was raised while I was providing training, concerning participatory development, to the staff members and members of community organizations. Often, the participants in the training sessions raised the question of the practicability of the ideals of participatory development. Moreover, I observed that separate training events were arranged by the SRSP for the members of men's and women's organizations. This separate treatment of men and women in training moved me to think that on the one hand the SRSP claimed gender sensitization, while on the other hand, in practice, it behaved differently. These kinds of experience occupied my mind and led me to undertake this study to evaluate empirically NGOs' role in implementing participatory development.

## 1.2 Research journey: an overview

This study started its journey to examine empirically whether or not the SRSP implemented participatory development, or in other words, whether it truly empowered local people in the project cycle stages. However, its focus later broadened to a critique of the practicability of participatory development in general. In the beginning, my understanding was that the issue was quite simple and distinct and, therefore, I initially focused on evaluating the SRSP's claims of community empowerment in each stage of the project cycle, i.e. needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. However, the empirical data revealed that PD is not as simple as I had initially believed. The data exhibited it as deeply entrenched in a firmly entangled web of forces that undermined the likelihood of its materialization. The manifestation of these forces caused me to become quite critical of the practicability of PD. As a result, my focus was modified and shifted from simple evaluation of one organization to a more critical and theoretical analysis of PD. Thereafter, while juxtaposing the empirical data with macro-level knowledge, I intensively analysed PD in relation to the influencing macro and

micro-level factors, such as donors, state/government and community power structures. Such critical analyses led me to a critique of the practicability of participatory development theory and more specifically of the idea of empowerment of the impoverished sections of society. This critical analysis suggested that the ideal of PD was infeasible because of its being co-opted by donors, states/governments and local power structures for their own objectives.

The intentions of donors were found from the perception of staff members to be constraining the SRSP in its efforts to pursue participatory development in accordance with its actual principles. This finding was consistent with critical literature (see chapter II) which reflected donors' role as anti-PD in that they co-opted NGOs for their vested interests of maintaining colonialism, but in a new dress, i.e. neo-colonialism.

The attitude of Pakistan's government was also found to be self-serving. On the one hand, it visibly encouraged such NGOs (see chapters IV and V); while on the other hand, its posture was more personal and authoritarian. It cooperated with the SRSP only to attract donors and fulfil their conditions of allowing NGOs to pursue participatory development independently. Furthermore, its close association with the SRSP manifested its intentions as using it for its own objectives. Such findings were not only reflected by the empirical data but were in line with the wider literature which provided a rich base of different case studies where states/governments utilized foreign-funded NGOs mainly for accomplishing their own particular purposes. In the same way, the local power structure adopted the SRSP only to use its development activities for their own vested interests. Therefore, in such circumstances, the ideal of participatory development as a way to restructure power relations and reach impoverished men and women was akin to chasing a mirage in the desert.

## 1.3 Significance of the study

This study, as highlighted above, is a first ever effort, not only with respect to the SRSP but also to the participatory development NGOs in Pakistan in general. So far, no such empirical research has been found conducted which has reflected upon the success or failure of the SRSP in employing participatory development. Indeed, the SRSP has conducted various official-based evaluative studies, but their focus has been only concerned with describing the SRSP's achievements and, more importantly, uncritically describing its success stories in figures (see, for example, SRSP, 2000; SRSP, n.d.). Furthermore, such studies were conducted for their submission, in the shape of reports, to the donors or other concerned departments. These studies treated the activities in isolation and lacked academic depth, failing to investigate critically the implementation of PD in relation to wider perspectives. Therefore, the significance of this study is not only as a pioneer effort in the region but also, more importantly, due to its significance as a contribution to the theory of PD and other participatory development NGOs- either in Pakistan or elsewhere- pursuing PD in similar environments.

This study is an addition to the comparative case studies conducted so far on the practicability of participatory development in different countries. It provides a rich knowledge of micro and macro-level forces that influence the philosophy of participatory development. It satisfies the problem of relevancy by providing diversity-based information and filling the gap between theory and practice, as Booth (1994) recommended for post-impasse researches. It is a direct response to the demand of Edwards (1994) and Hulme (1994) who lamented the paucity of research on the southern NGOs implementing participatory development. It contributes in answering their demand for meso-level research on southern NGOs to examine their internal dynamics and the external/structural forces that divert them from their actual mission of

empowerment (participatory development) to the attainment of an external agenda. In this way, it helps strengthen the ability of participatory development theory to represent real-world experiences.

In addition, it contributes to the wider theoretical debate on the value and meanings of participatory development. It clarifies somewhat the confusion in the central elements of PD and its overall compatibility to the ground reality. It, hence, represents a clear picture of the theoretical deficiencies of PD and the micro and macro level forces that discourage its materialization.

### 1.4 Synopsis of the study

The first chapter presented a brief introduction to the thesis, while chapter two reviews related literature and presents a picture of both participatory development and NGOs. It comprises two parts. Part I presents the theoretical framework and describes the earlier development theories in relation to their interventional foci and strategies. Their description brings to the fore not only their contribution to the emergence of participatory development but also the primary difference among their approaches to development. The chapter goes on to explain participatory development and provides a guide to the understanding of the main issue of the study. It also reflects the main points of the critique of the practicability of participatory development.

Part II discusses NGOs, and looks at their nature and ideological shift from a historical perspective. In addition, it identifies the main and pivotal forces that led to the exponential growth of NGOs and their global ideological shift from relief to development. It also elaborates the consequential changes, after the new liberal agenda, in donors' and states' relations with NGOs on the one hand, and the critical literature that targeted such relations as destructive to the application of participatory development on the other hand. This wider level critical description provides a

foundation for subsequent examination of such relations with respect to NGOs in general and the SRSP in particular.

Chapter III describes the whole research procedure followed by the study. It explains each research step in relation to its significance and suitability to the study. It highlights the tools of data collection employed, and also the way data was collected.

Chapter IV is primarily concerned with providing a complete picture of NGOs in Pakistan. It comprises two parts. Part I concentrates on the relationship between foreign donors and NGOs' growth in Pakistan on the one hand and the resultant emergence of participatory development NGOs on the other hand. This helps to set the increase of Pakistan-based NGOs in the context of the overall global trend. Part II focuses on the nature of changes which Pakistan made with respect to NGOs after the donor agencies required aid-receiving countries to provide space and a facilitative environment to NGOs. It clarifies the government's overall attitude towards NGOs in general and the SRSP in particular. The rationale of this chapter is to reflect upon the influence of government and its policies on the SRSP or, in other words, on participatory development.

Chapter V provides background information on the SRSP's establishment, organizational structure, mission, policy, objectives and components, as portrayed by the SRSP itself. This chapter, on the whole, is concerned not only to clarify and highlight its documented participatory development theory and the underlying determinants in its establishment, but most importantly to provide a foundation for the analysis of the primary data.

Chapter VI deals with the primary data collected from the SRSP's staff members. The way this chapter is designed aims to develop a complete picture in the mind of the reader of the study's objectives and the factors impeding the SRSP from accomplishing them. To facilitate an understanding of the evaluation of the SRSP's claims of following

participatory development and more specifically of empowering local people in the project cycle, the 'ideal' project cycle is described and the reality as depicted in staff members' views is compared and contrasted with this. The factors which influenced people's empowerment in the project cycle are explained in detail.

Chapter VII complements the previous chapter by presenting the views of members of men and women's organizations. The organization of this chapter is similar to that of chapter VI. However, the aim of this chapter is to present the views of community members in order to understand their similarities and dissimilarities from those of the staff members.

Chapter VIII draws together the information presented in chapters II, IV, V, VI and VII, and analyses it in relation to the wider level knowledge existing on the issues, constraining participatory development. It is composed of three parts. Part I describes how the SRSP's activities, or in other words, its ideals of implementing participatory development theory, were negatively influenced by the interventions of government and donor agencies. Part II explains the role of local power structures in discouraging the SRSP from implementing its theory by reaching the poorest of the poor. Part III focuses on the reasons, such as the male dominated culture and the SRSP's internal deficiency, that paralysed its efforts to follow its ideal gender and development approach.

The final chapter draws out the main points arising mainly from the previous chapter and revisits chapter II in order to validate the study's results with reference to wider knowledge. It opens with a description of the summary of the research findings in relation to the study's objectives and, subsequently, explains in detail the macro and micro-level structural issues that undermine the feasibility of participatory development. The last part of the chapter describes the implications of the study's findings for participatory development and also highlights the future prospects of participatory development.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THEORIZING PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on participatory development theory and the way NGOs employ it practically. To understand the issues in depth, the chapter is arranged in two parts. The first part presents a summary of development theories and locates participatory development theory among them. It also describes the nature and causes of the emergence of 'Gender and Development' (GAD). In addition, it introduces the reader to the critique of participatory development, mainly in relation to its underlying conceptual vagueness, optimism and its co-option by the donors or, in other words, by the modernization theories under the neo-liberal agenda.

The second part provides information about NGOs. It describes their evolution and their corresponding ideological changes from relief to participatory development. Furthermore, it elaborates the pivotal factors responsible for the emergence and increase of present day participatory development NGOs. It also focuses on the nature of policy changes made by the donors and the aid recipient states to encourage NGOs' in development activities. The last section of this part presents the critical literature on donors'/states' relation with NGOs. The underlying aim of this section is not only to understand the impact of such relations on NGOs' activities in a broader perspective, but also to provide a critical foundation for the interpretation of the study's findings.

## 2.2 Part I

### 2.2.1 What is development?

The word 'development' has no all-encompassing and specific definition (Griffiths and Callaghan, 2002; Vincent, 2004) which can satisfy the demands and

needs of all people, policy makers, planners, governments, disciplines, etc. It has been differently defined by different people of different disciplines and times (Farah, 1977; Crush, 1995). For instance, Pronk (cited by Boyce, 2002: 239) defined it in relation to power relations as, 'turning around well-established power structures which are not conducive to development'. Similarly, Wiens (2001:1) took it in the context of community development and defined it as 'building the capacity/ability, knowledge and experiences both at the individual and community level'. In economics it is defined and identified with economic growth, usually measured in terms of per capita (per head) income (Taylor et al., 1995; Grant, 1977: 294; Robbins, 1968; Henry, 1977: 9).

This multiplicity of definitions shows that development carries various meanings and explanations and is/has been treated differently in different contexts and from differing perspectives. The reason behind the differences in the definition of development is said to be due to its multiple dimensions, goals and ends (Staudt, 1991). Staudt, thus, gave seven of the hundreds of definitions available, all of which focused on different dimensions and goals. The definitions he presented reflected the change in focus from 'economic growth' to a 'sustainable level of living' and onward to equity based structure/development. He referred, in this context, to Gita Sen and Caren Grown, who said about the later developed conception of development:

> "We want a world where inequality based on class, gender, and race is absent from every country, and from the relationships among countries... where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated... where massive resources now used in the production of the means of destruction will be diverted to areas where they will help to relieve oppression both inside and outside the home... where all institutions are open to participatory democratic processes, where women share in determining priorities and making decisions" (Gita Sen and Caren Grown cited in Staudt, 1991: 28-29).

Thus, the meaning of 'development' has never remained the same; rather it has changed and modified with emerging needs/demands. For example, when development theories first emerged, it was associated with economic growth (Taylor et al., 1995;

Hulme and Turner, 1990: 9), but after the realization of the failure of 'development', so conceived, to improve the overall societal structure and human life, it was reconceptualized in terms of basic needs (Streeten and Burki, 1978; see Hicks, 1979), sustainable development (Fulcher and Scott, 2003: 544) and participatory development (Potter et al., 2004). Now, the question of how development was generally dealt with in previous development theories and how it was redefined, is reviewed below.

## 2.3 Development theories

### 2.3.1 Modernization theories

Modernization theories emerged immediately after World War II when development thinking marked the 'West' as the sign of modernization and industrialization. Proponents of this approach associated development with economic growth and considered industrialization as the key instrumental factor in attaining economic development (Pieterse, 2001). Economic development was regarded as the pivotal point and its ensuing benefits were believed automatically to trickle down to all sections of society (Wilson-Moore, 1996). The 'West' was, therefore, believed to be different from the underdeveloped countries because of having attained a self-sustained economic growth. It was assumed that to achieve a similar position, the underdeveloped societies needed to pass through five stages, i.e. the traditional society; the pre-takeoff society; takeoff; the road to maturity and the mass consumption society (Rostow, 1960).

Modernization theories- which believed in the evolutionary progression of societies from traditional to advanced stages (see Kabeer, 1994)- considered the 'West' as having already gone through such stages and expected that the third world countries, desiring to reach the self-sustained development like that of 'West', would also go the same path/way (Wilson-Moore, 1996). Those who failed to imitate the 'West' by adopting the modernization imperative would not only fail to get developed but would also remain permanently in the vicious circle of underdevelopment (Hettne, 1990: 38).

To help the underdeveloped countries to catch up with the 'West' and get modernized in the same way, the 'West' provided them with the necessary development ingredients, such as modern values, technology, expertise and capital (Harrison, 1988). Modernization theories occupied a central place in development, but gradually lost their fame (at least in academic circles) when dependency theories emerged with a distinctive theme of development.

### 2.3.2 Dependency theories

Dependency theories emerged during 1960s (Valenzuela and Valenzuela, 1978) in reaction to the perceived failure of the modernization school and modernizations theories (Hulme and Turner, 1990). Modernization theories were criticised not only for their failure to attain the expected results by putting the third world countries on the linear track of modernization but also for not explaining this failure (Ibid). Dependency theorists believed that the problems in national development did not exist inside the national economy but outside it (Booth, 1995). They adopted a radical perspective and criticized the 'West' as a model to be followed by the third world countries. Frank (1969a), in this respect stated that the 'West' (developed countries) not only failed to develop the third world countries, but also exacerbated their underdevelopment and strengthened the West's hegemonic position (Kiely, 1995). In support of this view, Frank (1969a, 1969b), cited various cases, such as those of Chile and Brazil in Latin America, which did not realize any development due to their participation in the process of world capitalist development. Frank further said that:

> "Capitalist contradictions and the historical development of the capitalist system have generated underdevelopment in the peripheral satellites[1] whose economic surplus was expropriated, while generating economic development in the metropolitan centres which appropriate that surplus- and, further, that this system still continues" (1969b: 3).

[1] 'Peripheral satellites', according to Escobar (1995), refers to the third world countries.

Dependency theories further criticized modernization theories for being ahistorical (see Opello and Rosow, 2004) by not highlighting imperialistic exploitation in European modernization (Pieterse, 2001). Regarding the assumption that the third world countries would develop by following the Western model, Frank (1969a: 46) held that 'if the now underdeveloped [countries] were really to follow the stages of growth of the now developed ones, they would have to find still other peoples to exploit into underdevelopment, as the now developed countries did before them'. Keeping in view this exploitative relationship between the developed and underdeveloped countries, dependency theories proposed that underdeveloped countries could develop only if they delinked their relations with the metropolis- developed countries (Foster-Carter, 1991; Frank, 1969a, 1969b).

Both of these theories, modernization and dependency, were primarily based on economic growth (Stohr, 1981). Modernization theories were partially successful in bringing about economic growth but failed to produce social development (Hettne, 1990; Milani, 2003). By lack of social development, Hettne meant that the poorest remained poor and no improvement was found in their lives. Similar to modernization theory, dependency theories also came under severe criticism, both due to their theoretical deficiencies and also their irrelevance to practical local problems. That is why their failure to bridge the gap between theory and practice was marked as 'theoretical impasse' (see Booth, 1985).

### 2.3.3 The stage of theoretical impasse and beyond

Like modernization theories, dependency theories, which accelerated the demise of the modernization paradigm, failed to answer the problems such as poverty, economic stagnation, failure to industrialize, absence of take-off and poor project performance (Hulme and Turner, 1990: 53). Whilst intended as a theoretical critique of modernization rather than an explicitly practical approach, dependency theorists

nevertheless were increasingly critiqued for a perceived failure to practically address such problems, as well as the resultant lack of significant socio-economic development in the third world countries, led to a theoretical vacuum in the 1980s, which Booth (1985) identified and labelled as a 'theoretical impasse'. The theoretical impasse was not only associated with the dependency perspective but also with the result of a 'generalized theoretical disorientation affecting in different degrees all the main positions in the radical development debate' (Ibid: 776).

After the identification of this theoretical impasse, a number of writers (Mouzelis, 1988; Sklair, 1988; Vandergeest and Buttle, 1988; Corbridge, 1990; Kiely, 1995) wrote in support of the idea. However, this does not mean that during the impasse period there were no development attempts or empirical studies; they continued even during that time, but lacked a paradigmatic umbrella, such as dependency theory (Schuurman, 1993). Reflecting upon the importance of such attempts, Booth (1993, 1994: 3) elaborated that the previous development theories ignored the complex heterogeneity of the real world of development and therefore the gulf between academic inquiry and the various spheres of development policy and practice had widened to the point where practitioners were raising fundamental doubts about the relevance of academic development studies (Edwards, 1989). Booth (1994: 3), while referring to the new diversity-based researches in the 1990s, expressed hope for the clearance of the impasse by saying that:

> "...yet the heavy atmosphere of intellectual stagnation and self-imposed insulation from practical issues that was so prevalent in the early 1980s (at least among those influenced to some degree by the theoretical leitmotives of the 1970s) does seem to have cleared" (1994: 3).

These diversity based studies were undertaken under different perspectives, such as gender and development, participatory development, needs based development or in other words, alternative development (see Pieterese 2001). These perspectives- which

proliferated during the impasse period- were considered as capable of evolving into a new development theory and also providing a pathway out of the impasse (Booth, 1994; Corbridge, 1994). In line with Booth's perceptions, Edwards (1989), seeking to assert the relevance of development studies to practical problems, highlighted the need for bringing theory and practice together by conducting 'bottom up' researches at micro - (or project) level and also looking at the 'world/wider forces and trends through the eyes of those people who experience and act in them...(Ibid, 1994: 286).

These micro-level theories, as stated above, emerged due to the dissatisfaction with earlier theories. The earlier theories, notwithstanding their ineffectiveness, were purely 'top-down' and held the state to be the sole powerful entity responsible for planning and designing everything (Hulme and Turner, 1990; Pieterse, 1998; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Weaver, 1981). The emergence of the micro-level theories did not happen simultaneously; rather, the first development was associated with 'basic needs' and the emphasis thereafter moved to participatory development, which emerged with a distinctive 'bottom-up' development idea- setting the community at the centre of development, rather than the state (see Potter et al., 2004; Pieterse, 2002).

Similarly, dissatisfaction with the earlier development theories not only led to the emergence of participatory development but also, as I explain below, opened the way for feminists to think about alternative approaches to ensure equal status and development to women in society.

### 2.3.4 Development theories: a road towards gender and development (GAD)

Development theories and development projects, initiated in the light of modernization and dependency theories, were criticized by feminists for ignoring women and also negatively affecting their status (Boserup, 1970; Parpart, 1995, 1993). According to Boserup (1970), the belief of modernization theories- that the benefits of

development would automatically trickle down to all sections of society- was disproved by the failure of this approach to improve women's status.

Development theories treated women in isolation and rather than improving their status by integrating them in development processes, were seen to exclude women, thus bringing quite negative effects on their status (Moser, 1993). The strong realization, during the 1970s, of the negative effects of existing approaches on women's status and that they were left far behind men (Visvanathan, 1997) led to the emergence of the women in development (WID) approach, particularly after the publication of Boserup's historic book, '*Women's Role in Economic Development*', in 1970 (Parpart and Marchand, 1995).

The WID approach believed in integrating women in development activities so that they could be able to develop and make a tremendous contribution to the overall development process (Ramji, 1997). It also maintained that women's problems would be solved by their involvement in the development projects/programmes and, thereafter, they would be able to enjoy equally with men the benefits of development (Karl, 1995). However, this approach also was not sustained for a long time, due to its inherent deficiency of treating women in isolation (see Razavi, 1997). According to Ramji (1997: 1), it did not work to analyse the prevalent male-dominated social structure and also did not try to identify the nature of and reasons for women's exploitation. It merely focused on the productive aspect of women's work and failed to challenge gender roles (Rathgeber, 1990: 492). Furthermore, this approach isolated women from mainstream development and failed to bridge the gap between men and women. The women-only projects added an unprecedented workload to the load women already had. Hence, many of the development projects, initiated to focus on women in development, failed because their success required the attention and involvement of men too.

Following the dissatisfaction with WID, a new approach, namely; women and development (WAD) stepped into its shoes during 1976-1985 (CEDAW, 2002). The basic difference between this approach and WID was that WAD, having been drawn from dependency theories (Visvanathan, 1997: 18-19), recognized women' contributions and assumed that women' status could be raised only if the international structure was changed and made more equitable (Moon, 1997: 244). Furthermore, the WAD approach critiqued Boserup's (1970) assumption that women had been excluded from development (Rathgeber, 1990). WAD, according to Rathgeber, fundamentally based itself on the premise that 'women have always been a part of development processes... have [always] been important economic actors in their societies and that the work they do both inside and outside the household is central to the maintenance of those societies, but that this integration serves primarily to sustain existing international structures of inequalities' (Ibid, 493). However, both of these approaches, which were primarily concerned with involving women in development activities, failed to deal with the basic question of restructuring the prevalent biased social relationships and of facilitating and ensuring an equity based social environment. To fill the gap left by these two approaches, gender and development (GAD) emerged during the late 1980s (Pokharel and Mira, 2001). Its underlying philosophy was to empower women; address gender relations; identify and address the reasons behind gender inequality (Humble, 1998; see Cornwall, 2000), and modify the social/power structure (Crawley, 1998) in order to ensure gender equality at all levels of development processes (Rathgeber, 1990). To change gender relations, Song (2002: 2) insisted on women' participation in decision-making and also their empowerment to determine independently their own line of action. Rai (2002) developing 'Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau' (2000) initial work, provides a useful and clear comparison of WID and GAD, as reproduced in Table 1.

**Table 1 Comparing WID and GAD**

| | WID | GAD |
|---|---|---|
| The approach | Views the absence of women in development plans and policies as the major problem | Views unequal social relations between men and their 'naturalization' as the major problem |
| The focus | Women | Socially constructed, endorsed and maintained relation between women and men, with special focus on the subordination of women |
| The problem | The exclusion of women from the development process- an efficiency approach that focuses on the loss of half of development resources as a consequence of this exclusion | Unequal power relations, which prevent equitable development and women's full participation |
| The goal | More efficient, effective development that includes women | Equitable development with both women and men as full participants in decision-making |
| The solution | Integrate women into the existing process | Empower the disadvantaged and women and transform unequal relations |
| The strategies | • Focus on women's projects, on women's components of projects and on integrated projects<br>• Increase women's productivity and income<br>• Increase women's ability to look after the household | • Reconceptualize the development process, taking gender and global inequalities into account<br>• Identify and address practical needs, as determined by women and men's to improve their conditions; at the same time, address women's strategic interests<br>• Address strategic interests of the poor through people-centred development |

**Source: Based on Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau (2000) cited by Rai (2002: 72)**

To implement GAD theory and, likewise, to ensure reorganized gender-balanced social relations, GAD developed links with participatory approaches to development because of their similar fundamental methodological premise (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Similarly, participatory development took on board GADs specific emphasis and concerns for a gendered analysis of diversity and difference as enacted at the grass roots level. The association of the two, as is made explicit by this chapter, was due to their similar characteristics, such as empowerment of powerless men and women, bringing about structural transformation to ensure social equity, reaching the grassroots to represent their actual problems and also to help people to solve their own problems by utilizing their own skills and resources. In other words, both believed in social reliance and development- representing the real world problems. What participatory development (which is the focus of this study) means is discussed below, but before that it is important to state that generally the available literature has named it either a theory or paradigm (see Pieterse, 1998, 2001). However, to avoid such ambiguity, I use participatory development in this study as a theory and paradigm interchangeably.

### 2.3.5 Participatory development

Before delineating PD (the focus of this thesis), it is important to understand briefly in historical perspective the usage and distinction of the term 'participation' in the earlier community development activities and present day participatory development. Its formal use dates back to the concept of community development (Dunham, 1963; Moore, 1966) which in 1945 was stressed for the first time in relation to underdeveloped countries in the United Kingdom at the Ashbridge Conference (Rafiq, 1987: 18). The linkage of community development with people's participation in development activities was first formally asserted in 1948, in the definition made at the Cambridge Summer Conference on African Administration:

> "[Community development is] a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation, and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement" (Colonial Office, 1958: 2).

Community development incorporated the concept of community participation but, it was basically included to ensure economic development. As Abbott (1995: 160) explained, community development is a 'process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation'. Hence, the way the word people's participation in development activities was used was dissimilar to the present day participatory development theory (Dominelli, 1997). The difference between the two was that the earlier approach was top down- outsiders or government determined everything (Brocklesby and Fisher, 2003) - and did not empower people to own the decisions or the development activities (Midgley, 1986; Singh, 1999; Dominelli, 1997; Rural Development Foundation of Pakistan, 1996; Simanowitz, 1997). In contrast, the latter is/was bottom-up and believed in concentrating the power of decisions in the hands of grass-roots people (Chambers, 1995; 30-33). Besides, the former did not generate so much excited global interest as participatory development generated (Guijt and Shah, 1998). In addition, the earlier community development activities, according to Pieterse (1998), were based on people's mere involvement/presence and existed only to support the modernization efforts (Senarclens, 1997). Hence, the development activities initiated in that line failed to be sustained mainly because they did not reflect the desires of local communities (Bruyn and Rayman, 1979; see Misra, 2000). Consequent upon such experiences and the failure of the earlier development activities during 1950s and 1960s, the need of participatory development theory- focusing primarily on people's empowerment- evolved in the mid 1980s (Guijt and Shah, 1998).

What participatory development means is transforming the prevalent discriminatory societal and power structures; empowering marginalized groups to carry on their decisions by themselves; decreasing their reliance on outside agents (the state or western agencies); organizing them into strong community based organizations and enabling them to utilize their local knowledge for the solution of their local problems (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; see Eversole, 2003). Along similar lines, Guijt and Shah (1998: 1) explain that 'participatory development empowers local people with the skills and confidence to analyse their situation, reach consensus, take decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances...[Its] ultimate goal is more equitable and sustainable development'. Such interpretations establish that participatory development is a bottom-up approach (Chamber, 1994) and empowers the impoverished people to decide about each and every activity concerning them or affecting their lives (Cornwall, 1998).

These definitions of participatory development cover almost all its basic tenets. However, to clarify them further they are briefly expanded below to reflect its overall schematic picture and philosophy. Participatory development theory constructs the positive and linear relationship between 'participation', 'empowerment', and sustainability (Guijt and Shah, 1998; Chambers, 1995). However, I use participation and empowerment interchangeably to represent the basic and distinctive element of participatory development, i.e. empowerment (Rothman, 2001; Fisher and Urich, 1999; Warner, 1997). Similarly, empowerment in this study is taken in relation to the decision-making power held by grass roots people (including men and women) in the project cycle, such as needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation (see chapters V and VI for more detail).

The basic focus of participatory development is to base its activities on local knowledge (Fraser and Lepofsky, 2004) and empower the local poor (including men

and women) or, in other words, the socially and economically marginalized people to make decisions independent of any external pressure (Arce, 2003; Nuijten, 2004; Guijt and Shah, 1998; Jones and Speech, 2001). By marginalized, Guijt and Shah (1998: 1) mean those 'groups (and individuals) that have less access to and therefore exert less influence over decisions that are made on behalf of the collective good'. Poor people are said to have understanding of what they need and also the capabilities to satisfy their needs and solve problems (Midgley, 1986), but need help to provide them with an environment where they can come forward and control the decisions affecting their lives (see Jeong, 1995). Hence, to ensure that the marginalized get control over the decisions, participatory development transforms the prevalent power and economic structure and provides an equal space to all (Potter et al, 2004: 249). To ensure the power shift to give voice to the voiceless (Guijt and Shah, 1998), participatory development works as a process (Elliott, 1987; see Burkey, 1993) 'with a view to [enable marginalized people] to take control over their own lives and environment...'(Cohen, 1996: 223). To support the process and accomplish this goal, it employs a continuous process of social mobilization (Brocklesby and Fisher, 2003). Social mobilization, according to Cohen, means that:

> "It is a process of engaging a large number of people in joint action for achieving societal goals through self-reliant efforts. Its immediate expected outcomes are the mobilization of all possible resources and the sustained adoption/utilization of appropriate policies, technologies or services through the modification of attitudes and behaviour of various social actors. These changes can be induced by compulsory forces, e.g., policy changes through sanction or legislation, by voluntary decision stimulating training, and by communication that helps people see their own situation in new ways and make informed choices. In the long run, social mobilization aims at empowering people to demand and generate the satisfaction of their needs" (1996: 232-3).

The above interpretation of social mobilization provides an overall picture of it and relates it to the goal of empowerment. Similarly, Rubin and Rubin (2001: 18) have given extensive explanations of social mobilizations, but the one which is closest to

satisfying the idea of participatory development and also taken in almost the same way in this study maintains that social mobilization is a process of organizing people to act together and gain power to pressure the powerful to comply with their demands (Dorsner, 2004). To mobilize the local impoverished people to take control, participatory development hands over power to the 'insiders' (local people) and keeps the role of 'outsiders' (technicians, developers and researchers) limited to enabling and facilitation (Haidari and Wright, 2001: 54). Reflecting upon the role of outsiders, Jones and Speech (2001: 2) referred to Chambers (1993) who emphasized the role of facilitators as 'listening rather than lecturing or imposing ideas', 'relaxing rather than rushing', and 'handing over the stick to participants'.

This, then, is the overall goal of participatory development. However, the question arises, how does PD ensure power to the powerless; mobilize them to take control and restructure the social fabric to ensure the marginalized to come forward and decide everything affecting their lives? To attain such goals, participatory development employs the tool of community organizing.

**(a) Community organizing**

Participatory development holds that individual efforts cannot challenge the prevalent power structure alone and, therefore, people need to be organized into organizations to shatter this exploitative structure (Barua, 2001; see Purdue, Diani and Lindsay, 2004) and make it conducive to themselves (Constantino-David, 1995). Community organizations, according to Chaskin et al. (2001: 61), are vehicles which seek power for both the individuals and communities in which they live. They further hold that organizing people make them gain confidence; achieve self-reliance (Westergaard, 1994); develop feelings of success in the organization and also get control over their lives and personal problems. Similarly, in relation to the importance of community organization in ensuring empowerment, Rubin and Rubin (2001) hold

that power comes from solidarity (Rubin and Rubin, 1986), from membership in a group, where the efforts of individuals are more channelled, focused, and effective. Furthermore, reflecting upon their relationship, Rubin and Rubin (2001) referred to Speer and Hughey, who held that people:

> "are empowered to the extent they understand that their own access to social power exists through organization, through the strength of relationships among individual members in that organization, and through active participation in their organization and subsequent reflection on their involvement" (Rubin and Rubin, 2001: 78).

To organize the community and to ensure that the objective of empowerment is attained, participatory development builds the capacity[2] of the people. Capacity building aims at helping community organizations, in terms of skill and knowledge, to play an effective role in the development of their area; to manage projects; and to identify their own skills required for their own future aims (Skinner, 1998). To sum up, the theory of participatory development revolves around the philosophy of empowering the marginalized sections of society, with the aim of ensuring not only their self-reliance but also the sustainability of the development activities (Robinson, 1999). Participatory development is an important attempt to bring about just development. Nevertheless, it still has certain theoretical and practical deficiencies to which I draw attention in the following critique.

### 2.3.6 Critique of participatory development

Participatory development reflects quite an ideal revolutionary theory which, according to Chambers (1983), puts the last first. Theoretically, it reflects a logical

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[2] Capacity building, according to Neely (1996), cited by Mattessich and Monsey (1997: 60), refers to 'activity to enhance leadership skills, group problems solving, collaborative methods, and substantive understanding of community assets, problems and opportunities among organized, participating community residents'.

approach to a distinctive[3] kind of development but in practice it seems far away from its expected/proposed destination. The following critique is not intended as criticism for its own sake, because I admit that each theory passes through stages of weaknesses and comes to maturity after its gaps have been identified and filled (see Burr, 1973 for detail on theory revision). What I believe is that this theory has inherent potential, but also has certain definitional, methodological and most importantly in-built optimistic weaknesses in perceiving its 'laboratory' (community/society) as a field of controlled experimentation where every object can be dealt with and organized the way it is liked (see Broom, Selznick and Darroch, 1981; Baldridge, 1975 for scientific research). It forgets that it deals with community which, according to Cleaver (2001: 44-5), is realistically a site of both solidarity and conflict (Adely, 2004: 3), shifting alliances, power and structure and discouraging external manipulation. Reflecting upon the idealism of PD in treating community so simply, I begin with its confusion and misguided optimism with regard to whom it theoretically encourages to participate and what happens in practice.

**(a) Who participates? Theory and practice**

To begin with, who should participate in the development activities? This issue is still hazy and not yet fully resolved. Most of the advocates of participatory development prefer only the impoverished/deprived to participate in the development activities, since its main purpose is to bring them to a position of equality with the already privileged and rich people (Chambers, 1997, 1993). On the other hand, Karl (1995) and Holland and Blackburn (1998) insist on the participation and empowerment of the whole community in the process of development. Similarly, White (1982: 19) proposed that community participation does not mean only the participation of some

[3] I use the word 'distinctive' to indicate that normally in the earlier period, development activities were initiated by outside agencies and the local people and their views were not taken into consideration. The 'Participatory development' approach revolutionized the development arena and made local people pivotal and central in the entire decision-making process.

individuals who should be regarded as the beneficiaries of participation; rather it should involve all sections of society in the process. In relation to such confusion, Cleaver (2001: 37-8) further holds that it is not clear 'who' is to be empowered- the individual, the 'community', or categories of people such as 'women', 'the poor' or the 'socially excluded'.

However, avoiding such confusion, I only take here the most common and fundamental assumption of participatory development that 'it empowers impoverished sections of society' (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Chambers, 1983). Here, I agree to some extent with Pain (2004: 657) that 'participants are willing to be empowered', but my basic question is who- the poor or the rich-, and secondly, is shifting decision-making power so simple as PD suggests? This question runs through the whole of the critique, but to have an answer at this point, I refer to the critique of Guijt and Shah, who criticised the idealism of participatory development's empowerment of impoverished people and went on to explain their reasons, arguing that in participatory development:

> "Community has been viewed naively, or in practice dealt with, as a harmonious and internally equitable collective. Too often there has been an inadequate understanding of the internal dynamics and differences that are so crucial to positive outcomes. This mythical notion of community cohesion continues to permeate much participatory work, hiding a bias that favours the opinions and priorities of those with more power and the ability to voice themselves publicly. In particular, there is minimal consideration of gender issues and inadequate involvement of women" (1998: 1).

Similarly, Cooke and Kothari, while referring to the same issue, suggested that participatory development sees community:

> "as homogeneous, static and harmonious units within which people share common interests and needs. This articulation of the notion of community, they argue, conceals power relations within 'communities' and further masks biases in interests and needs based on, for example, age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender" (2001: 6).

To me, the fundamental optimistic flaw in participatory development and among its advocates is this optimistic view of community (Guijt and Shah, 1998) and expectation that it will be harmonious and easily manipulated. Even people in a relatively small community are not homogeneous (Adely, 2004). Keeping in view the social dynamics, I cannot accept so easily Chambers' (1983) conception of 'putting the last first' which is a direct challenge to the powerful and power structure of a society. The reason for my disagreement is not that I disfavour equity based social structure and relations, but I believe that it is not realistic to expect it without either innovating effective tools for ensuring such a transformation or understanding fully the prevalent power dynamics in a social structure. I contend that participatory development conceals the underlying community power dynamics (see Brent, 2004). In relation to this issue, Cleaver, who admits that participatory development views community in an uncritical way, holds that:

> "Development practitioners excel in perpetuating the myth that communities are capable of anything, that all that is required is sufficient mobilization (through institutions) and the latent capacities of the community will be unleashed in the interests of development. The evidence does little to support such claims. Even where a community appears well motivated, dynamic and well organized, severe limitations are presented by an inadequacy of material resources, by the very real structural constraints that impede the functioning of community-based institutions"(2001: 46).

However, according to Williams (2004) such assumptions, as described in the above quotation, relating to the structure of community, are ideal and ignore the power relationships that form the construction of local development problems. A number of case studies have proved that community elites never allow the poor to come to the surface and have an equal share in decision-making (see Williams et al., 2003; see Gaventa, 2004). Indeed, I admit that the practitioners of participatory development may genuinely seek to encourage the poor to come to the front, but the elites are always reluctant to accept such change- which they perceive as a threat to their hegemonic

position. A similar assertion was made by Chhotray (2004) who referred to the case of a watershed development programme in the Indian village of Kurnool, which appeared socially quite harmonious. The development programme emphasized specifically the empowerment of local poor. It designed strategies to ignore the local elites and incorporate particularly the poor in the committees, but what happened was the reverse. The elites dominated the whole project and co-opted the committees for the purpose of further strengthening their status in the village. The most interesting finding, besides the elites' hijacking, was the helplessness of participatory development officials. The officials were helpless because they knew that displeasure of the elites could lead to the failure of the project, which they had to complete in a specified time period.

This example provides a support to my critique that participatory development is quite optimistic with regard to the participation of the impoverished and also quite far from a practical understanding of society/community. Besides, it forgets the fact that the empowerment process is not apolitical (Chhotray, 2004: 327; Jennings, 2000) and, hence, cannot be depoliticised (Williams, 2004). The same weakness is reflected in PD's claims of structural transformation philosophy (see Kothari, 2001) where again it obscures local power differences by uncritically celebrating the community (Williams, 2004). Accordingly, the general assumption of Chambers (1997) that participation has the potential to change power relationships dramatically within the development practice looks impractical under such structural/cultural circumstances (Williams et al., 2003).

I admit that many of the case studies of Word Bank, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), USAID and the International Relief/Development Project (IRDP) have reflected participatory development as quite relevant and effective in addressing local needs (see Jennings, 2000). However, my criticism is not of its effectiveness in getting the work done; rather I contend that it fails to empower the

impoverished as it persuasively idealizes in its theory. The same view has been indirectly reflected by Kapoor (2004: 2) in his discussion of 'managerialism' in relation to basic education in Malawi. He mentioned that in Malawi, participatory development involved local people in a tokenistic way for the purpose of attaining project objectives. The objectives, according to Kapoor, were achieved by forcing the local people to follow the external agenda. They were not empowered to determine the course of action by themselves.

**(b) Power and empowerment: A vague and impractical notion in participatory development**

Similar to the confusion in relation to participation (De Kadt, 1982; Narayan and Srinivasan, 1994; Dorsner, 2004; Kollavalli and Kerr, 2002; Smith, 1991; Cooke and Kothari, 2001), the word empowerment in participatory development is also not clear (Eklund, 1999; Eldis, 2002; Goulet, 1989; Harris, 1997). According to Barr (1995), empowerment is a fashionable term used differently in different ideologies by individualists, collectivists, liberals and radicals. However, what it means and how it has been taken in this study has been highlighted in this chapter as the decision-making power held by grass roots people (including men and women) in the overall project cycle. My criticism is not only of its definitional confusion (see Parfitt, 2004 for details) but most importantly, of the way it is taken in participatory development. Empowerment involves power, but what it means has different connotations. According to Bell (2004), orthodox conceptions of power equate it with domination, where the powerful/dominant impose their own will upon others and compel them to adopt and follow their (powerfuls') priorities. To Crawley (1998: 26), power 'is about people gaining the ability to undertake activities, to set their own agendas and change events'.

Similarly, relating to power, there are four models adopted currently while analysing different aspects of participation and empowerment. They are described as

'power over', 'power to', 'power with', and 'power from within' (see Rowlands, 1997; Nelson and Wright, 1995). If the first phrase, 'power over' is taken in participatory development then it straightaway opposes the ideal of participatory development- that it struggles for equity based development (Kothari, 2001). If it is taken in other meanings then it treats community in a harmonic way which does not generate any anti-force to resist such interventions. As an example, I take power here in the sense of 'power to' which corresponds with the general ideal of participatory development that it gives control/power to (poor) people to gain control over their lives (Lihiri-Dutt, 2004: 15).

Craig and Mayo (1995) hold that power resides with all individuals and does not decrease if shared by others. They go on to suggest that empowerment of the powerless can be achieved within the existing social order without any significant negative effects upon the power of the powerful (Potter et al., 2004). This may be valid at a philosophical level, but is not applicable in relation to the micro-level power relations. My argument is that in participatory development the power/control, as reflected in the above definition, is not taken at a philosophical level; rather it is taken in relation to particular decision-making power bestowed upon the impoverished. I believe that empowerment does challenge the power structure (Fook, 2002: 47) which can be found from the reflections of Freire's (1971) pedagogy- which relates empowerment with conscientization and collective identity formation. To me, therefore, approaches based on the harmony model of power are not valid and too far from reality. I contend that if such assumptions carried validity concerning the grounded social reality then the local elites would not have been so reluctant to share power with the powerless, thereby inhibiting the process of equity-based development. My assertion is supported by Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) admission that the empowerment of marginalized people causes structural transformation in economic and political relations.

**(c) Participation and co-option: a fashion spreading across the world and fields**

Similar to the ways in which 'gender' is now commonly inserted into development proposals, the word 'participation' has also become like a fashion adopted in almost all fields, such as forestry, education, environment, health etc. (Timsina, 2003; Pacheco, 2004; Jones, 2004; Gilbert, 2004; Zanetell and Knuth, 2002). Its adoption in different programmes and policies is actually due to its expected merits, such as ensuring empowerment to the local poor and making the state accountable to the people (Nuijten, 2004; Jennings, 2000). However, it lacks any clear explanation, as stated above, which can specifically delineate the areas and activities in the field of participatory development that can be a guiding principle for others to follow (see Lane, 1995). In relation to this confusion, De Kadt (1982: 174) wrote that participation 'has popularity without clarity and is subject to growing faddishness and a lot of lip service'. Different agencies and organizations give their own definitions of it (Narayan and Srinivasan, 1994) and use it in whatever suits the attainment of their objectives. Relating to this confusion, Kollavalli and Kerr (2002: 213-16) hold that participation is considered as a pre-requisite to development, but there is still no agreement on its definition and its operationalization.

In addition to the unclear but pervasive use of the term, it has lost its idealized vigour and come to be restricted to a 'fashion' due to its co-option under the neo-liberal agenda. Participatory development emerged an independent bottom-up development perspective but, according to Edwards (1993, 1994), did not sustain its independence because of being co-opted, under neo-liberalism, by donor (bilateral and multilateral) agencies or, in other words, by the mainstream development approach (modernization theory) (Pieterse, 2001). Confirming indirectly my assertion that participatory development is a 'fashion', Kothari (1993), who used the word 'alternatives' for the micro development theories such as participatory development, lamented that they have

lost their independence and their critical edge (Cleaver, 2001) over the earlier theories since their co-option. He further held that their co-option has left the world without alternatives.

Such co-option of participatory development into the earlier modernization theories surfaced when the neo-liberal agenda- which emerged in the mid 1980s- considered the state as the barrier in development (Pieterse, 2001). The neo-liberal agenda, to ensure economic growth, required structural reform, deregulation, liberalization, privatization and the rolling back of government from development intervention of the aid receiving countries (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Furthermore, under this agenda, the donors, such as the IMF and World Bank stopped direct funding to the aid receiving countries and channelled it through southern NGOs pursuing micro practices/theories such as participatory development (Farrington et al., 1993). The process of the co-option of participatory development at the theoretical level, as highlighted above, reflects its fashionable status, but now the question of its co-option at the practical level, i.e. through NGOs, is highlighted in the second part of the chapter.

## 2.4 Summary

The above part reflects that the word 'development' has been given various meanings. It was taken by development theories, such as modernization and dependency, in the context of economic growth. However, their approaches were different from each other. Modernization theories believed in the realization of economic development by setting the 'West' as the model for the third world countries to follow, while dependency theories criticized modernization theories for this assumption, and for the negative impact on the third world countries. Dependency theorists asserted that the third world to develop, would need international structural changes and also the disassociation of these countries from developed countries. Like modernization theories, dependency theories- that worked only at a critique level- also came under severe

criticism for failing to explain the prevalent deprivations and the resultant lack of significant socio-economic development in the third world countries. The exposure of the flaws in these development theories led to a so-called 'theoretical impasse'. However, the micro development theories, such as participatory development that emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with the earlier theories, were hoped to provide a pathway out of the impasse.

Participatory development theory revolutionized the development field by shifting the development attention from economic growth to people's empowerment: to become the masters of their destiny and decide and control the whole development activities by themselves.

While disillusion with the earlier development theories led in one stream of thought to the emergence of participatory development theory, the wave of discontentment also spread among feminists academics and practitioners. Feminists, observing the negative effects of previous development theories on women, innovated a new approach, namely, WID which later developed into GAD. The GAD approach was different from WID and WAD because it believed in restructuring the prevalent power structure and ensuring equal status to women. Owing to its similar characteristics to participatory development, it was later on implemented in association with participatory development theory.

Participatory development theory, however, has been criticised for being unnecessarily optimistic in its expectations and also vague in its basic concepts, such as participation and empowerment. In addition, it has become a mere fashion because of its co-option by the donors/modernization theories under the neo-liberal agenda.

## 2.5 Part II

### 2.5.1 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

The growth of NGOs was caused by (1) the discontentment of donors, such as the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank with the governments' performance, on the one hand, and (2) their (NGOs) inclusion in the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) as a conditionality of aid on the other hand (Paul, 2003). The reason behind their preponderance is that they were seen as a development panacea (Booth, 1994; Watts, 1995; Mercer, 1999) - and 'a cure-all wonder drug that is prescribed for any number of social ills: poverty, disempowerment, unsustainability, inefficiency, authoritarianism etc.' (Cross, 1997: 3). However, before discussing them in detail, it is important first to understand what NGO means. The term 'NGO' is still short of any consensus-based definition (Paul, 2003), but they are generally known as self-governing, private, voluntary, non-profit and non-state organizations (Vakil, 1997; Mencher, 1999; Brown, 1992; Wellard and Copestake, 1993; see OECD, 1988). They are known for their distinctive features, such as efficiency, cost-effectiveness, innovativeness, flexibility and capability to reach grass roots people (Smith, 1987; Wils, 1995). The reason behind the disagreement in their definition is due to their different meanings in different contexts and levels (see Farrington et al., 1993).

As a result of their different contexts, NGOs go under various names, such as voluntary agencies/organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organization (PVO), community (development) organization, social action group, micro or people's movement (Eldridge, 1989: 3). The variation in definition also reflects the inadequacy of any single term to cover the activities of all such organizations working in the guise of NGOs.

For the purpose of understanding their nature, NGOs have been classified into different categories. For example, Farrington et al. (1993) classified them generally on

the basis of the degree of autonomy, location (Thomas, 1992) and scope of activities. For greater convenience, they have also been classified on the basis of their objectives and functions. For instance, they are categorized as welfare NGOs, development NGOs, service NGOs, environmental NGOs, advocacy NGOs, human rights NGOs, women's NGO, and religious NGOs (Haque, 2002). Kibreab (2002) classified them on the basis of their level of operation (international, national and local), their organizational structure (accountability and control by their constituencies), and their orientation (development, relief, gender and human rights). Furthermore, Clark (1991) specifically classified them on the basis of their nature. According to him, NGOs vary from agencies acting as project organizers and implementers to non-operational advocacy and lobbying groups; from those that concentrate on delivery of relief during emergencies such as floods and famines to those involved in technological transfer within the developing world to agencies involved in both relief and development interventions. Some simply categorize them on the basis of their project orientation and name them as 'empowerment', 'modernization', and 'welfare' NGOs (Sen, 1998). The diversity/variation in the types of NGOs is said to be related to the variations in their objectives (Clark, 1991). According to Clark, some NGOs focus on particular problems of society while others may be concerned with numerous problems and situations.

Hence, to have one definition to cover the activities of all kind of NGOs is difficult, because the term NGOs, in the light of the above categorization is all-inclusive. They have a number of manifestations and are involved in various activities, and this creates confusion as to what this label means (Farrington et al., 1993: 3). They are a 'diverse lot- in terms of their origins, activities, structures, or sources of finance', (Herbert-Copley, 1987: 23).

To provide a more clear and consensus-based framework for understanding NGOs, Vakil (1997) presented his own classification but simultaneously lamented that

still there is no articulated classification that can differentiate all the NGOs rightly. He further held that lack of a framework for classifying NGOs seriously impedes their understanding as a sector. This confusion raises the need for an exhaustive research to help construct a detailed and clear classification of NGOs, so as to understand clearly their nature and also to remove the ambiguity arising out of their definition. Meanwhile, for the purposes of this research, NGOs of concern are defined as 'participatory development NGOs', akin to what Padron (1987) calls non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs). NGDOs, according to Padron, are indigenous, private, not-for-profit and working as intermediary between international and grass root organizations (Ibid). However, the question which arises here is whether NGOs existed in the past too? If yes, what was their nature and, secondly, how did they come to take their present day diversified forms? These questions are addressed below.

### 2.5.2 NGOs: in historical perspective

For the sake of gaining insight into the comparative picture of NGOs, two periods are identified here. The first half of this section briefly describes the nature and ideology of the NGOs that existed before the term 'NGO' was formally used in Article 71 of the UN Charter (Willetts, 2002), while the second half explains their nature, since the formal use of the term, to their present day diversified nature.

#### (a) NGOs: before formal use

NGOs' tradition is not new. They existed throughout the world even before the twentieth century in both the North[4] and South[5] (Clark, 1991). They were voluntary and philanthropic in nature and existed to help the needy and destitute (Kaldor, 2003). In the South and that also particularly in the British India[6], they were philanthropic and operated in the fields of education, medicine and cultural promotion, as well as acting

[4] 'North' is the specific word used in the world of NGOs for the west (developed countries).
[5] 'South' is a specific word used in the world of NGOs for the east (third world countries).
[6] British India referred to India and Pakistan before their independence in 1947.

during crises such as droughts and famine (Sen, 1998). Besides the initiatives initiated by the local people in the Indo-Pak, Christian missionaries also initiated a number of activities relating to socio-economic development around the 1810s. Influenced and motivated by Christian missionaries, the local people too- particularly the 'Hindu bourgeoisie'- worked as social reformers and concentrated on building schools, colleges, dispensaries, and hospitals etc. (Ibid: 258).

Similarly, in the United States, a number of NGOs, which were largely an outgrowth of missionary activities, concentrated primarily on welfare. Among these NGOs were included the Salvation Army, Catholic relief services and Church world services (Fox, 1987). Like the national based NGOs, the establishment of international NGOs also dates back to the nineteenth century (Kaldor, 2003). According to Kaldor (Ibid), the most popular NGOs among such international NGOs were the Anti-Slavery Society (1839) and the International Red Cross (1864). Their number increased from 32 in 1874 to 1083 during 1914 (Ibid: 15). These international organizations did work at national, local and international levels but were not yet labelled as NGOs. Formally, they (including local, national and international organizations) were labelled as NGOs after World War II.

**(b) NGOs: after World War II**

The word 'NGO' was first used in the UN Charter Article 71, in which the Economic and Social Council (ESOSOC) [7] was empowered to 'make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence' (Gordenker and Weiss, 1996: 21). The

[7] The Economic and Social Council coordinates the work of 14 UN specialized agencies, 10 functional commissions and five regional commissions; receives reports from 11 UN funds and programmes; and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to Member States. Under the UN Charter, ECOSOC is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, economic and social progress; identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems; facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. To carry out its mandate, ESOSOC consults with academics, business sector representatives and more than 2,100 registered and non-registered non-governmental organizations (United Nations, 2004).

UN Charter, according to Gordenker and Weiss (Ibid), formalized the relationship between the NGOs and the world organization and made them more central in comparison to their previous position/status. The post war period led to the emergence and increase of both local/national and international relief based NGOs to extend relief oriented services to needy people in war affected countries. The number of international NGO (INGOs) increased during the 1990s by one-third, i.e. from 10292 to 13206 (Kaldor, 2003: 16). In Latin America and in Canada, INGOs emerged in the same post war period and concentrated particularly on welfare and relief work (Landim, 1987; Herbert- Copeley, 1987). Later on, their number quadrupled and ideology shifted from mere relief to include development also (Fisher, 2000).

Similar to the nature of international NGOs, which mainly emerged to provide relief to needy people, there was also the emergence of local/regional/national based relief NGOs in the third world countries, such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and, in short, in the whole South (Fisher, 2000). However, their growth was not as exponential as happened particularly during and after the 1980s (Sen, 1998). The NGOs which were relief and welfare based and privately funded were named by Korten (1987: 147) as 'first generation' NGOs. Their intervention was for providing temporary relief (see Landim, 1987) and short-term provision of physical commodities to victims of acute crises (Buckland, 2000).

Understanding the limitations of relief and welfare approaches (which carried out symptomatic treatment of the problems (Elliott, 1987)), as a development strategy, many of the NGOs shifted their attention, in the late 1970s, from welfare to self reliance. Korten (1987) labelled these as 'second generation NGOs'. Second generation NGOs, according to Korten (Ibid: 148) were not concerned with attempting 'to address the causes of the inadequacy of their service providers or the larger institutional and policy context of the NGOs' own activities'. Korten (Ibid) incorporated second generation

NGOs in his analysis but others (Brodhead, 1987; Buckland, 2000; Brown, 1992) described a clear and straight shift of NGOs from relief/welfare to development. However, it needs to be mentioned that basically all the development activities contain(ed) a welfare element (Buckland, 2000) or, in other words, more precisely both the welfare and development elements might co-exist within a single organization as it may confront different kinds of problems at similar times (Brodhead, 1987).

Development, according to Brodhead (Ibid), is diametrically opposite to welfare and is based on the philosophy of participatory development. Korten (1987) mentioned this kind of NGOs as the 'third generation NGOs'. Garilao (1987: 115) while describing the evolution and stages of NGOs named the third stage- which is akin to Korten's third generation- as 'institutionalization'. Korten believed that such NGOs hold a sound financial background, sustainable position and work as models for government and other NGOs to follow. It remains to be seen whether Korten's proposition[8] made almost two decades ago about such NGOs' status, is valid today, and if not, what particular problems prevent third generation NGOs from attaining such a position. Biggs and Neame (1995:34), while commenting upon the importance of Korten's linear evolution of NGOs from first generation NGOs to second and third generation NGOs (which seek changes in the institutions and policies at national and sub-national levels that inhibit effective self-help action), held that his contribution proved vital in the growth of official support for NGOs and, likewise, for their exponential growth during the 1980s.

Official support proved exactly instrumental during the 1980s when the NGOs in the South grew tremendously in number (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; see Kamat, 2004) and also diverted their attention from relief and welfare to development. In other words, according to Townsend and Townsend (2004) participatory based development NGOs are donor created and donor-led. To recapitulate from the above highlights, the

[8] His proposition of 'third generation NGOs' is similar to participatory development NGOs mainly in respect to their common element i.e. restructuring power structure and empowerment of the impoverished sections of society.

1980s was the era when the neo-liberal agenda and structural adjustment programmes necessitated the involvement of NGOs in the aid receiving countries in development activities, minimizing states' role and requiring them to facilitate and create a supportive environment for NGOs (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Kim, 2000). The kinds of changes donor agencies and states brought as a result are described below.

## 2.6 Changes in donor agencies' and states' policies

### 2.6.1 Changes in donors' policies towards NGOs

The donor agencies such as World Bank and IMF made certain changes in their policies to promote NGOs and use them as a vehicle for development activities. They changed their direct funding from the governments to NGOs because of the latter's comparative advantages in reaching the poorest sections of the society (Brown, 1992; Henderson, 2002; Fowler; 2000). The attitude of the World Bank towards NGOs was quite positive and favourable, as indicated by the World Bank's Vittorio Masoni (cited by Brodhead, 1987: 1) who notes 'official donors have turned to NGOs... [and see] them as more efficient conduits for development inputs than the often-discredited official agencies'.

The interest of such official donors, as a policy change in their focus and interventions, resulted in the growth of NGOs' participation in World Bank development projects. Brodhead (1987: 1) indicated that NGOs received US $ 3.3 billion from private sources and $ 1.5 billion from official aid. The participation of NGOs in World Bank projects increased seven-fold from an average of 14 new projects a year from 1973 to 1988 to an average of 96 new projects a year from 1989 to 1990 (Brown, 1992). A more recent record reflected their increase from 6 percent of projects during 1973-88 to nearly one-third in 1993 (Meyer, 1997). More elaborate statistics for the collaboration between donors and NGOs are provided by Edwards and Hulme (1998) who report an increase of funds by member countries of the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) channelled through NGOs as from 0.7 percent in 1975 to 3.6 percent in 1985, and at least 5 percent in 1993-4.

### 2.6.2 Changes in states' policies

Similar to the growing co-option of NGOs by donors in their development projects, the aid recipient countries also showed a positive attitude in terms of creating a facilitative environment for NGOs and also collaborating with them[9] in different projects/programmes. In Latin America, states shifted away from direct implementation of development initiatives and involved NGOs in different projects and created quite a facilitative environment for NGOs to flourish. In Peru, for example, the state totally withdrew itself and let the NGOs carry on the agricultural extension independently (Bebbington, 1997). In Tanzania, too, the government made certain policy changes by decentralizing its previously state-performed functions and likewise, developed an NGOs' friendly environment (Hirchmann, 2003). Besides, in response to donors' funding, the Colombian government also incorporated certain changes in its policies. It initiated a municipal reform programme and provided a wide space to NGOs in different development activities such as in local development, service delivery, health care programmes etc. (Clark, 1997). In India, the government not only encouraged NGOs to get independently involved in different development activities but also collaborated with them in various development projects (Drabek, 1987).

Similar to India, in Bangladesh, the government sought the help of NGOs and their valuable experience in different fields such as in group formation, human resource development, income generation activities and awareness creation etc. Furthermore, the Bangladesh government developed strong and successful collaborative relations with them (Haque, 2002), with the external support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Children's Fund

[9] The policy changes, made by the aid recipient countries, as has been noted above, were in response to the bilateral and multilateral agencies' aid conditionality (see Kim, 2000).

(UNICEF), in the field of health and family-related projects. These collaborative relations also expanded to other sectors based on similar initiatives taken by international agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and Canadian International Development for Agricultural Development. Such productive collaboration between Government and NGOs in Bangladesh received so much prominence that it was replicated in many other parts of the world, such as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Haque, 2004). Indeed, the aid recipient governments made such policy changes to provide space to NGOs' functioning, but on the other hand, some critical literature considered these policies of donors and states as leading towards (1) new forms of colonialism (2), and NGOs' co-option to follow states/governments' determined objectives. Such criticisms are reviewed below.

### 2.6.3 NGOs: new forms of colonialism/imperialism

It needs to be mentioned here that, so far, relatively little focused and direct work has been done to reflect upon the ways NGOs are used by the donor agencies, such as the World Bank and IMF, as new forms of colonialism. Nevertheless, in the available literature, some writers have quite blatantly accused NGOs of being a manifestation of neo-colonialism. In this context, I may refer to Pieterse, who holds that:

> "NGOs are sites of power outside the reach of the state they are within the reach of donors, who in turn move within the orbit of their funders, state or private, and their cultural and discursive agendas. NGOs can function as parastatals, subcontractors of the state or Government NGOs, but outside the channels of accountability and control. They can just as easily be conservative agencies, such as evangelical movements broadcasting the theology of quiescence or the prosperity gospel of individual achievements, charismatic movements propagating new forms of ritualism; not to mention agencies such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics which is on record as having served as a CIA conduit" (2001: 84-85).

Similar to Pieterse, Clayton (1994), who admitted the lack of work on NGOs in relation to political conditionality (here it refers to neo-colonialism), insisted that aid

was given by Western governments to NGOs to counter the spread of communism, which the Soviet Union reinforced and propagated by financing NGOs. Furthermore, Pieterse (2001: 85) characterized NGOs as 'new missionaries' engaged in recolonialization, as 'unguided missiles', as 'the new East India Company[10]', or as 'direct outside interference'. In relation to their being new forms of colonialism, Islam (2001) contended that foreign funded NGOs in Bangladesh have a hidden agenda and run a very powerful parallel government and can, hence, undo at any time any order of the government (see Cohen, 2004). Islam (Ibid) referred to the de-registering of two such NGOs by the government, for by-passing government directives. They, according to him, were reinstated within three hours, after pressure was exerted by foreign embassies. Constantino-David (1992: 142) has made the same assertion that funding NGOs is a process of neo-colonialization 'whereby funds take the place of the sword, the cross, or the gun'. Such assertions, treating NGOs as new forms of colonialism, spark a need for empirical research to investigate their validity. A contribution is made in this respect by this research, which looks at the ways foreign funding compels NGOs to comply with funders' directives. However, it should be noted that this study is not concerned with foreign funded NGOs' impact on government's overall political policy- which would be a topic for a separate study. Rather it looks at the impact of foreign funding on NGOs' accountability. In the case of NGOs' accountability to donors, not community, the assumption of neo-colonialism would prove valid. It is therefore of interest to consider how such co-relation impacts on the SRSP- the focus of this study- in implementing participatory development.

### 2.6.4 NGOs' co-option by states

Similar to the attacks on donors, described above, states have also been severely attacked for co-opting NGOs merely to reduce their own burden and use them for

[10] East India Company refers to the Britishers who came to British India during 18th century with the pretext/aim of business and trade but later on spread their tentacles and established their rule there.

carrying on their (states') desired activities. However, before reflecting upon such critical literature, it is important to provide background information on how states/governments control, co-opt and utilize NGOs for their own inherent interests.

States' attitude has not been alike towards all kinds of NGOs. They are not open to cooperate with all kinds of NGOs and, hence, provide room only to those kinds of NGOs which are perceived as not posing any threat to their security or overall activities (Clark, 1991). States cooperate only with those NGOs which are apolitical and not critical of them and their activities (Farrington et al., 1993). In Africa, for example, the amount of space provided to NGOs is determined first and foremost by political considerations; rather than by their expected contribution to the socio-economic development (Bratton, 1989). To control NGOs- following donors' increased funding to them- and also to maintain control over their activities, states modified their laws pertaining to NGOs' registration. Such laws were enacted in different countries, such as in Bangladesh (see Karim, 1995; Ahmad, 2002), Zimbabwe (see Mungate, 1993), Kenya and Bolivia (see Farrington et al., 1993) Sri Lanka (see Wanigaratne, 1997) El Salvador etc. (Sollis, 1995). The main purposes of these laws were: to maintain control over NGOs' activities; to discourage their direct contacts with the foreign donor agencies and, most importantly, to subject them to states' accountability. Reflecting upon the similar biased and controlling behaviour of the states, Mungate (1993) referred to the Vice President of Zimbabwe, who spoke with regard to NGOs:

> "What we need is constructive assistance. Government would not hesitate to intervene whenever it felt that the activities of persons employed by NGOs or persons who came in the name of the church are working contrary to the aspirations of our people and our national sovereignty" (1993: 27).

Another strategy, adopted by states to control and co-opt NGOs, was the establishment of 'fund pools' (Haque, 2002), set up in various countries such as Bangladesh, where foreign funds could be deposited and then disbursed only among

preferred NGOs (Haque, Ibid). The establishment of such funds, according to Mercer (2002), was to help the states to implement their own designed plans. In addition to such controlling tactics, states established their own NGOs mainly to attain their own objectives. In the Philippines, the government formed GRINGOs (Government-run, -inspired or- initiated NGOs) after 1987 when the donors refused to continue funding to government directly (Constantino-David, 1992). Similarly, in other areas the same kinds of NGOs were formed, which were named by Clark (1997) as GONGOs- government-NGOs- and by Steiner-Khamsi (1998) as QUANGOs- Quasi- non-governmental organizations. The basic intention of states behind establishing such kinds of NGOs was to use them as (1) conduits for government and bilateral aid funds, and (2) channels of the materialization of states' own plans/designs (Ibid: 2).

The co-option of NGOs by the state, in the garb of collaboration, has received severe criticism in the development arena. According to Farrington et al. (1993), states co-opt them visibly to undertake issues by joint venture but actually they transfer their basic services to them to reduce their obligations. Haque (2004) supports this view, adding that states in this way reduce the financial burden on their national exchequers. Furthermore, Sollis (1995: 531) laments that such collaboration causes NGOs to lose their independence (Gariyo, 1995) and work as 'instruments' for implementing states' policies. In other words, they become implementers of states' programmes (Bebbington, 1997: 1758). In relation to the practicability of healthy collaboration between state and NGOs, Tandon, cited by Clark (1997), asserted that healthy relations between them are rare and almost impossible, because governments and NGOs are separate species (Bratton, 1989). Bratton (Ibid) further says that states are driven by organizational imperatives of administrative command and control, while NGOs conversely seek to promote decentralized development.

Such co-option of NGOs by states raises a number of questions for this study. Does the Pakistan government maintain a discriminatory attitude towards NGOs by favouring some while disfavouring others? Has it also evolved a fund system to encourage its own NGOs? Has it also created its own NGOs like GONGOs[11]? Does it utilize NGOs (particularly the SRSP) merely to reflect its desired ambitions? To answer these questions, I had not only to examine the prevalent relations between government and NGOs, and the SRSP's position, but also to research, most importantly, the impact on the SRSP's participatory development/empowerment theory. As I demonstrate in detail in the thesis, it is clear that Pakistan's government established its own NGOs (GONGOs) such as the SRSP and co-opted it/them to work in line with its desires. The government discouraged those NGOs which could force its accountability to the people and encouraged only its own NGOs (such as the SRSP) that followed its directions. The government arranged funding to the SRSP through its own established 'fund' which was maintained through the fund/aid provided by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies for encouraging development NGOs. These kinds of government tactics paralysed the SRSP's ability to materialise its participatory development mission.

## 2.7 Summary of the chapter

It follows from the above that different development theories emerged at different times. Among them, the earlier theories- modernization and dependency- focused primarily on economic growth by top-down (government) planning and ignored the element of local people's priorities. The failure to attain development in third world countries, predicted by these theories, led to the emergence of micro development theories, such as participatory development. Participatory development appeared with the hope of replacing the earlier theories and pursuing a genuine development in the

[11] State-own-created NGOs, as described above, have been differently labelled, such as GRINGOs (government- run, inspired or- initiated NGOs) QUANGOs ( quasi NGOs) and GONGOs (government NGOs). However, to avoid confusion, I use and maintain the word 'GONGO', throughout this study wherever needed.

third world countries by its distinctive bottom-up approach. The disillusion with the earlier theories also led to the emergence of gender and development (GAD) theory, which was consequently implemented in association with participatory development.

To implement participatory development, NGOs were considered as effective mechanisms, having the ability to reach and represent the actual needs of the poorest of the poor and ensure sustainability of development activities. They mainly grew out of donors' insistence that aid recipient countries involve NGOs as a pre-requisite of aid. Nonetheless, the term 'NGO' is still short of any consensus based definition. NGOs have been classified on the basis of various dimensions, such as location, autonomy, orientation and level of operation. However, these classifications fall short of developing an articulated agreed upon classification that can distinguish them from one another.

The tradition of NGOs is not new. They existed in past centuries, but were confined mostly to performing relief and welfare based activities. The first formal use of the word 'NGO' was after the Second World War, in Article 71 of the UN Charter. NGOs were given a central position in UN-based development projects/programmes.

Historically, 1980s was the era during which not only both the international and national NGOs grew tremendously in number but also took a turn from their traditional role of relief and welfare towards participatory development. Since then, as a requirement of the new liberal agenda, both the international donors and the aid recipient countries have made certain changes in their policies by co-opting NGOs as the integral part in development activities. However, the critical literature views this co-option as having paralysed participatory development at both theoretical and practical levels. At the theoretical level, participatory development was found to have lost its independent, distinctive and celebrated development approach after being co-opted by the donors or, in other words, by the modernization theories. In other words, it

resembled the 'community development' concept introduced under colonisation that incorporated people's participation to legitimise the top-down development activities and support the modernization efforts. Similarly, at the practical level, it lost its ideals after being co-opted by the donors and states, as the above brief findings relating to the SRSP presents, for their inherent objectives. For states, these objectives were to use NGOs for performing their guided development activities through foreign funding and for donors, they were to maintain their hegemony by re-colonialising the decolonialised states. Hence, one could argue that this deep co-option at both theoretical and practical levels left participatory development a mere fashion.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

Chapter I highlighted the research focus, while Chapter II reflected its location in the wider available literature. This chapter is concerned with the way the research was carried out in practice and the research questions addressed. In order to reflect naturally, the way the research was conducted, an effort has been made to present all the steps in a systematic order. However, it should be noted that research is an iterative activity and, therefore, many steps may overlap or happen simultaneously in the field. Hence, the following order is given only to help the reader understand how the research started and how it culminated.

The chapter opens with a brief picture of how the research plan was set and what particular steps were taken. Afterwards, it moves to justify the selection of a case study, location of the target areas and the procedure adopted for selecting the respondents. This part elucidates the researcher's criterion in relation to the study's objectives and also the relevance of the target areas and nature of the respondents. Furthermore, it describes the nature of the role the researcher adopted and the tools of data collection used. In addition, the pre-field work preparation and practical field work stage are highlighted to reflect the way the study was carried out. Lastly, the processing of data is explained and reflections are provided on the ethical considerations taken care of throughout the research.

## 3.2 Overview of research process

Before reflecting upon the overall procedure and the scheme practically implemented in this study, it is important first to elucidate briefly how the overall

research plan was set. The purpose of this prologue is to help the reader to understand the research process at a glance. At this designing stage, I took into account the nature and dimensions of the study and concentrated on the utilization of those ways and means that could properly meet their requirements. I was aware of the technicality of this stage which, according to Bulmer (1982), requires researchers to keep in mind the whole picture of their goals, prevalent methods and limitations. Thus, the focus was on working out a clear guideline for the whole work that would satisfy the research objectives (De Vaus, 2001). The overall approach followed the framework of Punch (1998: 66) who divided the preliminary designing stage into four major elements. The first stage, according to him, is the strategy; the second is the conceptual framework; the third is the decision as to who or what will be studied, and the fourth is concerned with the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing data.

The decision to take the SRSP as a case, as described in chapter I, for this study was made in anticipation. The reason for its selection was its widespread participatory based activities and also my prior acquaintance. After settling the study's overall design as case study based, the next step was to select the study areas. This decision was made by keeping in view all the dimensions of the research objectives (see section 2.3 for details). After the finalization of areas, the next stage was to decide the nature of the people to be included. As the study was to investigate community empowerment, it focused only on those people who were the members of organizations and had already completed their projects. These respondents comprised men, women and staff members. The reason for including all these categories was to represent a more comprehensive picture of the data relating to the study's focus.

After deciding about the areas and people, the next stage was to select the role I was required to adopt during data collection. The nature of the research required in-depth qualitative information, which was made possible by the close interaction of

myself as the researcher with the community and the knowledge about the prevalent wider socio-cultural processes. Thus, to understand the issue in depth, I adopted the role of ethnographer, which, according to Silverman (1993: 53), 'draw[s] a picture of what some phenomenon 'looks like' from an insider's account of the phenomenon…'.

Similarly, the tools of data collection (participant observation and interview) were selected on the basis of ensuring participation of the researcher and the respondents, so as to conform to the nature of the research topic- participatory development- and also to produce a more in-depth understanding of the issue. Following this preliminary picture of the study, the following description further justifies and explains these decisions in detail.

### 3.3 Case study

The decision to undertake a case study was based on the aim and objectives of this research endeavour. The reason why other methods, such as survey, were not adopted, was mainly because the study was only concerned with those areas and people, as highlighted above, who had been involved in participatory development activities. In addition, the nature of the issue required uncovering in-depth information reflective of all possible dimensions of the issue, which would not be possible by other research methods. Case study is highly lauded in this respect in the field of research (see Black and Champion, 1976; Burgess, 1988; Creswell, 1994). It is said to be a microscopic study looking at the phenomenon very closely (Hakim, 1989). Its investigation is considered as more intense and in-depth as compared with surveys (Black and Champion, 1976). Besides, it is characterized by flexibility in terms of utilizing different data collection methods, such as in-depth interview, questionnaire, observation and statistical techniques (Punch, 1998) and also unearthing any related dimension related with the issue (Black and Champion, 1976).

The question that arises is why the study was restricted to one case, not many. I was well aware of the criticisms of different writers on a single case study (see Stake, 2000; Gomm, Hammersley and Foster, 2000), but faced certain constraints, such as problems of accessibility and shortage of time and finance. However, above all, the NGO selected for this study was characterized by a rich network of activities, as a result of working in most of the NWF Province[1] (see Fig. 1 showing NWFP's geographical position). It, therefore, represented a suitable case for thorough examination. In relation to the importance of a single case study, the research literature attests the advantages of selection of a single case over many. For instance, Stake (1998) holds that it enables the researcher to focus all the available meagre resources to develop a clearer picture of the complexities of the situation/issue. After deciding on the case study, the next stage was the selection of the target areas.

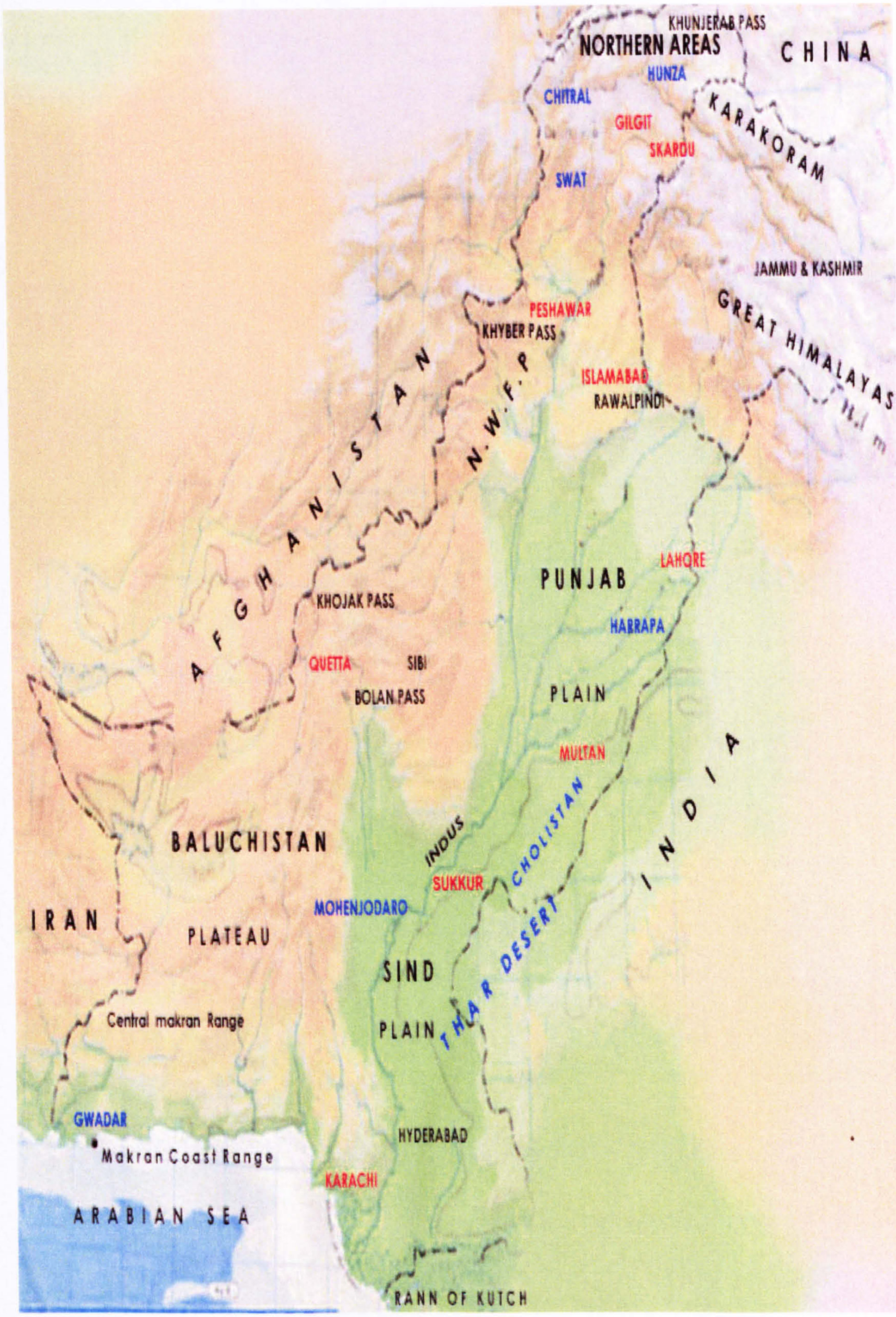
### 3.4 Location of target areas

After the case was selected, the next stage was the identification and determination of the target areas. To ascertain the SRSP's working areas, I consulted the Head Office at Peshawar and obtained complete data pertaining to the working areas and the nature of activities carried out there. The SRSP worked in four regions composed of eight districts, namely, Peshawar, Nowshera, Kohat, Karak, Mansehra, Battagram, Abbottabad and Haripur (see Chapter V for details) (see Fig. 2). Among all these districts, some development projects had been completed and some were still in progress.

The concern of the study was not only to evaluate community empowerment in the project cycle stages but also to answer the question of the sustainability of the

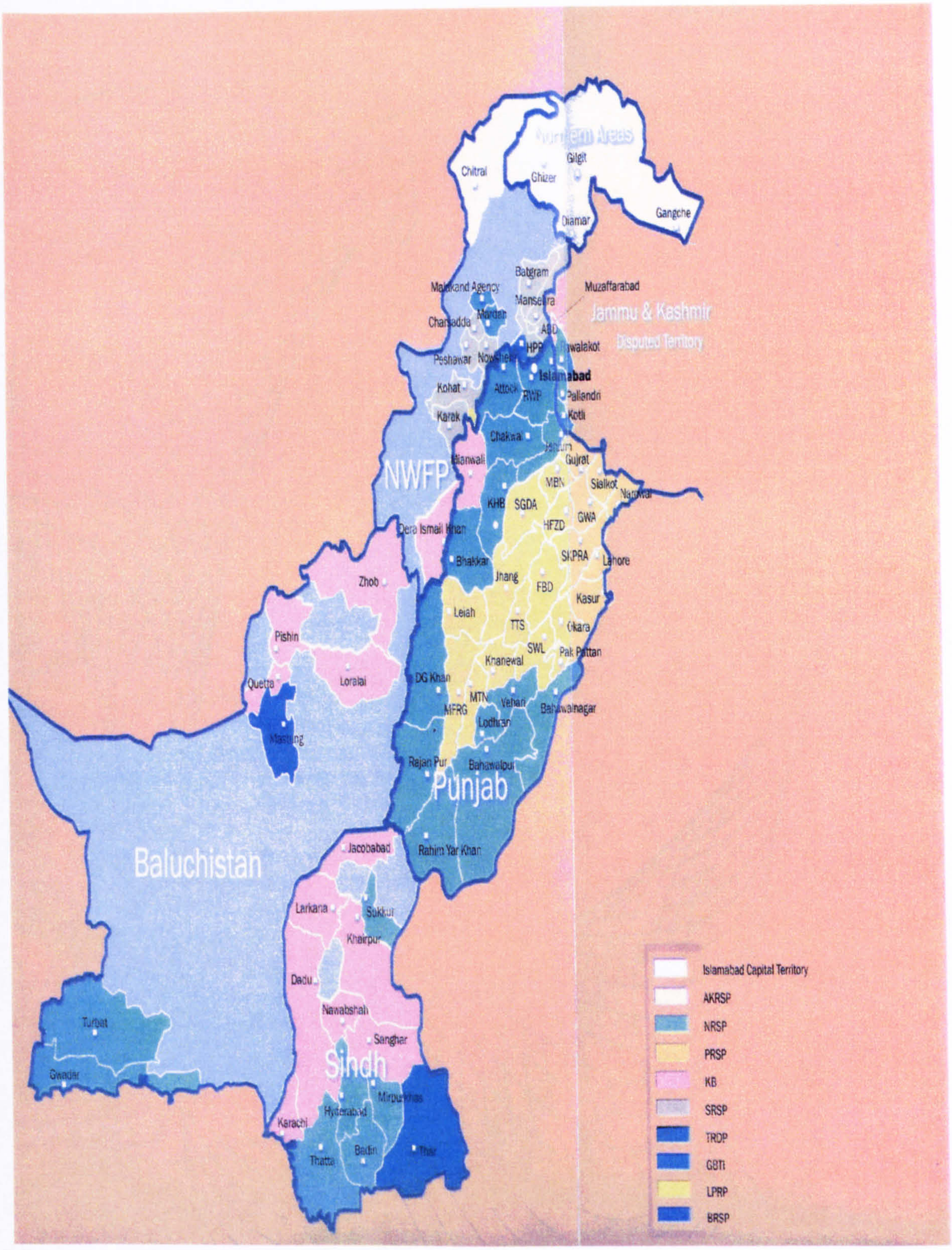
[1] North West Frontier Province is mainly bordered with Afghanistan on its west and is comprised of 24 districts. Its estimated population, as compared with the total population of Pakistan (151 million) in 2004 was 20 million (National Institute for Population Studies, 2001).

**Fig. 1 NWFP's geographical position in Pakistan**




**Source: Rural support programme network (2002)**

**Fig. 2 SRSP's and other Rural Support Programmes' working areas in NWFP and Pakistan**




**Source: Rural support programme network (2002)**

development projects and community organizations after the projects were completed. Therefore, to answer this question, I selected areas where there were both projects completed one year before the field work and also still in progress. The reason for looking at completed projects was that newly completed projects required no maintenance or repair, as was observed in the pilot survey of some projects and, therefore, could not help in understanding the issue of sustainability. Similarly, the reason behind studying on-going projects was to observe the actual situation of community participation and people's decision-making power in the activities performed during the implementation of the projects.

In the light of these selection criteria, the districts which qualified were Peshawar, Abbottabad, Kohat, Haripur, Mansehra and Battagram. Nowshera and Karak did not qualify, because the SRSP had started working there almost ten months before the start of the field work, which started on 25th of May 2003 and continued till 15th January 2004. In the beginning, the intention was to cover all the other six districts, but during the field work, news was received of a popular uprising against NGOs' activities in Mansehra and Battagram. This uprising was associated with the bombing of the SRSP's office in Karak by local extreme rightist religio-political groups. In the light of the security threat in Mansehra and Battagram, the study was restricted to the remaining four districts, i.e. Peshawar, Kohat, Abbottabad and Haripur. After deciding on the location of the areas, the next step was to decide the sampling procedure, which is outlined below.

### 3.5 Procedure of selecting respondents

For deciding about the selection of respondents, lists of men's and women's community organizations were obtained from each Social Organization Unit (SOU) in the regional offices that met the selection criteria. Such organizations, according to the SRSP's officials, were the active organizations. Active organizations, they explained,

were those that maintained regular meetings; regular links with the SRSP's staff and regular internal savings. In addition, they were said to be not dominated by any particular person; rather, all the members were said to hold equal status in terms of decision-making power. The obtained lists only contained the names and location of such organizations, while the names of members in each organization were available with the presidents and secretaries. The numbers[2] of such men's and women's community organizations in each respective district were shown below:

| Place | No. of men's community organizations | No. of women's community organizations |
|---|---|---|
| Peshawar | 60 | 30 |
| Haripur | 100 | 50 |
| Abbottabad | 80 | 30 |
| Kohat | 70 | 20 |
| **Total** | **310** | **135** |

To gain access to all such organizations and to study them in depth was quite difficult. Therefore, it was decided to select 5 percent of men's organizations and 10 percent of women's organizations from all such areas, making 16 men's and 13 women's organizations. The reason for the double weightage given to women's organizations was to give almost equal representation to women, given that the number of women's organizations, as reflected above, was less than half that of men's. While selecting such organizations, care was taken to choose a variety of projects, such as street pavement, hand pumps, irrigation schemes etc. The reason behind taking these different kinds of projects was to enrich the data base in responding the study's objectives.

The sample selected was 32 men's organizations' members and 26 women's organizations' members, 58 in total. Their selection was made by taking two members

[2] The actual number of such community organizations was either little above or below such figures. However, they were converted into round figures for the sake of onward processing of respondents selection.

(including 1- the president/secretary and 1 ordinary member) from each of the selected organizations on purposive basis. Furthermore, 6 focus group interviews/discussions were held in each target area. Hence, the total number of focus group interviews was 24.

Similarly, relevant staff members from both the Head Office and regional level field staff were also included. Among the Head Office staff, the respondents included the SRSP's chairperson, project managers human resource development, gender section, credit and enterprise development and engineering section. From the regional offices, 7 staff members from each region were selected, who were primarily concerned with social organization, projects' engineering, gender, and planning and monitoring etc. Thus, the total number of staff participants was 33. Likewise, 2 focus group interviews/discussions were held in each region, making 8 in total.

### 3.6 Salient features of the study area

This study focuses on the work of the Sarhad Rural Support Programme in the North West Frontier Province, Pakistan. The NWFP is geographically the smallest province and most economically impoverished among the four provinces in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 1997: 965), with 46 percent of population living below the poverty line (Asian Development Bank, 2005). It is bordered with (see Fig. 1 showing NWFP's geographical position) Afghanistan on the west, Punjab province on the east, Baluchistan province on the south and on the north it is separated by a narrow corridor from central Asia and China. The population of NWFP is predominantly Muslims and Pathans - *Pashto*-speaking people - who constitute the largest tribal group in the world (SRSP, 2001b). In NWFP, the areas the study covered were four different districts. District Peshawar and Kohat were predominently *Pashto*-speaking while in the other two districts, Abbottabad and Haripur, the population is mainly *Hindko*[3]- speaking.

[3] *Hindko* is not a pure independent dialect/language rather it is a mixture of *Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto* and other languages.

These districts, and particularly the rural areas in these districts where the SRSP concentrated its work, were marked by similar social and economic characteristics. Firstly, their geographical distance from major urban centres deprives them of basic facilities such as drinking water, health services, electricity, roads etc. (Sungi, n.d.). Secondly, these areas are characterized by widespread economic inequalities and status differentials, broadly divided between a minority of land-holders and a majority of landless or land-poor agricultural workers, who cultivate the land as tenants on a fixed share basis (Hussain et al, 1997). The disparity of land ownership along with the unequal access of rich and poor (particularly women) to education[4] (which also provides access to important people and resources outside of the communities) sets the overall structure of power and status that enables the landlords to largely determine the fate of the landless (poor) in whatever way they like (Ali, 1998a).

Within the basic division of landholding elites and landless poor, rural communities are also structured by a system of patriarchy and patrilineal kinship, in which the male members of dominant families compete with each other to control access to land and resources through kinship networks. While there are slight variations in the observance of *Purda (veiling)*, gender segregation is present in all these areas, and women are generally defined by and limited to their domestic roles and responsibilities maintaining their households and carrying out limited agriculture-related activities that do not bring them into contact with outside men (Hussain et al, 1997; FAO, n.d., SRSP, 2001c). As Ali (1998a: 141) notes in her study of women's status in such areas, 'women's place is in the home... the job-market lies within the public sphere which is a male domain, and that 'good' women stay within the *Chardiwari* [household

[4] Education is mostly attained in these areas by the rich because the poor cannot afford the expenses of schooling. Besides, the poor are actively discouraged by the rich from attaining education (see Ali, 1998a for further detail). The overall literacy level in Abbottabad and Haripur, according to 1998 census survey, was higher (i.e. 56.6% and 53.7% respectively) than in Peshawar (41.8%) and Kohat (44.1%). Similarly, there was a wide gap between the female literacy level in Abbottabad (39.1%), Haripur (37.4%) and Peshawar (25.9%) and Kohat (23.51%) (National Institute for Population Studies, 2001). The above figures, however, includes women in both urban and rural areas. The female literacy level in all the rural areas of NWFP, including the study areas, was only 7.3% (Ali, 1998a: 134).

boundries]'. The patriarchal structure that enforces gender segregation creating a wide gender disparity in terms of unequal access to education, health and other available facilities, leaves women in a subordinate and dependent position - despite their contribution to the overall economy (Ali, 2000; Ali, 1998b).[5]

### 3.7 Ethnographic approach

To conform to the demands of the study- which dealt with participatory development NGOs - the only alternative that ensured both the participation of the researcher and the respondents/community was ethnographic approach. As Burns (2000: 393) explains, 'in ethnography people are not subjects; they are experts on what the ethnographer wants to find out'. Thus, the ethnographic research approach was adopted not only to privilege community or, in other words, to provide opportunity of expression to a range of social actors, in line with participatory development theory, but also to get deep insight into their real world (Fielding, 1993; Clifford, 1997). Besides, another valid justification for using this approach was the researcher's cognizance of the prevalent local structure, where ordinary members were unable to express themselves openly until provided with a suitable platform. In such a situation, ethnographic approach or, in other words, the bottom-up approach (see Gedicks, 1979) was the only option to provide them with an opportunity to express openly their ideas. The ethnographic approach is highly appreciated for studying a group or a community in a natural setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) and also producing a complete picture of the social entity studied. Hammersley and Atkinson, cited by Tesch (1990), in this context, state that:

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[5]There was a slight variation in the intensity of *Purda* observation in these districts. It was more relaxed in Abbottabad and Haripur than in Peshawar and Kohat. The reasons behind it are the relatively higher female literacy level, involvement of women in agriculture along with their men and shared agricultural land, and differences in cultural constraints among *Pashto* and *Hindko* speaking groups relating to women's segregation (Ali, 1998a).

> "Ethnography is holistic in the sense that 'ethnographer participates... in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned with" (Ibid: 113).

The ethnographic approach has, like other research approaches, some advantages and disadvantages (see Walsh, 1998). However, its merits in terms of ensuring objectivity by utilizing different methods are said to be greater than those of other approaches, such as experiments and survey (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Hence, keeping in view the pre-eminence of this approach in producing intensive objective based information, I selected participatory based tools of data collection that directly conformed to the demands of ethnographic approach. They are described below.

### 3.8 Tools of data collection

Prior to deciding on the tools of data collection, I looked into their relevance and applicability to the nature of the study. My prior intention was to use the prevalent empowerment research methodology (PRA) to conform directly to the demands of participatory development theory and empower the poor sections of society (including men and women) and make power reversal real (Chambers, 1997: 106; Bhandari, 2002; Holland and Blackburn, 1998). However, it was realized that such an approach was not feasible in the prevalent circumstances. The reason for this was the nature of the prevailing power relations, such that ignoring the powerful in the presence of poor was quite impossible. Besides, PRA required the presence of the community at a particular time and day, while in reality the poor (ordinary members of organizations) were mostly busy, either in the fields or elsewhere, earning their livelihood. Another reason was that the effectiveness of PRA required the presence of both men and women together, while the prevalent socio-cultural set-up provided no room for their co-sitting. PRA is considered an efficient research technique, but it is also criticised for being time-consuming and not effective in all circumstances (Booth, 1998; Holland and Blackburn,

1998; Hailey, 2001). Realizing the incompatibility of PRA in relation to the existing circumstances, I selected participatory tools- which are also usually utilized by the practitioners of PRA (see Gill, 1998) - such as participant observation, individual and focus group interviews.

The decision to employ triangulation of these techniques was to ensure reliability (see Bulmer and Warwick, 1983) and validity (Taylor and Bogadan, 1984) of the data by maintaining checks and cross-checks upon the information obtained from each technique individually. In relation to the significance of triangulation, Denzin explains:

> "The logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors... Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed. This is termed triangulation. I now offer as a final methodological rule the principle that multiple methods should be in every investigation" (Denzin cited in Patton, 1990: 187).

Now, how these techniques were effective and applied in the process, are discussed below.

### 3.8.1 Participant observation

Participant observation, which is the central element of ethnographic approach, was used in conjunction with the individual and focus group interviews. The reason behind its use was the sensitivity (see Patton, 1990) of many of the issues pertaining to the main topic, which direct and conscious questions could not answer. As this study was concerned with evaluating the performance of the organization, therefore, I was aware that the respondents, including staff members, organizations' leaders and common members would not necessarily depict the real picture relating to the issue. Furthermore, sensitivity resulted from the prevalent culture, which was male-dominated, power-oriented and class-conscious. In such circumstances, participant observation was

the only tool that could ensure the reflection of 'real life' in the 'real world' (Robson, 1993: 191).

Furthermore, participant observation is honoured as a way of studying the phenomenon in a natural setting (Patton, 1990) and also not relying on the willingness of the observed persons to report events (Lin, 1976). This was the main reason for its employment, alongside other techniques, to explore the sustainability of the completed projects.

To undertake observation, I chose not to be a 'complete participant' because this is not only an undesirable approach, which raises ethical issues (Lin, Ibid: 206) but also was not justified when I had already introduced myself while conducting the interviews. In conjunction with participant observation, I utilized 'interviews' as the main methods of data collection. These are described below.

### 3.8.2 Interviews

The use of interview was selected due to its inherent potential for providing in-depth information relating to the issue (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). It is considered as non-directional and empowering respondents to respond openly to the questions (Brenner, 1981). In relation to its flexibility and depth, it is preferred over questionnaire, which is criticized for producing superficial information and also restricting respondents to the pre-determined options in the schedule (Stroh, 2000). Realizing the shortcoming of questionnaires, interviewing was the preferred option. Another reason for favouring this technique was the fact that most of the ordinary members of community organizations, both men and women, were illiterate and unable to fill in questions by themselves. Furthermore, the issue of gender and power relations, which influenced gender equality, was difficult to be understood until the issue was intensively dealt with from all possible dimensions.

To collect the depth information, the only kind of interview which was suitable was the open ended (in-depth) interview. Unstructured or open-ended interviews were adopted due to their innumerable merits as explained by Cohen and Manion (1989):

> "they are flexible; they allow the interviewer to probe so that he may go into more depth if he chooses, or clear up any misunderstandings; they enable the interviewer to test the limits of a respondent's knowledge; they encourage cooperation and rapport; and they allow the interviewer to make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes" (1989: 313).

For carrying out the open-ended interviews, an interview guide was developed. The purpose of the guide was to ensure that the content focused on the crucial issues of the study. In practice, little concern was given to the order of the questions in the guide, but efforts were made to ensure the issue-based free flow of information in a natural setting. However, before reflecting the way interviews were conducted, it is important to highlight the types of interviews adopted.

**(a) Types of interviews: individual and focus group interviews**

The purpose of individual interviews was to provide open space of expression to those respondents who were either scared of expressing themselves openly in the presence of others or felt hesitant. The same justification has also been given by Cronin (2001) who holds that individual interviews produce more in-depth information by being giving respondents the opportunity to vent their emotions and feelings without any fear of others (Merton and Kendall, 2003). The need of individual interviews was realized in response to the inclusion of different categories, such as men, women- being culturally bound- and staff members in the study.

In addition to the in-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews were also administered. The reason behind their adoption was to check and cross-check the individual responses noted in the individual interviews. In relation to whether such interviews should to be carried out before individual interviews or after, there is no

strict rule (see Morgon, 2003); it depends upon the situation. In this study, they were held after the individual interviews. They were designed to represent different categories of respondents in order to obtain argumentative-based information (Bryman, 2001).

In practice, interviews were carried out in each target area in three ways. Some interviews involved only organizations' ordinary members. The purpose of this was to see their views in the presence of others and, most importantly, to check the validity and reliability of the responses which were expressed individually. Second, focus group interviews were held that included both ordinary members and organizations' presidents and secretaries. The reason behind this was to see how they behaved and expressed themselves when together. Third, interviews were held that included field staff, organizations' presidents and secretaries and common members.

With regard to the number of participants in the focus group interviews, I did not determine a particular exact number for all categories of interviews. The reason was that focus group interviews, designed for common members, did not require as many people as was required in the focus group interviews that involved ordinary members, organizations' leaders and staff members together. However, effort was made to maintain the number between 6 to 12, which, according to Bernard (2000: 210) is the maximum desired number in terms of manageability.

### 3.9 Preparatory/pre-fieldwork stage

Prior to initiating the formal field work, the first step taken was introducing the research problem to the concerned SRSP's officials. As this study was about the SRSP, seeking their permission was not only an ethical obligation but was also required for their ongoing cooperation in the field. After their agreement had been obtained, the research topic was discussed with them for their further reflections. They provided information about their overall activities and areas and the way they carried out their

activities. The Head Office issued letters to each regional level office with regard to my study and stay. Afterwards, I got engaged first with the regional level office in Peshawar and started attending their meetings with the community in the target areas. Such meetings not only introduced me to the local community but also to the SRSP's overall activities and processes. After being introduced to their activities, I drafted an interview guide containing open-ended questions with respect to the overall project cycle in order to seek answers to the research questions (Rossman and Rallis, 1998). However, before finalizing it, I discussed it with the senior officials of the SRSP in particular and sought their views about the way the project cycle was carried out. They explained each and every step involved in each stage and this helped me in developing a complete interview guide (see Appendix). Prior to initiating formal interviewing, the guide was thoroughly discussed with the staff members and their inputs were taken into account.

### 3.10 Practical fieldwork

Before proceeding to the practical conduct of field work, it is important to mention, for the sake of highlighting the depth in the collected data, that I stayed throughout the field work with the SRSP's field staff in their official accommodation located centrally in each field. However, in Peshawar the field was not far from my house and, therefore, I was able to go there on a daily basis. Staying in the field afforded exposure to virtually every aspect of the research problem.

In terms of my own position vis-à-vis the organization members, I was aware that I might be seen not only as an outsider to their community, but also potentially as being an SRSP representative. In order to minimize both my 'outsider' status and potential perceptions that I was an official of some kind, I adopted the following strategies in my encounters with organization members. First of all, after I made initial contact with the first organization in each area through the SRSP staff, I did not use

their services further for contacting either the organization members or the rest of the organizations in the respective areas. Rather, I relied on organization members themselves to guide me in identifying other organizations in the area, hence minimizing both the influence of the staff on organizations' members views and also distancing myself from the SRSP. I presented myself throughout the field work as a student-learner, interested in the views of the respondents about the development work being undertaken in their area. Moreover, the fact that I was able to stay in the community over an extended period of time further helped to position me as being in a different situation from the SRSP staff (who normally only made very brief and infrequent visits to the communities). In fact, it was only after I had been in the communities for sometime that organizations' members gained confidence in openly expressing their views relating to all issues concerning community empowerment in the project cycle.

The interviews themselves were carried out in as informal way as possible, beginning with introductions and casual conversation for the sake of evolving friendly relations (see Ross, 1974). During the interviews, I attempted to minimize my role so as not to direct their views or responses (see Merton and Kendall, 2003 for interviewers' rules), although I did intervene tactfully whenever I felt the conversation was wandering too far from the main questions. In addition, probes, which are recommended in open-ended interviews (Fielding and Thomas, 2001) were used to explore their views on the issues in an in-depth way.

In the field, I had the need of a female research assistant[6] for women's organizations members in two districts, namely, Peshawar and Kohat. In Abbottabad and Haripur, the culture was not so strict with respect to women's segregation and, therefore, I faced no problem in contacting women. However, it needs to be mentioned that nowhere could I contact/interview women without the permission and presence of

[6] Her name is anonymous because of her own request. However, the main reasons behind her anonymity was (a) due to cultural restrictions that constrained women to talk with outside men and (b), the expected negative effect on her career by NGOs on highlighting the true picture of NGOs' activities.

their men. On the other hand, the situation in Kohat and Peshawar was quite different and, therefore, for women to be interviewed by a male outsider was out of question. The female research assistant, who gathered the data in these two districts, had wide experience in research and worked as a 'gender specialist' in a Peshawar-based foreign funded government development programme. However, for the sake of ensuring reliability and validity of the data, she was trained with respect to the interview questions and the way to record the answers. Her role also provided triangulation of investigators (see Janesick, 1998b), which helped in cross-checking the data in order to ensure validity.

Besides the formal data collection, the process of observation and taking field notes also continued. During the field, I tried to note carefully every detail. However, I did not note the observations in the presence of the respondents, but recorded them as key words to aid recall in subsequent writing up, either at the end of the day or whenever permitted. After the data was completed, it was transcribed, interpreted and analysed.

### 3.11 Transcription, interpretation/presentation and analysis of the data

The tape recorded data was transcribed after the interviews were completed. Each interview was checked for the purpose of checking the sound quality, a verbatim transcription made. Of course, it took much time to incorporate every detail but I was aware of the importance of quality assurance for the data (see Gill, 2000; Gaskell, 2000; Flick, 2000; Patton, 1990). Different methods of transcription have been suggested (see Gaskell, 2000) but I adopted a more suitable and innovative way that proved quite helpful in the overall data preparation and later analysis. I maintained separate registers for individual interviews and focus group interviews. Each interview was first transcribed in full and after that, on the left side of each paragraph/transcription- a space left blank for writing- headings/sub-headings were written. In addition, the number of

occurrences was noted alongside the views, to enable the strength of opinion to be considered in the later analysis (see Drever, 1995).

While transcribing the interviews, extreme care was taken in translating the interviewees' languages- *Urdu* and *Pashto*- into English. I was aware that no exact equivalent exists in English for some of the words used by the interviewees (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998 on the issue of translation) and, therefore, I translated them quite simply so as to convey what the interviewees meant. After the transcription was completed, the next step was interpreting the data. At this stage, the transcribed data was analytically presented with input from the field notes. The field notes, which were recorded with the exact date, place and reference, were described contextually along with the transcribed data (see chapter VI and VII for details).

### 3.12 Limitations of the study

Every research endeavour, besides its strengths, has certain limitations. The major limitation of this research concerns the inaccessibility of documentation which could specify in more detail the precise relationship between the SRSP, the World Bank and the PPAF. As I outline at length in what follows, one of the key issues that emerges from the study is the role of donors in creating conditions which prevented participatory development from being genuinely implemented. In particular, SRSP field staff continually expressed their concern and anxiety about their inability to achieve the aims of PD because they were spending their time meeting 'donor' targets, which were based on quantitative measures of projects completed, rather than on meaningful assessments of how far PD was being engendered. Unfortunately, information from the World Bank and PPAF was inaccessible with respect to its documented policies regarding SRSP's activities, and its role in setting and evaluating the SRSP agenda.

Repeated efforts were made to obtain relevant PPAF or World Bank documents, but without success. For example, when I asked PPAF officials if I could have access to

documents and reports which outlined the agreements between the SRSP and PPAF, they declined. I was told that such information was confidential. Hence, it became clear to me that an investigation of the relationship between the PPAF, World Bank and the SRSP would not only require research work that went well beyond official documentary data, but also that in order to gain access to the documentary data in the first place would require cultivating the confidence of high ranking gate-keepers both in PPAF and the World Bank. Such research was well beyond the time and resources available to me during the PhD, though it would present a very promising area for future researchers in order to further document and evaluate how donors' policies and practices variously enable and constrain the feasibility of PD in the work of NGOs.

In sum, the conclusions I have drawn about the relationship between PPAF, World Bank and the SRSP are largely based on inferences drawn from the empirical data gathered from interviews and observations with the SRSP staff in the field regarding donors' restrictions. However, these limitations are partially addressed through a critical analysis of my claims in relation to the wider comparative literature on NGO-Donor relationships. Indeed, there is substantial comparative literature (see chapter II and VIII) to suggest that as with the SRSP, donor targets and demands often derail the very processes of PD which they purport to support.

### 3.13 Ethical considerations

While conducting the study, great consideration was taken of the research ethics. Ethics, according to Davidson and Lunt (2003: 143), are 'about safety, respect, comfort, dignity and confidentiality'. Hence, prior to interviewing, the respondents were informed about the research aims and also assured of anonymity and privacy in providing the information (Punch, 2000; Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey, 1999). Similarly, permission was sought from almost all the respondents in recording their interviews. However, in two women's focus group interviews, which were conducted by the female

research assistant in the target areas (the exact place is anonymous), secret recording was used. The research assistant informed the interviewees about the aim of the interviews and also sought their consent, but they were afraid of arousing the anger of their men-folk arising from the possibility of their voices being heard by outside men. Besides, they were hesitant to expose the underlying truth of the projects completed in their names without the permission of their men. This issue had been discussed by the female assistant and myself in anticipation, because she expected such behaviour in the respective area. I, being aware of the research ethics guidelines reported by different writers, such as Burns (2000) Gass (1994) and Romm (2001) permitted her to act so because their information was not only beneficial for reflecting their specific issues but also significant for the entire theory of restructuring discriminatory power and gender relations. In relation to the same situation, Hornsby-Smith (1993) holds that powerless groups in society are always at a loss because researchers' access is always to the powerful and, therefore, suggested covert observation to depict the real picture benefiting them. He further quotes Punch who recommends that:

> "some measure of deception is acceptable in some areas where the benefits of knowledge outweigh the harms and where the harms have been minimized by following the convention of confidentiality and identity. One need not always be brutally honest, direct, and explicit about one's research purpose. One should not normally engage in disguise. One should not steal documents. One should not directly lie to people and, while one may disguise identity to a certain extent, one should not break promises made to people. Academics, in weighing up the balancing-edge between overt and covert, and between openness and less-than-open, should take into account the consequences for the subjects, the profession, and, not least, for themselves" (Punch quoted by Hornsby-Smith, 1993: 62).

The researcher followed Punch suggestions by weighing the benefits with the corresponding harms and decided accordingly. The place of origin of those women secretly recorded was kept anonymous and their responses were treated like those of other respondents. The use of secret recording was justified in the prevalent cultural set-up (see in chapter V, VI and VIII) where women were bound by cultural restrictions and

often had no access to anybody or platform to help their voices be heard. They were ruled by a common *Pashto* proverb '*Khaza Ya Da Kor Da Ya Da Ghor Da*', 'woman's movement is restricted only to household or grave'[7]. Confirming the same, the Government of Pakistan (2003: 19) national report, '*Between hope and despair: participatory poverty assessment*' reflected women's status in Pakistan by referring to a woman belonging to *Baldia* town, Sindh Province, who spoke that 'a woman is considered nothing more than a man's shoe. The only real home for a woman is her grave'. Hence, in these circumstances, the way their responses were obtained was of great importance and also in line with the core principle of participatory development, which believes in providing 'voice to the voiceless'.

### 3.14 Summary of the chapter

The research was carried out on a participatory development NGO, namely, the SRSP, located in NWFP, Pakistan. It covered the SRSP's development activities in three of its regions or, in other words, in four districts, namely; Peshawar, Kohat, Abbottabad and Haripur. In order to address the research questions, it covered those areas where the SRSP had carried out development projects. Similarly, among them, to investigate the issue of sustainability, only those community organizations were selected who had completed projects one year before the field work. As the issue of empowerment or, in other words, participatory development is more an issue of cultural transformation, therefore, a compatible and penetrating technique i.e. ethnographic approach was adopted to reflect the issue in a holistic way. Corresponding with the nature of the issue, consistent and participation-oriented data collection tools, participant observation and interview, were used. They were used with members of

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[7] In *Pashto* speaking rural areas of NWFP in particular, still those women are preferred who are confined to their households; whose voice is not heard outside their households, and who observe strict *Purda* (see chapter VI for detail on *Purda*). The only places specified for them are the household (when they are alive) and the grave (when they die).

men's and women's organizations, and the SRSP staff members involved with development projects.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, great care was taken in checking and cross-checking the questions of the interview guide with the SRSP's staff. After confirming and ensuring the appropriateness of the questions in the interview guide, the data was collected. After its collection, utmost care was taken in transcription, interpretation and analysis. Throughout the research, ethical considerations were strictly followed and I believe that no action was taken which could harm respondents' respect and dignity.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PAKISTAN

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overall picture of NGOs in Pakistan. It is composed of two parts. The first part, as a whole, is intended to highlight the influence of foreign donors on the emergence and increase of NGOs in Pakistan, as a result of their switching to NGOs instead of state institutions as a channel for their aid. However, in order to present a comparative picture of NGOs in relation to their motivating factors, an attempt has been made to highlight the NGOs which evolved/existed before Pakistan's independence and also those which emerged immediately after its independence and thereafter until the 1980s. The purpose of including such NGOs is to reflect their nature and, most importantly, their basis. In order to reflect and highlight the influence of foreign donors, as a stimulus to the increase of NGOs during the 1980s, a brief comparative account is presented of their gradual dependence on foreign donors and also their shift from relief and social welfare to participatory development. It needs to be noted beforehand that 'shift of NGOs' does not imply total replacement of relief and welfare NGOs by participatory development NGOs. Rather, it means the emergence or evolution of participatory development NGOs as a new trend in the field of NGOs, in the 1980s and beyond. Furthermore, in this chapter, the terms civil organizations, voluntary organizations and philanthropic activities are used interchangeably to refer to NGOs.

Part II of the chapter is mainly concerned with the modifications made by the government in its policies in response to foreign donors' conditions for the involvement of NGOs in their aid-based development activities. It highlights the nature of its policies and

posture towards all kind of NGOs on the one hand, and its efforts in encouraging NGOs as its partners on the other. It also depicts the nature of the changes the government initiated in its proposed legal framework following the tremendous increase of NGOs in Pakistan. The government's initiative in reviewing the legal structure is paid particular attention in order to reflect upon NGOs' reaction in initiating various steps and forums, both at the national and provincial levels, for developing an NGO-friendly environment. In the last part of the chapter, the government's disposition is described with reference to its establishment of 'Rural Support Programmes', such as the 'Sarhad Rural Support Programme' and others, throughout the country.

**4.2 History of philanthropic activities with particular reference to pre-partition era**

Before highlighting the different voluntary activities (NGOs) initiated in the pre-partition era, it is pertinent to mention here that most such activities were indigenous, non-formal, philanthropic and confined to relief and rehabilitation of needy people. They were initiated mostly to provide help to the destitute struggling for survival (PCP/3, 2002). There were a number of personalities who initiated different rehabilitative and welfare steps for the public benefit. Among them, Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan established the 'Society for Educational Progress of Indian Muslims' in 1870. Besides, he set up a college which was later on upgraded to 'Aligarh University' in 1920. He also founded the 'Muhammadan Educational Committee' in 1886 to popularize modern education among Muslims. Apart from him, there were also other Muslims who, in addition to other activities, founded '*Anjuman-i-Islamiyah*', '*Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam*', and '*Anjuman-i-Matalib-i-Mufidah*' (Ikram, 1977). Some non-Muslims also took certain initiatives with regard to benefiting the needy people. Among them, the prominent figures, namely, Diyal Singh Majithia, Nadir Shaw, Sir Ganga Ram, NusserWanjee and the Dinshaws, established schools, hospitals and

many other welfare and charity-based organizations primarily for assisting the poor and destitute (Sattar, 2000).

In line with their commitment to voluntary work, the Christian missionaries in colonial India also encouraged volunteerism. They established eye, leprosy and tuberculosis hospitals. Their interest ranged from care of destitute to the protection of animals. They focused mostly on the poorest of the poor (PCP, 2002). Some of these institutions still survive, both in Pakistan and in India. These innumerable works persuaded other people to continue efforts for public welfare. The interest in such activities accelerated immediately after the independence of Pakistan in 1947. Similarly, the gradual growth in non-profit organizations led the colonial government to regulate their activities under legislation such as the 'Societies Act, 1860', the 'Trust Act, 1882' and the 'Credit Societies Act, 1904' (PCP, 2002).

### 4.3 State of NGOs in the pre1980s period in Pakistan

Voluntary activities (NGOs) in Pakistan appeared immediately after partition, when a tremendous number of people started migrating from India to the newly established state. At that time, the government was not institutionally mature enough to handle the situation. In consequence, individuals were prompted to take self-help based initiatives to help and rehabilitate the immigrants on humanitarian grounds. Sattar (2000) particularly related the emergence of voluntary work (NGOs) to the influx of refugees from India and reported that the first voluntary work initiated after that was the establishment of the 'Edhi Foundation'. This was followed by Marie Adelaide Leprosy centre, the kidney centre and others. Gradually, the number of such voluntary activities started getting greater particularly in the sphere of relief and welfare activities (PCP, 2002). The number of such philanthropic institutions in Pakistan during 1955 was 200, while it jumped to 4000 in 1965. These

organizations were established in a spirit of humanitarianism and social welfare (PCP/1, 2002). The growth of voluntary organizations accelerated and according to Abbas's (1969) analysis of voluntary organizations operative in Pakistan in 1960, their number increased to 2,200 in East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh) and 2,000[1] in West Pakistan (now called Pakistan). These organizations covered various fields but concentrated particularly on schools, orphanages and recreational facilities.

The next boost in number of such initiatives came in consequence of the two wars which Pakistan fought against India in 1965 and 1971. These wars resulted in a number of casualties, prompting the emergence of a number of indigenous-based voluntary organizations to provide relief and welfare support to the needy people (PCP, 2002). Thereafter, the 1980s, as described below, proved to be a turning point, not only in terms of the tremendous increase in NGOs, but also in terms of a focus and in their basis.

## 4.4 Part I

### 4.4.1 Post 1980s: a hallmark in the NGO world - Pakistan in wider perspective

This part, as indicated above, describes the exponential growth of NGOs, their shift from relief and welfare to participatory development and their increasing dependence on international/foreign donors. They are described to delineate Pakistan's picture in the wider perspective.

#### (a) NGOs' upsurge and foreign donors: 1980s and onward

Previous NGOs (voluntary works), as highlighted above, were not only local in terms of initiators but were also based on local resources. Their tremendous expansion is reported to have started in Pakistan during 1980s when foreign donors preferred to work

[1] This number refers to all kind of registered and unregistered voluntary organizations under all laws that existed that time in Pakistan.

through NGOs rather than governments (Zomer, 1997; Khan, 2001; Smillie, Gohar and Rowe, 1996; PCP, 2002; Sattar, 2000). The same decade, as highlighted in chapter II, also proved important in giving a tremendous push to NGOs in the whole Asia, Africa, Latin America, Bangladesh, Tanzania and in short, in all the developing countries of the world (NGORC, 2000; Haque, 2004; Fiszbein, 1997; Igoe, 2003; Bratton, 1989; Khan, 2003). This was the time when the multilateral, bilateral and international donors agencies preferred under the 'new policy agenda' to replace state by NGOs, as a channelling mechanism for their aid (this is discussed further in chapter VIII) (NGORC, 2000; Meyer, 1997; Fisher, 2000; Constantino-David, 1992). The growth of NGOs, since the 1980s, accelerated tremendously with more initiatives emerging day by day. There is no detailed schematic record available of NGOs growth in the world, but piecemeal data reflects their increase in this period. For example, in Indonesia, according to a rough estimate, in 1980 there were 79 member NGOs in the Indonesian environmental forum, while the number had increased to over 500 in 1992. Similarly, the NGO membership of an African NGO environment network increased from 21 in 1982 to 530 in 1990 (Meyer, 1997: 1127). Likewise, in Nepal, there were 220 NGOs registered with the government in 1990, and the number increased to 1210 in 1993. In Tunisia, there were 5186 registered NGOs in 1991, increasing to 1886 in 1993 (Marzouk, 1996). Furthermore, the same trend was also observed in Bangladesh. There, the number of NGOs registered with the government social welfare department (one of the laws registering NGOs in Bangladesh) in the mid -1980s, was 263 and grew to 1500 by 1999 (Paul, 2003: 77). In short, the 1980s- the point of NGOs outpouring in the world (Tapcu, 1999) - led to an acceleration in the number of NGOs in the developing countries to almost one million (Dichter, 1996: 129). In addition, Reich (2002: 1673) described their number in the developing countries 'in millions'.

As far the growth of NGOs in Pakistan is concerned, the first event which proved to be a milepost, during the 1980s, to the tremendous increase of NGOs was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This made Pakistan a 'Frontline State', and as a result of which it began to receive international development aid for social development. NGOs engaged in development became major beneficiaries of this aid. Furthermore, a number of international donors established programmes for supporting the Afghan refugees in Pakistan (PCP, 2002: 15).

The growth of NGOs remained unchecked and received additional stimulus with time. An increase during the 1990s in Pakistan was encouraged by certain favourable factors such as the return to democracy, the growing push towards deregulation and privatization, the process of globalization, the emergence of international coalitions of civil society and the deterioration of the country's financial position (Ismail, 2002; and Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002).

As far as their total number is concerned, exact data are not available, because many NGOs were registered under local offices which did not keep records (UNDP, 1999: 3). Additionally, there is no agreement among the studies conducted with regard to their number initiated by different quarters in the 1990s. However, according to the first survey conducted by Pakistan's planning and development department (referred to in PCP/5, 2002) in 1990, their number (engaged in social services) was 8176. The United Nations Development Programme's (1999: 3) survey of NGOs in Pakistan in 1991 estimated the number of active registered organizations up to 1989 as between 8,000 and 16,000[2] (PCP/5, 2002: 15). A survey by the Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO) mentioned the number of NGOs, registered between January 1990 and December 1993, as 8547 (SPO,

[2] According to the same survey, the total number of NGOs would be between 25,000 and 35,000 if unregistered NGOs were also added.

2001: 13). The latest data, revealed by the report undertaken by the Social Policy and Development Centre as part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project for Pakistan (PCP/8, 2002), during 2001 and 2002 stated the number of active NGOs involved in social services and meeting the criteria of private non-profit, self-governing and voluntary status, as 45,000. Hence, in short, the 1980s was the era which revolutionized the world of NGOs, in terms of both number and focus, i.e., a shift from relief and welfare to participatory development (Brodhead, 1987).

**(b) Participatory development NGOs**

As in Pakistan, there has been a long tradition of voluntary philanthropy and associationalism in many countries throughout the world (Kaldor, 2003). Initially, as in Pakistan, all the NGOs, across the globe, were relief and welfare-based (Paul, 2003). For instance, in Bangladesh, the NGOs focused on meeting the immediate needs of the people through direct action, such as the distribution of food, the fielding of health teams and the provision of shelter (Korten, 1987). However, the 1980s marked a turning point in the world of NGOs, with not only a growth in their number but also a change of focus from relief and welfare to participatory development. Such a shift of NGOs from their past traditional activities- relief and welfare- was observed not only in Pakistan but almost the world over (Charlton, 1995) (see chapter II for details). During this period, participatory development NGOs emerged in Philippines, India and Bangladesh (Garilao, 1987: 115). In relation to this shift, Matin and Taher (2001) while focusing on Bangladesh described that the leading NGOs started working during 1970s as relief and rehabilitative organizations- to assist the people of the new war torn nation. However, as the emergency was ending, the leaders of such organizations shifted their direction from 'relief' to more self-reliant

development and thus the gradual evolution of participatory development approaches started taking place (Ibid, 2001: 230).

The reason behind the shift of NGOs from relief and welfare-based activities to participatory development activities was due to the inherent limitations in relief and welfare approaches, which led the beneficiaries to 'relief dependency' (Matin and Taher, 2001: 230). The participatory development approach carried comparative merits because it emphasized local self-reliance, with the intention that benefits would be sustained beyond the period of NGO assistance (Korten, 1987).

The same shift in NGOs' focus was also found in Pakistan. Among others, notable participatory development NGOs, which emerged in the post 1980s period, were the Orangi Pilot Project (see Cohen, 2004) and the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (more explanation forthcoming in this chapter). Among them the AKRSP proved a beacon light for subsequent Rural Support Programmes, such as the SRSP, which the government initiated to incorporate the participatory development philosophy into their working strategies (PCP, 2002; Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002).

**(c) Source of funding: a brief comparison**

As described above, NGOs in the pre 1980s period, both in Pakistan and the world around were based primarily on indigenous resources, while the NGOs in the post 1980s period were initiated by and based on international donors (Sollis, 1992; 1995; Jeong, 1995; Farrington et al., 1993). Globally, the 1980s marked the start of NGOs' dependence on international donors. Their funding increased tenfold between the 1970s and 1987 (Hellinger, 1987: 136; see Heijden, 1987 or chapter II for more detail). In other words, as Townsend and Townsend (2004: 273) noted the NGOs that emerged after the 1980s and which are involved in present day development, were donor-created.

The same trend of NGOs' dependence was also found in Pakistan, although there was insufficient record available in Pakistan to reflect quantitatively the gradual growth of NGOs' comparative dependence on foreign donors. An obvious reason for this is that donors' direct funding to NGOs was kept secret. This direct funding also proved a bone of contention for the government when it initiated a new law requiring NGOs, inter alia, to disclose their funding status (see the next part for further explanation). Relating to this vague situation, an Asian Development Bank (1999) report (cited by Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002) explained that it arose because (1) very few NGOs reported regularly (2) not all NGOs were able to answer precisely when asked about their income, and (3) some provided partial information. However, one of the available sources indicates that among the NGOs operative during 1960, only 1 percent were dependent on aid from foreign agencies; 21 percent were dependent on government grants; 8 percent on fund-raising; 24 percent on earnings from sales of goods produced; 2 percent on membership fees and 44 percent on carryover of the previous budgets (Abbas, 1969). Nevertheless, gradually the dependence on outside funding increased and the reliance on local funding decreased. For example only 6 percent of projects were World Bank funded during 1988, whereas more than 50 percent were so financed by the mid 1990s (Zaidi, 2000). The increasing reliance on foreign donors was also reflected by a NGORC (2003)[3] report. It revealed that 88.5 percent of the funds of NGO came from donors and only 11.5 percent from local non-profit donors[4]. Among such foreign donors, 34.6 percent donors were international, 23 percent multi-lateral, 21.1 percent bilateral, 11.5 percent local non-profit, 5.7 percent embassies/consulates and 3.8 percent were in other categories. In addition, among them 25

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[3] NGORC for updating the directory of donor agencies in Pakistan contacted 102 international, multinational, bilateral, Embassies and high commissions and local organizations and among them only 52 responded. Hence, this report is based on only those 52 donor organizations.

[4] The actual number may be less than this because here the local non-profit donors include PPAF, TVO, and South Asian Partnership Pakistan which are also mainly funded by foreign donors.

percent of the organizations were based in USA, 17 percent in UK, 9.6 percent in Pakistan, 7.6 percent in Germany, 5.7 each in Japan, Switzerland and Italy, and 3.8 percent each were in Canada and Netherlands (Ibid: 114-15).

## 4.5 Part II

This part deals with the nature of policy changes that Pakistan made in response to donors' demand for developing an NGO-friendly environment. Formally, the reason for such demands was that states were failing to address people's problems and, so, in order to ensure the effective use of donors' money, they were required to modify their policies and involve NGOs in development activities.

### 4.5.1 Changes in government's policy

During the 1980s, the government made certain changes in its policies towards NGOs in response to donors' pressure to create an enabling environment for NGOs and to maintain control. It placed more emphasis on social welfare in its sixth five year plan (1983-88) but made no mention of the word 'NGOs' (Government of Pakistan, 1982). In the seventh (1988-93) and eighth plans (1993-98), it particularly mentioned social welfare-related NGOs as working partners with government but, did not recognize them as autonomous bodies (Government of Pakistan, 1987, 1991). Its policy/attitude towards NGOs was inconsistent, discriminatory, and controlling (Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002). On the one hand, as reflected particularly in the 'Eighth Five-Year Plan' it was supportive of the role of NGOs in social service delivery and those involved in grass-roots development (here it refers to Rural Support Programmes, such as the SRSP, discussed below), while on the other hand, showed a hostile attitude towards NGOs involved in social and political advocacy (PCP/6, 2002), working as a watchdog of government activities (PCP, 2002: 18), involved in mobilizing civil society on issues like violence against women,

honour killings, political freedom, blasphemy law, freedom of the press, accountability and corruption etc., and outside the regulatory control of government as a result of being directly funded by outside donor agencies (Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002).

The government, hence, besides encouraging other welfare NGOs, established its 'Social Action Programme'[5]- a purely government effort and composed of government employees- solely with the financial assistance of World Bank. Within this programme, a special section, namely; 'Participatory development programme' was established with the purpose of involving NGOs and also developing strong linkages among communities, NGOs, CBOs, private sector and government (Social Policy and Development Centre, 1999). Similarly, it also established 'Rural Support Programmes' (RSPs) at national and provincial levels. By establishing RSPs, the government intended to adopt the international donor agencies' promoted participatory (empowerment) development paradigm in activities aimed at developing the less developed/marginalized people of remote areas (Ismail, 2002). The government modelled these RSPs on the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) which had already been implementing the participatory development model in the remote areas of Pakistan (PCP, 2002). The adoption of the AKRSP model was presumably due to its easy accessibility for replication and also because it satisfied the demands of foreign donors, who insisted upon participatory development NGOs.

The Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) was initiated by Prince Karim Agha Khan, spiritual head of the Ismaelities (an offshoot of the Shia sect) (Khan, 2003b) in 1982 in northern areas of Pakistan (Smillie and Hailey, 2001). It was mainly funded by the European Commission, UK, Canada, Germany, Norway and World Bank and to some extent by the government of Pakistan (Rural Support Programme Network, 2002). It

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[5] It was initiated by Benazir Bhutto (Prime minister of Pakistan) and was rolled back after she was replaced by Mian Nawaz Sharif (Prime Minister) in 1997.

worked on improving the quality of life of the people through institutional building at the grass-root level. The theory was that its innovative and distinctive participatory development approach would organize the willing people into community organizations and empower them to decide about their needs and all the stages involved in physical/productive infrastructure (PIs). However, no research evidence is available as to its level of success and failure in reaching its stated goals. It is reported that the AKRSP provided skill development trainings to organizations' members and disbursed credit among them (needy people) through their local community organizations (Rural Support Programmes Network, 2002). Key elements in its approach were the 'the establishment of village-level organizations to manage the development process, the use of physical productive infrastructure projects (PIs) with a grant element to support economic development and provide the initial incentive for community organization, the introduction of a savings and credit scheme, and training programmes to support self-help activities' (Smillie and Hailey, 2001: 12).

Realizing the innovative style of participatory development, exercised by the AKRSP, the government, as described above, established Rural Support Programmes, such as the 'Sarhad Rural Support Programme', the 'Balochistan Rural Support Programme', and the 'Punjab Rural Support Programme' to replicate the same development strategy in other remote and impoverished areas (PCP, 2002: 15-6).

**(a) The Sarhad rural support programme**

The SRSP was initiated, consistent with foreign donors' demand, as described above, by some political personalities of the government of North West Frontier Province in November 1989, on the AKRSP model. It began to work initially during 1990 in the same district (Charsadda) to which the initiator (the then Chief Minister) belonged. At first,

it received funding from USAID and afterwards, in late 1992, it received support from Netherland Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB). Like other NGOs in Pakistan, it was dependent upon international donor organizations (Smillie and Hailey, 2001). At the time of my field work, it was funded by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), NOVIB, Swiss Development Cooperation and Trust for Voluntary Organization (TVO). However, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) was the main funding organization, providing 86 percent of the total, while the contribution of the rest of the donors was only 14 percent (SRSP, 2001a).

The distinctive feature of the SRSP was that it was directly governed (indirectly reflected from its documents and personal observations) by provincial government, whose officials were appointed as its chief executives until 1996. In addition, it was generally believed that the provincial government strengthened it by arranging funds from different foreign donors mainly for the purpose of creating a more lucrative place for themselves. The SRSP became independent in 1996 when the provincial government ceased to appoint its own people. However, it was still controlled and influenced by the government through its 'Board of Directors', composed mostly of government senior officials, ministers and few other renowned personalities. As a result, it looked more like a 'GONGO' (Government NGO), (Smillie and Hailey, 2001: 28, see chapter II for more explanation of GONGOs). Even its documents (see Smillie, Gohar and Rowe, 1996 for details) named it a GONGO until 1996, when it was directly controlled by government officials. Other SRSP documents (SRSP, 1999; SRSP, 2001b) refer to it as a normal NGO like others, after 1996, but the ground reality was quite different. It danced to the government tune mostly, because of its reliance on official funding (official funding refers here to funds arranged by government) and government interventions in appointing its chief executive officer. The way it was structured and how it organized it activities are elaborated in more detail in the next chapter.

To promote and financially support this kind of NGOs, the government introduced new financial intermediaries, such as the Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO), Khushali Bank and the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) (Ghaus-Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002). All of them were established with foreign aid for promoting NGOs working on socio-economic development through a participatory development approach. The TVO was initiated by the government with funds made available by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its aim was to provide financial support and strengthen indigenous NGOs working on participatory development and empowering the marginalized segments of society (TVO, 1999). Likewise, *Khushali* Bank was established during 2000 (funded by Asian Development Bank) to provide financial help mainly through the network of 'National Rural Support Network', such as SRSP.

In addition to these bodies, the government established the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) as a financial intermediary. The PPAF, being the main funding agency to the SRSP activities during my field work, is elaborated below.

**(b) The Pakistan poverty alleviation fund**

The PPAF's establishment was part of the government's response to pressure from international donors to initiate favourable changes towards encouraging NGOs as partners in development activities. It was established by the government in 1997 as a model of public private partnership. It was mainly funded by World Bank, which provided US $ 90 million, while the government of Pakistan provided 0.7 million (PPAF, 2003). It worked upon three components. The first was a micro-credit scheme providing loans to partner organizations. The second component financed community infra-structure development on a cost-sharing basis to partner organizations and the third component was designed to improve the capacity of stakeholders and partner organizations (Lohano, 2001). The

underlying philosophy of the PPAF was to focus on less developed areas and alleviate the poverty of the vulnerable poor and, most importantly, to provide productive/physical infrastructure (such as water supply scheme, street pavement, mini dam construction etc.) through a participatory/bottom-up approach. In line with its focus on such activities, it primarily funded RSPs and a few other organizations, such as the Family Planning Association of Pakistan, which had also been created with the support of the government (PCP, 2002: 14; The Rural Support Programme Network, 2001; Lohano, 2001).

The SRSP worked in 86 districts through 38 partner organizations and had approved 6,564 projects by the end of fiscal year 2003. It had a rigorous system of auditing and reporting the finances and efficiency of the partner organizations for their onwards submission to World Bank and its own management. Besides, a World Bank mission, too, inspected the PPAF's establishment and the efficiency of partner organizations against their assigned mandate. The World Bank mission, after expressing satisfaction with the PPAF's progress during their (WB) 'Mid Term Review' (MTR) agreed to increase their funding to US $ 240 million but the decision was not finalized until the end of 2003 (PPAF, 2003).

Similar to the PPAF, the government made certain changes in its policies and incorporated only its own created NGOs, such as the SRSP, in its development activities. Its overall posture was cooperative to its own NGOs because it diverted the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund primarily to them. On the other hand, its attitude was quite hostile towards those NGOs which worked independent of its guidance and control, refused to conform to its directions and became involved in issues such as political freedom, honour killing etc. To regulate and control such NGOs and also the other growing number of foreign-funded NGOs during the 1980s and 1990s, the government decided to review the existing legal structure. What it did and what resultantly happened as a result is as follows.

**(c) Pakistan's initiative in reviewing NGOs registration legal framework**

Before reflecting upon the government's initiative in reviewing the legal structure, it is pertinent to note that at that time there was no legal requirement of registration when anybody desired to become associate of any kind of organization or to initiate any NGO. Similarly, the 1973 constitution of Pakistan did not make registration compulsory. Its Article 17, clearly explained that 'Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in interests of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan' (Pakistan Legal Decisions,1988; Sattar, 2001). However, most NGOs registered themselves under certain laws, for the purpose of their eligibility for support from international donors and the Pakistan social welfare. There was no specific category of law under which specific NGOs could be registered. The main reason was the absence of a definition of NGOs in the existing legal structure. Besides, the existing laws were quite archaic, confusing and non-compatible to the present needs (Zaidi, 2000). They were numerous but, those under which the majority of NGOs (that met the universal characteristics of NGOs as non-profit, non-governmental and voluntary) were registered were the Societies Act (1860), The Trust Act (1882), Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance (1961), and Companies Ordinance (1984) (see PCP, 2002).

In contrast to the above, the proposed revised law, 1994 (not yet implemented), entitled the 'Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Regulation) Act' made registration compulsory for all kind of NGOs, whether registered under other laws or totally unregistered. The proposed law empowered the government to dissolve any organization found inactive or not meeting legal standards. Furthermore, it empowered government to refuse registration to any NGO and inspect their record and sources of their funding. Under this law, the government intended to dismiss NGOs' governing bodies and take full control

of them by establishing a separate 'Board' at central level to regulate and control their activities (PCP/5, 2002). In short, it curtailed the freedom they used to have before.

The proposed law immediately led to disturbance among the NGOs and, in response, they united to protest against the curtailment of their development activities and freedom. Accordingly, the government held back for some time. In 1996, the government proposed another bill, the 'Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Regulation) Act', with similar features to that of the first one, but that too faced the same reaction. NGOs disapproval of these bills was based on the ground that the law would hamper their independence by subjecting them to government intervention and regulation (PCP, 2000).

The government move to introduce the new law stirred almost all the NGOs receiving direct funding from external donors and working independent of government control. However, I, working as a resource person with the SRSP and also engaged with other NGOs in other respects, did not observe the SRSP or other RSPs reacting to such legal changes. NGOs, except RSPs, to sustain their survival and independence, started concerted efforts during 1995 and 1996 and integrated into a national based NGOs forum, called the 'Pakistan NGOs Forum'.[6] In order to strengthen their position, they proposed a bill in 1999, known as the 'Pakistan NGOs Bill' and proposed minimum intervention of government in their activities. In addition, they declared their registration as not essential by quoting Article 17 of the 1973 constitution, referred to earlier. Relations between NGOs and government became more tense when the government deregistered almost 2500 NGOs during 1998-99. This move further intensified the already existing tug-of-war between the two. However, the dissolution of the Assembly led to the proposed law being shelved permanently. Some time later, in the beginning of 21st century, the government mandated

[6] Apart from the central NGOs forum, some other forums at provincial levels, such as 'Punjab NGOs Coordination Council' (1994), Sindh NGOs Federation (1995), Balochistan (1994) (Anwar, 2001) and Sarhad NGOs' Ithihad (1995) were established (SNI Secretariat, n.d.).

the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy to study the existing legal framework and suggest a consensus based alternative. The PCP proposed a law based on the views of CBOs, media people, district councillors, field officials, political leaders, NGOs, ministers, governors, senior decision makers, national and international funding and support service organizations at national and provincial levels (see PCP (2002) for further details). However, it has not yet been enacted, mainly because of the government's reluctance to allow the NGOs to establish their own autonomous statutory bodies.

### 4.6 Summary of the chapter

Before highlighting the main points of the chapter (which have close relation with the primary data presented in chapter VI and VII), it is important to remind the reader that this chapter will be utilized for the overall analysis of the data in chapter VIII. It has been shown that the number of NGOs in Pakistan in particular, and in the developing countries in general, exploded particularly in the post 1980s period, when the donor agencies preferred to channel their aid through NGOs rather than state institutions. The NGOs which emerged subsequently were mostly participatory based, dependent on foreign donors and, hence, very different from the relief and welfare indigenous based NGOs existing in the pre 1980s era. Their growth gained momentum with each financial push by outside donors, the number increasing to an astonishing 45,000[7] by 2003. In contrast to previous NGOs, which were based on indigenous resources, the present NGOs- which emerged during and after the 1980s- showed an increasing dependence on foreign donors. For instance, only 1 percent of NGOs were dependent, during 1960, upon foreign aid, while during 2003 the proportion rose to 88.5 percent.

[7] It includes all registered or unregistered active organizations.

Furthermore, in response to donors' pressure, the government made certain changes in its policies. However, they were discriminatory, prejudiced and hostile to NGOs' independence. The government encouraged NGOs which were based on local charity and involved in social welfare. Its posture was quite positive towards those NGOs which worked at the grass roots level, implied a participatory development approach and worked according to its directions. To encourage such NGOs and work in partnership, the government established a network of 'Rural Support Programmes', such as the SRSP, based on the AKRSP's participatory development model, over much of the country. The provincial government of NWFP established the SRSP and controlled it by its Board of Directors and official funding. Besides such partial reforms, the government also established financial intermediaries, such as TVO and PPAF to extend help to those NGOs (such as RSPs in particular) which were concerned with poverty alleviation through a participatory development approach. However, on the other hand, the government showed quite a hostile attitude towards NGOs directly funded by foreign donors and involved in social and political advocacy. To discourage these latter NGOs' independence and to maintain control over them, the government proposed new laws in 1994 and 1996 to register all NGOs under it and also to audit, regulate and check their activities. As a result, it faced strong opposition from NGOs and legal reform was rolled back by the government up to the time of my field work in year 2003-4.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# THE SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SRSP)

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter mainly highlighted the association between foreign donors and NGOs' growth in Pakistan, the government-NGO relationship and government's interest in establishing 'Rural Support Programmes', such as the 'Sarhad Rural Support Programme'. The purpose of this chapter is to present a comprehensive picture of the Sarhad Rural Support Programme, a participatory-based NGO, as observed and reported in its various reports. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section one briefly describes the process of the establishment of the SRSP (see the previous chapter for further details) and explains how the SRSP was organized and what functions staff members perform at each level. Data for this section is primarily based on field observations, interviews with SRSP staff and material from un-published internal documents from the SRSP.

Section two is devoted to describing the SRSP's project/programme components, such as social mobilization, productive/physical infrastructure, credit and enterprise development, human resource development, gender issues etc. This part is based on the reports compiled and issued by the SRSP relating to its achievements and its values. The detailed description of the SRSP's overall components will provide insight into the process/story of social mobilization and productive/physical infrastructure as provided by the organization. The chapter presents programme's objective and policy with the intention to enable us not only to understand but also to compare its claims with the actual practice described in the following chapters.

The SRSP was established by the provincial government of NWFP in 1989, as described in the previous chapter, with the objective of promoting development through a participatory approach to social organization and networking in community-based organizations (SRSP, 2001b). The interest of the provincial government in establishing the SRSP was to replicate the AKRSP (see the previous chapter for more details) and to work with and organize local communities into organizations and develop their linkages with government line departments. Its purpose was to make government departments more effective in their mandates (Smillie and Hailey, 2001).

The SRSP started work first in Charsadda and Kohat and extended later on to Mansehra and Karak. However, it stopped its activities in Charsadda following a huge credit loss during 2003. During my field research, it worked in four regions[1] namely, Kohat, Mansehra, Abbottabad and Peshawar.

According to the statistical summary for the period of June 2000 to July 2001 (SRSP, 2001a), it had formed 1947 men's community organizations and 1031 women's organizations. In addition, it had initiated 1426 PIs (for more explanation of PIs see chapters VI and VII) of which 1236 completed up to that time (see Table 2).

## 5.2 Part I

### 5.2.1 Organization of the SRSP

The basic objective of the SRSP was, as described in detail in the next sections of this chapter, to carry out all its activities through local community organizations. It worked on a variety of projects and issues in its regions and therefore employed different staff (see Fig. 3) for different purposes (described below in this chapter). There was no available consolidated up-to-date record of the SRSP's staff number, however, according to the

[1] Each region is at least composed of two adjacent districts.

# Table 2 Statistical Summary for the Period June 2000 to July 2001

| PARAMETERS | Charsadda Region Started in 1991 | | Kohat Region Started in 1991 | | Mansehra Region Started in 1993 | | Abbottabad Region Started in 1997 | | Peshawar Region Started in 2000 | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000-01 | Total | 2000-01 | Total | 2000-01 | Total | 2000-01 | Total | 2000-01 | Total | 2000-01 | Total |
| **Building of the Social Capital** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men's Community Orgs | 0 | 367 | 69 | 704 | 11 | 630 | 71 | 542 | 71 | 71 | 222 | 2314 |
| Women's Community Orgs | 1 | 176 | 50 | 486 | 15 | 317 | 32 | 194 | 34 | 34 | 132 | 1207 |
| Total Community Orgs | 1 | 543 | 119 | 1190 | 26 | 947 | 103 | 736 | 105 | 105 | 354 | 3521 |
| Clusters | 3 | 13 | 0 | 6 | | 50 | 2 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 83 |
| Associations | 4 | 10 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 25 |
| **Local Capital Generation (Million Rupees)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Savings of MCOs | 0.06 | 1.65 | 1.19 | 12.81 | 1.16 | 13.81 | 1.62 | 5.74 | 0.17095 | 0.17095 | 4.2 | 34.18 |
| Savings of WCOs | 0.04 | 0.59 | 0.82 | 4.98 | 0.49 | 6.33 | 0.44 | 2.17 | 0.13232 | 0.13232 | 1.92 | 14.202 |
| Total Savings of Cos | 0.10 | 2.24 | 2.01 | 17.79 | 1.65 | 20.14 | 2.06 | 7.91 | 0.303268 | 0.303268 | 6.12 | 48.383 |
| **Human Resource Development** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MCO Members Trained | 138 | 3274 | 146 | 8247 | 138 | 4818 | 281 | 2355 | 263 | 263 | 966 | 18957 |
| WCO Members Trained | 478 | 3363 | 156 | 5205 | 85 | 13164 | 174 | 2056 | 203 | 203 | 1096 | 23991 |
| Total Members Trained | 616 | 6637 | 302 | 13452 | 223 | 17982 | 455 | 4411 | 466 | 466 | 2062 | 42948 |
| **Productive Investment** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI's Initiated | 2 | 181 | 86 | 617 | 0 | 495 | 62 | 281 | 33 | 33 | 183 | 1607 |
| PI's Completed | 3 | 171 | 44 | 538 | 166 | 478 | 50 | 217 | 3 | 3 | 266 | 1407 |

**Source: SRSP (2000-2001) Annual Review**

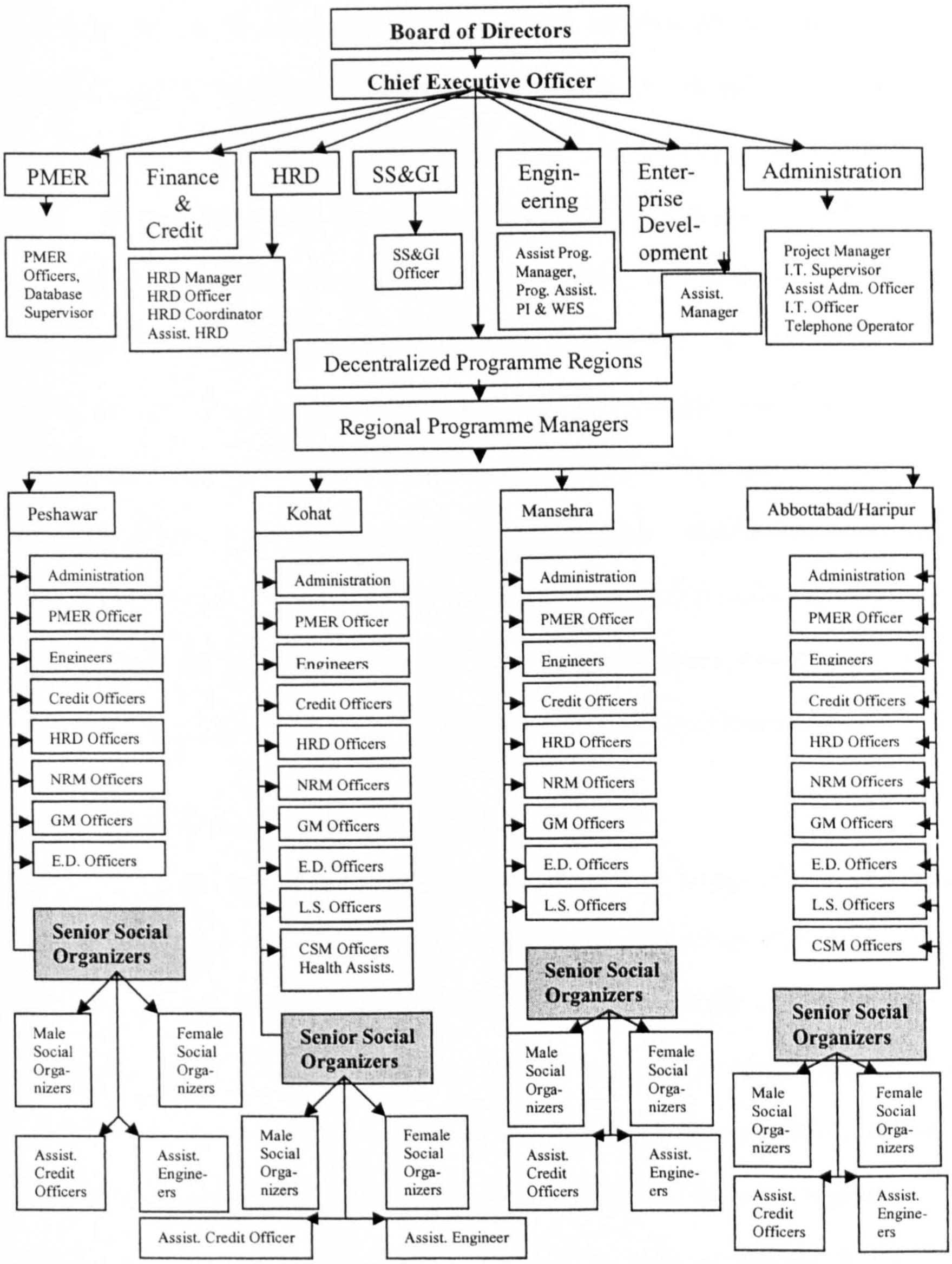
piecemeal data, its number was almost 850. The SRSP was headed by a Board of Directors composed of members of the government, the NGOs, community and experts in various fields. The Board mainly consisted of males and was responsible for the overall policy formulation, approval of the budget and advisory functions. Day-to-day management was carried by a group of professionals headed by a Chief Executive Officer and was divided into three levels. The Head Office was based in Peshawar, the capital of NWF Province, and was staffed for the various disciplines in which the SRSP worked.

The SRSP had a three tier organizational structure, with the Head Office in Peshawar and regional programme offices and field offices/social organization units in its programme regions. At the Head Office level, it had a Management group headed by a Chief Executive Officer. The Management was further composed of Project Manager Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (PMER), Project Manager Finance and Credit (F&C), Project Manager Human Resource Development (HRD), Project Manager Social Sector and Gender Issue (SS&GI), Project Manager Engineering, Project Manager Enterprise Development and Project Manager Administration. In the programme regions, Regional Programme Officers (RPOs) headed the programmes.

### 5.2.2 Functions of the Head Office and Regions

The Head Office staff were responsible for the formulation of the overall strategy, resource generation from the donors, linkages with government, training of staff, monitoring and evaluation of the programme, designing rules and other procedural matters etc. Section-wise, the PMER staff monitored and evaluated the work (i.e. PIs) during implementation and also after completion. The social sector and gender issues section was mainly concerned with gender sensitization but also performed, under some projects, functions relating to women's health issues and community-based education. The finance

**Fig. 3 Sarhad Rural Support Programme Staff Structure**




**Denotations:**

**PMER**: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Monitoring; **HRD**: Human Resource Development; **SS&GI**: Social Sector and Gender Issues; **PI&WES**: Physical/Productive Infra-structure and Water, Environmental Sanitation; **I.T.**: Information Technology; **NRM**: Natural Resource Management; **GM**: Gender Monitoring; **E.D.**: Enterprise Development: **L.S.**: Livestock; **C.S.M**: Community School Monitoring.

and credit section was concerned with the provision of credit facility to the organizations' members. The human resource development section, which served as the backbone for all activities, was concerned with social organization and provided training to organizations' members and the SRSP's staff. Almost all these categories of staff worked side by side in the field. However, pivotal in relation to PIs, were social organizers and engineers.

The regional level, which was composed of four regions, described above, was composed of 8 districts, namely, Kohat and Karak in Kohat region, Mansehra and Battagram in Mansehra region, Abbottabad and Haripur in Abbottabad region and Peshawar and Nowshera in Peshawar region. Each region was headed by Regional Programme Officers. The third level was that of Social Organization Units, which were typically composed of male and female Social Organizers and Engineers. This third level (SOU) was directly responsible for mobilizing communities, assisting them to identify opportunities available to them and to assist them to secure resources to harness their potential either from the SRSP, government, or other NGOs or donors.

### 5.2.3 Relationship of SRSP to World Bank and PPAF

Over and above the chief executive and board of directors of the SRSP is the PPAF and World Bank. While the SRSP is theoretically independent of both government and donors it is nevertheless answerable to both the World Bank and PPAF. However, as previously discussed in Chapter III, the precise details of this relationship are difficult to ascertain owing to the lack of any publicly available documentation concerning this relationship. The available documents, such as the Rural Support Programmes Network (2000), only reflect the SRSP's regular reliance on foreign donors and do not specify the nature or terms of their relationship. However, both World Bank and PPAF officials were observed visiting the Head Office and the regional level offices, as well as carrying out

regular field visits. Their visits, according to staff members, were only to ensure that SRSP followed their agreed upon target. The agreed upon target would have definitely been present in the written agreement documents signed by both parties but was inaccessible for the reasons stated in chapter III. According to staff members, the SRSP produced regular performance-based progress reports to PPAF - which were onward submitted to World Bank. Hence, SRSP was accountable - however, invisibly - to the donors by submitting to them the details of their progress in attaining their pre-determined target in writing. This higher-level relationship between SRSP and the donor agencies (PPAF/World Bank- see chapter IV for details) worked above the organizational structure and no doubt shaped SRSP's overall activities.

## 5.3 Part II

### 5.3.1 Main objective of the SRSP

The main objectives of the SRSP, defined in its project document in 1994 (Gibson et al., 1998) were to raise the income and quality of life of people living in its project area; to develop institutional and technical models for equitable and sustainable development; to evolve sustainable structures for productive management of available natural, human and financial resources; and to provide an effective and cost-efficient mechanism for government and donor agencies to reach small farmers and the landless poor. It employed a bottom-up approach and gave importance to the people and their opinions (SRSP, 2001c; Smillie, Gohar and Rowe, 1996). The central focus of the SRSP's approach was social organization, which was meant to fill the institutional vacuum at the village level through fostering a network of community based organizations working towards sustainable and equitable development. The men's and women's organizations acted as a 'receiving mechanism' for the SRSP, as well as for the government and other organizations. In short,

the community organizations network provided a local platform for the communities by planning and mobilizing manpower and by initiating collective management and indigenous control of resources (SRSP, 1996).

### 5.3.2 The SRSP's policy

The SRSP considered community organizations as the basic units of development and focused on training and the development of village activists as the most important aspect for future development. In order to ensure the long term sustainability of organizations, it believed in delegating some functions to such activists. It considered this to be cost- effective and also contributory to fulfilling its basic grass-root development theory. The SRSP (1996) reports that it also encouraged the formation of clusters of nearby organizations for the purpose of taking the role of social organizers in future. It intended to identify and develop local activists so that the programme might be implemented with greater responsibility and accountability to the communities. This initiative, the SRSP believed, would provide sustainability to all kinds of inputs, whether provided by the SRSP, government departments or other organizations. The basic theme behind this was to decentralize the responsibility from the 'Social Organizer' to local activists. The SRSP also pledged to introduce certain methods which could enable the 'Regional Programme Officers' (RPOs) to establish direct contacts with such local activists. In addition, the RPOs would be responsible to train such activists and approach them without the need of social organizers. The reason behind encouraging local activists was to facilitate capacity building among village communities to create and manage institutions at the village level.

The SRSP also intended to evolve and develop the clusters into NGOs, and once this objective was achieved, it would extend support to link them with other support organizations. Finally, these cluster associations, it believed, would emerge as self-reliant

and self-financing institutions, capable of undertaking their own development (SRSP, 1996).

Besides the SRSP, there were some other rural support organizations in Pakistan, as highlighted in the previous chapter, who were, like the SRSP, primarily concerned with extending the message of self-reliance to all people and helping the willing ones to organize themselves (Rural Support Programmes Network, 2002). Such rural support organizations were integrated under one umbrella, namely, the 'Rural Support Programme Network'.

### 5.3.3 Rural support programme network (RSPN)

This central network was established by the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) in 2000 with the financial support of the Department for International Development (DFID), UK. It was composed of 10 rural support organizations, namely, the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme, the Sarhad Rural Support Programme, the Balochistan Rural Support Programme, the Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara, the Lachi Poverty Reduction Project, the Khushali Bank, the National Rural Support Programme, the Sindh Graduate Association and the Thardeep Rural Development Programme.

The aim behind the establishment of this network was to ensure quality of intervention and also to support the RSPs in determining a viable and productive strategy after the expansion of their activities. In the light of the objectives, defined by the RSPN for all RSPs, the rural support programmes did not have a pre-conceived package, but decided their intervention in partnership with organized communities. Their aim was to reduce poverty, mainly with the help of people's own potential. In order to materialize this goal, they believed in organizing communities and supporting them in development activities which the people themselves identified and could undertake. They provided technical and financial support for building village physical infra-structure, provision of micro-credit,

support in natural resource sectors etc. RSPs were working in 80 districts of Pakistan and had, up to June, 2002, formed 34,046 organizations and completed 13,533 PIs (Rural Support Programmes Network, 2002).

### 5.3.4 Components of the SRSP

The SRSP, as mentioned above, worked in various components/issues and, therefore, employed various categories of staff for undertaking them. The way the SRSP claimed to perform these activities, as reflected in its documents, is presented below, in order to highlight its working mechanism and so that any gap between its theory and practice can be analysed in chapter VIII. The components are:

- Social Mobilization/Organization
- Productive Investment (Physical/Productive Infra-structure)
- Credit and Enterprise Development
- Natural Resource Management
- Gender Issues
- Social Sector
- Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

#### (a) Social mobilization

This component was concerned with mobilizing people towards the formation of local based organizations to carry out, in the long term, their activities themselves and struggle for sustainable development. To attain this objective, the SRSP believed in building the capacity of organizations to make them self-governing, self financing and self-reliant institutions capable of managing their development agenda on a sustainable basis. It, therefore, provided training to the activists and particularly emphasised the development of

their management skills. To form organizations and to promote their sustainability, social organizers, the SRSP claimed, held regular meetings with them until all the members got an equal chance of expressing themselves. The efficacy of this process was demonstrated to participants when their true needs were addressed through their own efforts. Among the organizations, genuine leadership was developed. Regular contact, it believed, was necessary to maintain the quality of management capacity of the organizations, especially that of the activists.

The SRSP, according to SRSP (1999), continued regular contacts with the organizations until they were fully mature and could stand on their own. It claimed that to make organizations more sustainable, it regularly contacted them and provided them with training and any required technical support. However, the theory was that the frequency of contacts would gradually be reduced as organizations became fully mature and sustainable. It was expected that after the 5$^{th}$ year of organizations, networks of activists and secondary level organizations and joint ventures would start to emerge and become able to handle development initiative independently by themselves.

The SRSP, besides holding meetings and identifying the genuine leadership, also focused on motivating people towards savings. It insisted on savings in order to develop among the people their own indigenous resources and also to provide needy people with access to their own resources for credit on a collateral basis. It encouraged 'internal lending' with some interest, for the purpose of increasing overall savings (SRSP, Ibid).

**(b) Productive investment (physical/productive infra-structure- PI)**

The productive infrastructure, as explained in chapter VI and VII, played an important role in the SRSP's intervention in the field. The SRSP, according to its claims, strengthened organizations by participating in their design and implementation. Generally,

only one PI was given to one organization. However, in the case of district Mansehra, the SRSP had changed its policy and approved additional schemes to one and the same organization. The reason for this change of policy was that people were in serious need but could not act independently due to their poor economic conditions (SRSP, 1996). The SRSP used PIs as an entry point for the formation of organizations in the start of the work in any area and subsequently encouraged the people to take interest in following the footprints of its philosophy (SRSP, 1995). The objectives of the SRSP in giving PIs were to strengthen the organizations by involving all of their members in the identification, implementation and on-going maintenance of projects; to build their capacity for future larger projects; and to raise productivity and thereby the income of the members of the organizations.

A PI, according to the 1980 Human Resource Development report, was an investment in organizations and was based on the principle of equity, productivity and sustainability. The benefits of PIs, it believed, were not required to be utilized by certain groups. Rather, their benefits were needed to benefit all the community members. They were also required to enhance local productivity and were to be sustained by people themselves. The SRSP, it claimed, enabled organizations' members to identify their PIs independently by themselves. With the aim of ensuring the participation and agreement of all the members, the SRSP held a series of dialogues with them. It also claimed that staff members helped and mobilized the members to form different consensus-based committees for different PI- related tasks, independent of any internal[1] or external[2] pressure (see ideal project cycle for more details in chapter V) (SRSP,1999).

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[1] 'Internal' here refers to the influence of any particular person(s) in the organization.
[2] 'External' here refers to the influence of any staff member or any other person not belonging to the same organization.

The SRSP believed that it encouraged the concept of ownership among the people by empowering them to decide PI-related activities and by their contribution, as a requirement, to the project's completion. The existing share of communities in the project, funded by PPAF, was 20 percent either in cash or in kind. Those communities who were unable to contribute in cash were required to contribute either in the form of unskilled labour or by supplying local material for the construction of the schemes. The SRSP did not believe in distributing the PIs among the organizations if they did not fulfil its set requirements (see chapter VI for detail). Its official policy was to give PIs to organizations if such PIs contributed towards the productivity of the area; benefited the majority of the people without any discrimination; and were sustainable, i.e., if the organizations could manage them by themselves after completion (SRSP, 1995).

**(c) Credit and enterprise development programme**

The SRSP initiated credit schemes for organizations to help them increase their productivity as well as to assist the poor to develop micro-enterprises and stand on their own. The purpose of the SRSP was to extend an easy credit disbursement to the rural poor at their doorsteps. Besides, it encouraged community savings and internal lending to the needy people. The specific objectives of the credit programme were to provide easy access to credit for the rural poor for productive purposes; to establish a permanent local pool to disburse credit to needy people as a collateral base; and also to encourage people to initiate micro-enterprise development initiatives for improving their financial conditions.

The SRSP had a set procedure for the disbursement of credit to the communities. It required the leaders of the organizations to submit the loan application (proposal) to the office of the needy member(s) approved by 75 percent of the total members. Thereafter, the social organizer confirmed the scheme's feasibility and decided whether or not to approve

it. Presidents and secretaries of the organizations were made responsible for the submission of the resolution, processing the demand/resolution and also ensuring the timely recovery of the credit from the loanees. The SRSP paid 2 percent to the leaders, from the service charges of the loan, for processing the loan and for its recovery. Besides leaders, social organizers also monitored the loans and struggled for their timely recovery.

**(ca) Delivery of credit**

The SRSP disbursed credit mostly through cheques in the name of respective MCOs/WCOs, in the presence of around 60-70 members of organization. The tenure of loan repayment ranged from six to thirty months, depending upon the purpose for which the credit was needed. A second loan was given only when the organization had recovered almost 50 percent of the first loan. The loan given during my field work had decreased from 20 thousand rupees[3] to 5 thousand rupees. Similarly, the mark-up rate per annum had increased from 16 percent in 1999 to 20 percent and the same rate applied until 2003-4. The SRSP provided loans to members without requiring any legal documents from the loanees, however, they made them socially bound[4] to repay. In case of failure to repay loans, it stopped any further intervention (as it stopped working in Charsadda) in the area concerned.

**(d) Human resource development**

This component was concerned with developing the skills of the organizations' members involved in the development process. Besides training to the organizations' members, it also provided training to its own staff and staff members of the government line departments.

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[3] Rupee refers to the currency of Pakistan.
[4] It provided loans to organizations' members on a social collateral basis.

**(da) Villagers/ organizations' members training**

It concentrated on making organizations' members aware of its development philosophy, development issues and approaches. It equipped (see chapter VI for further explanation) them with the skill to work as motivators and technical resource persons for their communities. Its goal was to develop a cadre of leaders (activists) to act as a link between NGOs and the communities and also between the government line departments and their communities. It also aimed at providing training to communities to strengthen their abilities, increase their productivity, and realize self-reliance.

**(db) SRSP's staff development**

The SRSP, as it believed, exposed staff members to the new knowledge in participatory development and also to its new policies and procedures. The training given to them went beyond mere introduction to the different concepts. It improved staff skills in communication and writing, social organization, training of activists, planning, and application of participatory rural appraisal techniques.

**(dc) Networking and collaborating with other development agencies**

Besides the provision of training to communities and its staff members, the SRSP, as it claimed, also conducted community participatory 'sensitization' workshops for government line departments staff. Training was also given to the members of other organizations working almost in the same direction. In order to reduce the burden on social organizers, it claimed that it trained some activists as 'Master trainers', by providing them with intensive and extensive training.

**(e) Social sector**

This component was primarily concerned with improving the health of rural communities. The SRSP, for this purpose, created linkages between communities and line departments, NGOs or any other organization working on the same theme. The objectives of the social sector are:

- To raise the health knowledge and skills of the community through health awareness and thereby to reduce morbidity and mortality in the disadvantaged rural women and children;
- To establish an effective coordination with the government and non-government health, education, family planning and water and sanitation service providing agencies and to link them with women community organizations.
- To raise women's literacy rate and to ensure quality education in the programme area by demonstrating effective community participation and ownership of education activities at the grassroots;
- To incorporate women in the mainstream development process as equal partners.

**(ea) Health, nutrition and family planning**

The objective of this programme was to improve the basic health of the rural communities. In order to achieve this objective, the SRSP had a set strategy, including creating health awareness in rural community; training of male and female health workers; and developing linkages between local health workers and government health departments. It trained the health workers, selected by their respective communities, in health education and expected them to link up communities with health services agencies. The health workers were expected subsequently to be responsible to work as change agents and to

familiarise the people with health problems, nutrition and the merits and techniques of family planning.

**(eb) Education programme**

Keeping in view the dearth of educational institutions in rural areas, The SRSP also incorporated the component of improving education in the rural areas through the introduction and motivation of communities towards community schools. It provided social guidance to communities and also extended any help required by communities in initiating such educational institutions. The communities, it reports, held such schools independently and ran them through a committee 'Village Education Committee' (VES). The committee was responsible to determine the fee structure, teachers salaries and to maintain each and every activity pertaining to its functioning. The SRSP claimed that it paid the first year salary to the teacher and in the second year its contribution came to 50 percent, while in the third year and onward, the cost was independently born by communities.

**(f) Planning, monitoring, evaluation and research**

This section provided support to all sections of the SRSP in planning, monitoring and evaluating their activities. Besides, it conducted field monitoring and maintained records. It also carried out activities, such as producing annual reviews, bi-annual, quarterly and monthly progress reports. In short, it was responsible for reporting each and every record of the SRSP's activities. Some of these reports were made public, while others, concerned with SRSP's progress in attaining donors' targets were sent to the donor agencies.

**(g) Natural resource management**

This component was concerned primarily with shifting the subsistence agriculture to improve agriculture processes so as to enable the farmers to earn more income and improve their economic conditions. The SRSP introduced new improved seeds and demonstrated their efficiency through demonstration plots. Besides, it motivated the communities for adopting the new agricultural practices. It also introduced improved varieties of livestock to improve the rural income. Communities were motivated, the SRSP claimed, towards food preservation practices, grain storage, mushroom cultivation, kitchen gardening practices and on and off-season vegetable growing. In the forestry sector, it encouraged communities towards the establishment of nurseries and forestation. It also demonstrated new crops, such as wheat, maize, sugarcane, pulses, vegetables etc. In order to enable the rural communities to utilize the introduced seeds and technology, it provided extensive training in agriculture.

**(h) Gender issues**

The SRSP, after recognizing the need to involving women more fully in the development process, replaced its 'women in development' section by 'Gender and Development' in 1996. It sought to bring women into the mainstream of village development through improving their social and economic condition and status. Its objective was to address the gender inequalities that existed between men and women with specific attention towards addressing the practical and strategic needs of rural women. The gender strategy of the SRSP was to address gender at three levels, i.e. the organizational level, the field level and externally through networking with other organizations. At the organizational level, it claimed that staff members were made well acquainted with and trained in undertaking gender-sensitive planning. At the field level, it motivated women to form organizations and also addressed their practical and strategic needs. At the third level,

women were integrated with other organizations for the purpose of reinforcing the concept of gender in every sphere of activity. To empower women (which was the SRSP's goal), it held that it motivated them towards forming their own organizations, so that they might develop, after receiving training and other assistance, skills in management, planning and other related fields. After needs assessment, the SRSP believed that women were provided with the required technical know-how to undertake and implement their activities independent of their men. To build confidence among women, it emphasised the importance of their organizational savings.

### 5.4 Summary of the chapter

This overview of the structure of the SRSP is necessary in order to provide a contextual framework for the critical analysis of participatory development in the subsequent chapters. What I presented in this chapter is based on how the SRSP publicly presents itself.

To encourage participatory development NGOs, such as the SRSP, employing participatory development methodology, a 'Rural Support Programmes Network', comprising 10 RSPs (including SRSP), was established to ensure the quality of intervention. In the NWFP the SRSP was established by the provincial government in 1989 with the objective of evolving community based organizations and empowering them to decide about the SRSP's activities and to ensure consequently, sustainable development. The common principle of the RSPs was that they did not go to the community with a pre-conceived package, but decided programmes in partnership with the local community organizations. Its basic philosophy revolved around community self-reliance, and to achieve this goal, it fostered local skills through its capacity-building programmes to control and utilize their own resources.

The SRSP's activities encompassed various components, such as social mobilization/organization, productive investment (physical/productive infra-structure), credit and enterprise development, natural resource management, gender issues, social sector and planning, monitoring, evaluation and research. It primarily believed in social mobilization as the fundamental step for its core activities to mobilize and encourage people to form organizations to carry out their activities themselves. Similarly, it provided productive infrastructure on a cost-sharing basis with the primary goal of developing among the people the feeling of collective ownership and also to build people's capacity for future larger projects. It encouraged both men's organizations and women's organizations, with the purpose of bringing women into the mainstream of development and rooting out gender inequality. It provided training in different fields to equip communities to meet their needs and properly utilize their existing available resources.

The following chapters provide a critical analysis of the SRSP activities in the field in order to evaluate whether or not and to what extent the SRSP has successfully implemented a programme of PD in NWFP. Before proceeding, however, it is important to point out - in advance - that even at the level of organizational structure and institutional arrangements there is a basic and fundamental problem that violates one of the major principles of PD, namely the flow of information and accountability. As indicated above, evaluation and assessment flows up from the field into the head office, where it is written up into reports for public circulation. However, part of this evaluation process, namely that conducted by and/or for the PPAF and World Bank, remains hidden, just as the precise relationship of the PPAF and World Bank remains largely invisible. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the views of both field staff and ordinary members alike, the presence and influence of the PPAF and World Bank are felt on an everyday basis to constrain in important ways the work of the SRSP.

# CHAPTER SIX

# DATA PRESENTATION: STAFF MEMBERS' VIEWS

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters presented an overview of NGOs in Pakistan and outlined the aims and organizational structure of the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP). This chapter describes in more detail the role of staff members involved in productive infrastructural projects (PIs), and particularly their views and opinions of how the project cycle worked in actual practice. It also reflects my observations and notes relating to the role of the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) in empowering the community to determine the whole project cycle (see chapter 1 for project cycle). The first part of the chapter is concerned with the views of staff members about how each stage of the project cycle worked. The second part reflects their opinions on the issue of the sustainability of the schemes, while the third part presents a discussion of staff members' views of the perceived impediments to participatory development, such as donors' restrictions, monopolization of organizations, political pressure and the credit/loan imbroglio.

## 6.2 Activities performed by the SRSP

As outlined in the previous chapter, the SRSP worked mainly on productive/physical infrastructure projects (hereafter interchangeably used with schemes or projects), and dealt with disbursing credit and training to organizations' members (for details see chapter V). The range of productive/physical infrastructure projects that were offered were as follows:

- water supply schemes (hand pumps, dug wells)
- irrigation channels

- farm to market shingle road
- sanitation
- street pavements
- small dams
- tube wells
- flood protection bund (walls)
- and land-levelling.

The SRSP introduced slightly different schemes in different areas because of the variations in the physical environment and people's needs. According to the SRSP staff, the nature of such schemes was identified and decided by SRSP itself in proposals submitted to the donor agencies. Furthermore, the SRSP, after their approval by the donors, was restricted to following them and, hence, could not initiate and approve any scheme beyond that, even if it was genuinely required by the community and desirable to staff members. The decision to identify such schemes was made at the Head Office level and their final approval was subject to the approval by the donor agencies. Field staff, as is discussed below in this chapter, were limited to implementing from a pre-determined range of schemes those which were feasible in the given time and which also helped them (staff) in attaining a pre-determined target number of community organizations. Credit and training were extended to organizations' members to build their capacity by making them self-reliant in initiating community-based development steps for themselves. The SRSP disbursed credit to the organizations' members to be repaid with 20 percent mark-up after one year. Basic training was sometimes given before project implementation and sometimes during implementation, depending mainly upon the availability of funds. For example, the SRSP provided training in leadership, organization building, social mobilization, proposal writing, gender sensitization, and sometimes, if required, in livestock, education and enterprise development to

organizations' members and also to its staff members. In addition, training was provided to organizations' members to build their capacity, develop among them the spirit of self-help and stimulate their interest in successfully completing their schemes (for further details see chapter V).

## 6.3 Ideal project cycle

As outlined in the previous chapter, the SRSP works according to the participatory development model in which communities (particularly the impoverished sections of society including men and women) are empowered to take control of each stage of the project cycle through consensual decision making processes. The SRSP's vision of the ideal project cycle, as articulated by the SRSP's staff- right from its Chairperson down to the field staff- is described in detail below.

### 6.3.1 Formation of community organizations

The SRSP believed in mobilizing communities to realize the utility of united efforts and to form organizations that would become self-reliant. It believed in confining itself to facilitating and guiding people to take independent initiatives by forming organizations to serve their common needs.

### 6.3.2 Needs identification

The SRSP believed in leaving people free to assess and prioritize needs on a consensual basis. They considered that PIs should only be given to those organizations that held regular meetings and savings and hence met the basic requirements of a viable community organization[1]. Staff suggested that their role was only to ensure community-based needs identification. They were to provide social and technical support, and also to ensure the practicability and sustainability of the projects after the withdrawal of the SRSP.

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[1] SRSP staff specifically used the English term 'gift' in this context. However, what was meant by the term 'gift' was not in fact charity, but rather something to be earned or achieved.

### 6.3.3 Planning

After needs identification, organizations' members were to choose the location of the schemes, such as street, drainage, and also identify the available alternatives for schemes, such as hand pumps etc. This is because members knew better about the most appropriate and easily sustainable alternatives. However, staff members were to examine their feasibility and decide accordingly. The SRSP staff members were to participate with people in surveying project locations. Staff members were to draw the plan in people's presence and to modify it, if required. The final shape of the project proposal and cost was determined after all members reached an agreement. People were allowed to modify the approved design, if they felt the need, at later stages.

### 6.3.4 Implementation

The SRSP encouraged members to form different committees, such as project, audit, operation and maintenance, supervisory and purchase, to complete the scheme and maintain it after completion. To strengthen the sense of responsibility and ownership among the people, members were supposed to contribute 20 percent of the project cost, either in cash or in the form of labour.

### 6.3.5 Evaluation

This stage is composed of monitoring and evaluation. People were to monitor ongoing schemes and modify them, if required, with the help of staff. After the completion of the schemes, members and staff were required to evaluate them in relation to the intended benefits.

On the whole, SRSP staff ideally saw their role as providing technical support and facilitating and guiding people in taking control of the whole project cycle. However, as I discuss in detail below, while this was the staff members' stated aim,

they recognized that there was a discrepancy between their stated ideals and what actually happened on the ground.

## 6.4 Staff members' views about the project cycle's stages

Having outlined staff members' views of the ideal project cycle, the following presents staff members' views of what actually took place during each phase of the project cycle.

### 6.4.1 Formation of community organizations

The SRSP staff said that they often utilized the influence of a 'Focal Person' in motivating people to form a community-based organization, which was a pre-requisite for benefiting from its services. This 'focal person' might be a political leader or wealthy landowner who had influence in their respective area. The 'focal person' acted as an entry point into the area and helped organize an initial 'village-based' meeting of the people of nearby SRSP's intended target area with the SRSP's staff in his *Hujra*.[2] In the first village-based meeting, the SRSP staff introduced its philosophy, procedure and objectives, and employed PRA techniques[3], to help people identify and prioritize their problems that could be addressed by the SRSP (see needs identification below). In many cases, the focal person took the initiative in forming organizations and received the project. Sometimes, a project proposal had already been agreed in advance with the focal person. They also persuaded others (local influential persons) to form organizations to utilize the SRSP services. The majority of the men's community organizations were formed by individuals after they observed other schemes in

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[2] *Hujra* is a specific place, mostly owned by comparatively well-off people, wherein all kinds of activities, such as marriage ceremonies, death ceremony, resolution of conflicts and other issues concerning people of the same area, take place. Both the old and young people sit during free time and exchange views with each other.

[3] PRA (Participatory rural appraisal) in this context refers to a process whereby people were asked to list their problems/needs. Then, they were asked to prioritize their needs and finally they were brought to identify the needs which could be addressed by them.

operation. They approached and consulted staff members about their proposal and afterwards, according to staff members:

> "Social organizers informed them about the mechanism and the process involved in benefiting from the SRSP services" (FGI, Peshawar).

**(a) Formation of women's organizations**

In relation to the formation of women's organizations, Female Social Organizers (FSOs) visited women and informed them about the SRSP and its activities. They encouraged them to form women's community organizations because under the agreement between the SRSP and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF, the funding agency, see chapter V), women's organizations were supposed to comprise 40 percent of all those set up. Normally, women's organizations, which used to be mostly composed of women from one and the same family or place, were formed by their male family members and sometimes by men (who normally led male organizations) from the same neighbourhood, in order to carry out additional schemes. As a staff member expressed:

> "Women's organizations are made by men for completing their incomplete works. Men get the papers signed by women and register their organizations" (Engineer, Abbottabad).

Another staff member reinforced this view that:

> "Their organizations [WCOs] are 'in name' and the actual actors behind them are 'men'" (Senior Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Research Officer, Abbottabad).

These men were usually encouraged by staff members to form their women's organizations. Staff planted in their minds a particular problem/project, in anticipation, and asked them to tell their women to explain the same to the FSO, if she asked about their problems.

On the whole, in almost all of the SRSP's target areas, women were not observed making any independent decisions or participating with men in any activity outside of the household. They were considered responsible for carrying out household activities such as caring for children, cooking, cleaning and maintaining houses, fetching water, caring for cattle, bringing fodder for them, cleaning stables etc. The exception to this was in Abbottabad and Haripur districts, where women, in some cases, were involved in the agricultural fields alongside their men. They fetched water and other things required for household use from outside. Therefore, staff members in Abbottabad replied:

> "Women's participation is increasing in such kind of development activities. Here women are involved in fetching water and doing even the rest of the work relating to their households. They understand their problems more than their men. They are different from women in other areas, and therefore, can decide about forming their own organization themselves" (FGI staff, Abbottabad).

Of course, women were observed as somewhat active in these areas but, according to Staff members, their basic aim was to get a loan or any other possible help from the SRSP. Mostly, those women who had been working in others' houses, or struggling to survive used to utilize its services. However, their participation was generally discouraged. As a staff member expressed in relation to the secretary of WCO, whom I interviewed:

> "The lady who gave you an interview is young and active but nobody likes to marry such women because of their interaction with outside men" (Engineer, Abbottabad).

Women, in fact, were not normally aware of their membership and those who were cited by staff members, were generally quite poor. One of them was educated up to matriculation and faced many problems from her male family members and the men of the neighbourhood. In an FGI, all the women in the WCO appreciated her role, but a male member, sitting there, told me that:

"We asked and also supported her to bring us a hand pump" (FGI, Haripur).

Likewise, the two other women, who were also cited by staff members, were widows and had to knock on any door which could help them to survive with their children.

For staff members the most important thing was to keep increasing the number of organizations at all costs. They, therefore, encouraged men to form, besides male organizations, women's organizations for extra schemes that the men wanted. The reason behind all this, according to a staff member, was that:

> "The SRSP is a target-based organization, and therefore, we have been given a large target number of organization formations which we are to achieve, in any case, in the stipulated time" (Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

Like staff members, who struggled for accomplishing their required target at all costs, people too formed organizations only to utilize their services. They formed organizations and submitted their selected problem to the staff in anticipation. In this connection, staff members explained that:

> "People form organizations merely to attain schemes. People come to our office and tell us, 'we want to form organizations for schemes or credit'. They also assure us by saying, 'We would gather people, if you (staff members) want to see for yourselves'. Some people complete the required documents in advance and bring them to us for a scheme or credit. However, we do visit the site to see whether it reflects the desire of all or of some particular persons" (FGI, Peshawar).

### 6.4.2 Needs identification

After the formation of organizations, members were allowed to choose a problem which was (1) within the SRSP's package and (2) feasible/manageable within a specified time. For ensuring their timely completion, the staff members in anticipation, informed organization members about the time limit for the completion of their proposed schemes. They informed them because, in case of delay, they would not be

able to attain their target in the given time. In addition, the members were not free to choose, even within the SRSP's package because, according to staff members, they might demand a scheme which they might not be able to afford at that time. Staff members also discouraged them from identifying expensive schemes, such as small 'Dams', because of the problem of their sustainability and, most importantly, to enable many organizations to be covered. Hence, they focused on directing members mostly towards small/less expensive schemes, like hand pumps etc. As a staff member explained that:

> "We go to the field with pre-set intentions as how to bring people together on one problem which we can do for them. We try to make them accept our decision. We tactfully deal with them and perform the process, because we have a definite number of schemes and have to manage them in such a way as to make many organizations happy" (FGI, Kohat).

The reason for restricting them to particular problems was due to their struggle to accomplish their set target. Staff members, as indicated above, kept on increasing the organizations and likewise promising schemes to almost all of them, not only to fulfil the demand of the donors but also to ensure the continuation of the funding for their survival. Therefore, staff members did not encourage members to have control in selecting any problem, even within the available package. In relation to this issue, a staff member narrated that:

> "The SRSP is actually following its target imposed by the donor agencies. We cannot let people have full control of selecting any need by themselves" (Project Manager Human Resource Development, Peshawar).

In addition, some staff members further highlighted that:

> "We want to keep the wheel moving and treat organization members like children. We deal tactfully with them and utilize them for our target because we cannot impose our decisions directly. We know about the people and they know about us because of working for so long here. We cannot prolong meetings with members if they do not agree upon the scheme which we can afford for them" (FGI, Kohat).

Besides such restrictions, influential persons dominated the whole needs assessment process and chose/agreed on those schemes which primarily benefited them. They formed organizations by incorporating the names of their tenants and poor people and received schemes for their own vested interests. Staff members, while recognizing this fact, could not discourage their monopoly because of their focus on target accomplishment. If they refused these people, according to staff members, they might not be able to work in their respective areas and this in turn could have adverse effects on their overall organization (SRSP) and its activities. In relation to the domination of these elites in needs assessment, staff members expressed that:

> "Need is identified by some political leaders/elites of the area and ordinary members remain behind the screen. Poor people cannot dare to speak before them. Sometimes poor people are asked, in advance, which problem will be indicated in the meeting with staff members. They are not approached because of such influential people's hold and, therefore the sense of community does not evolve among them" (FGI, Peshawar).

Similarly, another staff member explained the situation by elaborating that:

> "In any organization, only a few people decide and nowhere in the world is it possible that all people can have equal share in decision-making. In each society there are different tiers and different potentials[4]. Theory and practice never move together. In theory we are supposed to honour the say of all but in practice it is quite impossible and also to more extent dependent upon the resources of the SRSP" (Project Manager Human Resource Development, Peshawar).

### (a) Needs identification in women's organizations

As far as women's organizations are concerned, they were formed, as described above, and dominated by men. Right from the formation till the completion of the projects, men used to make all the decisions and women were found as mere recipients. Men assessed needs on their behalf and made proposals to the staff members for approval. On the other hand, staff members, for the sake of fulfilling their target, as described above, encouraged male family members towards the formation of their

[4] Different potentials here mean that not all the people have equal potentials.

women's organizations. Staff members usually approached women to encourage them to form organizations, after they had sought the consent of their male family members. As a staff member said:

> "The basic focus of staff remains on male community organizations because women's organizations formation depends upon the consent of men. After men show consent, Social Organizer tells male members to ask their women to form organizations and to ask the Female Social Organizers for a road construction, for instance, for them (men). In reality women may need a water supply scheme or any other scheme, not road construction, but they cannot oppose their men. Staff members do accordingly to cover their target" (Gender Monitoring Officer, Abbottabad).

In addition, another staff member further verified the fact that:

> "Recently I completed four projects, three drinking water supply schemes and one small bridge construction. In the first meeting, women insisted on a drinking water supply scheme but in the meantime an elderly person came and asked them to ask for bridge, and accordingly, in the next meeting the same women insisted on a bridge" (Female Social Organizer, Haripur).

On the whole, women were not been observed deciding about their needs themselves. However, some staff members in District Abbottabad, where women worked alongside their men in agricultural fields, were quite optimistic in making women, through their activities, independent enough to decide about the issues relating to them. They maintained that:

> "Men do dominate women but, however, our efforts are somewhat making them aware about their problems. Their participation in different meetings with FSO not only exposes them to the projects' procedure but also makes them aware of their importance" (FGI, Abbottabad).

### 6.4.3 Planning

Staff members stressed the importance of people's participation in planning for effective project completion and maintenance. A staff member quoted Dr. Akhtar Hamid (whom he called the god-father of participatory development) as saying that:

"Do not take your own technology to people. Rather graft local knowledge into your own planning" (Project Manager Human Resource Development, Peshawar).

Almost the same statement was made by another staff member:

"People's knowledge should not be ignored. People would have heard about technical things if have not done by themselves. An Engineer knows about the technical knowledge required for a scheme, for instance, how much cement and shingle is required, but does not know where it is required. This is only known to local people. If local knowledge is ignored the whole project would fail to achieve the desired objectives" (Regional Programme Manager, Kohat).

After the formal approval of the project by staff members, people normally selected the place for the scheme themselves, while staff members, as they reported, examined the place not only in order to determine its social and technical feasibility but also to ensure the project's utility to all of the people there. For something like street paving, the place could not be changed by the staff, but for projects like hand pumps and dug wells, staff members had to see the social and technical feasibility and if they considered it necessary, changed the location. A staff member, in relation to location selection, indicated that:

"People themselves decide which street or farm to market shingle road should be constructed. We accept their decision because they know better about it. We do not change the place selected by them because it may create problems" (Engineer, Abbottabad).

Similarly, other staff members maintained that:

"We cannot change the place decided by members because they have formed an organization for that purpose. We check the social and technical feasibility of the place selected by them. In schemes like hand pumps, we see its feasibility as to whether the place is accessible to all or not" (FGI, Peshawar).

However, it was observed that while organization members decided on project location, they could not determine the length, cost or final design of the schemes. Their role, according to staff members, was only to choose the location and after that it was up to staff to decide, in relation to the available approved maximum limits of cost for

each and every kind of schemes. Staff members did the measurement in the presence of the members but decided about the cost and final designing exclusively. Staff members argued that since they had to perform many other activities and manage other organizations, they could not give enough time to one organization, to sit for days with communities and incorporate their views in updating the designing. They believed that permitting members to determine the length/size of the schemes could result in demands which could not be covered by them with the available funds. In this connection, a staff member further explained that:

> "We are to estimate the cost of the scheme in relation to our (SRSP) available resources. If the scheme is too expensive then we ask members to change it. People, therefore, must select those schemes which are achievable at little cost, creating no social problem and also implementable by them themselves" (Regional Programme Manager, Abbottabad).

During the planning phase, staff members signed Terms of Partnership (TOP) with organization members and set out each side's responsibilities. Besides, during this stage, various committees, as described above, were formally formed for the implementation of the scheme. The role of such committees was to distribute the responsibilities of scheme completion among the members; to cultivate among them the sense of collective effort; to provide them a system of checks and balances; and to discourage the monopolization of schemes.

However, as in other stages, in planning too, the influential persons (presidents and secretaries) mostly selected the scheme locations and participated with staff members in surveying the place. Staff members, after their selection, made them formally responsible (see chapter V) for each and every thing relating to the scheme's completion or any other activity related to their organizations. Therefore, according to staff members, they exploited the situation for their own interest and selected a location which primarily benefited them.

After the final approval of a scheme by the SRSP management, staff members decided the nature of the material required for the scheme and also determined its cost in accordance with their limitations and set procedure. Staff members informed members about the procedure for changes in their approved scheme. Members were not normally allowed to replace their schemes but could make slight changes if they did not exceed the approved cost and also did not disturb the approved design. The prior permission and agreement of staff members was required, even before making such slight changes. However, the replacement of schemes, according to staff members, was normally discouraged because it could delay the timely completion of the schemes. A staff member elaborated that:

> "People are permitted to change their schemes before approval but are not allowed to change them after they are finally approved by the head office. After their final approval, we get a definite time for their completion. Changing them, at this stage, requires a lot of formal documentation, because it needs to be passed through the respective Social Organization Unit, regional office, head office and so on and so forth. We even discourage change before approval because we have a short time for the completion of each scheme. If any person disagrees to have a road or drainage near his house, we cut the cost from the total determined estimate and continue the work" (FGI, Peshawar).

**(a) Planning in women's organizations**

Women's organizations, as described above, were formed to help both the staff members attain their target, and the community to receive more schemes and other benefits. Men decided, on women's behalf, the schemes' location and participated with staff members in surveying the place for its onward processing. On the whole, women in the target areas were not allowed to participate with men from outside, either in determining the project location or in any other activity. A staff member, admitting this, replied that:

> "In planning no woman participate. They are so much conditioned that they do not dare to participate. For this reason we have been trying to appoint female engineers in the project to ensure women's participation within their houses in planning, but no one has agreed so far" (Gender Monitoring Officer, Abbottabad).

Likewise, another staff member maintained that:

> "In women's organizations, the place is selected by staff after consulting their men, because women do not know anything about the project being identified" (Gender Monitoring Officer, Kohat).

### 6.4.4 Implementation

Organizations' members themselves implemented the schemes and managed the material and labour (see chapter VII for more explanation on the issue of labour). In accordance with ToP, the SRSP provided 80 percent of the total cost, while the community was responsible for the provision of 20 percent, either in cash or in kind. However, members, according to staff, always tried to finish the work within the SRSP's share and rarely paid in cash themselves. Staff members understood the fact but felt satisfied with their target accomplishment. As a staff member elaborated:

> "Poor people cannot afford to pay 20 percent. When we ask presidents and secretaries about members' contribution, they reply that they cannot afford it. When they bring the vouchers of the material bought, we ask them again to show savings, but they say, 'We tried but they refused to pay'. However, we are happy if they can manage completion of their schemes within our money. It is fine also because they worked for three months in scheme completion" (Field Engineer, Haripur).

As described above, staff members gave a particular time for scheme completion and those organizations which completed their schemes in the stipulated time were informally eligible to utilize its other benefits, like credit, training etc. Besides organizations' members involvement in the implementation, staff members too visited the ongoing schemes to ensure their quality and provided technical guidance, if required.

Staff members explained their role by narrating that:

> "We regularly monitor the work and the material used, and check as whether the work is performed in accordance with the specified prescription or not. We provide technical assistance whenever required and stop releasing the next cheque [see chapter VII for the release of cheques by the SRSP's staff to organizations' member] if the work is not up to our mark" (FGI, Peshawar).

Officially, the committees, as mentioned above, were responsible to undertake the whole work jointly, but in practice, the presidents and secretaries of the organizations were dominant in deciding each and every activity during implementation. Staff members admitted their monopoly but believed that their regular visits, particularly during implementation, besides other purposes, were aimed at discouraging their financial embezzlement. Staff members kept exclusive contact with presidents and secretaries and consulted them about the schemes' implementation. Similarly, presidents and secretaries kept them informed about schemes' progress and issues emerging during it. In addition, staff members argued that implementation requires the members to spare time and other resources, which not everybody could do. They further expressed that:

> "Expecting all the members to be capable is something ideal and there may be only a few people who have spare time, resources and management skills" (FGI, Haripur).

Similarly, another staff member maintained that:

> "Of course presidents and secretaries are dominant in the whole process of implementation, because it is wrong to consider all the 30 members to have the same skills and ability. It is nowhere in the world that a poor and rich person may stand together and enjoy the same status" (Gender Monitoring Officer, Abbottabad).

**(a) Implementation in women's organizations**

As in other stages, women were generally not observed anywhere in the implementation of the schemes approved in their names. This was because it required them to purchase material, arrange labour and supervise work, which they could not do in a male-dominated environment. In some cases, their names were included in the committees with men, as a required formality, but in practice men carried out all the activities. Reflecting upon this, a staff member asserted that:

> "For implementation purpose we put the name of an old woman in the supervisory committee, after her consent is sought, but the actual supervision is done by men. Besides, we put the names of elected persons and presidents of the nearby male organizations in the committee as well" (Female Social Organizer, Peshawar).

However, one staff member cited a positive example of women's participation in implementation of a project in *Moza Chow*, a village in Peshawar, where a shingle "farm to market road" was built in the name of two organizations, one men's and one women's organization. For this scheme, joint committees of both men and women were established and:

> "Women participated in deciding about what to purchase. They were fully aware of all the things relating to the schemes. Their awareness reflected their encouragement to participate in decisions and asking about their rights" (Project Manager Gender Section, Peshawar).

Similarly, another staff member also held somewhat supportive views and maintained that:

> "almost everything is done by men for women's organizations but in some cases women (presidents and secretaries in whose names a joint account is opened) have been observed going to banks by themselves, which is of course a change brought by the SRSP" (Female Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

One of the main reasons that these women were reported as having participated in implementation were firstly that in these areas there was no strict emphasis on *Purda*[5] and secondly, that they almost all belonged to one and the same family or neighbourhood.

### 6.4.5 Evaluation

This stage, according to staff members, was formally composed of monitoring and evaluation. Formally, the project and audit committees (however, in practice the

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[5] *Purda* means women covering themselves and avoiding any contact with males other than their families. According to King, Mayhew and Vencent (1998: 446), it means 'a segregation of post-pubescent women from all men outside the immediate family in orthodox Muslims'.

presidents and secretaries) were responsible for the completion and monitoring of the schemes. They kept staff members informed about their progress and also about any problem which occurred during implementation. In addition, staff members, including social organizers, engineers, and sometimes regional programme managers, monitored the ongoing schemes to ensure their successful completion. A staff member further held that:

> "We monitor the work regularly and make minor changes if required, and may stop it in the middle if it does not ensure the desired quality. We also examine whether the work will be completed in its given time. We also check the emergence of any social problem and initiate prompt steps for their solution. In short, we monitor the work to ensure its successful completion" (Engineer, Abbottabad).

In relation to the importance of monitoring, staff members said that their regular evaluation not only ensured the successful and high-quality completion of the scheme but also encouraged their timely completion. A staff member further described that:

> "We regularly monitor the ongoing schemes to see whether the work is done in accordance with the plan and also the material bought is up to the recommended standard. If we did not monitor, then many technical and social problems may arise which the people may not be able to deal with by themselves. We also examine the achievement of the benefits which it was planned to provide to people. If it were not carried on regularly then it might cause number of technical and social problems which may in turn damage our whole intervention. Sometimes, we get strict with people because, if they have a complete free hand, organization members may exploit the scheme for their own vested interests" (Senior Social Organizer, Haripur).

After scheme completion, staff members such as the engineer, PMER and, sometimes external parties (donor agencies) evaluated the schemes. Organizations' members did not participate in any activity held after that. A staff member in this respect clarified that:

> "Organizations' members have nothing to do with evaluation. Only staff members formally evaluate the completed schemes for record purpose" (Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

## 6.5 Summary of staff members' views about the project cycle

In summary, it appears that staff members, to achieve their donors' imposed target, motivated people towards the formation of organizations mainly through local influential persons/leaders. Likewise, men were encouraged, for the sake of attaining the 40 percent WCOs target, to form women's organizations for other schemes or to complete their incomplete work. Women could not bypass their male family members and were reported as following them in the way that was expected. In a few cases, where women were reported as active in the SRSP's activities, it was reported as being mainly due to their extreme poverty and absence of strict observation of *Purda.*

In needs assessment, members had to select a problem that fell within the SRSP's package; however, it was dependent upon the availability of resources. Staff members, therefore, guided them towards those schemes which were feasible and would enable them to accomplish their target. However, even within this limited choice, ordinary members had no say and their names were included simply for the purpose of getting schemes approved. With regard to women's organizations, with few exceptions, men made all the decisions on their behalf. Staff members, due to target pressure, could not ensure that the decision reflected the desire of women members.

In planning, the location for the scheme was decided by the community (influential persons) subject to the resource constraints. In case of street pavement, the location was not changed by staff but in some types of schemes, staff members might change the selected alternative, if they realized it not feasible. Women, generally, did not participate in planning and thus, staff members and male members selected the location on their behalf. Formally, various committees of organizations members were formed to undertake scheme completion collectively; however, normally, presidents and secretaries dominated the decisions at each stage. After selection of the location, staff members surveyed the place and only they drew up the plan and carried out the costing.

They also determined the quality of material to be used and required the community to act accordingly.

After planning, people implemented the whole scheme by themselves. Staff members provided technical support and also ensured work quality and the adoption of the designed procedure. Presidents and secretaries remained dominant and either purchased the material by themselves or delegated the task. Members, mostly, did not pay their 20 percent share in cash and completed the scheme within the SRSP's share. In some places, in WCOs, women's names were included in committees and were involved in some aspects of implementation. In general, however, they did not participate in purchasing material or supervising schemes.

In the evaluation stage, members (particularly presidents and secretaries) monitored the work and reported the ongoing scheme to staff members. However, they did not participate with staff members in the formal evaluation of the schemes after completion.

### 6.6 Staff members' views and perspectives on sustainability

Having presented an overview of staff members description of the way the project cycle works in practice, the following presents the reflections of staff members on sustainability. Sustainability here refers to (1) the maintenance of completed schemes by organizations and (2) to the initiative taken by community organizations, after that, in finding solutions to their own problems. Generally, according to staff members, people did not take any interest in maintaining their schemes after completion. In a very few cases, they were observed maintaining their water supply schemes, such as hand pumps etc. The reasons for such projects' sustainability, according to staff members, were mainly their utilization by a few families, ease of maintenance and non-availability of any substitute for them. Particularly in Abbottabad (a hilly area), where people fetched water from distant areas, people took care of hand pumps. However, on

the whole, in most of the target areas, many hand pumps had become non-functioning immediately after completion, due to the easy availability of other sources of water.

On the other hand, no care was taken of streets and drainage. Their maintenance entailed a significant cost which the people could not afford. Staff stressed that people maintained only those schemes which were needs-based and easily maintainable. A staff member in this respect elaborated that:

> "An actual need-based scheme (particularly hand pump) is more sustainable because people realize the non-availability of any other alternative for it" (FGI, Peshawar).

Similarly, other staff members reported that:

> "Only those projects are sustainable which are need-based and easily maintainable like, hand pumps" (FGI, Abbottabad).

Of course, there were some factors, as described in needs assessment, which did not enable the people to identify their actual needs. In addition to them, staff members highlighted some other factors which inhibited the identification of needs-based schemes. The first reason, according to staff members, was that they could not employ, due to target pressure, the required process of community mobilization to help all the members to reach their common actual needs. Some staff members in this context replied:

> "We should not make the decision in the first meeting with the members and should follow the complete process of organization building. But, we have so many external pressures that make us unable to follow the whole required process" (FGI, Kohat).

The second reason, according to staff members, was that presidents and secretaries selected the problems and monopolized the whole process and did not let the ordinary members prioritize their own needs. Some of them further elaborated this issue and replied:

> "It goes wrong from the beginning when the decision is made by *Nazims* or influential persons [presidents and secretaries], not reflecting people's actual needs" (FGI, Haripur).

After the completion of the projects, I observed hardly any independent work done by the members themselves in solving problems in their locality. Staff members themselves denied that any independent step was taken by the organizations' members for the solution of their problems. Staff members believed that organizations were mostly formed by *'Ghanrkapan'*,[6] (theives): who knew how to earn/embezzle money by any means; and who avoided taking any step for community welfare. However, a few of the staff members in some of the research areas indicated that there were some organizations that had done something with the help of other organizations/agencies. They mentioned that:

> "Some organizations' members have done internal lending [this refers to loans given by organizations' members to their needy members from their organizations' savings], developed nurseries for sale, and also established small organizations, within their localities, for getting loans or schemes from line departments, the community infra-structure programme (CIP), and World Bank. The reason behind it is that the SRSP has been working here for a long time and has demonstrated its potential. Community organizations have become similarly, quite strengthened due to the SRSP's capacity building programmes and other development organizations interventions" (FGI, Kohat).

In addition, another staff member cited an instance of a combined organization, of one men's and one women's organization, which had been given a combined scheme of a protection wall by the SRSP to stop their farms being eroded by rain, flood etc. In relation to this, the staff member highlighted that:

> "After construction of protection wall, members started utilizing the water for irrigation purpose. They also took credit from Bank of Khyber[7] and established a 'Tube well'. They utilized it for irrigation and also for supplying water to the nearby villages on payment and earned income for their own organization" (Project Manager Gender Section, Peshawar).

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[6] "*Ghanrkapan*" is a *Pashto* word used for 'thieves'. It was used by a 'Female Social Organizer' in an FGI, Peshawar for the founders of community organizations.

[7] Bank of Khyber, besides its normal transactions, gave loans for small enterprises and development initiatives.

### 6.6.1 Sustainability in women' organizations

As far as women's organizations are concerned, they, in nearly all cases, had neither maintained their schemes nor initiated any independent development step. However, some staff members cited an instance of a women's organization where the president, being a widow and having no source of income, had initiated a nursery for income generation. Similarly, another staff member reported that:

> "on the whole, women's organizations have not initiated any development linkage by themselves, except in a few cases where they have developed their independent linkages with other departments and have also got their organizations registered with them" (Gender Monitoring Officer, Kohat).

In addition to organizations' members lack of interest in maintaining schemes and initiating independent development steps, they mostly did not take interest in holding meetings[8], either among themselves or with staff members. According to staff members, they lost interest in meetings after they completed their schemes. However, they were reported as holding meetings with staff members whenever they required credit or other benefits from the SRSP. Similarly, in most of the active organizations, no up-to-date record of savings was observed, but they maintained a shared account for the purpose of securing their eligibility[9] for other packages that might be announced by the SRSP at a later date. It was observed that the organizations' members did not know the logic (see chapter VII) of meetings and savings and therefore, most of the staff members suggested the need of proper mobilization to change their minds to realize the significance of savings. They also proposed that if the need is real:

> "People may continue saving for its ongoing maintenance" (Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Research Officer, Kohat).

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[8] Regularity in meeting and saving by the organization members were considered as the indicators of their being active. Staff members, therefore, stressed regularity of meetings, even after the completion of the scheme, to share common problems and also to identify a workable solution for them collectively.

[9] SRSR extended its services, such as credit, training or any other facility which it might initiate later, only to those organizations that held a relatively up-to-date shared account.

In summary, it was found that schemes were normally not maintained by the people, mainly because they did not reflect the actual needs of all the members. The reasons which checked the location of needs-based schemes were presidents' and secretaries' monopolization and lack of implementation of the organization-building and needs identification process by staff members. Only those schemes were reported to be sustainable which, besides being needs-based, were less expensive and for which there was no substitute, such as drinking water schemes.

In some cases, members maintained their schemes and also did some development work, as reported by staff, either through their elected leaders or through other agencies working in their areas. Nevertheless, most of the organizations, claiming to be active, were waiting for other schemes/benefits and did not initiate any step exclusively for their own development. They did not take an interest in meetings and savings, but maintained a joint account for the purpose of taking advantage of any of the SRSP's benefits at a later time.

## 6.7 Issues raised by staff members in influencing people' empowerment

Staff members, as reflected above, were aware of the gap between the theory and practice of participatory development, a gap which, as outlined above, led to a lack of sustainability. In reflecting on the gap between theory and practice, staff raised a number of key issues which are discussed below:

### 6.7.1 Donors' restrictions

Donor agencies, according to staff members, sanctioned projects to the SRSP on certain conditions. The SRSP had to attain their target in a specific time period and in accordance with a set procedure. The donors, hence, pushed the SRSP to accomplish the target by compromising on the adoption of participatory development practice. Staff

members themselves considered their approach as target-specific, but blamed the donors for this. They further explained that:

> "Donors are concerned with target not with the process, whether it is properly followed or not. We, while going to the field, are least bothered about the interest and number of people present in the meeting, because we are only concerned with achieving the set target and have to get the agreement signed from the people in any way. Our efficiency is target accomplishment and donors, too, inspect target accomplishment not the process or quality in work. Besides, the project remains for a limited time and due the donor pressure, the process cannot be followed" (FGI, Haripur).

In addition, another staff member maintained that:

> "Donors believe in short term policies and insist on target achievement. If they are sincere about empowering people, then they should initiate a consistent long term policy so that intervention may, particularly, be based on sustainable community organizing". (Human Resource Development Officer, Peshawar)

It was observed that people used to come with completed documents, required for a scheme, to the SRSP office, to seek schemes for themselves. Staff members did not have enough time to follow the required organization-building process and to ensure that the proposal reflected the views of all members. They usually encouraged people, as described in organizations' formation stage, to form organizations to attain their required target. All of the staff members criticized the donor agencies and some of them also criticized the SRSP for seeking such target oriented projects which were contrary to their participatory development slogan/claims. In continuation, they asserted that:

> "80 percent of the fault is on the part of donor agencies by dictating us and 20 percent on the part of the SRSP by taking the project without evaluating staff members' efficiency and capacity as to whether they would be able to perform it by laying a perfect organizational foundation. The SRSP takes a project from donor agencies with all conditionalities for its own survival, which in turn damages the whole process of community-based development" (FGI, Kohat).

At the time, the SRSP was working on the project delivered by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (see chapter V). Almost all of the staff members considered PPAF as target-specific and as compromising on quality for quantity. Some of them narrated that:

> "PPAF has given us a target and we are unable to follow the process of organization building in this limited targeted time. The process may sometimes take two months or more to identify the right people and the actual problem, but we can not do so because we have to achieve the target" (FGI, Peshawar).

### 6.7.2 Pressure/burden on staff members

It was observed that field staff members, in particular, were overburdened by recovery of loans, forming organizations, and managing a greater number of organizations. They could not get time out to approach the needy organizations on time and therefore, according to staff members, they were hijacked by presidents and secretaries. Staff members believed that due to shortage of time, they could neither properly mobilize people nor rightly assess their actual needs and, therefore, neither their schemes nor organizations could be sustained. To reform the situation, a staff member proposed that:

> "An SO, to carry out better follow up, should have only 30 organizations. Most of the time organization members require our services/help but we cannot give it because we remain involved in credit recovery, developing linkages etc., and managing almost more than 300 organizations. We are unable to give proper time to each and every organization to ensure their viability" (Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

In addition to the work burden, the number of field staff was quite insufficient to properly deal with each and every organization and to provide them with timely and adequate feedback. In relation to the ratio of staff members and population covered, the SRSP's Chairperson reported that:

> "300 staff is managing almost 1 million in each of the clusters [region]" (Chairperson, SRSP).

Staff members, here, included all staff members, including menial and office staff, while the burden on field staff, i.e., (F)SOs and field engineers was found to be far greater. In each region (SRSP normally distributed its target areas by regions, see for example chapter III and V) there were two to three each of SOs, FSOs, and engineers. They shouldered the whole field responsibility and were accountable to their superiors and the community as well. As a staff member reported:

> "We sometimes hide from community people because the decisions, made by us with people, are refused to be maintained by our high-ups due to financial constraints or some other unknown reasons" (Female Social Organizer, Haripur).

Likewise, another staff member maintained that:

> "Field staff are always stuck up in the middle of management staff, political leaders, determined target and community. Management stress on efficiency [target accomplishment] and we, likewise, struggle to achieve it on time. In such circumstances, we cannot follow the exact organization building process, and so, impose schemes on people which are not 'demand driven'. We have to keep all the people- community, elites of the area, and political leaders- happy and also to obey the directions of influentials" (Female Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

### 6.7.3 Political pressure

It has been described above that elected leaders/elites influenced the decisions of the SRSP at both district and union council level. Most of the staff members, having experienced the negative repercussions of leaders involvement, criticised them and held them responsible for the failure of their intervention. As a staff member in the management flatly uttered:

> "Political involvement has always sabotaged the SRSP's grassroots development theory". (Project Manager Credit and Enterprise development, Peshawar)

Political leaders used to specify the areas for the SRSP intervention (see also chapter VII for more detail), mainly for the purpose of strengthening their political hold. They asked the people to form organizations for schemes. In some cases, they directly led the organizations in the capacity of either president or secretary. Due to their direct

influence, local people, instead of contacting staff members, contacted such leaders and received schemes. In relation to this issue, a staff member reflected that:

> "Members of any organization may not understand the philosophy, process and utility of their organization, if the scheme has been given to them through elected person. In such cases, people think that we voted Mr. (X) and he did it for us, nothing else" (Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Research Officer, Kohat).

These influential people, according to staff members, did not let the poor people develop their links with the SRSP or to initiate any independent development step. Almost all the staff members criticized their intervention but believed that avoiding them could result in carrying adverse effects on their activities (see chapter VII for further details). As one staff member maintained:

> "Local leaders, in most cases, determine not only the schemes but also the areas and, we cannot sustain political pressure for a long time due to its ensuing adverse effects on our activities. It is a wrong step but, we are helpless in this respect" (Social Organizer, Kohat).

However, on the other hand, despite the elites' self-interested intentions and staff members' discontent over their involvement, some staff members preferred their inclusion in their activities, mainly to help them in target attainment. They sought their help whenever they faced any problem and followed their guidance at almost every stage. It is pertinent to note here that under PPAF policy, according to staff members, they were not required to work through political leaders but in practice, they mostly worked as was desired by them. Those who preferred their inclusion rationalized that:

> "Many local elected persons are and have been our organizations members and we are trying to utilize their services. They have disentangled us many times from different problems" (FGI, Kohat).

Similarly, other staff members insisted that:

> "Political leaders should be involved in the process because they, due to being elected from the same area, take more interest in its development. If they did nothing for their area, how would they face the people?" (FGI, Peshawar).

### 6.7.4 Lack of ordinary members' interest/awareness

Most of the members, as described above, were unaware of the details of their schemes' completion. They in almost all the cases remained behind the scenes and took no interest in responding to my questions about their schemes (see next chapter). They, likewise, indicated mostly that their presidents and secretaries, and sometimes the elected people, had done everything. In relation to their indifferent attitude, staff members' views were observed as mainly focused on two factors responsible for that i.e., donors' SRSP relationship and the leaders of the organizations.

With regard to donor agencies, they held that due to their pre-determined target and definite time, they could not reach the ordinary members as they should and so took an approach which could ensure their target accomplishment. A staff member further elaborated this point and highlighted that:

> "We prepare 'parrots' [It refers to making people learn few words but without the understanding of their meaning or philosophy] and do *Jirga* [it here refers to staff members' efforts in motivating and requesting the influential person to accept their activities] only on the influential persons of the area and take them into our confidence. We ask people to remember the name of the implementing organization and the donor agency so that they will be able to repeat it before the donors, whenever they visit the area" (Senior Female Social Organizer, Abbottabad).

Likewise, in relation to the role of organizations' leaders, staff members said that presidents and secretaries took interest in their organizations only for their own interests. They, as has been described earlier, independently took all the decisions, and ordinary members did not know or understand anything relating to their projects. The Regional Programme Manager, Kohat confirmed this by saying that:

> "The reason for ignorance/unawareness, on the part of members, is the hijacking of organizations by presidents and secretaries. Members' regularity in meetings and the overall organizations' sustainability would be possible if they focused on the overall community benefits".

Similarly, some other staff members further elaborated that:

> "there are many factors responsible for members' lack of interest like, (1) members get defaulters after not paying the loan and so hide (2) when schemes is given to them through political leaders (3) people are poor and can not spare time for community based activities, and (4) the inability of SO in not rightly doing community building" (FGI, Peshawar).

Almost all the staff members admitted the neglect of ordinary members in the decisions pertaining to their schemes. However, they held that the SRSP, in the prevailing restricted circumstances, was helpless to implement the grass-root development theory properly. They insisted that ordinary members, in particular, were not mentally ready to understand the philosophy of shared work. For evolving the sense of self-help among them, they suggested the long term policy on the part of donors, proper mobilization and the continuation of schemes up to at least three to one and the same organization. They believed that schemes' continuation would enable the theory to reach to their roots, resulting in development of a spirit of community-based initiatives. As a staff member quite optimistically maintained that:

> "The first step would be awareness and in the last stage they would develop the sense of self-help" (Project Manager Credit and Enterprise Development, Peshawar).

### 6.7.5 Monopolization of community organizations

Here, monopolization refers to the dominance of the presidents and secretaries in organizations. It was observed in almost all the organizations that such people dominated all the decisions and maintained exclusive contacts with staff members. They were also empowered to nominate and endorse members for training and credit. Staff members also listened to them and did not consult the ordinary members after the formal selection of the presidents and secretaries. Staff members, in accordance with the SRSP's policy, issued cheques only in their names and made them responsible for the timely completion of the schemes. They admitted these people's egocentric

intentions and hold, but claimed they could not avoid their pressure. As some staff members narrated that:

> "Decisions are made by a few [presidents and secretaries] because they own resources, agricultural land and enjoy a comparatively higher status. We can not ignore them because they may create problems for us in the area" (FGI, Kohat).

In addition, some staff members held that:

> "Organizations are formed by some people [presidents and secretaries] for certain interests like credit, schemes and training" (FGI, Peshawar).

In addition, a social organizer in the same FGI further uttered a proverb in *Pashto* language[10] concerning poor people (here mostly the ordinary members), "*Da Ghareeb Pa Bang Sok Kalima Na Wayee*", "nobody would say *Kalima* on the public call of the poor". This saying refers to the fact that normally when the 'public call' (*Azan*) is given in the mosque, then immediately people recite *Kalima* (the words spoken normally by Muslims at the start of anything). Thus, the proverb means that if a demand is made by a poor person, then nobody pays heed to it.

### 6.7.6 Credit/loan imbroglio

In addition to the above mentioned factors, credit schemes[11] were observed to be negatively affecting the SRSP's activities. The SRSP stopped working in its first target area (Charsadda district) following its failure to recover loans made there. Failure of recovery had grim effects on the staff as well as on its development theory. A staff member held that:

> "Problems have been created by credit disbursement and its recovery. We are all the time running after members (defaulters). Having taken loans, they hide and so, in such circumstances, how can we focus on maintaining organizations?" (Engineer, Abbottabad).

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[10] *Pashto* language, according to King, Meyhew and Vencent (1998: 42) is spoken mainly in North West Frontier Province and northern Balochistan Province in Pakistan.
[11] Credit scheme was an essential component of the donor (PPAF) agency.

In almost every area, staff members were obsessed with credit recovery and had almost no time for organizations. As in Charsadda district, the SRSP had also lost a huge amount in Nowshera district.[12] In relation to this set-back, a staff member described that:

> "We were asked to deliver a huge amount of credit among the needy people in a short specified time, which we could not perform in the right way. We were asked by the district *Nazim*[13] (elected administrator) to distribute it among his supporters in the target area. Likewise, we performed the same because we could not find the needy people in the given time and also could not refuse, for our survival, the district *Nazim's* directions" (Senior Social Organizer, Peshawar/Nowshera).

In relation to its negative effect, a staff member insisted that:

> "By credit, an implementing organization puts people in a vicious circle from which they cannot get out easily" (Social Organizer, Kohat).

Owing to its tremendous losses in almost all the target areas, the SRSP temporarily stopped credit disbursement, during my field days, in two of the districts and negotiated with the donor agency for either removing the credit component altogether or relaxing its procedure and conditions. However, up to that time, they had not reached any final decision.

### 6.7.7 Field staff capacity

On the whole, the SRSP staff were quite knowledgeable and clear about their assignments. However, some field staff members lacked community organization related knowledge/expertise. They carried out the activities as mere formalities and without fully understanding their philosophy and their relationship with the socio-cultural elements. In relation to this, staff members stressed that:

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[12] Nowshera district is bordered by Peshawar on its west. SRSP has recently started work here in two of its union councils.

[13] The District *Nazim* was indirectly elected by the people and was responsible for the whole administration and management of the district. At the district level, he was assisted by an indirectly elected *Naib Nazim*. Similarly, at the lower level, there were the indirectly elected town *Nazims* and *Naib Nazims* and directly elected union council *Nazim* and *Naib Nazim*.

> "Staff, particularly field staff, must have relevant qualification and professionalism to rightly understand the cultural set-up and also know the different intricately woven determinants influencing human actions and behaviour" (FGI, Haripur).

Some staff members also believed that professional staff could know the skills as how to asses the actual needs of both men and women. They proposed that the staff should have been skilful enough to discourage the dominance of anybody in the organizations. In addition, some other staff members suggested that:

> "Staff members should be quite tactful and follow the process/procedure once a scheme is given to any organization, otherwise the whole idea would go to waste" (FGI, Peshawar).

### 6.8 Summary of the chapter

It appears from the evidence presented and explained above that staff, in order to attain their target, did not follow the required process of organization formation and utilized the services of influential persons to encourage people to form organizations for schemes. They normally approved those schemes which they could cover within their available resources. Throughout the project cycle organizations' members exercised limited power because the final decision was normally made by the staff in accordance with their limitations. Among the organizations, only the presidents and secretaries (who were usually influential and who formed organizations mostly for their own self-interests) monopolized almost all the decisions and were formally responsible to staff for each and every activity. Women's organizations were formed by men, usually at the instigation of staff, in order to attain the 40 percent target of WCOs. Men, on their behalf, usually made each and every decision right from the formation of their organizations to the stage of their schemes' completion. Organizations' members, normally, did not maintain their schemes mainly due to the reason that they did not reflect the actual/common needs of all the members. In addition, organizations'

members were generally found as not to have initiated any independent step towards the solution of their problems.

A number of issues inhibited the materialization of the actual theory of participatory development. Staff consistently felt that donor agencies were pushing them to merely attain pre-determined targets within a given, limited time frame. Field staff, in particular, besides target pressure, were burdened by having to manage more than 300 organizations at a time. They could not get enough time to reach each and every organization at the right time, and therefore, most organizations either died out or were hijacked by a few persons for their vested interests. In addition, political leaders influenced their decisions and refusal to accede to their demands could lead to the SRSP's entry into their areas being blocked.

Ordinary members were mostly unaware of the way their schemes had been completed. Their unawareness was mainly due to their being ignored by organizations' leaders and staff members. Presidents and secretaries, besides being powerful, also carried staff members' support by contacting and consulting them at each and every stage of the scheme. Besides being forming organizations, they monopolized the whole process, mainly to attain their own vested interests. The effectiveness of staff members to approach the needy organizations was largely jeopardised by their deep engagement in recovering credit from defaulters. Failure in credit recovery resulted in the SRSP withdrawing its activities permanently from one of its districts. A few field staff members were not well-versed in community building theory, its philosophy, and the different societal dynamics and, therefore, could not properly ensure common needs.

Having outlined staff members' views of the way project cycle was carried out and their perspectives on the issues restraining the implementation of participatory development theory, the following chapter investigates the views of men and women who are members of community organizations in terms of the project cycle.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# DATA PRESENTATION: ORGANIZATIONS' MEMBERS' VIEWS

## 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented staff members' views of how the project cycle worked in actual practice. This chapter supplements that by describing the views of men's and women's organizations' members, along with my observations, of how they perceived the implementation of the project cycle. To facilitate the comparison of organization and staff members' views, this chapter is structured in a similar way to the previous chapter. The first part of the chapter describes members' views on the different aspects of the project cycle. The second part presents their perspectives on the issue of the sustainability of the schemes. The third part highlights their views about the problems/issues they believed restricted their ownership of development projects.

It is important to note at the outset, however, that many (though not all) of the direct quotations presented in this chapter particularly reflect the views of organizations' presidents and secretaries who, as in projects themselves, tended to dominate proceedings. Despite attempts during the research to involve ordinary members and solicit their views, they were mainly unforthcoming in expressing their own opinions about development projects. The reasons for this were mainly that (1) ordinary members were often unaware of their organizations' and schemes-related activities and (2) secondly, the presidents and secretaries were usually landlords, educated and influential and the ordinary members (mostly poor), expecting their support in problem situations, could not easily dare to speak before them or contradict what they said. Hence, I have supplemented the directly expressed views of organization members with my own observations.

## 7.2 Organizations' members' views about the project cycle stages

Having described staff members' views about the ideal project cycle and its practical implementation in the previous chapter, the following presents the perspectives of organizations' members on how each stage of project cycle took place in practice.

### 7.2.1 Formation of community organizations

Organizations were observed and reported to be formed in the way staff members described in chapter VI. People, after learning about the SRSP's activities, contacted either the focal person, organizations whose schemes had been completed earlier, or the SRSP staff directly, in order to seek guidelines relating to their interest in forming an organization. In an FGI, a president explained that:

> "The SRSP introduced itself through an influential (local elite) person of the area. In the first meeting, we gathered in his *Hujra* [see chapter VI for explanation] and staff members explained its (SRSP) philosophy and also gave details of the schemes and other activities which it could perform. They took the initiative of discussing our problems and asked us to form MCOs and WCOs, as a requirement, for solving such problems. Likewise, people formed their organizations and selected their presidents and secretaries. Presidents and secretaries were selected as those ones who were educated and could have spare time to give to the organization activities" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

In some other places, members described that they formed organizations after observing the SRSP's work:

> "There was no organization in our area before. The SRSP formed organizations in our village and completed schemes for them. Observing their benefits, we also got together and formed our organization to get a scheme" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

However, the main point was that everywhere some influential persons (president and secretaries) usually took the initiative of forming organizations and incorporated the names of people, as also noted in the previous chapter, for completing the formality to avail themselves of the SRSP's benefits. Their basic purpose, as discussed in the last section of this chapter, was usually to serve their vested interests. On the other hand, they justified their position by claiming that ordinary members were poor and unable to

understand the underlying philosophy of the SRSP's based development activities. In addition, most of them felt proud of having independently initiated organizations in their areas. As a president insisted:

> "The whole credit should go to me because I introduced the SRSP here in this village and formed many organizations, both of men and women, and got many projects for them from the SRSP. I also received a scheme of water channel for ourselves" (MCO, Peshawar).

On the other hand, the ordinary members were poor, uneducated and often unaware of the schemes they were supposed to be involved in. Ordinary members often said to me, in private, that their presidents and secretaries had done everything for them. Many of them were not even aware about their membership.

Another observation frequently made by ordinary members- not highlighted by staff- was that organizations used to be comprised of individuals belonging to one and the same family. Their names were included by presidents and secretaries in organizations mainly in order to receive schemes primarily benefiting their families. They were usually unaware of their formal membership but followed the presidents and secretaries in expectation of common benefits. Presidents and secretaries were not always senior in age but were supported by family members for having initiated such beneficial steps for them. Generally, in such families, the authority was usually associated with age. However, in case of any activity requiring regular mobility and know-how (education), any member, even junior in age, could perform the role, if it was beneficial to the whole family. Hence, members did not challenge these people's decisions and felt satisfied over the achievement of their common cause. As an ordinary member, in this context, said:

> "I am not certain about my membership [however, his name was present in the members' register] in the organization but the president, who is both my nephew and son-in-law, formed the organization and completed the irrigation channel through the SRSP for our fields. We are happy with the SRSP because MPAs (Members Provincial Assembly) failed to do it for us" (MCO, Peshawar).

Like staff, who, as noted in the previous chapter, focused on merely increasing the number of organizations, presidents and secretaries also formed organizations not with the goal of developing the spirit of self-help but with the primary intention to utilize the SRSP's services to the fullest possible extent. They frequently said that it was in their interest to milk the SRSP as much as possible because it might not be there after some time. They appreciated, in this context, staff members for encouraging them to form additional organizations for completing their left over work. A president and secretary, in this context, narrated that:

> "First, we had one organization but the credit goes to the SRSP by asking us to split the existing organization into two, to receive two schemes. If we had known at the time, we would have made many organizations by incorporating our boys into them" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

**(a) Formation of women's organizations**

As far as women's organizations are concerned, women members (including presidents and secretaries) were mostly unaware about the formation of their organizations and simply mentioned men as having done everything. Men (mainly the nearby MCOs presidents), in nearly all cases, formed their organizations and usually incorporated the names of their own family women or the women of the same neighbourhood in order to complete their leftover work or to obtain some other benefits. As an ordinary member narrated:

> "Three persons of our nearby street came to my husband (a shopkeeper in Middle East) and compelled him to deposit 20 thousands rupees as savings required for the formation of an organization. They told my husband that after forming the organization they would take a scheme of paving our street and also the streets leading to their houses. They then wrote down the names of fifteen women and took our signatures and one of them, who is president in a nearby MCO, put his wife as the president and another put his daughter's name as the secretary and my name as a member" (WCO, Peshawar).

Similarly, an MCO president, in support, further clarified that:

> "here it is a routine that those who are presidents or secretaries in MCOs also form WCOs, which in they make their wives, sisters or daughters as presidents and secretaries and do what they (men) want. We do not prefer WCO. We prefer for women training in handicraft, sewing and other related activities, which can be carried on by them inside their houses" (MCO, Kohat).

Although WCOs were normally formed by men, women did have their own motivations to work and participate in such activities, and sometimes took the initiative in forming their own organizations. Such feelings were observed from the views of ordinary members who, while explaining the process of the formation of their organizations, elaborated:

> "A Female Social Organizer came and told us, 'We will give you a scheme, credit etc. but you are to form an organization'. First, we did not understand their policy but when FSO came for the second time, we asked our men, and when they consented we formed it for street pavement and drainage. The reason behind their willingness was that one street was left from the MCO and our men had already been asked by the SRSP to form a WCO for that street" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

However, women, due to being culturally subjugated to men's authority, could not dare to initiate any step independent of men or to participate with male outsiders in such development activities. Those that did show initiative were almost always blocked by men's dominance and found it difficult to break the cultural chains fettering them into conditioned inferior social roles. A president of a WCO, in this context, explained that:

> "I faced so many problems in forming WCO because after seeking the permission of my male family members, the neighbourhood people gave me a tough time in forming it. Normally, decisions are imposed on women and cannot have their independent say. Whenever we go for meeting, male family members ask us, why are you going at this time? What are the reasons of going there and so forth?" (WCO, Abbottabad).

Such restrictions discouraged them and they were found to be mostly reluctant to participate in such activities. As a president (Union council councillor) elaborated:

> "I asked my wife to form an organization but she in response told me, 'you want me to sit among men now'" (MCO, Abbottabad).

In all the areas covered in the study, there was only a single exceptional women's organization whose president reported her organization as being formed by women independently of men's influence. She explained that:

> "The SRSP staff members used to come to our area and women were suspicious that female staff members bring males with themselves to steal things. Later on, they formed an organization with the help of their men. After that we asked them it was a 'play' and nothing else but they told us that staff had promised to give us schemes, credit and trainings. When they received a scheme we also immediately formed our organization and we were given a water supply scheme for irrigation and drinking water supply" (WCO, Haripur).

The same woman was also cited by staff members as the most active and independent president. Her views/responses were quite different from those of other women (and men). She hailed from an extremely distant agricultural-based family where the water was quite scarce both for dinking purpose and for irrigating fields. There, women worked in agricultural fields along with their men and did not observe *Purda*. She was a teacher and widow with one child. In addition, she was president of the 'District Association of Rural Women', president of her women's organization, and secretary of '*Deva*' (Candle), a *Tehsil*[1] level network. She maintained regular liaison with staff members and participated in all its activities. Similarly, staff members encouraged her to participate in all its programmes and had also sent her on a number of training courses. Her case is treated as an exceptional case and runs through almost the whole of this chapter.

### 7.2.2 Needs identification

Organizations' members normally reported that staff members informed them in advance about the SRSP's schemes' package, their completion period and the available funds. They were to choose one scheme from the package and did not have the freedom to locate any problem beyond that. They mostly criticized their restriction to the package but

[1] *Tehsil* refers to a unit of administration in each of the district in Pakistan.

they, however, could not do anything because staff members could not allow them beyond that limit. A president in this respect elaborated that:

> "The SRSP is not giving us a free hand to select any problem which we need in actual. It gives us its package and asks us to select one among them. We do not have the right to express our choice. People ask for a road and staff members tell, 'We can give you water supply scheme'. We wrote down our problems including health, education, electricity etc. and discussed them with the SRSP staff but they clarified their package to us, and thereafter, we selected the one available with the SRSP" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

Of course, they were restricted to the package but, nevertheless, had the freedom, as they said, to select any one among them. Nearly all the organizations' members admitted that staff did not change their identified schemes (which were within the SRSP's package) and approved them without any hesitation. A secretary in this context explained:

> "We had so many problems but particularly for bringing drinking water we had to travel for almost one kilometre and, therefore, selected it. The SRSP did not intervene and approved it for us" (MCO, Haripur).

In addition, members in an FGI collectively stated:

> "We had enough water available inside our houses but our street was unpaved and faced a lot of problems during rain. Once, a neighbour of ours had died and while taking his funeral during rain, many of the people who had come for attending his funeral ceremony, slipped, fell and faced great difficulty to walk through. After that we all decided to pave it first and talked with the SRSP. The staff members did not intervene and approved the street pavement scheme for us" (FGI MCO, Kohat).

During needs assessment, a new observation disclosed by some organizations' members- not highlighted by staff- was that staff members had made them promises of additional schemes after they completed their first schemes. Organizations' members said that they identified some problems which staff promised, but subsequently, despite their continuous requests, had not received them. A president and a secretary similarly said:

"We had been promised by staff members another scheme for completing the rest of the part of our street. However, after we completed our first scheme we asked them again and again but in vain" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

Similarly, women members collectively uttered that:

"when FSO asked us about our problems we all proposed a 'dispensary' but she told us that presently 'we have a water supply package and will give you the rest of the things like a dispensary later on'" (FGI WCO, Abbottabad).

Nevertheless, even within the available package, the ordinary members were not observed to participate in identifying their needs. Their names, according to ordinary members, were incorporated by the presidents and secretaries only for attaining schemes or other benefits from the SRSP. Presidents and secretaries, according to ordinary members, carried out all the activities independently mainly for satisfying their self interests. Normally, presidents and secretaries hesitated to disclose the fact that they exclusively assessed the needs because they knew that, officially, the need assessment and other activities are supposed to be decided by all members on consensual basis. However, some of them confessed their monopoly and said that they usually, while expecting any meeting with the staff members relating to needs identification, told the ordinary members in advance what problem was to be mentioned. A president in this context further explained:

> "President and secretaries inculcate in the mind of ordinary members, gathered in his *Hujra*, what they (presidents and secretaries) are interested in and what they (ordinary members) are to say if ever asked by staff members. A poor person can not express his own feelings because if he refuses to follow the rich persons, then the next day he will not help him at the time of any need" (MCO, Haripur).

**(a) Needs identification in women's organizations**

In relation to women's participation in needs assessment, men said that they assessed the needs on their behalf and completed the required formalities for attaining the schemes. They further replied that women's activities were limited to their

household boundaries and therefore they could not rightly judge the surrounding problems. On the other hand, women members (being culturally confined) also often replied that they accepted the decisions of their male family members and could not refuse their decisions. They said that men chose the schemes and took their signatures on the papers. A woman president in this context highlighted:

> "We do not know anything about the scheme because all the work has been done by the nearby MCO president and secretary. They chose the scheme and informed us that 'we have covered the rest of the streets from MCOs and the SRSP is no more giving us other schemes and so by this we will cover all the streets left from ours'" (WCO, Peshawar).

Similarly, other women members expressed the same views that:

> "All the decisions were made by men. They took our signs and told us that through WCO 'we would pave the leftover street'. We accepted and accept anything decided by men whether that is good or bad and never intervene in their decisions" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

The only woman, cited above (whose organization had received a 'Tube well' for drinking and irrigation purposes), reported her/their independence in identifying the problem and further explained that:

> "We selected our problem on consensus. Here women brought water from distant area and faced the problem themselves. On the whole, men are dominant but here the situation is different from other areas and men in rural areas, in particular, can be easily motivated. We can make our decisions ourselves. Even, whenever the SRSP turns down our decision, then we threaten not to participate any more in any of their meeting or training. We have done so practically before. Once, the SRSP refused to give credit to few of the women of another WCO. I, along with them, visited the SRSP officials again and again and refused their offer, in the meanwhile, of training with the advance of T.A/D.A (Travelling allowance/Daily allowance), until they approved credit for them. At last, they agreed and managed the credit for those women" (President WCO, Haripur).

With regard to such women, who were somewhat independent in making decisions, male organizations' members replied that only those women; living in the hilly and distant areas, working on agricultural fields and taking care of their cattle and crops could participate in such activities. They further narrated that:

> "Women who participate and make decisions by themselves have their men working in distant cities and the old women, who are either old enough or have low eye sight remain inside houses for taking care of household, while the rest go outside to fields" (President MCO, Haripur).

### 7.2.3 Planning

After needs identification, organizations' members, as they reported, themselves located the place for the scheme, but could not determine the size/length of the schemes, such as street pavement, sanitation, a farm-to-market road, as they desired. Their size or length was said to be decided by staff in accordance with their own limitations. As a president in a group interview explained:

> "We chose the place (street pavement and drain) but the engineer, after doing its survey, told us 'We cannot do the whole because we have limited funds'" (FGI, Kohat).

The places the members selected for schemes such as streets, drainage, farm to market road etc., were normally not changed by staff members if affordable to them, while, in other types of schemes, the place, according to organizations' members, could be changed by staff if found not socially or technically feasible. A president in this context replied:

> "We selected a place for a hand pump but staff members changed the place by telling us that the place is unhygienic because it is close to stagnant, dirty water" (MCO, Abbottabad).

After the finalization of the location of scheme, staff members, according to organizations' members, took the estimate and formulated the final design exclusively in accordance with the available cost and their other priorities. Almost all of the organizations' members criticized staff independent planning (final designing) and considered that as the cause of the failure of schemes. They, in this respect, referred to many such schemes which were left incomplete and lying waste. They said that staff members did what they wanted and did not do what the community wanted. Like male

organizations' members, women members in a few cases also criticized staff for not incorporating their views in the final design. They reported that what staff decided during surveying the location, did not actually enter the plan and therefore their problems remained as that was before. Some women reflecting upon this in relation to their scheme narrated that:

> "The drain, which was built on our organization name, is so wide that neither old people nor children can cross it easily. In the beginning, staff members noted the need for a 'Bin' and also some 'slabs' to help people cross it easily but later on they refused and cut down, from their selves, the cost and told us that 'we do not have the fund to construct the 'Bin' and the slabs'" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

Members continuously stressed the need for members to be present with staff during the final design stage. They believed that the presence of members would enable the staff to update and modify the plan in accordance with their needs. A president in this respect suggested that:

> "Staff members must involve members to sit with them during cost estimate and designing the plan. They must, during that time, explain what they can do and what people are to do and if both of the parties are agreed, it is right, otherwise the scheme would not be feasible if people do not show agreement to it. If possible, they should stay with people in field to involve them in designing. Their involvement will also make them realize the importance of their participation and would therefore sustain them afterwards. They should not shoulder so much work burden [in response to staff members work pressure] if they are interested to differentiate it, in terms of quality, from governmental works" (FGI MCO, Abbottabad).

According to organizations' members, after the final plan was made, staff gave them a definite time for the completion of the scheme. They also determined the nature of material and required members to follow accordingly. All these decisions were said to be made by staff independently and the members were required only to follow their prescription.

During the planning stage, members were observed only participating with staff in selecting the location. However, in practice, such members were not the ordinary members but were the organizations' presidents and secretaries. Nearly all of the

ordinary members were unaware of the details of the planning stage and simply mentioned their presidents and secretaries as having selected the location of their schemes. Most of the ordinary members reported that presidents and secretaries did not ask their opinion, but decided what they preferred. As some ordinary members narrated:

> "Presidents and secretaries pointed the place to staff members. They did all the things and did not involve us at any stage during planning" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

**(a) Planning in women's organizations**

For the most part, women did not participate in planning with male outsiders, and were normally unaware about planning activities. Men, on their behalf, located the schemes and also assisted staff members in surveying and estimating the schemes locations. In relation to this, female members collectively replied:

> "We do not know anything about our scheme cost estimate, funding or feasibility. The president and secretary in the nearby MCO formed our organization for three streets. They selected the place and did all the things. We are not bothered about as who forms organization? Who selects the place? and, how is the fund generated? Our only concern was the construction of our street, nothing else" (FGI WCO, Peshawar).

Generally, women could not bypass their male family members. They were culturally restricted, as described above, to performing their household duties and also complying with the sayings of their men. In relation to such gender relations, a female president stated:

> "We cannot think to participate with outside men in planning. We eat after our men finish. When we [refers to all women] are asked by our men to bring food we do accordingly" (WCO, Abbottabad).

However, only a single woman (cited as a unique case in this chapter) claimed that she had participated with staff in locating the place for the scheme. She described that:

> "I participated with staff members in locating the place for our scheme and after that the engineer made the estimate" (President WCO, Haripur).

### 7.2.4 Implementation

Organizations' members implemented and completed schemes within the given time and also managed the required material and labour by themselves. They formed various committees of members, as noted in the previous chapter, in the light of the SRSP's requirement to distribute the work load and maintain the checks and balances among the members. They said that for each and every scheme's related activity, they formed a separate committee and assigned a task to it. For instance, for purchasing material, they formed a 'purchasing committee' who were designated to buy and arrange the material determined by staff, at any time required during implementation. In addition to organizations' members involvement, staff members were also observed visiting the ongoing schemes. Staff, according to organizations' members, checked the work quality and the adoption of the formulated plan. As a president narrated:

> "Staff members visited our scheme for checking the work quality. They also advised us when the work quality was observed as poor or deviating from the set design" (MCO, Kohat).

Only in few cases were organizations' members observed as doing labour in their 20 percent share. Normally, organizations hired labourers for their schemes either from the same place/organizations or from outside and paid them from the SRSP's share. In the light of the ToP (Terms of Partnership signed by organizations' members and staff, explaining their responsibilities), the organizations were required to contribute 20 percent either in cash or in the form of labour. However, in practice, few members (including presidents, secretaries and ordinary members) contributed either their money or did labour in their schemes. In some cases, members provided food to the labourers and counted that as their 20 percent contribution.

In practice, normally the presidents and secretaries, as in other stages, monopolized each and every activity. They, according to ordinary members, supervised the work and purchased the material either by themselves or delegated the responsibility to someone they liked. In addition, the cheque was also issued in their names. Mostly, the ordinary members reported that presidents and secretaries did not consult them either in purchasing the material or in any other activity and, therefore, they did not know about the quality of material used in the schemes. The committees which were formed were said to be in name only. Even some of the presidents and secretaries considered them as a mere formality and further continued:

> "Committees are made by name. An ordinary member has no power to do any thing. He is only to sign and nothing else. The SRSP is responsible for making this kind of organization [monopolized by presidents and secretaries], and if it had not been able [to represent the views of all members equally], then why has it been given the scheme" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

With regard to changes in the schemes during implementation, almost all of the organizations' members reported that staff members had permitted them certain changes in their schemes after their prior permission. Therefore, they (particularly presidents and secretaries) were observed to have made certain slight changes in their schemes in accordance with the approved design/cost and most importantly with the prior permission of the staff members. A president in this context replied that:

> "We made certain changes and for that we passed a resolution and convinced staff members" (MCO, Abbottabad).

**(a) Implementation in women's organizations**

As far as women's participation in implementation is concerned, as in other stages, they generally did not participate in the whole implementation process. Men, on their behalf, were observed as buying the material, supervising the work, arranging the labour and performing any other activity which was required. Like ordinary male

members, whose names were formally present in committees, women's names too, were found present in certain committees along with men. In practice, however, they did not participate in any committee. Almost all of the women said that men completed the schemes because they (women) were not culturally allowed to participate in such outside activities. Most of them reported that they were mainly concerned with the work done and not with the person who performed it. They said that:

"The overall implementation of the scheme was done by the president and secretary of the nearby MCO. They purchased the material and took our signatures without informing us about its purpose. We were neither consulted nor informed about the cost and design of the scheme. However, we do not mind because our concern is the construction of our street, nothing else" (FGI WCO, Abbottabad).

Similarly, an ordinary woman member maintained:

"We do not know anything about the work because the men, who formed our organization, purchased material and gathered women members for taking their signatures on the papers [cash memos]. They did not let us know anything" (FGI WCO, Kohat).

Only one woman (cited above) claimed that she participated actively during implementation and contacted staff members at the time of need. She further maintained that:

> "I used to supervise the work while the material was bought by men. I also checked each and every thing bought by men against their cash memos" (WCO, Haripur).

Of course, she could do so because during my field work she took me, in the presence of men in fields, to the agricultural fields irrigated from the tube well installed on their organization's name. Besides, she knew quite well how to operate the diesel engine installed on the tube well. On the whole, however, women were not observed directly working in the schemes. Rather their participation was limited to preparing food, as their 20 percent share, for the labourers working on the schemes.

### 7.2.5 Evaluation

Monitoring was observed and reported by organizations' members as carried out, besides staff members, by members themselves. They regularly monitored the work and ensured the successful completion of the schemes in accordance with the designed plan. They regularly intimated and contacted staff not only about the schemes' progress but also about any emerging social problem- in case people resisted the scheme- or technical problem and sought their prompt feedback.

Formally, the project committee was responsible to monitor the work and keep staff informed about every detail but in practice, nearly everywhere, the presidents and secretaries, as usual, performed it exclusively. They, as reported in this as well as in the preceding chapter, held almost exclusive contacts with staff following their formal accountability to the staff for schemes' completion. In some cases, some presidents felt pride in mentioning themselves as having done every thing independently. As a president insisted:

> "We had the project committee for monitoring the work but in most cases I did all these things myself and informed staff members about anything which happened during implementation" (MCO, Peshawar).

#### (a) Evaluation in women's organizations

Women members also did not participate in monitoring their schemes. They normally mentioned men as having done everything from purchasing the material till the completion of the schemes. A woman president in this context said:

> "Two men particularly supervised the work and also dealt exclusively with staff members in case of any need" (WCO, Peshawar).

Similarly, an ordinary woman member mentioned that:

> "The secretary of the nearby MCO completed the whole scheme. He independently monitored the work and contacted staff members whenever required" (WCO, Peshawar).

However, only a single woman (cited above) held different views about her participation in monitoring. She held that:

> "I supervised the work and informed staff members about the overall work progress and also about the problems emerging that time" (WCO, Haripur).

Of course, organizations themselves implemented and monitored the schemes and arranged everything, but did not evaluate them after completion. The role of organizations' members usually stopped after their schemes completed. After completion, staff, as reported by organizations members, evaluated the schemes and documented their whole detail and:

> "Released 10 percent[2] of their share after that" (MCO President, Haripur).

### 7.3 Summary of organizations' members' views about the project cycle

In summary, members of community organizations reported that people formed organizations either after staff displayed the SRSP's package or after they observed the completed schemes in the nearby areas. They were mostly formed by some influential persons (who became presidents and secretaries) and incorporated the names of people from the same area mainly for schemes or some other SRSP services. In some cases, organizations were comprised of members of the same family. Women's organizations were generally formed by men and mainly by the nearby MCOs presidents and secretaries, in order to receive additional benefits. However, only one woman president, described in this chapter as an exceptional case, formed an organization independently

[2] SRSP provided its 80 percent share to the organizations in three instalments. The first cheque was given before initiating the work. The second was given in the middle after staff members assessed the work. 10 percent was given after the completion of scheme. The philosophy of releasing 10 percent at that stage was to ensure members' own 20 percent contribution.

of men's pressure/motivation. She was a widow with one child and taught in a government- run school. Besides, she lived in a distant farming area where women participated in agricultural activities along with their men and did not observe *Purda*.

In needs assessment, members were confined to selecting a problem available in the SRSP's package. During this stage too, the presidents and secretaries prevailed and usually identified those problems which they preferred. Men, who formed women organizations, also selected needs on their behalf. Among all women, only one woman, cited above, selected her problem (tube well) independently of men. In some cases, staff, in order to encourage organization formation, made promises of additional schemes after they completed their first schemes.

After needs were assessed, members (particularly presidents and secretaries) selected the location for streets, drainage, farm to market road etc. while the cost and estimate was determined exclusively by staff in accordance with their limitations. They did not participate in the final formulation of schemes' design and therefore reported the failure of many of the schemes due to their non-involvement. Women did not participate in planning with staff members, while only one woman, referred to above, participated with them in the selection of the location for their scheme.

After planning, various committees, formally comprised of ordinary members, (however, in reality the presidents and secretaries) implemented the schemes and arranged the material and labour mainly in the SRSP's share. In certain cases, they had modified their schemes within the approved cost and plan and most importantly with the prior permission of staff members. In some cases, as a formality, women's names had been incorporated with men's in certain committees, while in reality they had not participated in implementation. Only one woman, cited above, supervised the work and scrutinized everything bought by men for the scheme. Formally the committee was required to carry out monitoring but, in practice, presidents and secretaries executed it

and informed staff members of every detail about the scheme. Normally women did not participate in it, except the one, cited above, who monitored the work and informed staff members about her scheme's progress and also about the problems emerging that time. After the completion of the scheme, their participation stopped and the final formal evaluation was exclusively carried out by staff members.

### 7.4 Organizations' members' views and perspectives on sustainability

Having presented organizations' members' views about the practical implementation of the project cycle, the following describes their views on the issue of sustainability. Sustainability, as described in the previous chapter, refers here to the maintenance of schemes after completion and also members' independent efforts for initiating development steps for the solution of their problems. Mostly the maintenance, as noted in the previous chapter, was observed as associated with the nature of need. Those schemes which had been needs-based and indispensable for human survival, such as water supply schemes, were taken care of, while schemes like roads, drains etc. were not maintained. In relation to this, a president expressed that:

> "People maintain only needs-based schemes like hand pumps because without water they can not live. They do not maintain streets, drains etc." (FGI MCO, Haripur).

On the other hand, normally the streets, drains and roads were not maintained by organizations' members. Almost all of them were broken and in bad condition and members did not consider this as their own responsibility. Organizations' members normally expected the government or any other department/organization to carry out repairs for them. In addition, most of the organizations' members (particularly presidents and secretaries) normally claimed to be too poor to undertake such a repair by themselves.

Even among the water supply schemes, many of them were not maintained and were non-functional. The reason for this, according to ordinary members, was that they did not need them, but they had been built by presidents and secretaries for their self-interest. In relation to one water supply scheme which was broken, ordinary members collectively replied that:

> "Actually we did not need it but it was installed by a nearby influential person (MCO President) in the name of a women's organization. We all have wells in our houses and there is no need for women to go outside their houses to fetch water" (FGI MCO, Kohat).

On the one hand the schemes were reported by members as not maintained because of not being needs-based and on the other hand, they gave other reasons for their lack of interest in maintaining their schemes. One of the reasons, according to most of the ordinary members, was that presidents and secretaries monopolized schemes and never consulted them or involved them in any schemes-related activity. The second reason, reported by both presidents and secretaries and ordinary members, was that staff planned the scheme according to their own set criteria and did not incorporate the views of the organizations' members to make it compatible to their needs. In a few cases, even some women members cited this as the cause of their lack of interest in maintaining their schemes. They complained about the inflexible attitude of staff members and replied:

> "Nobody takes care of the work. We would have been taking interest if staff had listened to us during planning. We were not even informed. We asked our men to ask staff members to make certain modifications in the plan. They talked to them and requested them time and again but in vain" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

The third reason, reported mostly by the presidents and secretaries, because of their relatively greater exposure and awareness about the SRSP and its package, was that members (particularly ordinary members) were poor and according to them not mentally mobilized to accept the maintenance as their responsibility. The ordinary

members, in particular, according to presidents and secretaries, did not understand the merits/aim of organization formation and would get involved only when they expected benefits. They further said that people were not used to such self-sustained schemes because previously the government departments had completed and repaired such schemes without expecting people to participate or to contribute even a single penny.

Presidents and secretaries, therefore, stressed that the SRSP should work to change people's outlook and make them fully understand the philosophy of organizations and the advantages of community-based development. A president, in support, further explained that:

> "People' problem is not money; the problem is the change of their mind. If they are mentally changed, they can arrange resources from themselves. They have the resources but their utilization is not rightly done. Organizations, to reach to the stage of maturity[3] need almost 5, 8 or 10 years. The SRSP, as it was expected, is moving in the wrong direction, and if it wants its success, it must focus on social mobilization; and should give enough of time to the formation of organizations" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

However, it is important to note here that the general lack of community interest in the sustainability of the schemes does not mean that the completed schemes were of sub-standard quality or seen as completely without benefit. They were observed and reported by organizations' members as being of better quality than the government-initiated development schemes. Their quality, according to organizations' members, was better because of their own involvement and the absence of any 'commission system'[4] that prevailed in the government public works departments. The quality of the SRSP's development schemes suggests that the SRSP provided some specific concrete material benefits to the community even if it otherwise failed in its idealized community empowerment ideal. In other words, community members

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[3] By maturity the member meant social mobilization and the change in mentality.

[4] Normally in the public works and other development departments in Pakistan, some percentage out of the total estimated cost of any project is held by the concerned officers as their share in the total cost. By law, it is not allowed, but this practice has become so institutionalized that staff consider it their right.

appreciated that they had received material assistance which the government might either not have been able to provide or may have provided but of an inferior quality.

### 7.4.1 Sustainability in women's organizations

As far as women's participation in maintaining the schemes is concerned, women, on the whole, did not maintain the projects completed in their names. As they could not and generally did not participate in any other stages, they also remained unconcerned with sustaining them after completion. In the target areas, women, according to male organizations' members, were not expected, due to cultural restrictions, to participate in maintaining or repairing the schemes.

Their non-involvement also brought no change in their attitude and therefore they did not accept any responsibility, in some cases, even to clean their streets drains, built in their names. As a woman secretary, when asked her about the cleanliness of the drain, very bluntly replied:

> "I can only clean the drain before my house and not the drains before others' houses" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

Only one woman among those interviewed reported, as in other stages, different views relating to her/their role in maintaining the schemes. She said that her organization maintained their scheme through a self-sustained system. She further explained:

> "We are taking care of tube well which is used by us for drinking water as well as for irrigation. Before this we had to go to distant area for fetching drinking water and our crops got dried very often because of drought. We are collecting money for its maintenance because it is run by diesel engine and the people who are benefiting from it are paying for its maintenance" (WCO, Haripur).

In addition, women, like male members, normally did not hold regular meetings or savings, particularly after their schemes were completed. They were, according to male presidents and secretaries, gathered for meeting mostly in WCO president house

whenever either Female Social Organizer wished to meet them or when their signatures were required on some papers. They said that normally women contributed to the overall organizations 'saving' as long as their schemes were in progress. However, among all the women, only a single woman, referred to above, held a different view and said that:

> "We hold regular meeting and savings. We have formed a union council based network and have had many projects from other donors" (WCO, Haripur).

As far as the effort of organizations' members in initiating independent step in solving their own problems is concerned, almost no such step had been initiated by either men's or women's organizations. In a few organizations, male members reported 'internal lending' (see chapter VI for further explanation) from their own organizations' savings. In some other cases they had done some extension in addition to the designed schemes, but that was done mainly from money set aside and saved from the original SRSP share. As a president disclosed:

> "We have not initiated any work from ourselves because people are too poor to afford it. However, we have done some extra work on the saving we had from the total scheme cost" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

In summary, it was found that normally the only schemes to be maintained were those that were needs-based and indispensable for human survival such as water supply schemes. On the other hand, no care was taken of street pavement, drains etc. because their maintenance entailed high cost which they could not afford. While presidents and secretaries cited the ordinary members' lack of commitment and lack of social mobilization, ordinary members associated lack of maintenance with presidents' and secretaries' monopolization of schemes, staff members' independent designing and poverty.

Members did not hold meetings regularly after schemes' completion and held them only when required any help from the SRSP. Likewise, no up-to-date saving was observed in any of the organizations. It was carried on mostly until the completion of the scheme. However, members maintained their shared account for the purpose of their eligibility to other services of the SRSP like training, credit or any other scheme which it might introduce at a later time.

Similarly, women, like male members, neither maintained their schemes nor held regular meetings or savings after the completion of their schemes. Only one woman, cited above, maintained her water supply scheme (tube well) on the money received from the nearby beneficiaries utilizing its water both for drinking and irrigation purpose. In addition, no independent development step had been initiated either by men's or women's organizations. Among the men's organizations some had done 'internal lending' and some extension in their schemes, mainly through the savings from the total share, provided by the SRSP. Again however, the SRSP, if unsuccessful in community empowerment and engendering sustainability, was generally appreciated both for providing things which the government may not have otherwise provided and for the quality of the work that was completed.

### 7.5 Issues raised by organizations' members in influencing people's empowerment

Organizations' members were normally not aware of the SRSP's ideal project cycle and the gap between theory and practice, as reflected by staff in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, they independently raised a number of general issues, similar to those raised by staff, which they saw as restricting their freedom and prevent a real shift in power to the grass-root level. Such issues are described in detail below:

### 7.5.1 Staff members' irregularity

Almost all of the organizations' members (particularly, though not exclusively, presidents and secretaries) reported that staff members regularly visited them during the formation of their organizations and implementation of their schemes and relinquished them totally after their schemes were completed. Staff, according to them, had promised them regular visits, even after their schemes were completed, but did not keep their promises. Some of them also criticized staff for not visiting them on the day and at the time promised, which caused loss of interest and reliability. They also said that staff took no interest in old organizations and focused primarily on new organizations. They also associated the long term viability of organizations and people's interest in community work with staff members' regular feedback, even after the completion of their schemes. A president, in this respect, explained that:

> "People need awareness about the importance of organization and about participatory development philosophy. It is only possible if staff members visit the organizations even after the completion of their schemes" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

Similarly, another president elaborated:

> "Staff members do not develop the concept of organization building among people, because they do not have the time for it and therefore organizations extinct. Social Organizer, instead of doing his job, is all the time behind recovery and do not get time to visit organizations" (MCO, Kohat).

It was not only that staff did not visit projects after they were completed, but also that they were irregular in their visits during projects. According to some members, staff irregularity helped presidents and secretaries to monopolize the schemes. A president in this context insisted that:

> "Presidents and secretaries will not dominate if staff members regularly visit organizations members and provide them the feedback. By their regular visits and meetings with members there will be no embezzlement by presidents and secretaries and members will consider schemes/PIs as their own." (FGI MCO, Haripur).

Like men's organizations' members, some women (particularly presidents and secretaries) also insisted on the regular visits of the staff members to meet members, listen to their problems and to encourage them to participate in the activities. A woman secretary in this respect explained that:

> "Female Social Organizer should come to our organization and meet members herself because when I ask ordinary members for meetings and training, they ask me as 'why FSO is not coming herself to talk to us'" (WCO, Abbottabad).

The exceptional woman president whose case runs throughout this chapter was quite familiar with the number of field staff and also knew them by names. She reflected, in relation to staff members' irregularity, that:

> "Leadership in an organization fails if there is no regular feed-back and follow-up by staff members. Follow-up makes an organization active and viable. Besides follow-ups, they must provide awareness training to the members to develop and maintain among them the concept of community based work. Even before giving schemes to organizations, there should be awareness training to change their minds" (WCO, Haripur).

### 7.5.2 Lack of ordinary members' interest/awareness

It was observed that ordinary members, in particular, were quite unaware of all the activities relating to their organizations and their schemes. Among them some were not even aware of their membership, although their names were formally recorded in their respective organizations' registers. Owing to their unawareness, most of them simply indicated their presidents and secretaries as having done every thing. In addition to their unawareness, they took no interest either in meetings, saving, implementation or sustenance of the schemes. They reported some reasons responsible for their indifferent attitude, such as poor economic condition, business for survival and monopolization by presidents and secretaries. However, among such reasons, they mostly targeted the SRSP's supported presidents and secretaries who were said to

monopolize everything for their own interests. Thus, for example, in a group interview, ordinary members collectively explained:

> "In the beginning we all took interest but gradually we started getting passive. The reason was that the president did every thing by himself. We asked him many times about some changes in the drain but he did not accept. He also nominated some members for training without consulting us. This was/is a kind of business he was/is doing and made/makes money for himself. Staff members too listen(ed) to him and never consulted us. We are still its members but by name" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

Of course, presidents and secretaries monopolized the schemes but, on the other hand, notwithstanding their vested interests, they also performed actively in all the activities and in the completion of their schemes. They, mostly, in relation to ordinary members' lack of interest, believed that ordinary members were not mentally mobilized and not used to the SRSP-backed participatory development strategy. With regard to ordinary members' lack of interest/unawareness, some presidents and secretaries took the blame themselves. However, most of them targeted staff members as responsible and insisted they should spend more time on mobilizing them. As a woman president (cited in this chapter as an exceptional case) proposed:

> "If the SRSP focuses on social mobilization, then even the inactive members will become active" (WCO, Haripur).

Similarly, in support, a secretary suggested that:

> "Still there is no community and ownership feeling. It can be encouraged if they are more and more involved in its activities" (MCO, Haripur).

### 7.5.3 Monopolization of community organizations

Presidents and secretaries usually exploited their formal responsibility to staff, for the completion of their schemes, in their own interest. They, mostly, took no interest after the completion of their schemes. However, they normally maintained the names of their organizations and pretended to be active before SRSP's staff members or any

other development/welfare organization in their areas. The main purpose of maintaining their organizations' names was to receive any possible benefit later, either from the SRSP or any other local organization. These leaders, according to ordinary members, incorporated their names in the organizations but did not consult them at any stage. Even some presidents and secretaries also admitted the fact that organizations were monopolized by presidents and secretaries. As a president in a group interview admitted the fact that:

> "Organizations are made by name by few people (presidents and secretaries). The names of the ordinary members are incorporated in organizations and they attend meetings with staff, but say what they are told to say by presidents and secretaries. A poor person is not allowed [to contribute] by them. Many people listen to them but nobody listens to a poor [ordinary member]" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

As already suggested, organizations' members (particularly ordinary members) blamed staff members for encouraging presidents and secretaries to monopolize the whole work. Ordinary members said that staff members came and consulted them about each and every activity and never listened to the opinions and problems of ordinary members. In one case, an ordinary member reported that his president and secretary monopolized proceedings because staff had accepted a bribe from them for a personal scheme and had empowered them in their decisions.

Ordinary members of women's organizations, too, sometimes criticized the discriminatory attitude of staff, who extended their full support to presidents and secretaries. Thus, for example, in one group interview, ordinary women members openly uttered:

> "The depth of our hand pump is only 70 feet and also away from our houses while the president (local councillor) has a hand pump just close to her house with 150 feet depth. We asked staff members many times about it, during implementation, but they did not listen to us, while they cooperated with her to their best" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

Similarly, most of the presidents and secretaries- as they mostly did not take the blame themselves- also criticised staff for not involving ordinary members in their activities. A president (district coordinator, referred above in this chapter) maintained that:

> "Staff members take no interest in reaching the poor. They are working for salary only and not for developing a community sense. I do not agree if somebody tells me that they are working for equitable community based development" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

### 7.5.4 Political pressure

The SRSP's decisions, according to organizations' members, were not only constrained by the dominance of presidents and secretaries, but also unduly influenced by political leaders, both at the district and union council level. They also believed that staff could not initiate any work in their areas unless they were involved. As a president replied:

> "The SRSP has done work in only those areas where local *Nazims* have been involved. While no work has it been permitted to do where it refused to involve and take them into confidence" (FGI MCO, Abbottabad).

Of course, staff members could not easily ignore them because such political leaders (mostly *Nazims*) were running the local administration and created problems for any organization bypassing them. They, at district level, held both formal and informal power to bulldoze any organization not conforming to their ideals. They, as the people's representatives, held influence over people, as noted in the preceding chapter, and could easily mobilize them either in favour or against any issue.

Perceiving the central role of these leaders, staff members very often held meetings in their *Hujras* and motivated them, as reported by organizations' members, to encourage organizations' formation. They, hence, utilized the opportunity and formed organizations and mostly appointed their own people as presidents and

secretaries. They incorporated the names of the ordinary members but did not let them participate practically in any activity. Ordinary members, therefore, remained unaware of anything and reported their *Nazims* as having done everything for them.

Besides ordinary members, even some presidents were unaware of their schemes' completion. Their names had been incorporated as a formality by their *Nazims*. Among such presidents, one replied that:

> "Our organization has been formed by my cousin, who is the union council *Nazim*, and put my name as president and also incorporated the names of our neighbours. I do not know anything, because he himself supervised the work and built the irrigation channels for our fields" (MCO, Kohat).

Almost all the organizations' members criticized the involvement of *Nazims* in the SRSP's activities. They considered them as working solely for their own interests and to please their supporters. One of the presidents, who was already involved in district-based voluntary activities, criticized them for discouraging the grass-root development process, and further maintained that:

> "CCBs[5] [Citizens community board] are discouraged by *Nazims* because they consider them as a parallel power to themselves. The SRSP should not involve politicians, because then people will be waiting for politicians again, as like in the past, which is contrary to its slogan. Some time back, the SRSP worked through a district *Nazim*, maybe due to the directions of donors (DFID), and he gave schemes to his own people [supporters], and so all the money went to waste" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

### 7.5.5 Pre-planned decisions/donors restrictions and lack of compatibility

Normally, ordinary members, due to being mostly uneducated, uninvolved in schemes' activities and having no formal contact with the SRSP's staff, were unaware about the SRSP's development package and its limitations. On the other hand,

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[5] CCB stands for Citizen Community Board. It was introduced and incorporated by the Musharaf's government in the Local Government Ordinance 2002. They were to be initiated by *Nazims* and elected councillors with the condition that they would facilitate them to make decisions by themselves. In the start, 50 percent of the local budget was allocated to them but due to the reluctance of *Nazim* and councillors, it was reduced to 20 percent. However, despite the reduction, they have not been initiated anywhere so far, due to the *Nazims'* unwillingness.

presidents and secretaries (in most cases), because of their being actively involved in their schemes and having regular contacts with staff members, were quite well aware of the package and the SRSP's limitations. They criticized the SRSP for restricting members to an in-compatible pre-planned package. Most of them said that what they wanted was not given to them and what was given to them was what staff wanted. A president further explained that:

> "It has one and the same package for all the areas. Each village has its own different problems. The package is not addressing our problems because it has come 'ready-made' from outside. Our village is agricultural based and requires projects only compatible to it" (FGI, Haripur).

Some of the presidents and secretaries considered such restrictions responsible for deviating the SRSP from its development philosophy. Even an ordinary member (ex-vice chairman of ex-local based organization), who knew almost about every detail, in this context, suggested that:

> "There should not be any target given to the SRSP and should have enough of time to spend on the formation of each of the organizations to ensure their viability. Besides, if a model organization is formed in any village other people in other villages will also start taking interest and would work like that" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

### 7.5.6 Credit/loan imbroglio

Credit disbursement was an essential component of the PPAF (see chapter IV and VI for details) project. Normally, the organization members were found to be reluctant to pay the credit back to the SRSP. Rather most of them demanded increase in its volume, extension of its duration and relaxation of interest, which the ordinary staff members could not do. Those organizations which failed to repay were blacklisted, considered inactive, and were not given extra benefits like schemes, training or any other package introduced by the SRSP later on. The amount of credit given per person, during my field days, was 5 thousand rupees (equal to almost 50 pounds) which of

course was quite little to help a person to initiate even a small business. The reason for members not repaying the loan, according to presidents and secretaries, was that staff members imposed credit on the organizations receiving the schemes and paid no attention to changing their minds towards its rightful utilization and its underlying philosophy. They also said that its credit policy was similar to the already existing credit disbursing departments/organizations and carried no gainful opportunity to the recipients. A president further explained that:

> "The SRSP is putting more emphasis on credit, which used to be given by government departments too. It must first make people know about its utilization and must have a different and better style than the earlier government departments disbursing it. People first took it from those departments and now are taking from the SRSP and no difference has been observed in its style. People did not repay it to those departments and now are doing the same with the SRSP" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

## 7.6 Summary of the chapter

It follows from the above that organizations were normally formed by the relatively influential persons (presidents and secretaries) who monopolized almost all the stages. They usually incorporated the names of the nearby people and in some cases the names of members of the same family as a formality and sought the schemes they preferred. They were mostly rich, educated and, in short, influential and could pose problems to people who refused to follow their promptings/sayings.

Organizations' members were limited to selecting the problems from the available pre-planned package. In addition, they were constrained by staff at nearly every stage in accordance with the SRSP's limitations. Staff members maintained independent contacts with presidents and secretaries and showed less concern with consulting or reaching the poor (ordinary members). Staff members, in certain cases had also made promises of additional schemes, to encourage the formation of organizations, after the members had completed their first schemes.

Women's organizations were usually formed by men either for completing their left over work or for some extra benefits. They made, on their behalf, all the decisions relating to the schemes made in their names. Some women did have the inherent motivation to participate in such development activities, but the prevalent cultural environment did not allow them to act so. However, one woman (WCO president), who was a widow and school teacher and living on the distant agricultural farms, had initiated her organization exclusive of men's involvement and her organization had made all the decisions throughout the activities themselves.

Organizations' members normally neither maintained their schemes nor initiated independent development steps on their own. The main reasons for this were that ordinary members, in particular, had not been sufficiently mobilized and engaged in the process and, secondly, the schemes often did not reflect their actual needs. However, as previously stated, this does not mean that the schemes were completely unappreciated, and members generally saw the work as being of better quality than that done by the government because of their participation in it, limited though it may have been.

Some problems/issues, almost similar to those noted in the previous chapter, paralyzed the process of power shifting to the grass-roots people to locate their prioritized problems. Staff members restricted members to a pre-planned and cost limited 'ready-made' package, mostly incompatible with their areas' problems. They deserted them after they completed their schemes. Organizations' members associated the extinction of organizations, people's lack of interest in organizations' activities and the organizations' hijacking by presidents and secretaries with their desertion by staff members after their schemes' completion.

Staff members were criticized for involving political leaders in their activities. They considered these leaders as merely working for their own interests and discouraging any move intended to empowering grass-roots people. Besides, they held staff

responsible for empowering the presidents and secretaries exclusively to monopolize the whole scheme. They were reported as mainly working for their own interests and they relinquished the organizations as soon as their interests were met. Members generally desired an increase in loans, extension of the repayment period and also a decrease in its mark-up. However, they were reluctant to repay loans, mainly due to their negative concept about NGOs and also because the SRSP's loan scheme was similar to already existing government loan scheme, and so was treated in the same way.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# THEORIZING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

## 8.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters presented an overall picture of the SRSP's activities. Among them chapter IV elaborated comprehensively the relationship between donors and NGOs and that between government and NGOs, while chapter V described the SRSP's overall structure, mission and claims. Similarly, the previous two chapters, i.e., VI and VII (which were based on field data) presented the views of staff members and members of the community organizations (including men and women) and my observations. They were based on the way the project cycle actually took place, and the issues creating the gap between theory and practice.

This chapter is concerned with juxtaposing these views and observations and the SRSP's position/surrounding environment and are analysed in relation to the wider perspectives on participatory development. To provide clarity in understanding the issues, the chapter has been split into three parts. The first part opens with an analytical description of the underlying realities in the establishment of the SRSP. It also focuses on the nature of government and the SRSP's relationship and also the nature of changes which the government made, following the demands of international donor agencies, with respect to NGOs. Similarly, it presents donors' and the SRSP's relationship with the intention to understand donors' impact on the overall activities of the SRSP and on its idealized participatory development theory. It is pertinent to mention here that donors' impact on SRSP's activities is analysed on the basis of SRSP's staff members' perceptions and not on the basis of their documented reports (see chapter III for study's

limitations in this respect). Nevertheless, as previously indicated, the analysis presented here on the impact of donors on PD is supported by other studies of similar situations. Part II is devoted to analysing the local power structure (by which I mean local elites and organizations' leaders), and relates it to its impact on the SRSP's participatory development activities. It then reflects upon the pivotal factors/reasons which discouraged a restructuring of power on the one hand and impeded the SRSP's aims on the other hand. The third part is concerned with locating the SRSP's position in respect to implementing gender and development (GAD) theory in its development activities. Furthermore, it analytically elaborates the reasons responsible for the failure of the SRSP in implementing GAD theory. It needs to be mentioned here that the issues presented in this chapter are interrelated and interdependent and, therefore, to understand the issues overall, cross references have been made at appropriate places in the chapter.

## 8.2 Part I

### 8.2.1 Political economy/ State and the SRSP's relationship

The SRSP was established by the provincial government with the stated intention (as described in chapter V) to implement participatory based development theory. Its establishment reflected from the onset the demands of bilateral and multilateral donors, as a part of structural adjustment programmes during the 1980s, that receiving states democratize their economies as a new conditionality (Leftwich, 1994) and provide space to NGOs to undertake development work (Farrington et al., 1993). The reasons behind such insistence, as highlighted in chapter II, was states' failure in reaching the poor, and NGOs' perceived greater potential, over national government, private firms and international donors to empower the poor to take control of development decisions (Bratton, 1989). The logic behind the replacement of government institutions by NGOs, in the views of official funders and members of the

public, was their comparative advantages over other agencies (see Fowler, 1990; Riddel and Robinson, 1995 or chapter II for more details) in reaching the 'poorest of the poor' (Vivian, 1994: 183), and their efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of services (Meyer, 1992). The interest in working through NGOs was also aimed at making state/government and its institutions more accountable to the people so as the policies and decisions could be made in accordance with their needs and requirements (Vivian, 1994). Theoretically, all such expectations from NGOs to transform the existing structure of society and create a new vision of development sounded more than perfect, but practically the empirical data, collected in relation to the SRSP, found no evidence of its success in making the government institutions, involved in different fields, accountable to people.

Evidence of government intervention, dominance and political hijacking stemmed from its early period when certain political personalities in the provincial government established the SRSP not only to brandish the sign of compliance with donors' conditions but also and more importantly to utilize its resources for their political benefits. The visible reasons behind the SRSP's subjection to government priorities/pressure, in this context, were its establishment by government; the deputing of certain government functionaries to lead it; and government's help in arranging finances from the multi and bilateral donors. It, hence, looked more like a 'GONGO'- government NGO- (see chapter II for more detail on 'GONGO') and little like a genuine NGO. Of course, Smillie and Hailey (2001) reported that the SRSP became totally independent after the government withdrew its government functionaries in 1996, but the writers perhaps concluded this only on the basis of documents, not on the basis of ground reality, which could be confirmed only after a detailed field study. The field data presented here suggest that the SRSP's activities were still largely controlled and manipulated by the government either directly or indirectly. Hence, its aim of reaching

the poorest of the poor and empowering them to decide all the stages of PIs was endangered ab initio, a situation which has continued till today.

Further, there is and has been emerging a burgeoning literature, as highlighted in chapter II, which considers NGOs as a vehicle of decentralized development. This focus seems to have influenced the Neo-liberals who strongly criticised states, promoted market liberalism and also advocated institutional reforms to promote civil society (NGOs) in the new development arena. They envisaged NGOs as having the competence to decentralize state decisions and make them responsive to marginalized and grassroots people (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Clark (1995), while analysing the impact of NGOs on international society, also asserted that the (modern) NGOs have the capability to influence states' policy agenda and make them supportive/facilitative to NGOs to undertake equitable development. However, here the focus of Clark was on international NGOs, such as Oxfam and Amnesty International- which maintained a rich funding base (Antrobus, 1987) - but she generalized the argument to NGOs overall. Of course, in respect to international NGOs her generalization sounds logical, as they can pressure the countries where they work for policy changes and for creating a facilitative environment- as the receiving countries, expecting benefits and also negative repercussions in cases of non-compliance, cannot easily compromise on the withdrawal of their development activities. However, in respect to the SRSP- the brain-child of the government and completely dependent upon the multilateral, bilateral and official funding (PPAF) - the assumptions that it could/would challenge government directions, decisions, and mould the government and its policies to support the SRSP's activities/objectives, were found to be simply untrue.

The government has encouraged certain NGOs, such as the SRSP, to work through it. However, this does not imply that it was given complete freedom in its decisions. An indication of this fact was also reflected by the aggressive, dominating

and abortive effort initiated by the central government, as discussed in chapter VI, in 1994/6 to register all the NGOs under one act. The reasoning behind this was to monitor their overall activities and financial affairs, and, in short, to make them to work in accordance with government directions. Riddel and Robinson (1995) also confirm that most governments impose registration of NGOs for the purpose, not only coordinating, but most importantly, increasing governments' ability to monitor, control, and put boundaries on NGOs' operations. Such attempts are considered as checking NGOs' potential to influence local and national level policy. The question is whether the relations between state and the SRSP have improved, and whether government has satisfied the roles which were expected of it for actualizing the idea of participatory based development dreamt in the structural adjustment programme? These questions are dealt with in the following discussion relating to the government reforms in developing NGOs friendly environment.

### 8.2.2 Pakistan's government reforms and changing the SRSP-state relationships

It was found that the SRSP worked more as an intermediary/agent between the government and the people. Its decisions were influenced by government's priorities and its success and failure was observed to be associated with the relationship of government. Here, in the case of the SRSP, the common assumption indicated by Clark (1995) relating to NGOs that they are less bound by political considerations than government agencies, that they are innovative and that they fulfil a role that is qualitatively different from other development actors (Vivian, 1994), was not supported. Such prospects could be possible if the state had either been a static entity or if this transformation had not been a threat to its authority. Even the policy changes which had been brought by the government pertaining to establishing a fund (PPAF) and supporting the SRSP through it, as discussed in chapter IV, proved to be a way of dominating and orienting the SRSP's decisions to follow government plans more

successfully and also satisfy the demand of the foreign donors. At first sight, the establishment of PPAF was a step towards ensuring NGOs' independence and the realization of their expected features, but in practice, the data revealed that the government, by financing the SRSP, dominated its decisions and determined directions for its activities. PPAF's establishment made the SRSP accountable, in terms of showing quantitative progress, to both the government and the lending countries.

Reflecting upon the impact of such a special fund for NGOs in Latin America, Bebbington (1997) in his study concluded that it looked like a new mechanism of states to control and condition NGOs in accordance with their own priorities. He thus named NGOs, in this context, as 'subcontractors' carrying out state directives (Ibid: 1757). The same assertion was also observed to be true with regard to the SRSP. It worked as a 'subcontractor', merely extending the previously government extended services (PIs) to the people through external money. Organizations' members confirmed this, albeit in a slightly different way. They asserted that the SRSP, as explained in the preceding chapter, did not properly incorporate the tenets of participatory development in its working style. They considered the SRSP as similar to the government departments which extended such services in their respective areas before. Similarly, Haque (2002:), while reflecting upon the same kind of fund in Bangladesh- which disbursed loans to NGOs- maintained that it was also a government control mechanism because it not only made the receiving NGOs accountable to itself but also required them to receive/collect fund from foreign donors through it. Furthermore, Hows and Desai (1995) held the same view that NGOs' dependence upon such kind of funding worsened their situation by hampering their independence. All these reflections provide valid explanations for the failure of the SRSP to function in the way it or the advocates of participatory development NGOs intended (Chambers, 1993; Hows and Desai, 1995; Kaldor, 2003). It worked more like a remote control toy totally controlled and manipulated by the

government in various ways, as described above. In addition, on the one hand, it was found to be controlled by the government, while on the other hand the SRSP's staff members indicated that donors made it follow their footprints. By this, they meant to those who provided the SRSP with the finances to implement its participatory development activities. In this situation, the donors actually meant PPAF and the World Bank. The above discussion treated PPAF as a policy step/change initiated by the government to get control over NGOs (such as SRSP) activities, while the next discussion treats PPAF in the guise of donor, channelling World Bank fund to the SRSP. Hence, the following discussion analyses how donors (the agencies disbursing money to the SRSP) affect the SRSP's participatory development model.

### 8.2.3 Donors' restrictions and the SRSP's activities

The SRSP, as described above, was established by the provincial government to replicate the interventional participatory development strategy of Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP). What was not mentioned in the SRSP's reports was that it was established by the government to comply with the demand/insistence of international donors that the Pakistan government involve NGOs if it required any foreign assistance. However, its continuous dependence, reflected by its documents, on bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, reflects and validates that it was established as a sign of compliance to their demand, as previously discussed in chapter IV. Further support for this view is reflected by the evidence that it was established at a time when the bilateral and multilateral donor agencies pursued the 'New Policy Agenda' which called for respective states/governments to involve NGOs if any aid/finance was required for poverty alleviation, social welfare and 'civil society' (Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 961).

The reason behind the increase of NGOs during the 1990s was international donors' dissatisfaction and discontentment with the performance of government

institutions (Zaidi, 2000:1; Brown, 1992: 2-3; Edwards and Hulme, 1995: 3-5; Fowler, 1995: 143-45), their (governments'/states') failure in economic development and also their lack of political accountability to the society/people to reflect their actual needs (Farrington et al., 1993). Donors' interest to work through NGOs not only led to an unprecedented increase of NGOs in developing countries throughout the world, but also led to making NGOs dependent upon official aid (Hashemi, 1995:109); threatening their performance, and making them accountable to donors, rather than to the community (Uphoff, 1993: xiii).

Similarly, the SRSP, like other NGOs, supported by bilateral and multilateral donors and presently (during my field work) mainly by the World Bank through PPAF (see chapter IV for more detail), was found from the understanding of staff members to be functioning in accordance with their agenda. It needs to be mentioned here that donors' agendas, targets, conditions or priorities are used interchangeably in this chapter. They are based on the interpretations of the SRSP's staff members who referred them to donors' specified target-, i.e. the formation of men's and women's community organizations, disbursing of pre-defined schemes/PIs, as described in chapter VI, and disbursing of credit among the organizations' members- required to be accomplished in a specified time frame. The SRSP was exclusively dependent upon the donors and therefore could not sideline or ignore their stipulated plans and conditions. Staff members saw themselves as fettered by donors' conditions and, hence, had to fulfil their target at the cost of their idealized participatory development theory. Donors, according to staff members, set the agenda and required the SRSP to achieve it within a pre-determined time-frame. The struggle for target accomplishment in the prescribed time-frame handicapped both the NGO's staff and the community people in locating the problems which the people actually faced. It was established in the last two chapters that staff members took more interest in forming men's and women's organizations and

increasing their number- as opposed to its theory explained in chapter VI and VII- and used any means available to help them to attain their target. Hence, they rushed through the project cycle and moved the people in the way they wanted in order to accomplish their stipulated task. The reason which staff members explained for their struggle for accomplishing the target was to ensure the continuation of the next instalment for the survival of the SRSP. The same has also been confirmed by Perara (1996) and Hodson (1996), who maintained that donors withdrew their finance when the respective organizations (to which funds had been provided) failed to achieve the contracted outputs. Staff members, besides other reasons, particularly ascribed their failure to attain their ideals to their subjection to the donors' requirements. Apart from staff members, some men's organizations' members (see chapter VII for explanation of this issue) also plainly complained against the donors, whom they thought drove the SRSP not for the community but for the accomplishment of their own set target. Such restrictions/pressure negatively affected the SRSP's ideals of participatory development by not allowing the community to take control over the decisions as idealized (see chapter VI and VII). In relation to such a situation, Botes and Rensburg (2000), while analysing the dynamics of community participation, particularly in South Africa, stated that donors' pressure on staff members to attain the determined target compelled them to make decisions independent of the community, because involving people could cost much time which they could not afford in the limited time frame. In this respect, they referred to a community leader who reflected that:

> "What we resent is the high-handed way the planners go about ramming proposals down our throats. This is our community and we want to be part of decisions affecting us" (Ibid: 50).

The above version not only authenticates the belief that donors' restrictions hampered the participatory development theory but also validated the assertions of staff members and members of community organizations who held that projects (PIs) were

not sustained because they were externally instigated/induced and also did not reflect the actual needs of the overall community. Confirming the negative relation between donors' restrictions and community involvement, Njoh (2002) concluded from a case study of Mutengene, Cameroon self-help water project, that the imposition of targets on the development workers in a specified time resulted in the failure of institutional building due to not involving the community in the decision making process. Similarly, many other writers (Hashemi, 1995; Karim, 1995; Uphoff, 1993) have similarly agreed that donor-dependent NGOs are donor-driven, not community-driven.

### 8.2.4 Issue of the SRSP's accountability

The interest of donor agencies, as briefly reflected in chapter II, to work through NGOs is based on the assumption that states had proved inefficient in performing their role to reach the grass roots. On the other hand, NGOs were preferred because of their distinctive characteristics, such as their cost-effectiveness (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001; Paul, 2003: 75; Edwards and Hulme, 1998), voluntarism (Bratton, 1989), determination of independent decision-making of state's directions (Uphoff, 1993: xv), downward accountability, potential to strengthen local organizations and their ability in promoting popular participation in the development process (Farrington et al., 1993). However, such claims in relation to the SRSP were found to be unjustified in the light of staff members' understanding because the donors, while channelling their funds through it, threatened not only its independence but also its downward accountability to beneficiaries/community people. The SRSP staff members, as described in the previous two chapters, admitted that they were responsible to the donors for the completion of their target, not to the community. This view was further indirectly supported by organizations' members' complaints who targeted the SRSP for neither giving them the freedom to reflect their actual needs, nor were they involved in the final designing of the schemes. The SRSP's upward accountability was also reflected by its struggle, not only

to complete its stipulated number of community organizations-imposed by donors- but also to increase their number in order to ensure the continuation of the next instalments. Staff members, being obsessed with their accountability to the donors for target accomplishment, were observed as least bothered/concerned about organizing people towards ensuring community-based efforts. They completed the required formalities without looking at their underlying truth, i.e. whether the benefits of the PIs benefited all or a specific category. Similarly, they had little time to coordinate with the organizations after they completed their schemes. The same was also found pivotal from the views of some of the organizations' members, who cited donors' pressure as distorting the materialization of participatory development.

The sign of staff members' upward accountability (an indication of its sub-contractorship) appeared from the very start when they informed community people about the SRSP's package, the available cost and time limits. Likewise, in order to attain the required target, staff members discouraged organizations' members from making any change or modification in the designed schemes/plans in accordance with their actual needs. It is worth mentioning here that giving too much freedom to NGOs may also sabotage their accountability and transparency in their activities, just as too much closeness and reliance on donors takes NGOs from their self-regulation to regulation from above (Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 968-69). However, to ensure their accountability to the people, they should not be overly dictated to, time-bound or restricted to attaining a pre-determined target. Otherwise, it, as the case study presented here suggests, is just the old top-down development in a new dress, rather than a paradigm shift towards people-centred development.

Such reflections clarify that, as long as the SRSP does not get or find/manage an indigenous source of income for its activities or the donors, as explained by the staff members, do not review their conditions, the situation of its upward accountability

would remain unchanged and the idea of bottom-up development would look like a dream. A similar conclusion was reached by Bratton (1990) who concluded from three case studies of African NGOs that those who generated most of their income from local resources and little from foreign donors worked under very few conditions. On the other hand, the NGO, solely dependent upon foreign donors, acted as it was told and, hence, worked at the expense of its participatory development objectives. The problem of NGOs' upward accountability, according to Biggs and Neame (1995), is actually created by their search for funding. They expressed the problem by quoting the proverb, 'He who pays the piper plays the tune' (Ibid: 31). Similarly, Heijden (1987), while commenting upon NGOs as solely reflecting the demands of donors, used an African proverb, 'If you have your hand in another man's pocket, you must move when he moves' (Ibid: 106). In relation to NGOs' upward accountability, Edwards and Hulme (1996: 967-68) also maintain that, morally, NGOs are supposed to be accountable to beneficiaries, but they do not have any option other than to stand accountable to donors (Edwards and Hulme, 1998). Likewise, in the same tone, Hashemi (1995: 103-10), while referring to NGOs in Bangladesh- which has more NGOs than any country of a similar size in the world (Paul; 2003: 76), held that most of the NGOs were dependent upon donors and had never shown their accountability downward to people- which of course was their mission. They had the capacity but could not find an alternative local/indigenous source base to escape the net (Karim, 1995: 115-17). Edwards and Hulme (1998) assert that there are signs that greater dependence on donor funding may compromise NGOs' performance and distort their downward accountability. They were cautious about generalizing this view but, in the case of the SRSP, all the data confirm and provide a clear picture that its activities were totally conditioned by donors' priorities and, hence, its accountability to people looks questionable, because donors' dissatisfaction can cause a threat to its survival.

### 8.2.5 The SRSP's innovativeness and flexibility

Besides other perceived characteristics, as discussed above, NGOs are said to be characterized by flexibility and innovativeness (Edwards and Hulme, 1995, 1996). However, in this case, where the SRSP was reported to be completely bound in terms of its activities and time, it discouraged any community effort which would take more time than it could afford. Staff members almost invariably followed a pre-determined pattern in the formation of both men's and women's community organizations and, likewise, approved the schemes. However, they informed the members, in anticipation, about the prescribed time frame. Theoretically, the SRSP had documented unequivocally in its reports (SRSP, 1999; 1996 or as briefly explained in chapter V) that its strategy was to spend enough time on the mobilization of people until they developed the merits of community organizations. It also theoretically believed in giving enough time to ensure that staff members ascertained the views of all the organizations' members alike in the decisions pertaining to the whole project cycle. However, what was found was the reverse. The reason behind this was that, as described above, the SRSP was circumscribed and tied to attaining the pre-determined target. Its failure, according to the staff members, to follow that could bring about negative effects to its survival. In addition, it had no right to exhibit flexibility or innovativeness to modify or change donors' conditionalities. Hence, I argue that, based on historical precedents, the perceptions and experiences of staff members and my own empirical research, the SRSP merely worked as an agent of donors (and the state) to implement their pre-set programme and, therefore, could not take its own initiative to modify that in accordance with its own or community needs. Such an effect has been confirmed by Gariyo (1995) after his fieldwork experience in which he studied different types of NGOs in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, concerned with improving the livelihoods of rural poor. He concluded that NGOs' dependence on foreign donors discouraged their flexibility and

independence to allocate or spend some part of the money on the alternatives they desired, if it was not already mentioned in the programme documents. With respect to lack of flexibility, the writer referred to the complaint of an NGO official in central Uganda, who said that:

> "... We want to start our own income-generating projects so as to sustain our programmes when the donors stop giving us financial assistance one day. The area we are in has rich fertile soils which can be used to grow food crops for sale in the main urban centres. Our donors cannot allow us to use part of the money they give us to purchase land and start an agricultural project. When donations stop this year, we would have wanted to be able to continue some form of assistance from our own sources but now it will be difficult. We shall have to close unless we get another donor" (Ibid: 133).

The author also quoted another official of another NGO in Nairobi, who said:

> "They [the donor agencies] should give us money but should not dictate what we should use the money for. Sometimes we want to set up our own income-generating activities such as consultancies, training centres or services such as accommodation units but donors would not hear of it"(Ibid: 133).

The above assertions inherently maintain two explanations. On the one hand, they confirm that donors constrained NGOs' innovativeness, while on the hand they reflect that donors took no interest in the viability/sustainability of the respective organizations. This provides an explanation for their lack of interest in evolving a participatory-based development truly founded on community demands. Normally, the characteristic of NGOs' innovativeness- a feature that distinguishes them from other institutions (Fowler, 1990) has been greatly lauded. Chambers (1993) and Bebbington and Farrington (1992) for example, cite NGOs as being instrumental in innovating participatory rural appraisal and agricultural technology development methods. However, they only focused on their theoretical characteristics and did not, in this case, take into account donors' restrictions. The data in connection with the SRSP revealed no such signs where it could even think about changing donors' pre-determined strategy or innovating or showing flexibility for ensuring the idealized participatory approach to

the PIs. It followed the financial agencies almost in toto and only worked as a traditional service providing agency. Confirming this view, Hows, and Desai (1995) asserted that the innovativeness and flexibility of NGOs is endangered once they are expected to produce the predictable results assumed by the donors (Ali, 2004).

### 8.2.6 Summary

It appears from the above part that the SRSP was a brain-child of government and worked in practice as a government NGO (GONGO). Its primary establishment and continuous support by the government, in terms of providing/managing funding from different foreign funding agencies- in the present case through PPAF- made it work as a 'sub-contractor', extending projects/facilities unquestioningly to the remote areas previously served by government departments/institutions. It reflected a tremendous gain for the government to reduce its development expenses and utilize donors' money for development projects which had previously incurred huge cost for the treasury. Furthermore, the establishment of PPAF and the provision of funds to its own established NGOs, such as the SRSP, made the SRSP accountable to the government, not to the beneficiary community, and also helped the government to maintain control over its activities. Similarly, the SRSP, working as an agent of government, carried out the activities and requirements set by the World Bank, as the staff members perceived, without taking care of its ideal documented characteristics, such as reaching the poorest of the poor and empowering local people to make all the decisions by themselves (see chapter VI and VII for more detail).

In addition, establishment of the SRSP by the government resembled a mere formal response to fulfilling the conditions required by the international donors for channelling their development funds. Hence, its establishment, on the one hand, satisfied donors' requirements by incorporating in its documents the essential features of an NGO (see chapter V) and on other hand satisfied their intentions of requiring

NGOs to form and work through local men's and women's community organizations. In short, the SRSP danced, on one hand, directly to the tune of government (which not only established it but also channelled World Bank funds to it through PPAF) and on the other hand, to the World Bank that determined the completion of set targets of a particular number of men's and women's community organizations and the dissemination of PIs.

## 8.3 Part II

### 8.3.1 Local power structure/relations

This section analytically addresses the prevalent local community power structure in relation to its adverse effects on participatory development. It is worth-noting before proceeding to reflect upon the overall picture that, on the one hand, government and donors, as described above, paralysed the SRSP's claims of community empowerment, while on the other hand local power relations left it limited to theory only. The power structure here simply refers to the elected figures, such as *Nazims* (see chapter VI and VII for more explanation) and the local elites (community organizations' presidents and secretaries) who had been influencing the SRSP's process and activities, preventing their reaching the grass roots. Therefore, the local power structure and its role in sabotaging the SRSP's claims, is analysed in relation to its inherent structure, internal/local factors and also external factors.

### 8.3.2 State/elements of power structure

Participatory development, as highlighted in chapter II, is said to be people-centred (Sin, 2002; Rijal, 2001; Shah, 1998a; Shah, 1998b; Guijt and Shah, 1998), bringing the marginalized- i.e. poor, deprived, powerless, isolated, physically weak- before the strong and powerful and also empowering them to take full control of their lives and the decisions pertaining to them (Chambers, 1993: 10-11; Midgley, 1986;

Holland and Blackburn, 1998). To materialize such ideals, NGOs are considered as effective vehicles/mechanisms of participatory development (Suds, 1992; Gurusamy, 1996; Fernandes, 2003; Bebbington, 1997) by working at the grass-root level (Bojicic-Dzelelovic, 2002; Bratton, 1989; Vivian, 1994), changing the power relations and enabling the powerless to share power with the powerful (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Thomas, 1992; Brett, 1991; Williams et al., 2003; Poulton and Harris, 1988).

Theoretically all such claims look simple but, in practice, the empirical data, described in chapter VI and VII, depicted a very different picture. The power structure in the respective areas was found to be totally unmoved by the SRSP's staff intervention. The local elites dominated all the decisions and ignored the poor. Community organizations were normally dominated by their leaders, i.e. presidents and secretaries. It is worth-mentioning here, to clarify possible confusion that even the presidents and secretaries were not powerful enough to decide the activities independent of staff members, in the way idealized by the SRSP. However, among the given decisions, they were found to monopolize the activities relating to the overall project cycle.

They dominated all the decisions, right from the formation of organizations till the last stage of evaluation, on behalf of ordinary members. They not only dominated the ordinary members but also discouraged the SRSP from reaching the poor people. Hence, the question as to why the SRSP was not given a free and independent role/status by community elites to represent the grass-root people and enable them to gain control over all the decisions, relating to the project cycle, is dealt with below.

**(a) Community elites' internal persuasion of maintaining status quo**

Many of the advocates of participatory development, as described above, postulate a linear and predictable progression of NGOs in giving a voice to the voiceless by changing their prevalent power structure. They also describe quite optimistically the linear relation between participation, empowerment (see chapter II for more detail) and

sustainability (Guijt and Shah, 1998; Chambers, 1995; Kollavalli and Kerr, 2002). However, such assertions, in the light of empirical data, could only be possible if the change did not affect their (elites) status/position. The primary data similarly belies the SRSP's slogan of empowering all the people, because all the decisions were made by community elites (presidents and secretaries of the organizations) not the poor (ordinary members). The idea that NGOs reach the poor (Gubser, 2002; Uvin, 1995) is an ideal picture; however, it ignores, as discussed in the critique in chapter II, the heterogeneous structure of society characterized by different characteristics and priorities. Guijt and Shah (1998) assert that simplistic description of community hide the power structure, the biases in interests and needs based on age, class, ethnicity, religion and gender (see below).

The community/society, according to Twelvetrees (2002: 58-60); Cohen (1996: 229) and Chambers (1993) is stratified and characterized by different classes, races, cultural groups, poor and rich, men and women, traditional and modern, traditional leaders and local administrative powers and large landowners and small farmers. Similarly, the target areas of the SRSP, where I conducted my field work, were predominantly agricultural based and characterized mostly by landlords and landless and, hence, highly stratified in terms of status and power. Landlords were influential and held control over the rest of the people. They could easily exert pressure against any external intervention which could be undesirable to their interests in particular. On the other hand, the ordinary members were usually poor and in some cases tenants, working on landlords' agricultural land. Organizations' leaders, when forming organizations, usually incorporated the names of the poor and also asked them to pronounce the same before the staff members, if ever asked during the meeting. The leaders of the organizations formed community organizations mostly for their own interests and left the organizations after they completed their work. They were not only found to have

formed their own respective organizations but had also formed organizations in their surrounding areas, mainly for the purpose of further strengthening their influence. They did not encourage the ordinary members to come to the fore and share in decision-making with regard to PIs activities. The reason why they resisted the SRSP's intention to devolve power to the grass-roots and monopolized all the activities almost independently is a matter of power and vested interests. Craig and Mayo (1995) assertion, as highlighted in chapter II, that power- the ability of determining of an action (see Richardson, 1983) - does not decrease if it shared by other people. While this assertion might work on a philosophical level, in practice and taking it in terms of influence and relating it to the on-the-ground facts of the SRSP's related activities, it was found to be untrue. Had their assertion been valid in this context, then the elites (presidents and secretaries) would not have been reluctant to allow the poor (ordinary members) to participate equally in the decisions. Likewise, the idea of decentralized decisions and the concepts of 'participation', empowerment', and sustainability would have been implementable.

The idea of empowering the powerless was not so simple in practice because the respective areas/societies, as briefly highlighted above, were composed of different groups. Their priorities differed and those in power always struggled to maintain their position through any mean they could utilize, for their own survival. Hence, they drew the SRSP's benefits to themselves and left the ordinary members at the mercy of their own destiny. Confirming the data which highlighted community elites as restricting the SRSP's role in empowering the impoverished, Botes and Rensburg (2002), on the basis of case study in South Africa, highlighted that a particular group of leaders/elites interposed between the development agency and the beneficiaries and, likewise, obstructed all attempts to reach the poor. Similarly, Njoh's (2002) study in Africa also

found that the local elites intervened between the development agency and the local beneficiaries and hijacked and monopolized all development activities.

Reflections from the above discussion also support staff members' assertions, described in the chapter VI and VII, that decisions were made by the few (presidents and secretaries of the community organizations) because they were rich and enjoyed comparatively higher status than others (ordinary members). They also held that they could not ignore them because they created problems for their activities in the respective areas. Such reflections are well-supported by the literature described in chapter II. Furthermore, for example, Popple (2002) and Samoff (1990) maintain that any struggle relating to power shifting to poor is always resisted by the powerful because that (struggle for power shifting) reduce their power/influence in their areas. Similarly, Babacan and Gopalkrishnan (2001) held that those who have resources have power over others. They further maintained that such power can often be used to exclude others and set up a structure that perpetuates oppression in society. In addition, many other case studies too have concluded that NGOs' projects have been successful in many terms, such as in improving the living conditions of the people, however, they failed to counteract the elites and so to reach the poor and empower them in decision-making, in line with the NGOs' ideals (Riddel and Robinson, 1995; Nustad, 2001). Now, here, a question arises as to the major factors that constrained the SRSP's efforts to restructure the power structure and provide space to the relatively poor. These are analysed below.

**(b) The SRSP's biased interventional methodology**

The above discussion brings us first to criticise the SRSP's interventional strategy of utilizing a 'focal person' (see chapter VI and VII for more detail) as a channel for entering into a new area. The SRSP's claims had been quite simple and idealized with regard to reaching poor people and integrating them into organizations

through such elites, since the empirical data depicted that these elites were the ones who hijacked the whole process for their own interests and discouraged the poor from participating in decisions. Of course, theoretically, the elites could act as facilitative channels for taking the empowerment model to the ground but, as found above, they did not play such a role because of their struggle to maintain their influence and control in their areas. The emergence of elites' influence and pressure on the SRSP's activities started from the onset when the SRSP involved elites (either the political leaders or non-political but influential people of the area), when initiating work in any area. It was, therefore, found out that such local elites either managed the so-called organizations by themselves or in some cases managed to have their own people (other relatively influential people) as their leaders. The strategy of reaching the poor gradually through community elites was found in other case studies as similarly strengthening the position of the elites (Hardiman, 1986). Hence, it is safe to claim here that the SRSP's involvement of elites as 'gatekeepers' served to further strengthen/consolidate their position. This assertion is also supported by the responses of the members of community organizations. Ordinary members in particular and presidents and secretaries in some cases, criticised the SRSP's staff for encouraging organizations' leaders (presidents and secretaries) to monopolize all the projects for their own vested interests. Even, in an FGI, the president of an organization maintained in the presence of other ordinary members that:

> "Staff members take no interest in reaching a poor. They are working for salary only and not for developing community sense. I am not agreed if some body tells me that they are working for equitable community based development" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

However, on the other hand, the responses of the staff members reflected their perception that they were driven by the donors, i.e., the World Bank and the intermediary- PPAF, and this was certainly their experience of working in this context.

Staff members believed that they, due to the target accomplishment pressure, could not get time out to ensure the representation of poor. In addition, they maintained that ignoring the local elites either blocked their entry into the target area or caused failure to their efforts to attain their given target. Here, the assertions of the SRSP's staff members carry a considerable logic, in the context of the prevalent power structure, for utilizing local elites as a channel for reaching the poor masses. However, ironically, the outcome was to make them the centre of power. Staff members empowered the presidents and secretaries of the organizations for all kind of documentation required during the whole process/stages of schemes completion. They were also empowered, as described in chapter VI, to recommend the names of applicants for credit. All such concentration of power in organizations' leaders led to their monopoly and hijacking of the organizations for their own interests. Thus, the SRSP's (staff members') role served further to consolidate the prevalent power structure. Alongside this situation, the other major problem which emerged as constraining the SRSP in restructuring the power structure was the poor process of community organizing.

**(c) Poor community organizing**

It is to be noted that, generally, the point which came out of the first part, was that the SRSP was quite restricted by donors (World Bank) and by the constraints of PPAF to the attainment of a particular target within a specified time. However, here the findings are analysed for the purpose of reflecting how the prevalent and practised pattern of social mobilization and community organizing discouraged the poor section of society from taking control of decisions. As described above, the participatory development model believes in empowering particularly the poorest of the poor. To attain such ideals, people, as described in chapter II, are organized into organizations for the purpose of being integrated and to evolve among them the sense of self-help and self-reliance (Carey and Sutton, 2004; Bratton, 1990; Rubin and Rubin, 2001;

Constantino-David, 1995; Westergaard, 1994). Hence, the NGOs, working by adopting the participatory model, organize the poor/neglected with the intention of enabling them to exercise greater influence over the decisions affecting their lives, as well as to ensure the sustainability of their efforts (Robinson, 1992).

Based on the same rationale, the SRSP also worked through community organizations, but the way they were formed did not satisfy the attributes of actual community organizing (see chapter II). Staff members, as briefly highlighted above, contacted the local elites and encouraged them to form as many organizations as they could, so that they (staff members) could attain their determined target. Hence, organizations were formed by particular people, mainly for their vested interests. These people also formed organizations in the nearby areas by completing the formal documentation required for seeking the PIs from the SRSP. Staff members mostly sanctioned schemes without practically understanding and investigating whether they reflected the desire of one particular person or all organization members. Hence, the decisions were made by the organization leaders, and mostly did not represent the needs of the ordinary members. The result was that such organizations survived only until they had completed their projects, and were then abandoned: except some which were waiting for other expected benefits from the SRSP. The SRSP's theory of holding regular meetings with organizations either before the approval of the schemes or after their completion remained a theory only. This all resulted into further consolidating the position of organizations' leaders and, therefore, the philosophy of participatory development remained a mere dream.

The obvious reason, reflected from staff members' responses, was that the attainment of donors' stipulated targets in a given time prevented staff members from ensuring consensus based organizations. They also held that due to shortage of time, they could not follow the required process of organization-building to ensure the

representation of the views of the poor people/ordinary members. Similarly, some of the leaders of men's and women's organizations members also emphasised the adoption of a complete process of social mobilization prior to sanctioning any scheme. They further stressed:

> "People' problem is not money; the problem is the change of their mind. If they are mentally changed, they can arrange resources from themselves. They have the resources but their utilization is not rightly done. Organizations, to reach to the stage of maturity need almost 5, 8 or 10 years. The SRSP, as it was expected, is moving in the wrong direction, and if it wants its success, it must focus on social mobilization; and should give enough of time to the formation of organizations" (FGI MCO, Haripur).

This does not mean that social mobilization should only be restricted to a mere process. Rather, there must be some attraction, in terms of some benefits provided to the people by the development organization, to demonstrate to them the benefit of their integration. The same point was made by an organization member (secretary) who maintained in response to the above suggestion that:

> "If 10 years are spent on organization and awareness, then we would be dead and there would not be any use of schemes for us" (MCO, Haripur).

Reflecting upon the same issue, Botes and Rensburg (2000) argued that neither extreme is desirable. They held that 'process without product leaves communities feelings that nothing is really happening other than a lot of talking.... Product without process runs the risk of doing something communities do not want or need, or can not sustain' (Ibid: 51). Some case studies have also clarified that organizations do not work without attractive personal incentives for all the members (Kamara and Karbgo, 1999; Lyon, 2003). However, the main point here is that the preoccupation with meeting targets and establishing new organizations and implementing new schemes meant that insufficient attention was paid to the process of capacity building and mobilization, and

that the product was mainly an incentive and means whereby elites could further consolidate their position.

## 8.4 Summary

The above discussion has shown that the local power structure hindered the process of overall community involvement in the decision-making pertaining to the project cycle. The local elites (specifically the leaders of community organizations), on the one hand, constrained the poor people (ordinary members) from coming to the fore and participating in the decision-making process, while on the other hand they controlled and paralysed any kind of external intervention- such as the SRSP- that threatened their supremacy and influence. They maintained influence over others (poor/ordinary members) and used them and their community organizations merely for their own interests. The SRSP's intervention, rather than restructuring the prevalent local power and providing space to the poor section of society, resulted in further consolidating their position. The effect of its strategy in perpetuating elites was reflected in two major factors. The first factor was that it focused on local elites while entering into any new area, encouraged elites to form community organizations and also empowered them officially to carry on and complete the overall official documentation and organizations' activities. Secondly, the SRSP did not complete its idealized mobilization process, but approved schemes put forward by elites without checking whether the decisions were made by the leaders or by all on consensual basis. However, the underlying reason for this situation was the struggle of staff to meet donor targets within the prescribed time-frame.

## 8.5 Part III

### 8.5.1 The SRSP and gender and development approach

Participatory development, as highlighted above, believes in empowering not only powerless men, but also women (Welbourn, 1991; Mayoux, 1995; Cornwall, 2003). It also believes in empowering 'local people [both impoverished men and women] with the skills and confidence to analyse their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances' (Guijt and Shah, 1998: 1). NGOs, besides other assumed merits referred to above, are considered as the effective channels to reach and empower impoverished men and women equally (Cornwall, and Gaventa, 2001; Galjart, 1995). NGOs are also known for their efficiency in structural transformation by adopting the 'gender and development' (GAD) theory and mainstreaming women in development (Ajuonu, n.d.) (see chapter II for more detail on GAD).

However, the empirical data, as discussed above, did not verify this ideal of the SRSP's role in structural transformation, sensitizing gender and mainstreaming women in its development activities. The SRSP, as discussed in chapter V, replaced its 'women and development' (WID) by 'gender and development (GAD) in 1996 to bring women into the mainstream of village development. In addition, it aimed at focusing on both the strategic and practical needs of women with the intention of sensitizing gender and rooting out gender inequality by restructuring the social relations and the overall power structure. However, no evidence of women's empowerment and structural transformation- ensuring women's empowerment- was found. The data reflected no change in the attitude of men and women to ensure their equal participation in the decisions pertaining to all the activities involved in the project completion. The data reflected the absolute monopoly and dominance of men, from the formation of women's organizations to the completion of the projects, approved in women's organizations'

names. In short, the data reflected no signs of GAD, because the SRSP neither carried out gender analysis nor sufficiently focused on its theory. Women's organizations were observed as only formed, as discussed in chapters VI and VII, to attain extra projects or to complete outstanding work, such as extension in street pavement, installing more hand pumps, etc. Furthermore, the committees (see chapter VI and VII for details), which were formed in the name of men's organizations, were exclusively made up of men, while on the other hand, the committees formed in the name of women's organizations, rarely had women as their members. Of course, in certain cases, women's names were found written with men's in women's organizations. However, that did not mean women's participation in decision-making. Hence, the SRSP's claim of having adopted a GAD approach in its development activities by restructuring the social structure to provide an equal voice to men and women proved to be mere 'Utopia'. Confirming the same phenomenon, Cornwall (2003) held that development projects, following GAD theory, not only failed to transform the men-only culture but also proved supportive to maintaining the prevalent status quo- which was highly inequitable for women. Besides, a comparatively large number of case studies of participatory development projects have reflected a GAD approach limited to theory only (Cornwall, 2003; Perez, 2002; Agarwal, 1997; Mayoux, 1995; Izugbara, 2004; Gathiram and Hemson, 2002; Sardenberg, Costa and Passos, 1999). Similarly, many writers held that participatory development projects followed 'women in development' (WID), not 'gender and development', despite the semantic shift from WID to GAD (Mayoux, 1995; Burlet, 1999).

The assertion that participatory development projects followed WID not GAD, and the empirical data relating to the SRSP's efforts in incorporating gender to its activities, mutually support each other. No single case of any organization was found which was generally composed and run by both men and women equally. Here, I would

like to argue that the data did not even practically reflect the SRSP as having implemented the true 'women and development' approach (see chapter II for details on WID). Hence, it would be fair to evaluate the SRSP's activities in relation to GAD, as the worst form of WID- a 'filling in the blanks', process- because women's organizations, in particular, were formed as a mere formality in order to meet the donors' required 40 percent quota for women and 60 percent for men (see chapter VI and VII). The question as to why the SRSP failed to ensure women's empowerment and root out gender inequality from the local structure is dealt with in relation to its two major factors below.

**(a) Male-dominated culture**

NGOs, as described earlier, are said to be an effective instrument in empowering the powerless (in this context, women) by transforming the social structure and making it equally friendly to both men and women. However, this assertion forgets about the prevalent male dominant and male-friendly cultural set-up. Normally, culture vests power in the hands of men and empowers them to control women and their activities (Agarwal, 1997; Rathgerber, 1990; Cohen and Uphoff, 1980; Ajuonu, n.d.; Seeley, Batra and Sarin, 2000; Abane, 2004; Prihantinah, Marinova and Stocker, 2002; Sin, 2002; Little and Panelli, 2003; Yudelman, 1987; Lind, 1997). Hence, any attempt to empower women by changing the hierarchical gender relations is resisted by men due to their fear of losing their hold and power on women (Ugbomeh, 2001). The same situation of male-dominancy and men-friendly social norms was found in the target areas of the SRSP. As briefly highlighted above and more extensively elaborated in chapter VII, women's organizations were formed by men. They completed the formalities by putting the names of women of their households and in some cases the names of the neighbourhood women. However, it was found that most of the women were not aware either of their membership or of any details of the projects built in their

names. Men controlled everything, even though they formally appointed women as organizations' presidents and secretaries. From the inception of women's organization until the completion of the projects built in their names, men did everything. Women's role was limited to household activities and they were not allowed by their men either to initiate any step on their own or participate in any activity outside the household. In some cases, they participated in the completion of the projects indirectly by preparing food for the labourers working on the completion of the schemes. Confirming the overall situation of women in Pakistan, Agboatwalla (2000: 181) held that Pakistan is a patriarchal society and the role of women is limited to their household activities.

The initiators of women's organizations were mostly the presidents and secretaries of the male organizations who had, in most cases, already received either projects or some other benefits from the SRSP. The formation of women's organization, as highlighted above, brought them further benefits. Women, in almost all cases, were culturally so conditioned to 'obeying their men' that they reported that they were happy to follow them unquestioningly. As some women members expressed:

> "All the decisions were made by men. They took our signatures and told us that through WCO 'we would pave the leftover street'. We accepted and accept any thing decided by men whether that is good or bad and never intervene into their decisions" (FGI WCO, Haripur).

Men, generally, did not like their female family members participating in activities with outside men. They, mostly, criticised the SRSP's for involving women in such activities and preferred that they be involved only in income generation activities, which could be maintained and managed within household boundaries. As described above, formally women' names were incorporated in certain committees in relation to the projects' completion. However, in reality they had no power to influence men by incorporating their own views. The helplessness of female members of committees in advancing their own views in the presence of men was not only found in the respective

areas but also confirmed by many other participatory development projects (see Seeley, Batra and Sarin, 2000). Confirming the same point, Agarwal (1997: 1375), while referring to a gender based participatory development programme- Joint Forest Management- in India, held that the women- members of committees with men- who attended meetings were not allowed to speak and hence, became 'discouraged dropouts'. He further cited Britt, who referred to a woman member in a Forest Management committee: 'I went to three or four meetings.... No one ever listened to my suggestions. They were uninterested' (Agarwal, Ibid: 1375). This quotation also indirectly validates the reflections from the empirical data, where some women were interested to come forward and participate actively in project activities, but the surrounding male-dominated cultural set-up discouraged them from doing so.

Among all the target areas, as described in chapter VII, there was only a single exceptional case of a women's organization where the president formed the WCO and identified the problem exclusively of men's pressure. Nonetheless, the important facilitative factors in this respect were (1) women's involvement in agricultural activities outside with men (2) no strict *Purda* observation (see chapter VI for explanation), and (3) also, in this case, the president's being a widow and having no male family member to stop her from participating with men in outside activities.

**(b) The SRSP's male-biased interventional strategy**

On the one hand, as described above, social norms prevented women from participating in decision-making while on the other hand, the SRSP's interventional strategy further weakened their position by beginning with men. The SRSP, as highlighted above and elaborated in detail in chapter V, theoretically believed in focusing on both the strategic and practical needs of women, while in reality its strategy did not show any sign of reflecting the restructuring of gender relations and gender inequity. Even its components, described in chapter V, and its working pattern did not

incorporate the required elements of women's empowerment and structural transformation- in other words, the philosophy of GAD (see Humble, 1998; Kindon, 1998; Cornwall, 2003; Angeles, 2003 for details on the philosophy of GAD). The SRSP exhibited a discriminatory attitude towards women from its very early stage, when it contacted and motivated the influential men of the respective areas towards the formation of community organizations. Of course, it was not easy in these areas to reach women first; however, the SRSP did not dare to show any practical instance, throughout my stay in the field for almost more than seven months, of beginning with women or ensuring their empowerment in project-related decision-making. Staff members encouraged men towards the formation of women's organizations for extra projects or other possible benefits. They did not ensure the reflection of women's views in the project identification and empowered men to deal with all the affairs concerning the projects exclusively. Thus, the SRSP not only failed in addressing gender inequality but also reinforced and further strengthened women's disadvantaged position.

Staff members asserted that the reason for their failure to reach and empower women was their confinement by donor agencies to the formation of pre-determined number of men's and women's community organizations in a particular time frame. Besides, their responses/activities and the SRSP's overall position demonstrated donor agencies to be the cause of the SRSP adopting the worst form of WID. However, women members criticized staff members for not visiting them and also exclusively empowering men to deal with all the activities. Instances of discriminatory attitudes of staff members against women have also been found in other gender based participatory development projects (see Agarwal, 1997). Hence, in such a situation, where the NGO followed its quantitative targets at the expense of its espoused aims and values, it resembled a 'true subcontractor', as described above, expressing in its manifesto,

donors' required attributes- incorporating the tenets of participatory development theory- yet attaining contracts merely to preserve its viability.

### 8.6 Summary of the chapter

The chapter demonstrates in the light of the understanding of staff members and based upon my broader empirical research, that the SRSP carried no independent status and worked totally in accordance with the directions and interests of government and donor agencies. Its overall bridled position had a negative impact on its basic documented participatory development theory. In addition, the local power structure proved unmoved by its interventions. The SRSP's interventions, instead of restructuring it, further consolidated the hold of powerful elites in two ways. Firstly, it began with local elites and did not bother about the ensuing long range effects on the poor people. Likewise, it exclusively empowered the organization leaders to perform all the activities relating to PIs and other issues concerning their organizations. The primary purpose of the SRSP, as expressed by its staff, was to attain the donors' pre-determined target. Secondly, it failed to carry out a proper social mobilization process in line with its ideals. It also failed to implement gender and development (GAD) theory or practice, which it had incorporated as the integral part of its overall documented participatory development manifesto. It stated in its documents that it focused on the strategic and practical needs of women, restructuring the social structure and developing an egalitarian based environment friendly to both men and women. Nevertheless, in practice, its activities were found to further reinforce the prevalent male-dominated hegemony. It behaved partially from the very beginning when it entered a new area through men- local elites of the area. Similarly, its partiality was observed throughout when it encouraged men to perform each and every activity on the part of so-called women members. The SRSP, while working in any area, neither focused on carrying out gender analysis nor gave sufficient attention to the issue. Hence, its intervention

reflected its approach towards women as the worst form of women in development (WID). Besides the SRSP's biased strategy, the prevalent male-dominated culture also did not provide any scope for women to realize their strength and empowerment in the activities and decisions affecting their lives. Men made all the decisions on their behalf and preferred the SRSP to initiate only income generation schemes. In sum, the overall chapter establishes that the government's and donors' restrictions not only caused it to fail to apply participatory development theory but also further strengthened the existing power and gender inequalities.

# CHAPTER NINE

# CONCLUSIONS

## 9.1 Summary of the findings

This study, as described in chapter I, was fundamentally based on evaluating community empowerment in the overall project cycle of a participatory development NGO, namely, SRSP. Theoretically, the SRSP, as described in chapters V and VI, idealizes people, irrespective of colour, caste, class or sex, as the centre of power and aims to make all the decisions relating to the project cycle stages on a consensual basis. Similarly, it suggests its own role is limited to facilitation and extending technical assistance required by the community at any stage. In short, its ideals reflect the basic tenets of participatory development, which correlates people's empowerment with sustainability of the development activities and people's zeal in community based activities, even after the development agencies roll back their activities from their respective areas (see SRSP, 1996, 1999). With few exceptions, the empirical data, as presented in chapters VI and VII, did not reflect any community empowerment and sustainability of the projects in any of the stages/cases. The reason behind the failure to attain the ideals of the organization, as the thesis reflected, was that the issue of community empowerment could not be addressed without recourse to the larger level social processes. Community empowerment was found to be not something simple or attainable in isolation. It carried a close association with the surrounding social phenomena and was deeply integrated into a complex structural web. In sum, the study not only found the SRSP's empowerment claims to be unmet but also revealed that participatory development overall is not feasible.

In order to ensure the genuine implementation of participatory development, some changes could be suggested, such as:

- Participatory development needs to be process/programme-based, not project-based.
- Performance evaluation needs to be qualitative-based, not quantitative-based.
- NGOs need to be independent from external manipulation and need to be accountable downward to the community, not upward to donors or states.
- Gender and development (GAD) needs to be genuinely pursued by focusing on structural changes.

If the above modifications/suggestions, as put forward in the light of the study's findings, are incorporated into PD based programmes such as SRSP, it (PD) might be followed in a more meaningful way. However, without significant changes at the structural level, the modifications outlined above, cannot effectively be implemented for reasons which I discuss below. Indeed, structural transformation might be seen as a necessary precondition for the changes suggested above. The structural issues, as the preceding chapter reflects, acted as a central barrier in inhibiting its implementation and, hence, did not easily allow any room for simple recommendations. In considering the possibilities for the genuine implementation of participatory development, these structural forces need to be re-examined and their role re-assessed. This study has to some extent helped in this endeavour.

### 9.2 Role of structural factors in influencing participatory development's feasibility

The structural forces operated at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, they were the donors and states, while at the micro level they were the local power structures. Their controlling role paralysed the SRSP, preventing it from adhering to participatory development principles. Both macro and micro level forces made the SRSP project-based, not process-based and, hence, caused it to fail to observe the

complete process of community organizing. The reflections of the SRSP's project-based activities were highlighted by the rapid expansion of its activities to new areas as a result of funds being received from different donors (see chapter V). In addition, as described in chapter VI and VII, it exclusively carried out micro-level projects in its target areas. Project based activities do not conform to the underlying principles of participatory development because PD, as described in chapter II, requires observance of a complete process (see Eversole, 2003; Burkey, 1993). In other words, a project is an output based activity required to be attained in a particular time and within a particular cost, while a programme is a long process, composed of a number of projects determined to achieve, in an integrated way, the macro level changes that are of strategic importance (The Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reforms, n.d.).

Making the SRSP follow PD by adopting a project-based, not programme-based approach, was variously in the interest of all these macro and micro-level actors. The donors' interest, as perceived by staff members, was to ensure quantitative achievements in terms of completed projects and to exhibit these as the sign of a successful return for their investment. Similarly, the government also preferred the project-based strategy, because its interest was to extend development projects to all those areas which it might not be able to cover by its own resources. In the same way, the local elites not only adopted the SRSP by taking development projects for their personal use but also used it to maintain their dominance in particular localities.

A second way the macro-level structure caused PD to be paralysed was by quantitative-based evaluation. I found both from my own observations and the views expressed by staff members that donors and the government, while assessing the SRSP's efficiency in relation to the given target, did not take into consideration changes in gender relations, power structures or people's attitudes. Rather, they evaluated the SRSP's performance on the basis of quantitative achievements and considered these as

the criterion for deciding about the continuation of the next instalment. Hence, for the SRSP to maintain its survival, there was no option except to follow the target, without implementing the capacity building measures required. The imposition of the target and quantitative based evaluation made the organization accountable only to funders, not to the community.

Thirdly, these larger level issues negatively affected the implementation of GAD. The SRSP was found to be giving it 'lip service' by treating it in a superficial way. It was not addressed in its strategic and holistic sense; rather, it was considered as an isolated phenomenon not influenced by other internal and external factors. Theoretically, by definition, GAD, as described in chapter II, views gender inequalities as a social phenomenon deeply imbedded in intricate social webs and, hence, requires devoted holistic efforts to effect real change in men's and women's lives. The pivotal reason, for the failure in this respect, was that macro level forces used the SRSP only to attain what it was required to fulfil in the stipulated time. At the same time, the local power structure not only discouraged poor men from sharing power, but also gave no room to women. As reflected in the preceding chapter, men monopolized everything and left no place for the empowerment of women in relation to the projects completed in their names. In sum, micro and macro level forces not only simply made PD infeasible and the implementation of a GAD approach impossible; but also as I discuss in more detail below, further undermined its practicability by reinforcing each other and the existing inequalities in distribution of power.

### 9.3 Mutual reinforcement of macro and micro-level structure and the co-option of participatory development

The macro-level forces reinforced the micro-level structure by creating conditions which further strengthened the hegemony of the local elites in the areas. These macro-level forces, i.e. the state and donor agencies, as found and explained by

staff members, while pursuing their own objectives, took little interest in the local level structural changes and preferred to attain their goals in any possible way. As revealed in the preceding chapters, the SRSP, from the start of its activities in any area until the end, maintained almost exclusive relationship with the local elites. It took into confidence the district *Nazims* and other local *Nazims* (see chapter VI and VII), in order to obtain help in attaining its target. Likewise, it started its activities from the local elites and sought their help in extending its activities to the rest of the people in the respective areas. The reason behind the reinforcement of the local power structure, as revealed by the SRSP's staff members, was their helplessness in the face of the macro-level structural conditionalities. In the same way, the local power structure reinforced the macro-level structure by helping it to attain its pre-determined target.

Such reinforcement reduced the chances of genuine implementation of participatory development. This reinforcement, as the thesis shows, primarily emanated from the co-option of PD, in the shape of the SRSP, by all these actors at all levels for their inherent objectives. Donors' co-option, under the neo-liberal agenda, left the SRSP tied to conforming to their directions and discouraged the independent pursuit of its ideals. Similarly, the state's co-option through various tactics such as the SRSP's establishment, arranging funds for its activities etc., left the organization tied to state directives. This macro-level co-option made PD, in the shape of the SRSP, a 'sub-contractor' performing unquestioningly what it was directed to do. These empirical findings are in line with the critical literature highlighted in chapter II, which asserts that donors' co-option of NGOs is a form of neo-colonialism and an attempt to assert control over decolonialized states. States co-option and regulation of NGOs may be seen as an attempt to claw back power and ensure foreign funding for their own desired development plans. This co-option was not only confined to macro-level structure but also existed at the micro-level. At the micro-level, the local power structure, as

described in chapter VII, co-opted the SRSP with the sole purpose of milking it as much as possible, because people believed that it might be there only for a limited time. As a male president of an organization (see chapter VII), while lamenting over the completion of the SRSP's projects in his area, reflected:

> "...If we had known at the time [when the SRSP initially started working in our area], we would have made many organizations by incorporating our boys into them" (FGI MCO, Peshawar).

This deep co-option of PD at all these levels, undermined its claimed potential to fill the theoretical vacuum left by and move 'beyond the impasse' (see chapter II). Similarly, the co-option of PD at each level, as stated in chapter II, suggests that far from being a transformative practice, PD is merely a 'fashionable' discourse that serves to reinforce pre-existing relations of dependency and disempowerment. Indeed, I would suggest that the ways in which PD has been experienced and implemented by the SRSP in the Pakistan context is actually little more than a semantic neo-colonial reconfiguration of the older colonial style approach to community development.

### 9.4 Some implications for participatory development theory

The above description reflected the conditions leading towards the infeasibility of PD while the following part concentrates on the study's implications for theorizing participatory development. Before proceeding, however, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of any generalizations made on the basis of a single case study. Obviously this study has dealt with some issues that are specific to the SRSP, although it is useful to recall that the SRSP is one among 10 Rural Supports Programmes' working under the umbrella of 'Rural Support Programme Network' in Pakistan. Hence, it is probably fair to suggest that the findings presented in this study about the SRSP extend to many if not all of the other Rural Support Programmes set up by the Pakistan government. However, it is clear that not all NGOs (either in Pakistan or elsewhere in

the world) are working within the same constraints as the SRSP or other Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan. Indeed, some NGOs have been lauded for their effective role in, for example, gender mainstreaming (see Angeles, 2003; Osirim, 2001) while others have been severely criticised for having failed to follow their structural transformatory agenda (see Yudelman, 1987 and for reflections consult chapter II and VIII). Nevertheless, I think the study raises a number of important questions about PD, which both draws on and extends existing theoretical critiques of PD whose applicability extends well beyond the specific Pakistan context.

### 9.4.1 Theoretical idealism concerning micro-level structural transformation

Participatory development has been found from the study's findings, to be a linear theory expecting the realization of its goals quite optimistically. Theoretically, PD sounds well and good but, in practice, it has certain in-built theoretical flaws that do not correspond with grounded reality. It is primarily centred on privileging the powerless sections (including men and women) of the community, but practically ignores the local power structure that constrains any intervention threatening the position of the powerful. It forgets that each social set-up has different composition, priorities, power dynamics and cultural inhibitions. Moreover, PD, as reflected in the critique part in chapter II, too often treats community as a bounded, easily manipulatable, entity in isolation to wider social processes and structural forces. However, the empirical data showed that this was far from being the case. Not only did local elites monopolize everything to satisfy their own vested interests, but their position, as previously discussed, was reinforced by, even as they reinforced, macro-level power structures. The point is, as the thesis demonstrates, for PD to be effective and really take root, it requires simultaneous structural transformation at both the micro and the macro-level.

### 9.4.2 PD's optimism concerning implementing agencies- NGOs

The final issue I wish to highlight is the failure of participatory development to critically reflect on the role and problems of implementing agencies, e.g. NGOs. It assumes that NGOs work independently and are the most effective channels through which to reach the impoverished sections of a society. However, as the empirical data concerning the SRSP reveals, NGOs exist within states and are financially dependent upon external donors. Their dependency at both micro and macro-levels results in the loss of their putatively distinctive features, such as efficiency, flexibility, accountability etc. The empirical data, concerning the SRSP's constrained position, also calls into question characterizations and definitions that define NGOs as non-governmental and independent. However, here the point of concern is that advocates of PD need to critically think about NGOs in relation to other implementing agencies, such as donors and states, and work out an effective model to address these problems.

## 9.5 Future prospects of participatory development

Participatory development, as described in this thesis, evolved in response to the perceived failure of earlier development theories. Its fundamental premise, contrary to earlier development approaches, was based on putting the 'last first' and empowering socially and economically marginalized people to orient development on the basis of their own needs, knowledge and resources (Guijt and Shah, 1998). In short, its aim was to initiate development from below not above, which would not only bring about greater equality but also make development reflective of the aspirations of grass roots people.

Its emergence seemingly revolutionized the world of development and caught the attention of academics, theoreticians, practitioners and other concerned stakeholders who variously saw participatory development as both overcoming some of the major problems of earlier development approaches and providing a pathway out of the theoretical impasse. However, the research presented here suggests that there remains a

continuing and significant gap between PD's theory and practice. Indeed, as I have argued the gap is a reflection both of prevalent macro and micro level structural forces and the failure of PD to adequately deal with these forces either in theory or practice.

As previously described in Chapter II, a number of critiques were made of PD at various levels, such as definitional ambiguities, unclear objectives (see Nelson and Wright, 1995) and its failure to fully realize the heterogeneous nature of community (Guijt and Shah, 1998). However, all such critiques, according to Cooke and Kothari (2001), failed to influence or challenge the growth of PD in development discourse. In response to this failure, an attempt was made by Cooke and Kothari (Ibid) to present a forceful integrated critique in the shape of a book entitled '*Participation: the new tyranny*', that focused on its epistemological, definitional and methodological basis. They specifically used the word 'tyranny' to call attention to the urgency of the critique, highlighting the tyrannizing role of PD in producing negative results under the guise of empowerment rather than creating facilitative environments for genuine structural transformation. It brought to the fore the role of external factors, such as practitioners, donors and Eurocentricisms in deviating PD from its idealized objectives. Furthermore, it critiqued PD's technology - PRA- for its deficiency in adequately dealing with underlying structural issues, and also for its pervasive uncritical and formulaic use. In short, similar to the account documented in this thesis, it analysed the way in which 'local knowledge' is discouraged and powerful elites and external knowledge are encouraged. The difference is that whereas '*Participation: the new tyranny*', was primarily based on exposing the main epistemological deficiencies of PD it did not present a systematic or comprehensive case study such as that provided here. What this thesis adds, in particular, to previous critiques of participatory development is a detailed and holistic document and account of the various micro and macro level practices, linkages and factors that effectively serve to subvert its stated aims and objectives.

The intention of the former critiques was to analyse PD's deficiencies and to pave a way for its transformation and enable the process of 'power reversals' to become a reality. Indeed, a recent collection entitled '*Participation: from tyranny to transformation*' (2004) appeared as a follow-up to the afore-mentioned critique. According to the editors Hickey and Mohan (2004), the new collection provides an important counterpoint to the earlier criticism made of PD and charts its recent convergence with participatory governance. It celebrates the various ways in which participatory development has responded to previous critiques and refers to the emergence and proliferation of a new range of approaches to participation found across theory, policy and practice. More specifically, the editors suggest some important ways in which PD has evolved and can be (re)established as a genuine transformative approach to development.

The first point it makes is about the potential of mainstreaming PD beyond the local level to its inclusion, as an approach to decision-making, at the structural and institutional levels. The extension of PD and its methodologies to the structural and institutional levels, it is suggested, ensures a holistic focus and encourages multi-scaled strategies for initiating overall transformation. The second point, it makes, is about the re-politicization of PD's, as Williams (2004) extensively elaborated, and its convergence with participatory governance. The assertion behind the association of these two is that institutional and structural transformation, which is the core objective of PD, is possible once participation is encouraged at political levels and the voices and aspirations of local people are taken to the policy levels directly. Thirdly, the book critiques the spatial and project-based approach to PD and its implementation as a linear progression towards structural transformation. Finally, the authors highlight the importance of new diversity-based experiments that 'can be linked to genuinely

transformative processes and outcomes for marginalized communities and people' (Ibid: 3).

Some of the assertions in this book, as with the previous collection, support and strengthen the findings of this thesis. This includes the points made above that PD should be seen as a developmental process rather than as a project-based activity and also that grass roots empowerment cannot be treated in isolation from structural and institutional issues. However, its concentration on the links between participatory governance and the re-politicization of participatory development as a way towards structural transformation potentially conceals the power dynamics that, as this thesis highlighted, obstruct the poor from influencing decision/policy-making concerning them - which is the central point of PD. In addition, it once again celebrates and presents a linear model of progression indirectly in the shape of PD's mainstreaming, but does not treat the root causes, such as donors, states and local power structures, that, as observed, resist attempts to provide space to people's participation beyond certain levels. Indeed, it is important to remember that part of the reason the Pakistani government set up the Rural Support Programmes - through which most of the PD money and projects flow - is not only to ensure continued access to, and exercise control over, donor funding, but also to effectively delimit the scope and activity of NGOs to welfare provision to the exclusion of explicit politicization. The point is that while the editors and the contributors to the recent collection may have found certain positive moves and responses to some of the previous criticism levelled at PD, their (overly) optimistic assertions need to be subjected to, and tempered by, critical analysis in relation to the feasibility of PD in real world situations, such as Pakistan.

Hence, as far as the future prospects of PD are concerned, the critique developed in this thesis, by highlighting the basic surrounding structural issues, presents and predicts a contextually gloomy prospect for its genuine implementation in Pakistan and

other such countries if the situation, as observed, remains unchanged. Certainly it does not yet appear that PD is capable of wholly and effectively addressing the complex linkages and relations of power that create and sustain current inequalities and continue to disempower both poor women and men in the development process. In this respect, PD, might best be regarded as a critical lens through which to evaluate and analyse relations of power and inequality within development; an important first stage, no doubt, in the process of a genuinely transformative practice, but one that is far from ensuring that the last are definitely put first.

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## Appendix

# INTERVIEW SHEDULE

## For SRSP's staff, men and women organizations' members

## (For both Individual and Focus Group Interviews)

**N.B.** It is composed of two sections. Section I is comprised of questions relating to respondents' background information and apply to all categories (SRSP's staff members and men and women community organizations' members) in 'Individual and Focus Group Interviews'. Furthermore, this section is split into common questions (for all the above categories) and specific questions for community organizations' members and SRSP's staff. Sections II is consisted of questions relating to the overall project cycle and apply to all categories in both 'Individual' and 'Focus Group Interviews.

### Section I- Background Information

***Common questions***

1. Name of respondent _____
2. Age _____
3. Level of Education _____
4. Marital status _____

***Questions specific for men and women community organizations' members***

5. Type of scheme completed _____
6. Name of the village _____
7. Occupation _____
8. Total income per month from all sources _____
9. Duration of the formation of community organization _____
10. Position in the organization _____
11. Total number of members in the organization _____

***Questions specific for SRSP's staff members***

12. Position in the SRSP _____
13. Duration of employment _____

14. Place/Area the job is performed at _____

15. Description of job _____

_____

**Section II- Formation of community organizations**

16. How community organization is formed? _____

_____

17. Who initiate it? _____

_____

18. What factors motivate staff/organizations' members to form organizations? _____

_____

19. How and why women organizations are formed? _____

_____

**Needs assessment**

20. How needs are assessed? _____

_____

21. Who identifies the needs/schemes? _____

_____

22. How far organizations' members are free in identifying needs/schemes, they like?

_____

_____

23. What role do the staff members perform in needs assessment? _____

_____

24. What is the position of women members in needs assessment? _____

_____

**Planning process**

25. How the place for the scheme is selected? _____

_____

26. Who are involved in selecting the place for the scheme? _____

_____

27. What role do the staff members play in place selection? _____

_____

28. How the decision relating to the type of scheme is made? _____

29. How the final shape is given to scheme designing? _____

30. What kind of arrangements (such as the formation of committees and schemes' pre-requisites) are made during this stage? _____

31. What level of freedom is given to organizations members to change/modify their schemes, if they realize it needful? _____

32. What role do women perform during planning process? _____

**Implementation process**

33. How the arrangements (such as supervising the work, purchasing the material etc.) for the schemes are made? _____

34. How and who perform this? _____

35. What role do staff members perform during this stage? _____

36. What is the position/freedom of organizations' members at this stage in changing/modifying the on-going schemes, if they realize it needful? _____

37. What role do women members perform during implementation? _____

**Evaluation process**

38. How the on-going schemes are monitored? _____

39. Why schemes are monitored and what pre-requisites are kept in mind by the monitoring bodies? _____

40. What impact (positive and negative) does monitoring carry on the on-going schemes?

41. How and who evaluate the completed schemes? _____

42. How and why are they evaluated? _____

43. What role do women perform during monitoring and the final evaluation of the schemes? _____

**Community empowerment and sustainability**

44. What arrangements are normally made at SRSP's and organizational levels for maintaining the schemes after completion? _____

45. Are they maintained/repaired/operated after completion? _____

46. Do organizations members take interest in maintaining them? _____

47. What factors do cause the non-sustainability of the schemes? _____

48. Do organizations members hold 'meetings' among themselves and with SRSP's staff after the completion of their schemes? _____

49. What situation normally remains of the internal organizational level 'savings' after the completion of their schemes? _____

50. What is the state of organizations' and staff members' interest in the organizations after they complete their schemes? _____

51. Do organizations' members take any independent initiative after the completion of their schemes? _____

52. What kind of initiative and how do they manage them? _____

**General views of the respondent (s) on the overall situation**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____The End_____