

The Political Economy of Gwadar Port Development: A Perception from Local Community

* Jawaid Sarwar Hussain, ** Zahir Mengal

Abstract

This paper focuses on women empowerment in Makran region of Balochistan. In 1992, Pak-Canada Small Project Office (SPO) a bilateral program to fund social development projects through community based organizations started a distinctive program in Makran exclusively for female education, called Village Education Program (VEP). SPO was later on transformed into an NGO and changed its name to Strengthening Participatory Organizations, retaining the same initials. The aim of SPO was to work with existing grass-root level organizations in the communities to help them carryout uplift of women through the empowerment mechanism. In order to do that they had to help establish Women Development Organizations (WDOs). These organizations were further provided training and technical support by SPO to initiate and monitor women education processes in their villages. VEP started its first clusters of women development organizations in and around of Balicha. In their need assessment, they identified female adult literacy as their top priority. They wanted to be able to read and write. And ultimately, VEP started the first women uplift initiative as an adult literacy center in that area.

**Research Scholar at Southern Methodist University, USA.*

***Lecturer, Department of Political Science, UoB, Quetta.*

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

The female of the Balicha area took the control in their own hand. They helped establish many community girls' schools in the area by providing land for the school and also took the responsibility of monitoring the schools—to see whether the teacher is coming and/or the children are attending schools. This gave them the sense of ownership, being in-charge of their own affairs, and they carried out this responsibility with great commitment and devotion. After successful implementation and on-going maintenance, the same process was replicated in other areas of Kech.

Once the Women Development Organizations were established throughout the area, in order to eliminate duplication and perpetually support other development actors in the area for the benefit of the rural communities, the author came up with the blueprint of this project. This project networks community-based organizations, NGOs, GO, and International Development Agencies to share information and to collaborate with each other to save time and resources through utilization of available local human and other resources. This project was implemented by Makran Resource Center (MRC) located at Turbat-Kech. Women empowerment leads to economic and social empowerment and this project will prepare and strengthen Baloch women leaders for a brighter tomorrow.

The author is a Former visiting Scholar at Azusa Pacific University USA, where he received his master's Degree in Leadership Studies. He currently works at Southern Methodist University, USA.

Background and the description of the area:

Balochistan, about the size of US State of Texas, is situated in the extreme southwest of Pakistan. According to *The Districts Profiles*, it is the largest province in the country with a size of 347,193 square km, which is almost 44 percent of the country's total area.

With current population figure of 6.22 million, the province has a population density of roughly 11.5 persons per km living mostly in rural areas.

Climatic conditions range from tropical through sub-tropical in temperature type. The area is traditionally supportive of various combinations of nomadic pastoralism, date palm growing, dry-crop agriculture, trading, and fishing on the large Makrani coast of Arabian Sea. The potential area for cultivation is 5 % and only half of that land is utilized for rain-fed or flood agriculture. The area is considered to be among the oldest in the world. People of this area are called Baloch, and they speak Balochi as their native language. Balochs are believed to have come in this area in 14th Century. Almost ninety-nine percent of Balochs are Sunni Muslim belonging to Hanfi School of Thought. Balochistan was established a separate province in 1970.

Makran Region:

Makran which is the area this paper is going to be focused on, is the coastal belt of Balochistan. Politically, Balochistan is divided into six parts called Divisions, and Makran became one in 1977. There are three Districts (compare US counties) in Makran and they are Punjgur, Kech and Gwadar. Makran covers an approximate area of 54,000 square km with a population of one million people.

Historically, Makrani society was divided into three social strata: the ruler, the middle class noble with small land holding, and lastly the working class who almost did not own any land. This social division came to a halt when people of Makran crossed the Arabian Sea by going to Gulf countries in search of labor. It was the main reason of the enlightenment of Makrani society; I rather call it the renaissance of Makran. The joint family system is the predominant family structure. Large group of families live in one compound form their separate household. Male siblings (married or unmarried) live together and consider it their duties to look after their parents and the families of the brother who are not present.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

Community Leadership:

In terms of community leadership, tribal identity is losing its vitality and Baloch is a common entity anymore. All decisions rest to the households. The tribal structure is not present in collective decisions making unlike the other parts of Balochistan. For the most part, since a large number of men made their way out to Middle Eastern countries for making a livelihood, women took charge of their household behind, and they were supported by their other male family members. It was a big transition in terms of power sharing and women empowerment. Women would have total control of the money sent by the spouses/brothers/parents and would freely spend it. They would make decisions for their children and other domestic affairs. The only shortcoming they encountered was not being educated. Illiteracy was a big constraint and impeded in their development of effective leadership sometimes.

Government of Balochistan runs two segregate departments for education; one is for boys and the other one is for girls. Government does not recruit male teachers for girls schools because it is the policy to appoint only female teachers in girls' public schools (government run and operated schools). This policy led to a total darkness of illiteracy among female, which is strongly being felt by the parents of both sexes in recent days. Makran is the most underdeveloped area in Balochistan in terms of physical infrastructure as well as basic amenities. Most areas are effectively cut-off from the rest of the province, especially along the coast or the mountainous areas. Electricity is available only in towns (mostly part-time). There is a great potential for women of Makran to progress and prosper and actively take part in their own state of affairs, especially in decision-making.

Empowerment Process:

The empowerment of Makrani women began some 35 years ago, when the male folks of that region crossed the Arabian Sea in search of a better livelihood for their families. It was not an easy job to leave their loved-ones behind for a year or two because they could only come to their homeland during the annual or two-yearly leave for a month or two.

However their difficult time spent abroad paid off by giving birth to a new beginning for the Makrani female in shape of empowerment through taking control of their families in particular and lives in general. One might have a question in mind that how the plight of male to foreign country had anything to do with empowerment; the answer is not very complex. One of the reasons is that Middle East was the growing center of attraction globally because of its oil wealth and job opportunities, and it was becoming a prime place for cultural diversity. The exposure to different cultures sow the seed of a much broader mind and made Makrani men to think about the betterment of their wives, daughters and sisters as well. They saw people from the different part of the world in the Gulf States sending their female children to schools and that motivated them to provide an education for their own girls.

Even though there was not girls' schools available in the rural areas, except for the towns, they decided to send their girls to boys' school which was totally against the cultural norms. Defying the cultural norms created a big chaos in the society. Although the people of the area were not opposed to the idea of educating the female, they absolutely were not in favor of a co-education. In order to remove the constraints and bring back life to normal, it was decided to allow the girl children to attend the boys' schools until the age of 12 since there were not any schools for the girls. This initiative paved the way for a girl education at the primary level. After graduating from a boys' primary school, the further education of girls again came to a stop because sending the girls with boys to the same school after the age of 12 was considered a cultural taboo.

However, the parents were strongly in favor of educating girls; therefore, they decided to send their girls to boys' school after morning shift and they were willing to pay an extra fee for tutoring the girls in the evening. This idea of evening schooling for girls worked well for two reasons; one, it was not defying the cultural norms and second, it was appealing for the male teachers to earn an extra income. In normal conditions, there are not employment opportunities for a teacher to earn an extra income in the evening in a remote village. This process caught the attention of other people when the first batch of middle- passed-girls was hired in their respective villages to open primary schools for the girls.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

There were two factors for this attention, the first and foremost was that those families were getting a lot of respects in the community because of the teaching jobs their daughters held, and secondly the girls were making money with secure jobs. Another added advantage for those female teachers was that they were easily sought for matrimony by other families in the area; marriages are solely conducted within the ambit of arranged-marriage system. With the span of time the desire for girl education gained momentum and strength.

The Dawn of a New Beginning

In 1992, Small Project Office (SPO), a bilateral venture of Pakistani and Canadian governments which was later transformed into a Non-Government Organization (NGO), decided to enter the area for women development purposes. SPO decided to carry out an action research in area to find out the felt-needs of the people of that area. After conducting a study through random sampling, they came with the outcome of female education being the first felt-need of the area and mother-child care being the second.

In 1993, SPO launched a program in the name of Village Education Program (VEP). A team of four people was hired to develop a need based strategy by visiting different parts of the region to incorporate the people's view in their own development. The team paid many visits in the far-flung areas by studying the needs of the people of those communities and assessing the impediments against the promotion of female education in those areas. With limited resources in hand, it was decided to start off the process of fostering female education in the close proximity of the town of Turbat in Kech District. After studying the causes of success and failure of the female education projects in the area, the team came up with three fundamental components of the program; help organize and establish a women development organization, sustainable development of the organizations through technical support, and help develop an

organizational network in order to carry out the empowerment process of the women to participate in their own social and economic development.

Literature Review

Bangash (2001) mentions about prophet of Islam, Muhammad's (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) leadership that unfortunately there have not been much efforts made to drive lesson from his beautifully conducted way of life analyzing it from a power perspective. His (Mohammed's, peace be upon him,) pattern of conduct is the most beautiful (Quran, 33:21), and he was sent to bring the humanity to light from darkness (Quran, 65:11). *Seerah* (Prophet Mohammed's way of life) witnesses carrying out the power and authority beautifully by the will of Allah, and that process of leadership is a significant model for the transformation of the Muslim societies. After the life of Prophet (peace be upon him), Muslims have to follow the leadership guidelines according to the principles of Quran and *Seerah* (Bangash, 2000). A leader, viewed by Islam, has to have certain qualities of personal characters and the ability to motivate others towards accomplishment of particular goals (Bangash, 2000).

Besides these abilities, the leadership must also be accepted by the people, and the imposition of a physical force is not accepted in Islam (Bangash, 2000). As Holy Quran mentions "there shall be no coercion in religion (Islam) (2:256). The Islamic regulation of power system does not lead to injustice because it is separated and decentralized with a transparent accountability in order to avoid its abuse. The Holy Quran (51:56) mentions that *ins* (human) and *jinn* have been created for nothing but worshipping Allah. Therefore, it is mandatory for the human being to obey the laws of Allah ordained for them in the Holy Quran. It is the responsibility of the leader to maintain an Islamic way of life for himself as well for his followers, and prior to entrusting someone a leadership position, his or her personal qualities must be examined (Bangash, 2000). The Holy Quran (3:159) mentions "It was the mercy of Allah that you (O Prophet) were lenient with them, for if you had been stern, and hard-hearted, they would have disposed from around you. So forgive them and seek mercy for them and consult with them in the conduct of affairs. And when you have resolved [on an issue], then put trust in Allah. Lo! Allah loves those who put their trust in Him".

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

The Quranic guiding principles require a leader to be kind, compassionate, forgiving, and consult with the followers in decision making. Furthermore, based on forgiving the following qualities of a leader have been identified, and they are: knowledge, Taqwa (living a life according to the laws of Allah), Adl (justice) and Rahmah (compassion), courage and bravery, shura (mutual consultation), decisiveness and being resolute, eloquence, spirit of self-sacrifice, and sabr (patience) (Bangash, 2000).

Joha and Fatima (2000), staff writers for Star, while reporting on a United Nation University/International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) course held in Amman, Jordan stated that Ciulla (Chairman of Leadership and Ethics at University of Richmond) defines leadership as a trust-building between leaders and their nations. She furthermore mentions that women are fairly new in the area of leadership and their standpoints are regarded brand new. The role of women is being affected by various vantage points internationally, and power sharing comes first and foremost. The information age has redistributed the power today globally.

Naz (2003), a staff member of Department of Education, Balochistan states in *The Status of female education in rural Balochistan* that 80 percent of Balochistan's population live in small villages and these villages have not been touched by the advancements of this technological era owing to mainly being neglected by central authorities...and this has severely impacted women and girls.

Badawi (1971), a professor of management at St. Mary's University, Canada, says that Islam treats the whole humanity on ethical basis. Man and women should not be judged based on their gender. In the eyes of Allah there no sex is superior to the other. The ones who are valuable to Him live their life according to His will. If status of women is analyzed historically, a fair insight of what Islam contributes towards women's dignity may be attained (Badwai, 1971). In ancient civilization, Hindu women were kept in total surveillance in a state of dependence as stated by Manu in Encyclopedia Britannica (Badwai, 1971). Hindu scripture gives an account of women's mind, speech, and body being kept in subjection which gains prestige in the world (Badwai, 1971).

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

By the same token, Greek women were no better than Indian. They were subject to their male (Badwai, 1971).

Encyclopedia Britannica describes Roman Laws for women that they were totally dependent and their inheritance would pass to their husbands' custody. They could not hold any civil or public office nor was their say incorporated in any public affairs (Badwai, 1971). Similarly English common law provided legal ownership of wife's property to the husband, but later on, it was modified. However, husband still had the permission to benefit from it, and spend it the way he saw it appropriate (Badwai, 1971). David and Vera Mace were mentioned (Badwai, 1971) writing in their book, *Marriage East and West*, that Leaky (a historian) spoke of the early Church Fathers writing about women being considered as the door of hell or the mother of all human ills. They were the cause of the pain brought to this world. They implied as Eve, who was the reason for the man to eat from the forbidden tree in heaven. They also considered the first defiant of divine law. Not only they were considered inferior, but also they could not enjoy any legal rights previously conferred on them. Islam's treatment to women is completely different (Badwai, 1971).

In the period of ignorance, Arabs would bury their daughters alive, but the call of Islam brought light to that darkness and challenged their customs (Badwai, 1971; Nasrin, 2000). Allah mentions in the holy Quran (7:189) that God is the one who created man from a single soul and then created his mate that he might dwell with her in love. Quran (42:11) again mentions that creator of heavens and earth made pairs for you from among yourselves, and whoever, man or woman, is righteous and has faith, verily who will be given a life good and pure and also will be bestowed with rewards according to their deeds. Islam also takes into account women's biological functions and allows them exemptions from the fundamental duties praying and fasting during month of Ramadan (Badwai, 1971). Islam considers raising of children by their mothers the best; however, it does not forbid women from seeking employment, and there is no restriction from learning and benefiting from women talents and expertise (Badwai, 2000). She has absolute right to her inheritance and neither a father nor a husband can claim her share (Badwai, 1971). Islamic history is full of great women's achievements in 17th Century (Badwai, 1971).

Any mistreatment to women is not justified by Islam and their given legal rights cannot be taken away (Badwai, 1971).

Lastly, the reputation and chastity with their maternal role has been complemented by non-Muslim observers throughout the history, and the present status of women was not gained because of the men or the technology, but it was possible only through their own struggle and contributions to our societies (Badwai, 1971).

Many countries have paved the way for their women to come forward for leadership positions in different parts of the world and this phenomenon turned to be a success (Joha and Fatima, 2000). Indonesia is one of the examples where high middle-class females have attained political positions in lower government levels. The lower class has equally the same potential if they are given the same access to education as the high middle class has been given access to. In order to bridge that gap, NGOs (Non Government Organizations) are playing vital roles in fostering women issues at community level to establish a network between government agencies to improve women status in order to provide them leadership positions Paudiastui has been reported to have said that women are more capable compared to men in the areas of creativity, and openness; therefore, they can make better decision makers. Pudiastuti is mentioned of saying that there is no discrimination between men and women in Indonesia and Islam has been mentioned as a primary reason for the advancement of women in her country. True Islam emancipates from negative influences.

The editor of *Together* (April, 1993) states that Participation is a marvelous idea and everybody wants the absolute participation of the people one works with. Absolute participation benefits the empowerment process but it's not a piece of cake to obtain; rather, there are many obstacles which impede the path of perfect participation. Often times those barriers are encountered in shape of our own self-centered compulsions to gain popularity or to receive credit for the work being carried out. The ego behind name and fame can destroy the process of empowerment and weakens the participation process. Other times it is connected to the fear of losing power by giving away others the part of what one has.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

Similarly lack of trust to allow one grow independently can become a hindrance to progress in the process of empowerment. Finally this would end up in equating in terms of participation.

Irvine (1993) mentions that it has been realized that underprivileged communities also need empowerment like we do; therefore, it's essential for the members of those communities to be empowered in order to carry out a process of development for themselves which operates on a sustainable basis. Participation, on the other hand, is intertwined with positive self. It can only be brought around only if the participants are motivated enough to believe that they are capable of bringing a change in terms of development. Commins (1993) immaculately mentions that participation is being used very commonly in the development sectors as a buzz word; however, this talk of the globe has not yet been put into action as it is wielded by the development practitioners. An authentic participation plays a crucial role in transforming people lives, and that cannot come by mere practice of participation in the poor communities that we work with; rather, it involves the development organizations to actively implement participation process within their organization to bring about successful positive changes. It is a multifaceted activity which should involves all players engaged. Nevertheless, yet there is a dramatic gap present in the development organizations in terms of what is said about participation and what is actually carried out on the ground.

The *Rural or Rapid Participatory Appraisal* (Chambers, 1992) can be used for integration of learning and listening aspects of the participator development process. It is furthermore essentials for NGOs to strongly devote for an organizational change where power is shared and given up for the growth and development of others and information is shared with each other. Lastly new *professional model of development* should be created for passing the legacy to others through replication process and women empowerment should never be ignored, it should rather be a priority.

Commins (1993) furthermore mentions seven ways for a development organization to inspire and encourage the process of transformational participation among NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations).

The first and foremost one is constructing dialogue with the donors to take the issues of those communities along with the goals to international level debates so that they affect the global policy making in relation to their economics. The alleviation of conflict is another factor which needs to be taken care of by the organizations between the communities' ethnic and religious groups to pave the road for peace and harmony for their sustenance.

The mentoring (Murray & Owen, 1991; Daloz, 1999) is a process of growth and development of human beings through pairing of an skilled and experienced one and a less experienced one to carry out a phenomenon of learning and teaching in a more caring and friendly situation; relationship plays a vital role in the growth process. (p. xiv, p. 20) Furthermore, Daloz (1999) mentions that there is a great amount of research evidence which proves the progress of both men and women in an organization relating to mentoring (p.21). Bordas (1992) mentions that the status of women has changed dramatically for the last two decades and the present socialization pattern of young female have to be addressed in order to uplift women's position in the workplace or in the society in general (p.16).

Faith plays (Park, 1992) a very significant role in any mentoring environment; it's not refereed to religious affiliation but the spirit of doing positive and inspirational encouragement for a meaningful life where intellectual growth takes place. It is a pattern for everyday 'meaning-making' activities with the beginning of the day to the end (p.3). Therefore a mentor relate to us with our own experience and they play a crucial role in making dream-oriented youth with strong ambitions to accomplish their envisioned goals in life. Mentors nurture the adult faith for the accomplishment of mentees' ambitions (p.5). Clinton (1990) states that not all leaders finish well only some do; however, many leaders are supported and helped by others to reach their destiny and this is a form of mentoring (p.1).

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

He discusses, furthermore, five dynamics of mentoring which are relationship, submission, perspective, power transfer, and accountability. It is not likely for all of the above-mentioned dynamics to be present in a mentoring situation but more is the better (p.3) .

Roohana Gul Kakar (2013) illustrates, *It is shocking that in 21st century still we suffer in deprivation of education. A Saga said "if someone wants to destroy an entire nation, never demolish by weapons but keep the nation uneducated and it'll get ruined". The same process is being applied here in Balochistan.* She further explores that Balochistan has the lowest literacy rate in Pakistan compared to other regions nationwide. This is due to *low primary enrollment, lack of access to education, shortage of primary, middle and secondary schools, and inadequate access to female education.*

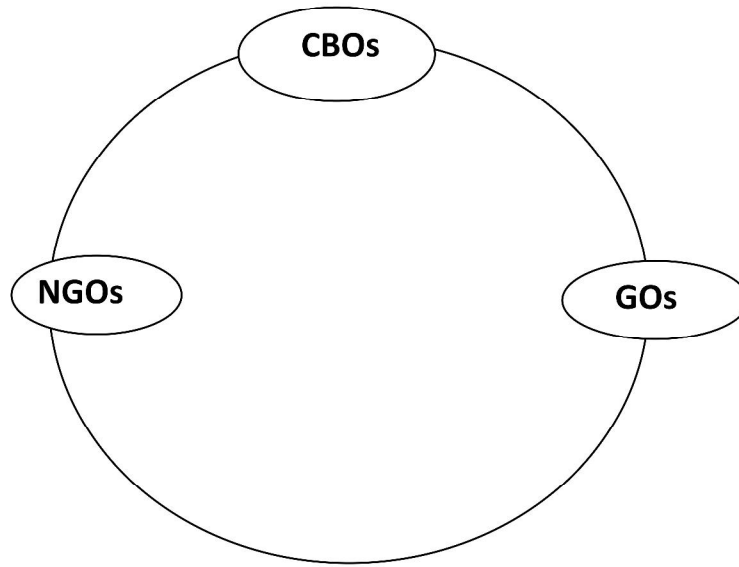
The proposed Strategy

This research and project was designed for the empowerment of the Makrani women through Women Development Organizations (WDOs) established in Makran region of Balochistan, Pakistan by SPO. This paper was originally prepared and submitted as a partial fulfillment of author's Master Degree program at Azusa Pacific University, California-USA. Presently, these organizations are operating on this networking strategy with the help and support of MRC (Makran Resource Center). Later in the paper, there is a brief mention of MRC in little more detail.

In order to transform WDOs into effective development organizations, it was essential to develop a strategy where the process of growth and development of the organization take place and particularly women would benefit from it by leading the path to progress. These organizations have objectives which are hard to be achieved alone, rather they need the power of people and that can be obtained through mobilizing and motivating the people in their own villages. Additionally, it is mandatory to unite these community-based Women Development Organizations with other sister organizations in the area. Here is the proposed networking-strategy that makes an empowering effort a reality.

The first phase of the empowerment process begins with a networking strategy with other organization of all scales in the region. The diagram below illustrates the essence of this process.

Networking Strategy



The objectives of the Network are:

- To share information about the activities taking place in helm of their affairs
 - To avoid the duplicity and redundancy of activities in the same village
 - To utilize the resources and skills of the organization for their own development
 - To get better networked with the public service rendering institutions for providing easy access to the common people of the area
-

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

- Create awareness for gender equity
- Create awareness about preservation of environment

Clustering of Community-Based Organization (CBOs)

All male and female community-based organizations would be brought into clusters and one cluster would consist of five to eight organizations in the radius of 25 miles. Since it is very remote and there is no physical infrastructure such as blacktop roads, it is hard to mobilize organizations beyond the proximity of 25 miles radius. Each organization would elect a representative to participate in the cluster meeting with take place on quarterly basis. There would be an elected president of the cluster for each year and the rendezvous would change for each quarterly meeting from one village to another allowing each member organization to host the meeting equally on a rotational pattern. The cluster would serve as a unity platform as well as a resource sharing body in the area.

The organization would make up the agenda, make participatory collective decisions, and take actions. The local cluster of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) would make the ground for establishing friendship among the CBOs members where they can actively participate in each other's events to render support. This would also result in perpetual engagement of the organizations. Furthermore, it also provide an information disseminating and sharing forum to make sure everyone is aware of what is going on in the area in terms of development. Another benefit of the cluster is that sharing their resources by allowing other CBOs to replicate theirs successful projects pattern. Since they inhabit in the same geographical area and share the same culture, it would be more effective to use each other's experiences within their communities.

Jawaid Sarwar Hussain et al

To comply with democratic and participatory traditions, the president of the Cluster Representation Committee (CRC) would be only a one-year term. The main role of the CRC president would be to facilitate the CRC. It would also send two of the cluster members to participate in training and workshop conducted by local NGOs for the development of local human resources of the area, and after receiving the training, the training participants would conduct the training for the cluster members to share the knowledge gained. The replication workshop would be participated by three members of the each women development organization for a further replication in their respective WDO. The master trainers at the cluster level would observe the workshop for feedbacks. The reason behind the process is to carve a new line of leadership within the organization and allow the members the liberty to grow and discover their unseen potential and wielding them in their own uplift. The true leadership process requires a transformational mechanism in an organization. It is a process of internal growth for resourcefulness. The clustering of the WDOs provides a firm ground to strength and empower the WDOs to fight against injustices and deprivations prevailing in the area. It serves as a union. It would be a beginning of a new era for the women uplift in the area of institutional development on the horizon. It would work as a liaison between the communities and the public service rendering institutions as well.

The purpose of the male organizations in the cluster is to provide support to the female organizations. They would further take up the responsibilities of becoming role models for the other male folks of the community by allowing their female family members to actively take part in the development works along with their male counterpart to lessen the segregation gap. This should result in propelling the further emancipation of women.

The hindering cultural norms have nothing to do with the religion of Islam.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

Islam is a vast religion practiced by the people of various culture, language, and geographical location, and these different people also incorporate their own norms and traditions in their way of life. By the same token, Makran is an area where Balochi cultural and traditions are observed along with the Islamic culture. Islam is a religion which provides respect and dignity to the women. If we explore and examine the Islamic history and shed some lights on the Islamic way of life, it is very evident that women played a vital role in the development of Islam in prophet's (peace be upon him) days. They fought shoulder to shoulder with the men during the war. They watered the soldiers and served as nurses during the wars.

To further narrow the gap in segregation of male and female in the society, the new generation can be used to challenge the parents in a positive way to remove the constraints. This can be carried out through educational activities and events among the girls and boys students in terms of competitions at the school and college level. Similarly, the parents of both sexes can be invited to attend the events to further weaken the gap of segregation. This would provide a ground for the male and female to mingle together, and remove the barriers by bridging the gap for a transparent communication.

Role of MRC

MRC was established on the aftermath of the March 3, 1998 calamitous flash floods which caused death and destruction by washing away entire villages with their human inhabitation in the area. After the flood, many relief agencies poured in the area; however, the scene was uglier than imagined. There were no roads and it was very hard to go to the affected villages. Secondly, it required a day long of traveling to get to the remote villages and there was not any place to lodge in at night.

Jawaid Sarwar Hussain et al

It made it more difficult for the city people to be in a situation where they have never been in the entire lives. So it became a matter of honesty and integrity in terms of providing relief to the affectees.

The ones who were honest with their jobs stayed and the others just caught flights in and out at the same day just to be part of the press coverage, proving their presence in area. Since there was not an organized local base for providing information and guidance to the area, the relief work became so difficult for the agencies that stayed in. The irony was that the relief work was being used for political gains. Many organization would come in, hire a truck, buy some relief goods, and head to a nearby village so that they can make it back to the town early enough to catch an evening flight back to their home; and next day put a big piece of news in a national newspaper. It was so pathetic, and they were playing with the lives of the victims because relief was resulting into more miseries for those poor people. That was the time for a group of young and energetic volunteers to come up with something in order to avoid the mishaps and misappropriation ever again in the future.

These philanthropists begin to invite like-minded people to gather in different places to discuss the problem. These long and exhausting meetings resulted in generating great ideas through those brain storming session. After evaluating and assessing the generated-ideas, finally they came up with an idea of establishing a local organization based in Turbat to manage and develop local resources of the area. Finally as a result, an organization was established in the name of Makran Resource Center (MRC) on November 9, 1998, which was the very first organization in the town that had two female members in its leadership. The primary purpose of the organization is to provide technical support and advising and training the CBOs.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

The objectives of MRC

- To build a developmental-information database
- To facilitate training and to carry out social education
- To mobilize resources and to advocate empowerment of women
- To establish a network of linkage among Non-Government Organizations (NGOs),
- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Government Organizations (GOs)

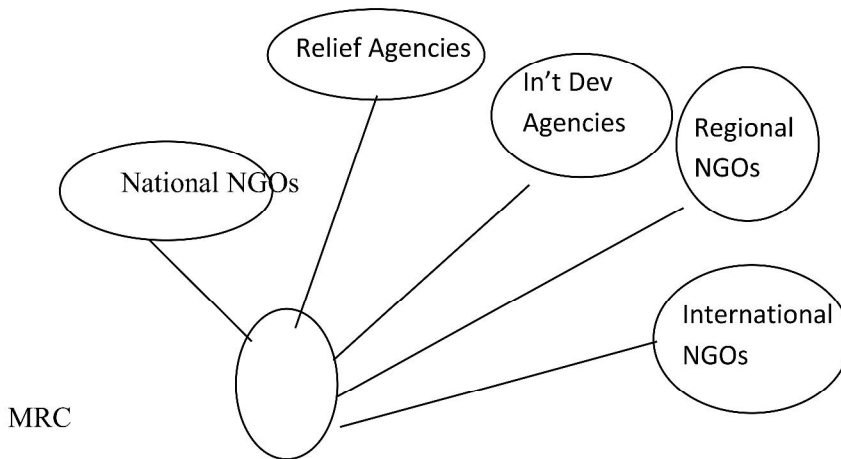
MRC would play the role of an umbrella organization to facilitate development activities in the area as well as to create, promote, and foster awareness regarding gender equity. Recently, MRC has launched a big campaign encouraging female folks to contest in the local municipal elections. A booth was established outside the election commissioner's office and women were assisted with their application process.

As an umbrella organization, MRC would take the responsibility of closely working with the CBOs of the area. For instance, if there is a problem or issue needs to be addressed, MRC would step in to facilitate to resolve the problem. In fact, one of the biggest problems exists among the CBO is their legal status because they are not registered with the government registering bodies. There are many reasons attached to that issue. First it is a difficult and time-consuming activity. Secondly, there are a lot of intricate technicalities involved that result in impeding in the way for a smooth registration process. Those complications finally bring the application to a halt or end up in a rejection by the registering authority. The non-registered CBOs are called informal groups.

Jawaid Sarwar Hussain et al

As a result, the non-registered CBOs are deprived of support from the funding agencies because of their status and finally that paves the way to becoming dysfunctional.

This issue can be handle by the MRC's resource bank. There are educated individuals with expertise in that area that can take the initiative of conducting workshops in the area to address this issue. Prior to the submission of their application for registration, MRC office can offer the service of making a final check in order to avoid any rejection.



Furthermore, MRC would also take the initiate to contact all support organizations and agencies in the country and establish a perpetual contact with them. It would gather information from those agencies about their areas of expertise and support.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

The purpose of this exercise is that many of the CBOs are located in the remote area that do not have any access and knowledge about the organizations and support agencies who render their services in the area of training and providing small projects for the rural remote CBOs.

In addition, these organizations are stationed either in the federal capital of Islamabad or regional capital of Quetta. MRC can bridge that gap by providing the support agencies about the development work being carried by the rural CBOs and also furnish the CBOs with the information about their training and upcoming events. Furthermore, the CBOs would be motivated and encouraged to take part in national seminars on rural development to present the work being carried out by them in the unknown remote places. This would provide them an opportunity to be heard and known in national scene.

MRC would also develop a directory of all development players engaged in the area either directly or indirectly. This directory would provide the information regarding their nature of work and the area they support and fund. Another project, which needs to be taken in hand, can also be carried out by MRC with the support of the Cluster Representation Committee; it would be pertinent to the contact-information of local CBOs, their available resources (human and others), and the work they have accomplished. This would help determining where the resources lie if a CBO needs assistance in the area. The available CBO with the resource can go to their rescue.

Coordination Council

The philosophy of forming Coordination Council is, first and foremost, to bring all NGOs on one platform with one understanding.

Jawaid Sarwar Hussain et al

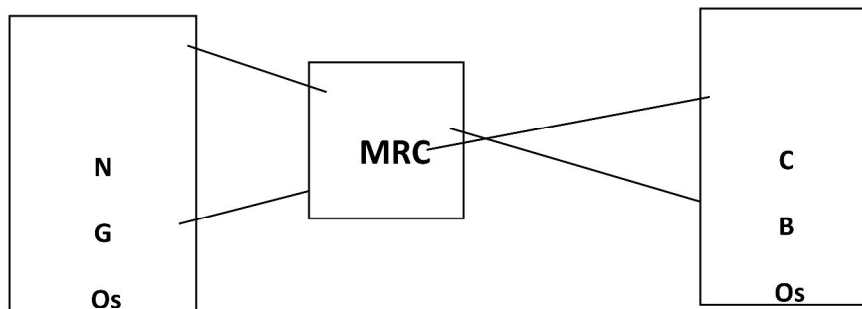
Leadership gurus teach us that we should think beyond boundaries and should also come out of our shells with a broad vision where competition and selfishness has no room to exist, rather acceptance and accommodation should prevail.

NGOs are non-profit organizations. They have a common cause at macro level which is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of that geographical area. With that commonality in their goals, it is essential for them to work together with other NGOs to address the needs of the area. There is a wonderful African metaphor “I am because we are” (Chinaka, 2001) teaches us that we are co-dependant because we co-exist in this world; therefore, we need each other. By the same token, there is a similar metaphor in Balochi (my native language) “five fingers are not equal and for grabbing a thing all are needed”. It too refers to our co-dependency. Sharing a common goal for serving the downtrodden, underprivileged, and impoverished people requires harmony and working together to alleviate miseries of that target group. It is so ironic that in our vicious human mind we as leaders derail from our authentic goals and rather listen to our egocentricity by doing the best alone by ourselves in order to receive full credit and acknowledgement for the work but that is not of primary importance. However, the primary importance is to bring a positive change in people’s life, and that change is not possible if all parties work together with open hearts by accepting and loving others despite the differences. Serving is a dignified job with no frontiers; therefore, it does not belong to a single organization.

If we evaluate the purpose behind an organization, it clearly defines and manifests its essence. It is a team of common individual working for a shared-vision for achieving their objectives. In this case, it is essential for a group of service oriented organizations to work with a single purpose of serving the people of that particular area.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

The development of a forum requires some genuine efforts; therefore, MRC would take the initiative to work as a liaison between NGOs and CBOs present in the area. Efforts would be streamlined to form a coordination council.



The Coordination Council consist of two parts. Part one would consist of the representatives of the NGOs present in the area, and part two would constitute one representative from each cluster. Furthermore, in order to prevail equality, the cluster representation would rotate from a male to a female or vice versa after the end of the term. The purpose of this shift strategy is to provide both the male and the female members of the respective cluster to receive an opportunity to grow and develop as a leader. This growth process would fortify the foundations of the organizations clustered together.

The Coordination Council would establish healthy relationship with all the organizations operating in the area. It would also save time and efforts for arranging meetings. The chain of networked organizations would easily provide a flow of information. The efforts in social develop scene would help in resulting a cohesive working environment.

Conclusion

Women are one of the oppressed people around the world and their empowerment is the need of the hour to make this world a just place to live. Women comprise almost half of the world population and cannot be ignored anymore. Technology has connected our globe in term of communication. The information flow is so fast that within seconds we know what is happening around the world. This world has always been a male dominated world where women have been oppressed and less privileged in all countries at various degrees.

Muslim women are as capable as any other women in any society in the world. Islam is a religion of enlightenment and progress not oppression. Islam liberates the women to play a vital role by reconstructing effective societies for better needs. *Hijab* (women's veil) has stereotypically been attacked by the western world as a negative element for causing hindrance in women's progress. In fact, it is a protection from men's evil eyes to look at women as chattel and sex object. Women are regarded highly honorable in Islam, and Muslim women are equally contributing in their leadership roles. Veil is not an imposition but a freewill, just like a nun's wardrobe, and the liberty, on the other hand, is the name of exercising one's freewill.

Today, still the journey of Makrani women for better human condition for their families and fellow community members is in progress. The health and hygiene situation in rural villages have been improved, and women are striving hard for better living condition and income generating schemes to provide employment to the rural women. Consequently, Islam has not been a constraint in their leadership development. Nevertheless, those women in southwestern Pakistan, are outspoken, exercising their right in decision making better than ever, and raising their voices to injustices being done by the government of Pakistan.

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

Behind their veils, they are functioning as better human beings, better mothers, and better role models. This legacy would continue and revolutionize that society to fight against the atrocities being made on them in terms of their mischievous underdevelopment.

Pakistani province of Balochistan has been a victim of socio-economic injustices from the very beginning. Yet that region has not been given any attention in terms development. The majority of people live in rural area where they are deprived of basic amenities in this 21st century. The towns lack sanitation systems which result spreading illness such as malaria and diarrhea. There is no tap water available and in many villages rainwater is stored in open ponds which is very much contaminated and unhygienic, used for human consumption all year around. These inhuman practices and step-motherly treatments have burdened the people of the area with miseries and troubles. In order to come out of that situation, the people of Makran, Balochistan has decided to initiate a development process through institutional development because institutions are the only bodies that can remain. It is a difficult process but it is possible. The essence of this project is to unite all people, men and women equally, on one platform and instigate a chain of struggles to bridge the gaps by sharing information and helping each other to utilize the available local resources to solve their problems. Finally education is the last resort, and it is the first and foremost priority to be fostered and promoted in the area, and with the support of organized communities, slowly but steadily we would work to alleviate poverty through eradication of illiteracy and women empowerment in Makrani society.

Jawaid Sarwar Hussain et al

Bibliography

- Badawi, J. & Beekun, R. (1999). The leadership Process in Islam. *The Islamic Training Foundation*, 20
- Badawi, J. (1971). The Status of Women in Islam. *Al-Ittihad*, 8 (2),
- Bangash, Z. (2000). The concept of leadership in Islam. *Crescent International*, August 16-31
- Bordas, J. (1992). Follow The Leader: Women Ways of Mentoring. (unknown): National Hispanic Leadership Institute.
- Commins, S. (1993). Participation: From nice talk to actual practice. *Together*. 3-4.
- Daloz, L. A. (1999). Mentor. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Editor, The. (1993). True participation brings great empowerment. *Together*. 1.
- Holy Quran, The*.
- Irvine, G. (1993). Who owns development, together. 2.
- Joha, G. & Fatima, K. (2000). Women Leadership course concludes Insights from different countries. *Star*, June 22
- Makran Resource Center (1998). Brochure. Turbat
- Murray, M. & Owen, M. A. (1992). Beyond the Myth and Magic of Mentoring. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Naz, S. (2003). The status of female education in rural Balochistan. *Impact: Making difference*, 290-297. **Available at:** http://ecommons.aku.edu/book_chapters/48
-

The Empowerment of Baloch Women: a Makrani Perspective

Parks, D. P. (1992). The University as a Mentoring Environment. Indianapolis: Indiana Office for Campus Ministries.

Profile of District Kech, The. (2001). Quetta: Planning and Development Dept.

Stanly, P. D. (1992). Connecting. Colorado Spring: Nav Press.
