CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter describes various ethnic tribes in Afghanistan in an anthropological perspective and also the traditional economic activities. Then it narrates how the prolonged civil war destroyed the livelihood bases of Afghans. Then it brings out the present national level and local level conflicts and the escalators conflicts since the USA along with NATO invaded Afghanistan after the attack at World Trade Center by Osama Bin laden having his breeding ground in Afghanistan. Then it narrates the present livelihood problems and the livelihood constraints faced by the Afghans.

The second part portrays the peace building process and also on Bonn agreement along with traditional problem solving mechanisms and various initiatives taken for peace building by the international communities and by the Afghan civil organizations. Finally the chapter briefs Gandhian approach for rebuilding the nation on Construction programs.

TRIBES

Afghans are tribes and have strong tribal features in their social life. The basic unit at the bottom of the Afghan tribal structure is the household. A number of households united by common descent constitute a clan. Every village consists of one or more clans. This localised household group into more inclusive clans, identified by a common ancestor. All patrilineal descendants of a particular
forefather make up a tribe. However, this trinomial distinction cannot be always applied to the realities of tribal organization.

TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

There are two main types of the traditional economic activity in rural Afghanistan: agriculture and pastoralism. However, this distinction cannot be clearly defined since both tribes/ethnic groups and individuals are often simultaneously engaged in farming and herding. Therefore in most cases it is difficult to identify groups of people, or even individuals, as “nomads” or “agriculturalists”. Among the Pashtuns most tribal groups include both nomads and settled, are engaged in both types of economic activity. Many individuals are nomadic pastoralists one year and settled the next year, depending on personal circumstances and climatic changes.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION

The ethnic composition of Afghanistan is characterized by extreme ethno-linguistic and physical diversity with 55 ethnic names found there. Many of these ethnic groups and identities are local categories only. They are relative, variable and dynamic. Except in rural areas away from the main lines of communication few ethnic groups maintain racial homogeneity; though Pashtuns are less affected by the influx of foreign blood. Many groups, especially in the north of the country, have practiced inter-marriage for centuries, thus composite ethnic communities exist in broad bands of ethnic grey zones. Therefore, Afghanistan is not a self-contained ethnic unit, nor
is it national culture uniform. Very few of its ethnic groups are totally
inground: Pashtuns break almost equal among Afghanistan and
tribal agencies and the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan.
Tajiks, Turkmens, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz have their own countries. Most
inhabitants of far western Afghanistan, which geographically and
culturally is an extension of the great Iranian plateau, are Persian-
speaking. The Baluch of the southwestern corner of Afghanistan
extend into the neighbouring areas of Pakistan and Iran with a few
settlements in Turkmenistan. The majority of Afghans are Sunni
Muslims. There are a significant Imami Shiite and smaller Ismaili
minorities.

**PASTHUNS**

Pashtuns are the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, which
is concentrated mainly south of the Hindukush mountain range but
also found in the west and north of the country, partly due to the late
19th century resettlement policy pursued by Emir, who thus
consolidated his power-base in the newly acquired territories. Their
exact number and ratio can be only estimated and there is a wide
range of statistical data, which is often politically motivated, ranging
from 4.5 to 10 million people (from 40% to 60% of total population),
who are engaged in agriculture, sedentary and nomadic pastoralism.
The bulk of Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims though there are some Shiite
Pashtuns as well.
TAJIKS

Approximately 3,500,000 Dari-speaking Tajiks of Afghanistan live predominantly in the north of the country, concentrating mainly in the northeast where they refer to themselves by the valley or region where they live. Those living in the areas dominated by other ethnic groups refer to themselves as Tajik. The bulk of the Tajiks are agriculturalists working on their ancestral land allotments, which are never redistributed. In some areas the land is owned by big landlords who have their fields worked by tenant farmers. Tajiks are non-tribal people and predominantly Sunni.

PERSIANS

Often mistakenly referred to as Tajik, from whom they are distinguished by their language, which is close to the Khorasani dialects of Persian rather than “normative” Dari, as well as by their Imai Shiite religion. Approximately 600,000 of them live along the Afghan-Iranian border or in Herat, Kandahar and Ghazni. Locally they are known as Persian-speakers, with regional variations. Socially they differ little from the sedentary agriculturalist Tajiks.

HAZARA

Approximately 1,000,000 Hazara people are concentrated in the Central Highland of Afghanistan in the area known as Hazarajat, which stretches from Kabul to Herat; there are also Hazara resident in Kabul and other urban centers as well as smaller pockets in the north of the country. Outside Afghanistan Hazara can be found in Iran,
Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. There is no agreement whether to consider their language, which possesses many unstudied dialects, as a dialect of Dari or an independent language. Hazara are tribal people with their social structure based on kinship. The majority of them are Imami Shiites, but there are also Ismaili and Hanafi Sunni groups among them. The ancestors of Hazara may have arrived to the area with the Mongol armies within the period of 1229-1447. Their ethnic name which might be derived from Persian/Dari hazara - thousand (the strength of a unit in the Mongol army) may serve a prove this assumption, though it might be nothing but an attempt in popular. Like it is the case with many other ethnic groups in Afghanistan there is no consensus on their numerical strength, thus estimations for Hazara range from 1,000,000 to 1,800,000 people.

**BALUCH**

These predominantly nomadic tribal people are scattered in Pakistan, approximately 4,000,000 predominantly in province Baluchistan the neighbouring areas of Afghanistan (approximately 350,000-400,000) and Iran (1,500,000) as well as in the Gulf (200,000) and Turkmenistan (38,000 - 40,000). In Afghanistan the Baluch reside in the provinces of Kandahar, Hilmand, Nimruz, Farah and Herat. The Baluch are mainly Hanafi Sunnis with a small minority of the Dhikris in Pakistan.
PAMIRIS

The Pamiris also mistakenly known as mountain or Pamiri Tajiks reside in the basin of the Panj River in both Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan as well as in isolated pockets in the neighboring areas of China and Pakistan. Their total number reaches approximately 200,000 people, with 60,000 to 80,000 of them living in Afghanistan.

Except for Yazghulamis who are Sunnis they are all Ismaili Muslims (some of their Tajik neighbors are also Ismaili) and they were persecuted on religious grounds by both Afghan and Bukharian Sunni authorities when they in the late 19th century upon securing a silent British and Russian agreement divided the previously united Pamiri areas of Badakhshan between themselves. Religious and social life of the Pamiris is dominated by hereditary Ismaili spiritual masters, who are hold in the highest possible esteem. Until recently the pamiris were virtually independent and only in the 1990’s the spiritual leader of all Ismailis Prince Aga Khan IV reaffirmed his position in the area. Having sided with the Kabul government in the 1980’s, which they believed will help them to assert their position vis-a-vis Sunni dominance and policy of discrimination, the Ismaili Pamiris found themselves in a difficult situation after the mojahideen victory in 1992. Fearing for their religious and cultural heritage many Ismaili communities in the Pamirs decided to hide their religious books in the caves. The Sunni Yaghnobis, whose language is also considered as belonging to the Pamiri group, live in isolation from their linguistic
brethren and culturally do not belong to the Pamiri milieu. Nevertheless, they retain some cultural similarity with the Pamiris going back to pre-Islamic times.

**TURKIC**

Although the majority of the people of Afghanistan are Iranians there are also considerable Turkic minorities that occupy their own distinct political and socioeconomic niches; moreover, on a number of occasions these minorities turned out to be an important and specific factor shaping the course of Afghan history - the fact often overlooked by the students of Afghanistan.

**UZBEKS**

Uzbeks are the most numerous and politically active Turkic group in Afghanistan. Their number is estimated as 1,000,000, they live predominantly in Northern Afghanistan as sedentary farmers and transhumants. They speak Chagatay (central Turkic) dialects and refer to themselves by their old tribal names Haraki, Kamaki, Mangit, Ming, Shesh Qara and Taymus. Prior to Emir Abd al-Rahman’s conquest of Northern Afghanistan in the late 19th century Uzbeks were the politically dominant ethnic groups there associated with the Turkic principalities of the north, which were ruled in accordance with the decentralized Chingizid paradigm. After the assertion of the Kabul authority in the north Uzbeks were usually considered as second-class citizens and some Pashtun (mainly Durrani) clans were resettled in the area in order to consolidate the government’s grip on the area.
In the early 1990’s the Uzbeks attempted to renegotiate their political position by throwing their considerable military weight in favor of different factions or even occasionally dominating the political process. These developments found their organizational framework in the establishment of the Uzbek-dominated Islamic National Movement of Afghanistan.

**TURLMENS**

Approximately 400,000 Turkmens are concentrated mainly in the north-western areas of Afghanistan bordering Turkmenistan. They are tribal people with the following major divisions found in Afghanistan: Tekke, Yomud, Tariq and Lakai in the Heart region; Tekke and Ersari in Aqcha; Saroq and Chakra in Andkhoy; Salor in Maymana and Maruchak; Ersari and Mawri in Dawlatabad. They speak the Oguz dialect. The Turkmens are predominantly semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic farmer-herdsmen. Many of them arrived to Afghanistan in the late 1920’s following the defeat of the anticomunist Islamist basmachi movement in Soviet Central Asia.

**KIRGHIZ**

The Kirghiz can be found only in the easternmost parts of the Wakhan corridor. They number a few thousand, speak a Qipchaq dialect and are engaged in nomadic pastoralism tending sheep, goats and yaks. In 1979 members of one of the two Kirghiz tribal lineages left Afghanistan because of rivalry with the other tribal group and
disagreement with the new regime in Kabul. After some peregrination they settled down in Turkey.

**MONGOLS**

The Mongols of Afghanistan speak Dari, however the Mongolian substratum is clearly visible. There are also very small groups of Pashto-speaking Mongols in the South. There are several thousand Mongols scattered mainly throughout central and northern Afghanistan as highland agriculturalists. They were originally concentrated in Ghor province but approximately in the 1850’s they dispersed from there. It is quite possible that they are the descendants of Mongol troops that invaded Afghanistan in the 13th century.

**ARABS**

There are very few Afghan Arabs who still retain Arabic as their domestic language (four known villages west of Mazar-e Sharif with 50-100 households in each of them). These Arabs are unrelated to many Dari or Pashto-speaking groups claiming Arab descend and forming small semi-nomadic and semi sedentary communities scattered all over the country but predominantly concentrated in the North where they resemble the Arabs of Central Asia. Many of them claim sayyed descend, which is rarely recognised outside their communities. Nevertheless, their Dari is often heavily Arabized.
Jewish presence in Afghanistan can be traced back to pre-Islamic times, though the exact number and position of the Jews is obscure. Prior to the 1980’s there were several hundred Afghan Jews who were quite similar to Central Asian or Bukharan Jews. They resided in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat working as merchants and moneylenders. All of them spoke either Dari or Pashto, with Hebrew being only their sacred language. After the creation of Israel they gradually started to emigrate there. During World War II Afghanistan was the only country that offered asylum to all European Jews without any discrimination and some of them found a safe haven there. After the war all these Jewish refugees left Afghanistan. Those Afghans who are aware of this fact take justifiable pride in their historical record. In the 1980’s all remaining Afghan Jews left for Israel. According to the hearsay, currently there are only two Jews left in Kabul and they are not on speaking terms with each other. One of them known as Isaac Levi was constantly sentenced by the Taliban for short spells in jail for sorcery. Thus he might be the last representative of a long-standing northern Afghan and Central Asian tradition, which invested Jews with special magical power.
Prior to 1992 there were approximately 20,000 Hindus and 10,000 Sikhs in Afghanistan. They resided in urban centres where they worked as merchants and moneylenders. Apart from either Dari or Pashto they also retained their Indian languages, mainly Hindi, Panjabi or Lahnda. After the mujahideen victory many of them tried to immigrate to India fearing the Islamization of public life in Afghanistan. Especially under the Taliban many of them found themselves in a precarious position being ordered in April 2001 to wear distinctive yellow marks on their cloths “for their own protection in order to distinguish them from Muslims” as the Taliban claimed. Fortunately, this edict was not implemented.\footnote{1}

**THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF SOVIET OCCUPATION**

The Soviet War in Afghanistan, also known as the Soviet-Afghan War, was a nine-year conflict involving the Soviet Union, supporting the Marxist government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan at their own request, against the Islamist Mujahideen Resistance. The Afghan government was also supported by India, while the mujahideen found other support from a variety of sources including the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other Muslim nations through the context of the Cold War.
SOCIALIST REFORMS

The reforms lead to the growth of violent fundamental groups named Mojahideen (holy war groups to conserve Islam supported by US and Pakistan). During its first 18 months of rule, the PDPA applied a Soviet-style program of modernizing reforms. Decrees setting forth changes in marriage customs and land reform were not received well by a population deeply immersed in tradition and Islam, particularly by the powerful land owners who were harmed economically by the abolition of usury and the cancellation of farmers’ debts.

Critics of Soviet and Afghan government forces describe their effect on Afghan culture as working in three stages: first, the center of customary Afghan culture, Islam, was pushed aside; second, Soviet patterns of life, especially amongst the young, were imported; third, shared Afghan cultural characteristics were destroyed by the emphasis on so called nationalities, with the outcome that the country was split into different ethnic groups, with no language, religion, or culture in common.

In 1978 the Taraki government initiated a series of reforms, including modernization of the civil and especially marriage law, aimed at “uprooting feudalism” in Afghan society. The government brooked no opposition to the reforms and responded with violence to unrest. Between April 1978 and the Soviet invasion of December 1979, thousands of prisoners, perhaps as many as 27,000, were executed at the notorious Pul-e-Charkhi prison, including many
village mullahs and headmen. Other members of the traditional elite, the religious establishment and intelligentsia fled the country.

DESTRUCTION OF LIVELIHOOD BASES

The mujahideen favored sabotage operations. The more common types of sabotage included damaging power lines, knocking out pipelines and radio stations, blowing up government office buildings, air terminals, hotels, cinemas, and so on. From 1985 through 1987, an average of over 600 "terrorist acts" a year were recorded. In the border region with Pakistan, the mujahideen would often launch 800 rockets per day. Between April 1985 and January 1987, they carried out over 23,500 shelling attacks on government targets. The mujahideen surveyed firing positions that they normally located near villages within the range of Soviet artillery posts, putting the villagers in danger of death from Soviet retaliation. The mujahideen used land mines heavily. Often, they would enlist the services of the local inhabitants, even children.

They concentrated on both civilian and military targets, knocking out bridges, closing major roads, attacking convoys, disrupting the electric power system and industrial production, and attacking police stations and Soviet military installations and air bases. They assassinated government officials and PDPA members, and laid siege to small rural outposts. In March 1982, a bomb exploded at the Ministry of Education, damaging several buildings. In the same month, a widespread power failure darkened Kabul when a
pylon on the transmission line from the Naghlu power station was blown up. In June 1982 a column of about 1,000 young communist party members sent out to work in the Panjshir valley were ambushed within 30 km of Kabul, with heavy loss of life. On September 4, 1985, insurgents shot down a domestic Bakhtar Airlines plane as it took off from Kandahar airport, killing all 52 people aboard.

The Afghans were supported by a number of other countries, with the US and Saudi Arabia offering the greatest financial support. However, the Afghans were also aided by others: the UK, Egypt, China, Iran, and Pakistan. Ground support, for political reasons, was limited to regional countries.

MASSACRE

Over 1 million Afghans were killed. 5 million Afghans fled to Pakistan and Iran, 1/3 of the prewar population of the country. Another 2 million Afghans were displaced within the country. In the 1980s, one out of two refugees in the world was an Afghan.

Before the war, Afghanistan was already one of the world’s poorest nations. The prolonged conflict left Afghanistan ranked 170 out of 174 in the UNDP’s *Human Development Index*, making Afghanistan one of the least developed countries in the world.

Along with fatalities were 1.2 million Afghans disabled (mujahideen, government soldiers and noncombatants) and 3 million maimed or wounded (primarily noncombatants) Irrigation systems, crucial to agriculture in Afghanistan’s arid climate, were destroyed by aerial bombing and strafing by Soviet or government forces. In the
worst year of the war, 1985, well over half of all the farmers who remained in Afghanistan had their fields bombed, and over one quarter had their irrigation systems destroyed and their livestock shot by Soviet or government troops, according to a survey conducted by Swedish relief experts.

The population of Afghanistan's second largest city, Kandahar, was reduced from 200,000 before the war to no more than 25,000 inhabitants, following a months-long campaign of carpet bombing and bulldozing by the Soviets and Afghan communist soldiers in 1987. Land mines had killed 25,000 Afghans during the war and another 10-15 million land mines, most planted by Soviet and government forces, were left scattered throughout the countryside to kill and maim.

**CHILDREN IN WAR**

A great deal of damage was done to the civilian children population by land mines. A 2005 report estimated 3-4% of the Afghan populations were disabled due to Soviet and government land mines. In the city of Quetta, a survey of refugee women and children taken shortly after the Soviet withdrawal found over 80% of the children refugees unregistered and child mortality at 31%. Of children who survived, 67% were severely malnourished, with malnutrition increasing with age.
Children became orphans and they were recruited by the Taliban for their army. Captain Tarlan Eyvazov, a soldier in the Soviet forces during the war, stated that the Afghan children's future is destined for war. Eyvazov said, "Children born in Afghanistan at the start of the war... have been brought up in war conditions; this is their way of life." Eyvazov's theory was later strengthened when the Taliban movement developed and formed from orphans or refugee children who were forced by the Soviets to flee their homes and relocate their lives in Pakistan. The swift rise to power, from the young Taliban in 1994, was the result of the disorder and civil war that had warlords running wild because of the complete breakdown of law and order in Afghanistan after the departure of the Soviets.

TALIBAN

Once the Soviets withdrew, US interest in Afghanistan ceased. The US decided not to help with reconstruction of the country and instead they handed over the interests of the country to US allies, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Pakistan quickly took advantage of this opportunity and forged relations with warlords and later the Taliban, to secure trade interests and routes. From wiping out the country's trees through logging practices, which has destroyed all but 2% of forest cover country-wide, to substantial uprooting of wild pistachio trees for the exportation of their roots for therapeutic uses, to opium, agriculture, the past ten years have caused much ecological and agrarian destruction.
Afghanistan torn in to pieces during the Majahideen era after the withdrawal of Soviet Union and the interest of USA ceased as soon as the USSR withdrew.  

**THE DESTRUCTION BY THE TALIBAN**

In this turmoil, the Taliban (the word can be translated as students of Islam] movement came on the public stage in 1994 and was quickly able to conquer vast parts of Afghanistan. At first they were regarded as saviors by the Afghan population. Also, external observers saw them as having the potential to bring back peace and stability. The Taliban received support from Pakistan, which was then, led by Benazir Bhutto. Bhutto saw the rise of the Taliban as a way to free transport roads from illegal road blocks and thus to create a stable situation in Afghanistan that would allow trade with the newly independent Muslim republics of former Soviet Central Asia. Significant financial resources and logistic support also came from Saudi sources while volunteers came from madrassas along the Afghan border.

By 1996, the Taliban militia controlled more than two thirds of Afghanistan including the key cities of Kandahar, Herat, and Jalalabad. In September 1996, the Taliban forces captured Kabul and established a strict Islamic regime based on Pashtun tribal values and the strict interpretation of *sharia*, Islamic Law. The regime was most oppressive in the major cities with a large non-Pashtun population. The fundamentalist implementation of Sharia brought further
hardships to the population. However, the vast countryside of Afghanistan was much less affected by the Taliban, partly because it had been largely spared from the modernization and development that took place in the urban areas and which the Taliban opposed.

The Taliban regime was great threat to secularism, basic human rights, women and children. The ethnic identity and religious sectarian approach are interlinked with the terrorist movement named Taliban who massacred the innocent Afghans imposing upon them severe rigid Islamic practices and turned the lives of Afghans three centuries back. Millions of young Afghans flooded to the neighboring countries to save their lives and also support their families in Afghanistan. When Taliban captured Afghanistan with their army in the year 1996 they killed hundreds of minority ethnic tribes named Hazara, Uzbek in north Afghanistan. From the following laws one can understand how cruel rule it was and how the Afghans suffered during this time.

- Mullah Umar founder of Taliban framed the following rules and regulations for Afghanistan. Commanders are appointed specifically to teach on Islam to the non believers of Allah mainly to the Americans. Others are not allowed to involve in conversion.

- The children who do not have beard should not be taken to the army.

- If any opponent surrenders the military council must take on that decision. Neither the Taliban nor the commander can take decision in this regard.
• Dissolve schools which teach worldly knowledge and only schools which teach Islamic theology are allowed.

• Close down the schools if they disobey collapse the school and kill the people.

• Women should wear bardah (a cloth covering from feet to head having holes for vision).

• She should be accompanied by her husband while she is out of her family.

• A woman should not look at any male. She should look down on the path while walking.

• Women who were employed in the government were sent back home, and also Girls should stop coming to school after ten years. The girls who attended classes in the night were watched and severe punishments were given to the teachers.

• The females were forbidden to take treatment from the male doctor. Female doctors were not allowed to do medical profession. The females during their treatment must go to the doctor along with their parents or with their husband. Many women died of not getting to access to treatment.

• Girls should not converse with any male except husband, father and brothers.

• Girls should not walk in the street without anyone.
• Women should not wear high heels foot wear.

• The noise of walking or her voice should not be heard to males.

• No one is allowed to speak aloud or laugh in the public places.

• The windows must have screens in the houses. Girls should not walk or speak in the houses with open doors or windows.

• If any such cases are reported of speaking in the open houses the head of the household will be whipped.

• Magazines are prohibited and females should not give their photos or comment to any magazines.

• If any photo of a girl appears in any magazine she will be hanged.

• Women should not sit in the balcony.

• Females are not allowed to ride cycle.

• Females cannot approach any court to redress her grievances.

• Children are not allowed to play any game or fly kites.

• All should do pray five times a day.

• The Afghans who are helping the non-believers who return back after regretting Taliban will assure security. If they continue their misbehavior they will be punished by the shariat Law.
• The Taliban who wish to convert the Afghans who worked previously with the earlier governments have to obtain permission from the commanders.

• The regretted Afghans who joined the Taliban repeat their mistakes they will not be given another chance. They will be killed.

• The Majahaideen are not allowed to punish the converted Afghans. They will be given another chance.

• The Taliban who wanted to transfer to another area must obtain permission from their area commanders.

• The prisoners will not be exchanged with a foreigner.

• Neither the area commanders nor the officials should come into any contract for money with any NGO. The local shura will decide on that.

• The Taliban or the Commanders should not misuse the arms or vehicles meant for Holy war.

• Each and every Taliban should keep on account for the money and the arms they handle and they must submit account to the commander.

• The Moojahaideen should not sell arms for money and If necessity arises he should get permission from his authority.
• Taliban should not invite other Mojahaideen groups to our army. If it is necessary Taliban should evaluate them before amalgamation.

• The arms captured from the foreigners must be equally distributed to the Mojahaideen.

• If Afghans who worked with the enemies regret and want to join Taliban they should not be killed.

• The Taliban who behave against the common interest of the people will be given a warning and he will not be given second warning but he may be dismissed from the world.

• The Taliban should not indulge in conducting in raid in the public place or capture the arms kept for self protection. If necessary the Taliban should get the permission from the Judge.

• Talibans are not allowed to rob the people. 3

**FIGURE NO.4**

**PRESENT CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN**
PRESENT SITUATION

After the interim government was formed the United states involved United Nations to enable the Afghans to frame a new constitution. Hamid Karzai formed the government and later he was reelected but there is sporadic violence and it is between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. In November 2006, the U.N. Security Council warned that Afghanistan may become a failed state due to increased Taliban violence, growing illegal drug production, and fragile State institutions. In 2006, Afghanistan was rated 10th on the failed states index, up from 11th in 2005. The conflict affects vast parts of the country but with varying intensity and different manifestations. Especially along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and in all of the southeastern and southern provinces the conflict manifests in military operations against presumed Taliban hide-outs and frequent guerilla-like attacks on Afghan and international military and police forces by AGEs. Other parts of the country witness smaller scale operations and attacks. Terrorist attacks aimed at government structures as well as national and international security forces are committed by AGE’s forces and often involve the use of explosives. There are also calculated assassinations of individuals by both sides. One interviewee stated that insurgents are very active in creeping into new areas in the north. He mentioned an example from Maimana, the capital of the Northern Province of Faryab:
“It’s a typical village in a valley with a police post. During the night they - once I would have called them ‘Taliban’ but nowadays I got more sensitive and would rather simply say ‘people from outside the area speaking a Pakistani Pashto’ - are coming down from the mountains, armed. They knock at the house of a normal farmer offering money and weapons. They would simply say ‘Just keep the money and hide the weapons. There is nothing we want you to do for us at the moment. BUT: You know the police checkpoint - one day we may give you a signal. And when this signal comes, you and everybody else will run this checkpoint over!’ If the farmer refuses to cooperate he risks that he or anybody of his family is getting murdered the next time these people return. This is what’s currently happening all over the country.”

There are three main types of explosive attacks: The explosive devices can be

1. “human-bound”, i.e. a vest with explosives carried by an individual “suicide bomber”,
2. installed in a car which can then be detonated from a distance or by the driver himself and
3. planted in/near roads as mines or “IEDs” (Improvised Explosive Devices) which are triggered either by movement of a “target” or through distant manual triggers like mobile phones, wires or infra-red devices.
There have also been less common cases in which IEDs were loaded on a donkey or attached to a bicycle, key leaders are assassinated by Special Forces or private security firms (e.g. through ranged missile attacks). AGEs are executing government representatives (governors, chiefs of police) and “collaborators” with Western forces or the government. In a way, this conflict is the one most instrumentalized on the political level. The “Taliban threat” is used as an argument for local commanders to re-arm (or not to disband their illegally armed groups in the first place). This is further supported if local militias (who are then likely to be informally organized as militias of a commander) are used for fighting “Taliban” forces as part of a security policy. Also, there are many rumors circulating claiming the US and UK forces collaborate with Taliban for their own profit or that they would refrain from defeating them completely in order to have an official reason for a lasting military presence in Afghanistan.  

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

There have been multiple accounts of human rights violations in Afghanistan. The fallout of the U.S. led invasion, including resurgence in Taliban forces, record-high drug production, and re-armed warlords, has led to a threat to the well-being and rights of hundreds of thousands of innocent Afghan citizens, according to Human Rights Watch.
The international coalition in Afghanistan is losing public support, one fallen civilian at a time. Twenty billion US dollars in military expenditures each month and billions more in support operations and humanitarian aid still leaves the many civilians harmed by international troops with nothing. Since the initial US invasion in 2001, the lack of a clear, coordinated strategy to address civilian losses has been a leading source of anger and resentment toward military forces. A new BBC/ABC poll shows a 12 percentage point drop in Afghan support for the international presence since 2007 and a drop of 15 points from 2006.

A once welcoming picture of the population has turned into scenes of frequent, widespread and sometimes violent protests over civilian deaths and a perceived lack of concern by international forces. Avoiding harm to civilians altogether is the goal. When harm nonetheless occurs, the imperative must be easing civilian suffering and making amends for losses. Many finally understand this need, from US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to Afghan President Hamid Karzai to the UN Special Reporter on Extrajudicial Killings Philip Alston. But few if any have looked closely at the existing compensation and victim assistance mechanisms to see what works and what does not.
This report does just that. The Campaign for Innocent Victims of Conflict (CIVIC) interviewed 143 victims of conflict in Afghanistan to document the harm they experienced and find out which, if any, of the existing compensation and victim assistance mechanisms met their needs and expectations.

Above all, CIVIC’s research shows that compensation and victim, assistance is both possible and practical, despite statements from government and military officials to the contrary. In fact, several mechanisms for addressing civilian losses are now working on the ground. In addition to formal claims systems, most countries providing troops to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have funds for ex gratia (meaning “out of kindness”) payments to civilians suffering loss of life, limb or property. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds an individually tailored livelihood assistance program for survivors of international troop activities.

The Afghan Government gives both immediate monetary condolences and longer term stipends to victims of the conflict. These mechanisms have enormous potential to meet civilian needs following harm, but civilians interviewed said they received no help or that the help was too little, too late. The gaps that allow civilians to be
Over looked must be closed now, lest Afghans become increasingly angry, resentful and left to mourn tragic losses without the dignity of recognition.

Our interviews suggest there is often a regrettable disconnect between the focus on “hearts and minds” at a policy level and the dedication of sufficient resources and energy toward civilians whose hearts and minds are most at stake. While circumstantial issues of security and corruption often get in the way of aid to war victims, in many cases it is a lack of funding, lack of coordination between foreign and Afghan actors, a failure to make assistance more accessible or liability concerns that thwart real civilian relief.

“People believe ISAF just pours salt in the wound, because of how they acted. People are angry because no representative from ISAF came to see what happened, or to apologize that it was a mistake.”3 Billion of dollars are spent to win, keep and rebuild Afghan communities, but it only takes seeing one family maltreated and ignored by military forces for a community to turn against the international effort. Victim assistance is equally critical on humanitarian grounds. In 2007 and 2008, an estimated 3,641 civilians were killed by parties to the conflict in Afghanistan. For every civilian killed, as many or more are injured, lose their homes or livelihoods. For countless Afghan families living on the margins, the loss of a breadwinner, high medical or funeral costs, or the financial burden of supporting disabled or dependent relatives can make even
basic survival difficult. For each family struggling to recover from losses there are multiplying ripple effects on Afghanistan’s continuing development and stabilization. The following are the recommendations done by the CIVIC Activists after their study.

- Victim compensation and support is possible, and is expected by the Afghan population.

- Mechanisms to address civilian losses created by the US Congress, ISAF member states and the Afghan Government must be more proactive, fully funded, and better coordinated if they intend - as they should - to reach out to all civilians directly harmed or affected by the conflict.

- A significant number of civilian survivors of combat operations receive no help from international forces, and those that do often find it is too little, too late.

- Every family with losses not recognized and addressed is another obstacle to Afghanistan’s stabilization and development.

- Anger and resentment over civilian casualties and property loss dominate Afghan views of international forces; the anger is especially strong when no help is provided following harm.

A focused, high-level dialogue on what further steps should be taken to succeed in these initiatives is critical and urgent. There are concrete, immediate measures that will improve the situation, including identifying victim’s families and responding to them.
proactively, tracking affected families and any aid they receive, and improving coordination among international troops. The report to follow contributes to the emerging debate by offering a roadmap to existing mechanisms for compensation and victim assistance, how they work, how civilians feel about them, and when appropriate what “fixes” could improve compensation and victim assistance.

Civilians harmed by international forces generally want timely and adequate help with necessary medical treatment, economic assistance for immediate rebuilding and long-term recovery, and to be given a sense that their losses have been recognized and redressed. The more that any mechanism or program is able to provide this help, particularly help perceived to be coming from those they blame for their losses, the more families are able to recover physically, economically and financially.

No mechanism or program will satisfy all civilian needs and expectations all the time, particularly not given the operating conditions of Afghanistan. For this reason, it may be that a network of overlapping, but different approaches is the best way to reach as many conflict-affected civilians as possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>What happened to your family?</th>
<th>What assistance did you receive?</th>
<th>What are your feelings about the incident now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother lost a husband and son to a suicide attack</td>
<td>“My husband and only son were killed (in a suicide bomb attack). ... When the blast happened, pieces of the flesh thrown from the blast landed in our yard”.</td>
<td>Received ACAP assistance; Italian soldiers who were the target of the suicide bomb provided immediate medical help and rebuilt a bridge that was destroyed.</td>
<td>“The big problem is that there’s no male in our family now ... I am not able to think of ... what we can do. We are drowning in agony and misery”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP fled Helmand province with 100 other fellow villagers following months of fighting and bombardment</td>
<td>“We came because there is no security and there is fighting all the time in the village we came from. There was one night of fighting and a lot of bombardment. We became afraid and finally ran away. ... We first went to Kandahar to but then the fighting spread there also so we came to Kabul ... We don’t have enough shelter and food. We don’t have wheat on our own here.”</td>
<td>Some assistance provided through the Afghan Red Crescent Society, UNHCR, and DoRR.</td>
<td>“When there is security we will go back. You see our lifestyle here and the problems we face. As soon as there is security we want to go back but we just don’t know when that will be. We would have but we don’t have any option but to be here”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy lost his legs and was permanently disabled due to cluster munitions dropped in 2001 in Herat province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When I was taken to the hospital ... the doctors were thinking that I almost died and they put me in the place for dead bodies ... After 7 days in surgery I swallowed and (another explosion) ... there was a piece of the bomb inside my belly”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No assistance provided as yet.</td>
<td>“They told me to talk to the PRT or other government officials. Because I cannot walk, ...I cannot go like you and others to meet with people to tell them what happened to me”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two relatives from Paktia province lost several family members and their homes in 2001 bombing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“About 1:00 am the airplanes started to drop their bombs. In the first bombardment four family members of my uncle were killed. ... (As we went to help them the) 2nd bombardment hit ... My mother lost her leg; my sister was killed. My sister was 14 years old. Her name was Sharifa. She was too young to die.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAP assistance: US military gave $5000 to distribute among everyone affected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man from Kunduz lost a leg in US airstrikes in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man’s wife was killed by US Marines in an escalation of force incident in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father lost seven members of his extended family in 2008 airstrike in Wardak; living as IDP in Kabul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-year-old boy lost his sister in a US airstrike on a wedding party in Nangarhar, July 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother-in-law killed in escalation of force incident in Kandahar in February 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three neighbors whose village in Shindand district, Herat was bombed twice by US forces as on interview date, once in April 2007 and once in July 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man lost his father and niece and himself injured by US Marines in March 2007; vehicle also destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m disappointed by international forces. They are killing innocent civilians. If they are here for peace and prosperity, that is good. But if (they are here) for killings and bombardments, then there is no reason for them to be here... We want justice. We want a trial of those harming civilians.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An array of stakeholders is involved in the net of conflicts in which Afghanistan is entangled. Beside the US and other NATO countries, Pakistan, India, Iran, Russia, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, all play important roles in these constellations. International military forces, namely the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and the United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) are also significant international actors on the national level. Regarding Afghan stakeholders, the Afghan president Hamid Karzai and his government as well as government security forces such as the Afghan National Army (ANA), the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the national intelligence service (NDS) are key players on the pro-government side.

A kaleidoscope of actors can be identified as anti-government elements, including the (“real”) Taliban and allied forces such as the Haqqani Network and the political-military party Hezb-e Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Foreign resistance fighters and criminal gangs are also involved in activities against the Afghan government, sometimes actually being hired by the previously mentioned groups, sometimes just claiming to be “the Taliban” for personal advantage and to create the illusion that the criminal act is committed by a large and powerful group that the police shouldn’t mess with.
One special group of stakeholders are the “jihadis” or “tanzims”, a number of influential political-military parties which were already active (with significant financial support from abroad) as mujahedin resistance groups during the Soviet occupation and continue to play an important role in today’s politics. Beside these, there are also a series of other Afghan actors active on the local level including different types of “shuras”/ community councils, mullahs and elders who play important roles in fueling Afghan conflicts or in their resolution.

**ESCALATING FACTORS**

Afghanistan’s long history of complex intertwined conflicts reflects the magnitude of different root causes and escalating factors. From a general perspective, not considering particular conflict fragments, it is both neither possible and nor useful to make a clear distinction between original root causes and escalating factors.

On the political level, Afghanistan struggles with the effects of bad governance. This is the result of a kaleidoscope of factors such as the lack of qualified staff. There is a widespread predatory approach to governance and official posts are often considered to be primarily opportunities to enrich oneself and distribute resources to one’s followers rather than serve the public good. This approach leads to endemic corruption and widespread impunity for powerful people and their followers. Given the use of military power as a major way to claim and hold political power, there also appears to be a militarized perception of “peace building” among many key persons in the Afghan
government. One national interviewee described this attitude cynically with the phrase “Go there, bomb any opposition to the ground and then afterwards simply build a nicer village.”

In addition to these political factors, key political players have been instrumentalizing ethnicity, religion and regionalism to mobilize their followers.

On the social level, there is very high illiteracy and a lack of vocational training in Afghanistan. The adherence to archaic honor codes can lead to long-lasting blood feuds. All of this is coupled with an explosive growth in population with the average woman having more than six children. Approaches to conflict resolution have been mainly re-active and limited to compensation for damages without addressing underlying root causes. In addition, there is a high degree of traumatization among the population from decades of war.

Economically and environmentally, Afghanistan faces a growing scarcity of natural resources such as water, arable land, pastures and wood, in combination with the fact that 80% of the population depends on agriculture. Droughts and other effects of global warming further exacerbate this. Unemployment is high which makes people more receptive to offers of payment from criminal/opposition groups. Insurgency and government corruption are significantly supported by revenues from the drug economy in Afghanistan.
Security-related factors that contribute to existing conditions are the high proliferation of small arms and the presence of hundreds of illegal armed groups organized as criminal gangs (or) under the command of warlords who use these private militias to claim, and maintain political power. National security forces, especially the police, are weak and in many cases negatively affected by corruption, and loyalty to powerful local players, as well as unqualified and ill-equipped staff. Related to that, there is a lack of security for the local population, with insurgency and criminal groups threatening civilians and/or offering “protection” in exchange for financial or logistical support.

Regarding conflict factors related to international events, sources or actors, Afghanistan’s borders have been artificially formed, dividing ethnic territories and creating a multi-ethnic country. The country has faced numerous attempts at invasion or external control and has become the arena for conflicts between foreign powers that try to influence the situation in Afghanistan to their benefit. Also, insurgency groups operating in Afghanistan receive external support or at least benefit from “safe havens” outside Afghanistan’s borders. Beside these external factors, the international presence within Afghanistan has had escalating effects on conflict due to perceived injustice in the distribution of development aid, alienation of the Afghan population caused by the civilian casualties during international air strikes based on faulty information, and behavior of
international soldiers considered culturally inappropriate such as night raids. 6

LOCAL LEVEL CONFLICTS

LAND

The majority of conflicts in Afghanistan include land as a conflict issue. These conflicts can be either about property or about access to land or pastures.

Conflicts about the ownership of land have different backgrounds. Many conflicts are a mixture of more than one of the following types; different legal systems supporting the claims of different people, resettlement, occupation of land by a commander, or disputed inheritance. Often, a single conflict involves two or more of these.

There are three legal systems which operate simultaneously: customary law, Islamic law / Shari’a and state law. All have generated various forms of documentation or title deeds. Also, an individual name on a document can stand for shared ownership within a family whose members have different rights to the land. In combination with the fact that property deeds have been falsified on a large scale, this results in an unclear legal situation in most land conflicts.

Resettlements have been ordered / conducted in Afghanistan over centuries for various reasons. Some resettlements/displacements took place due to policies associated with large dam and Irrigation projects initiated in the second half of the 20th century. The series of resettlements that has influenced today’s land conflicts the most is
the so called *Pashtunization* - a term which is in part misleading as members of other ethnic groups were also resettled. This internal colonization started during the reign of Abur Rahman Khan (1881-1901). In order to deal with resistance from rival Pashtun tribes, Abur Rahman Khan moved them to non-Pashtun areas in the North and West. These resettled Pashtuns were given the official task of ruling over the local inhabitants as well as often very good land that before had belonged to non-Pashtuns.

Other ethnic groups from the North were resettled into the South. This internal colonization continued during the following decades. In course of the Soviet occupation and the civil war, many Afghans left the country and thus their land and became refugees. In the meantime, other people (re)claimed the land and today argue that the land did not belong to the people settled there during the colonization in the first place as this would have been an illegal process. Regarding access to land, the conflict between the mostly Pashtun nomads (commonly known as *kuchis*) and Hazara settlers over access to pastures in the Hazarajat is the most prominent one.

This conflict has a long history as well. Prior to the Soviet invasion, relations between nomads and settlers had for generations been mainly peaceful and symbiotic. Nomads brought goods to the secluded Hazarajat and traded them together with their own livestock products for harvest crops and cash. However because the prices of the goods were quite high and trading conditions disadvantageous,
many Hazara peasants were eventually forced to sell their land to the nomads who then in return rented it back to them. Any resistance from the Hazara against perceived injustice was futile. Regarding the ability to mobilize people, the Pashtun nomads with their strong tribal structures were more than a match for the Hazara settlers whose own structures had been largely scattered by the invasion of Abdur Rahnan Khan. During the Soviet occupation, the Pashtun nomads significantly reduced their migration to the Hazarajat due to the ongoing fighting. At the same time, the Hazaras were the first to liberate themselves from the Soviet occupation, establishing their own state.

Later on the Taliban again successfully “integrated” the Hazarajat into their territory through the use of force. Under the new rule, Pashtun nomads returned again to the area. In recent years the conflict between the Hazaras and the Pashtun nomads has escalated significantly, with regular clashes (especially in the area of Behsud) between the groups every summer when the nomads come to the Hazarajat.

WATER

The arid climate in Afghanistan yields little rainfall, yet about 80% of the people depend on agriculture. The distribution of irrigation water causes increasing conflicts in years of drought. Population growth further exacerbates the issue. Traditionally, the distribution of water takes place under the supervision of the *mirab*, who is elected
by farmers of the respective canal. A just distribution is often hindered by corruption or the presence of powerful (and armed) landlords. Furthermore, water is seldom shared equally between farmers whose land is situated at the top of the canal and those whose land is in the middle or at the end. Farmers at the top tend to take as much water as they need to plant rice, which is most lucrative but also requires a lot of water. Farmers at the lower end of the canal are then limited to crops that need less water (e.g. grapes).

**DEFORESTATION**

After years of uncontrolled deforestation, access to forests and thus wood is also a common issue of conflict. People need firewood for cooking, but also for heating in winter time. Distribution is not properly regulated by any authority. In addition to uncontrolled deforestation based on people’s basic needs, local power brokers make profits by professionally cutting wood and exporting the lumber to neighboring countries. Between 1990 and 2005, Afghanistan lost about a third (33.8%) of its forest cover or around 442,000 hectares.

This deforestation has also lead to an increased risk of erosion and floods. The summer in Afghanistan is about 6-7 months long with short periods of spring and fall. During winter time (mid December - beginning of March) the temperature drops significantly below zero degrees Celsius. In the harsh winter of 2007/08, over 300,000 animals (sheep, cattle...) perished and more than 900 winter-related deaths were reported by the end of February 2008.
Although there are foresters to protect the remaining forests, corruption is still present. One person stated that a forester may wait in the valley and whenever one villager passed by with a donkey loaded with (illegally collected or chopped) wood from the forest, the forester simply requested some of the wood as his “share” and then let the villager pass with the rest of it. Thus, at least one dispute about horticulture was also listed in the UNAMA Violence Study in 2005, which only included conflicts with 5 or more casualties.

Violence resulting from the dismissal of staff is not limited to local power brokers engaged in illegal activities. International organizations especially can face direct or indirect threats if they choose not to extend a work contract with an individual staff member or cooperation partner.

In one case, a person threw a hand grenade in the middle of the night into the parking lot of an organization that did not hire him. While the actual danger from a staff member’s threat may be limited, its psychological effect can be significant - with more than one case where unqualified and corrupt national staff is kept in their posts in fear of such threats. Further disputes can arise over horticultural crops such as pistachios or pine nuts. Interviewees told stories of “harvest events” in areas with such crops (like pistachios in Badghis province). For example, one interviewee explained that he once witnessed this in Badghis when a local dignitary or commander on a special day gave the starting signal and everybody in the region was
allowed to rush to the hills and forests to harvest the crops. Pistachios are very valuable and whole families joined forces to claim - and defend at gun point - their part of the crop, leaving the city almost deserted.

With armed harvesters and virtually no security forces maintaining law and order, such events lead to a small number of casualties each year. Leaving out indirect deaths resulted e.g. from lack of water or land, drug-related conflicts cost the most lives among resource related conflicts, simply because the conflicting parties are usually armed and the issue at stake can be worth several thousand USD. Conflicts arise in the course of production (e.g. drug lords forcing farmers to plant poppy and harvest opium) as well as during the trafficking of the drugs.

Official posts in local government or border police along drug trafficking routes are also quite “valuable” as they provide access to significant financial resources through cooperation with the drug traffickers. Thus, the dismissal of a person from such a post often leads to an escalation or outbreak of violence, usually in the form, of insurgency or retaliation attacks. It is also important to stress that drug-generated income is partly used to fund private militias. Conflicts that involve drugs are thus closely linked to conflicts on the national level. Conflicts also arise over resources in a wider sense, such as development projects, job opportunities or official posts in government.
Conflicts on a family level are probably the most common conflicts in Afghanistan. Information about such conflicts are also less likely to be shared with outsiders, partly because it is regarded as inappropriate and impolite to talk about issues that might result in members of a family losing face or which may even be harmful to the reputation of the family as a whole. The family plays a significant role in an Afghan’s life. The family provides social security in that children support their parents in old age and unemployed relatives are supported or placed in vacant job positions.

Almost all leisure time is spent with the family including wedding parties, weekend picnics or visiting relatives. In a small conflict survey conducted by the author in Kunduz in spring 2008 with Afghan and international interviewees, family conflicts were listed as significant conflicts by almost all Afghan interviewees, while only a few international interviewees mentioned them at all. Most of the internationals who did mention them had been in Afghanistan for several years, apparently able to build up enough trust to actually hear about such conflicts.

For example, a younger member of a family may have been successful, with his (or also her) education and work skills, in getting a job in a business firm or an international organization. With a salary that can easily be 5-10 times higher than that of his or her parents, the younger member becomes a primary supporter of the family.
Nevertheless the person could face situations in which he or she feel patronized or forced against his/her will by older members of the family. UNIFEM Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{7}

Conflicts on a family level can be about material issues such as inheritance or the use of shared land. They also include conflicts about respective roles within a family, especially regarding the rights and duties of members from different generations. Such generational conflicts are far more common in urban / metropolitan areas than in rural ones. This may be connected to differences in education and income possibilities for young family members that can lead to younger family members providing the majority of a family’s income. A common conflict issue is the question of who a younger family member should marry, a decision which traditionally is made by the parents or other older members of the family rather than by the person himself or herself.

Overall, marriage-related conflicts are the “biggest conflicts” on a family level, due to their significance to the people involved but also because they often include other family members as well and thus have greater potential to spread. UNIFEM Afghanistan estimates that 70 - 80% of women face forced marriages. This indicates that the vast majority of marriages are arranged by families. Men can also be subjected to arranged marriages with their family sometimes prohibiting them from marrying the woman they chose, even as a second or third wife. Such arranged or forced marriages are
Afghanistan from other countries and thus the realization of gender injustice that was previously accepted as “normal.”

Traditionally, women (and men) are, as mentioned above, expected to obey the decision of their family when it comes to who to marry. In this regard, women in particular can also be “used” as a “means for conflict resolution.” For example in cases of “baad” in which a woman from the family of a perpetrator is given to the family of its victim as “compensation” for a crime committed. While the (recorded) number of real cases of baad is comparatively low, with 70-80% of the women facing forced marriages, the potential for “marriage conflicts” is great.

Women can also face difficulties from their families if they work outside the home - including incidents where members of a woman’s family suddenly appear at work to check on her or contact her superiors. Women are also subject to harassment by men on the street or intimidation. To avoid the violence involved in conflicts over the rights of women, many Afghan women prefer not to claim these rights for themselves. In addition, women’s rights have a rather negative image in Afghanistan as many agitators have succeeded in portraying them as an attack on Afghan culture. It should also be mentioned that there are a significant number of suicides committed by women in Afghanistan.
Afghanistan is the only country in the world with a higher suicide rate among women than men. According to one interviewee, an Afghan colleague working for a human rights organization had the opinion that women’s right had first to be granted to a wife by her husband and that he would also have the right to reverse his decision to grant these “rights” to his wife. Women’s rights would thus be a set of privileges subject to the approval of the husband rather than inalienable rights a woman could demand even against the will of a male family member. One infamous way of committing suicide in Afghanistan is self-immolation. As one interviewee stated, some women would choose this painful way also to be sure that even if they did survive, because of the deformation from the burns they could be sure that they would not be touched again.

Men at an early age are responsible for the support of the whole family, putting significant pressure on them. They are also expected to take care of the “honor of the family”, defending it (even physically) whenever “necessary.” While male gender roles appear to be far less disputed in Afghanistan, it is still likely that they have the potential to escalate other conflicts, especially at the family level.

TENSIONS

A majority of the Afghan interviewees stated that rising tensions between ethnic groups are a dominant challenge for Afghanistan. In 2005, UNAMA categorized about 32% of the violent conflicts. The ethnicity of an individual is based on the ethnicity of the father. The
mother's ethnicity does not play any role. Inter-ethnic marriages do take place but are not common in all variations, in part due to social pressures and the fact that many marriages are arranged for “family-political” reasons. Marriages are frequently used as a means for politics, for officially aligning two families and/or for increasing social status or access to resources. Ethnicity can play a role here: while for example a Pashtun man may marry a Hazara woman as his second or third wife, it is very rare that a Pashtun woman would be “given” to a Hazara man in marriage.

Pashtuns tend to regard themselves as the founders of Afghanistan and the ones with the highest claim to rule the country (most of the national rulers in Afghanistan’s history were Pashtuns). Hazaras, however, are usually seen to be at the other end of the scale. A marriage with them thus seems to be less “profitable” from a political, Pashtun point of view. One thing that supports the mobilization of groups within conflicts is the fact that the social machinery in Afghanistan is based upon norms of reciprocity, generosity and hospitality reflected in strong patron-client relationships which play an important role in structuring social life. This will be explained below in the example of Afghan notions of leadership.
PEACE BUILDING

Peace as absence of war is desirable fundamentally because war kills or maims human beings, and destroys or damages material wealth and natural resources. But even without war peace and resources can be harmed by non-military factors like economic poverty which can lead to hunger, homelessness, diseases, unemployment or poor incomes has been killing millions of people around the world. This killing will continue if the structural poverty is not eliminated and the economy of the poor in the world is not improved.

Denial of fundamental freedoms, equality and human dignity and economic exploitation, police persecution and dictatorship can destroy human well being and deny human fulfillment. The fate of minorities has been miserable in many countries of the world. Prejudices, bigotry and hate generated by racism, religionism, sexism, chauvinism and colonialism remain the most serious threats to peace within and without every nation-state in the world.

MICRO LEVEL PEACE BUILDING

Micro-level peace building refers to activities that take place at the sub-national level or at the level of local communities. Grassroots and indigenous leadership structures have an important role to play in securing and sustaining peace. In addition, non-governmental and ecumenical groups can also implement and take part in micro-level peace building initiatives. The macro-level, meso-level and micro-level frameworks can exist independently of each other, but effective
peacebuilding can only be implemented when each level complements the Other. At the macro level peacebuilding processes are often imbued with self-interest and often operate on the basis of ethical scepticism and political realism. There are cases in which micro-level peace processes and indigenous mechanisms can implement ethical processes.⁹

**BONN AGREEMENT**

Bonn Agreement is a milestone in the history of Afghanistan. In December 2001, leaders from the Afghan opposition and diaspora met in Bonn, Germany, and drew up plans for a political transition starting with a provisional government structure, which led to the naming of Hamid Karzai as chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) on 22 December 2001. The AIA held a nationwide Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) in June 2002, and Karzai was elected president of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan.

In December 2003, the Transitional Authority held a second nationwide Loya Jirga in Kabul to debate a draft Constitution, which was ultimately adopted in January 2004 (see Crisis Group’s December 2003 report, Afghanistan; The Constitutional Loya Jirga). After threats of boycott, violence and claims of fraud the first ever direct presidential election on 9 October was largely successful. Parliamentary and provincial elections were held in September 2005; exclusion of political parties from electoral process may compromise the strength of the legislature.¹⁰
ATTEMPTS FOR PEACE BUILDING

Attempts to resolve the crisis have been ongoing; actors and strategies have changed as the conflict itself has changed. Mediation has occurred at several levels involving state and non-state actors. In the Cold War years the diplomatic focus was on the US and Soviet Union, with support roles played by Pakistan and the Afghan regime. In the post Cold War years, the focus has been on the neighboring regional powers. There have also been a number of civil society and Diaspora-led initiatives. However, the primary role has been assumed by the UN, which operates in Afghanistan without either major collaboration or competition from other intergovernmental organizations. Unlike in Europe, Africa, or Latin America, regional organizations have tended to be weak throughout Asia.

FAILURE AT THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL

On the government level, there is little actual support and political willingness for national peace and reconciliation initiatives. One reason may be the high number of former mujahedin commanders in upper level positions who would likely jeopardize any process which might lead to accusations against them for human rights atrocities. One of the biggest blows against the National Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice was the amnesty law passed by the Afghan Parliament in the beginning of 2007. The Peace Jirga between Afghanistan and Pakistan in summer 2007, in which about 700 representatives from both countries met, was also widely
criticized for not inviting representatives from Taliban forces. Saudi Arabia succeeded in September 2008 in facilitating the first preliminary talks in Mecca between members of the Afghan government and “reconciled” Taliban leaders. Yet further talks appear to be thwarted by the Taliban’s proclaimed demand that all international forces should be withdrawn from Afghanistan as a precondition for any negotiation.

**NGOs INITIATIVES**

Although there is a lack of coordination among them, there continues to be an array of peace building projects conducted at the community level by local NGOs and some international organizations working particularly on this topic. These projects include, for example, trainings in conflict resolution techniques, local events, the establishment of peace councils and other structures for conflict resolution and reconciliation. However, with very few opportunities available in Afghanistan to receive long term funding, many of these projects are limited in duration to a few weeks or months with unclear prospects of when - or if - new funding will be available.  

11
### Poverty Profile of Afghanistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>NUMBER/ PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>32 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>43 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population living below poverty line</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children born per woman</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births attended by a skilled person</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally displaced persons</td>
<td>1,36,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.reliefweb/country/profile/Afghanistan.com

### Human Development Index

However standardized quantitative development indicators show little progress in human development: Afghanistan’s Human Development Index (HDI) stood at 0.345 in 2007 an overall decrease from 0.346 in 2004, thus indicating a slightly worse state of human development. This places Afghanistan in the human development stakes at 174th out of 178 countries worldwide, the lowest ranking nation in the entire Asia and Pacific regions.
FOOD CONSUMPTION

With as many as 6.6 million Afghans unable to meet their caloric food requirements, the percentage of the Afghan population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption is 30 percent. 30 percent of Afghans ingest lower levels of calories the required calorie on a daily basis.

HUNGER

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO). But According to FAO, 6.5 million people face food insecurity in Afghanistan in 2007. ”Food insecurity means that people do not have access at all times to the quality and quantity of food they require to lead a healthy life,”. Fifty-seven percent of Afghan households have insufficient food diversity (indicating poor quality) and over 20 percent of households do not have access to enough food, according to a national rural vulnerability assessment conducted jointly by the Afghan government and the UN in 2003. The report in 2007 Hundreds of people have abandoned their homes and moved to urban areas in different parts of Afghanistan, and some have reportedly migrated to neighbouring Pakistan, due to worsening food insecurity, largely resulting from soaring food prices and low cereal supplies.13
LITERACY

Literacy in Afghanistan is only 28 percent nationally with the rate of males at 36 percent and females at 18 percent. Although there has been a 35 percent increase in the number of girls attending schools between 2002-2007 - rising from 900,000 to 5.4 million primary school net enrollment stands only at 53 percent nationally.

Within the education sector a number of supply side issues (the provision of buildings, teachers, curricula and text books) have been addressed but a large number of children (2.5 million school age children in 2006) are still not enrolled in school. Demand side issues include families often being constrained by poverty to be able to send their children to school - requiring their children to work. Some families even take the social risk of sending their female children to school going against the traditional belief that it is inappropriate to send daughters to school or that suitable education for girls is unavailable. A large number of parents also believe that they have no influence on the government and NGOs in the decision making about education for their children or the management of local schools.

GENDER

Gender inequalities in Afghanistan are commonly viewed as a major barrier to addressing poverty due to the inability of women to maximize contribution to financial income. More broadly gender inequalities are seen to impact upon quality of life: under age marriages culturally enforced immobility leading to limited access to
health, justice and education services high levels of violence against women and limited participation in decision making. Afghanistan has achieved progress at the national level ranking in the top 20 countries which have a good number of women in parliament under constitutional provisions. However the meaningful representation of women’s gender interest in parliament remains minimal. Access to health services is minimal with a nation average of 1.6 percent of women in Afghanistan dying at childbirth, with rates as high as 6.5 percent in remote rural areas. In 2005 only 31 percent of the country’s population had access to safe drinking water. Afghanistan has up to 1.5 million cases of malaria each year.

MARKETS

Fifty percent of the licit economy in Afghanistan is driven by agriculture with over half from framing and the remainder from animal husbandry. The agriculture sector employs two thirds of the work force. Markets in Afghanistan are considered weak: economic institutions, business and the infrastructure upon which the private sector operates are seriously undermined.

High real exchange rates, the decline of the multiplier effect of the opium economy and lack of economic diversification is likely to have an impact on Afghanistan’s growth rates of 7-9 per cent of licit GDP (ibid). Overall the operating environments for small and medium enterprises in rural Afghanistan are considered disabling.
EXTREME RISKS

Since the oust of Taliban regime the last two years have seen a major movement of people back to Afghanistan, a lifting of drought in many parts of the country and a recovery in agricultural production that has led to an unprecedented harvest of wheat estimated to be in 4.5 million metric tons. Poppy cultivation has also expanded from seven provinces in 1994 to 28 provinces in 2003.

Despite the growth of the opium economy the realities under which most Afghans live their lives are austere and everyday rural life is characterized by extreme risk and deep levels of poverty and deprivation. Key indicators of health and human index confirm that Afghanistan is firmly towards bottom of international ranking. An environment of insecurity violence and impunity compounds all this.\textsuperscript{14}

CRISIS DICHOTOMY

Afghanistan’s agricultural economy is portrayed by many observers as a traditional or even medieval subsistence based system of isolated farmers using techniques that have remained unchanged for centuries. For much of the past century, Afghanistan has had a strong market oriented agricultural system. In the 1960’s it was one of the largest exporters of dried fruits (particularly of raisins) and karakul lambskins in the world. This brought significant wealth to the north of the country. Massive development aid was invested in the south, resulting the major transformations in agricultural systems. Although far from all these changes were positive for farmers and rural livelihoods, they have produced a current agricultural context
that has more to do with adaptation to episodic development interventions, recurrent drought, periodic conflict and the politico economic situation that to the tradition.

WAR LORDS

Adverse impact of the war lords in structures related with agricultural and rural livelihood. The gradual erosion of formal institutions, infrastructure and market structures, and the ample opportunities for predatory behavior by local commanders have had more impact than bombs and bullets. The crisis in agriculture was and in some ways still is caused by a combination of drought, chronically weak governance and disrupted markets. The monotonous landscape of interventions that makes up aid response has been marginally related to the diversity of challenges faced by rural people struggling to maintain their livelihoods as governments have come and gone.¹⁵

VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

APPPA (Afghanistan pilot participatory poverty Assessment) findings did not indicate that a particular ethnic /tribal or religious group was more susceptible to poverty than another. However they were included as some of the dimensions upon which discrimination was based within communities. The participants’ perceptions of poverty did indicate that they view poverty correlated with age, sex, a lack of family support net work, educational background and family size. Some women (in terms of powerlessness and marginalization) widows, orphans, the unsupported elderly, amputees and the disabled
were identified as some of the poorest categories of people. In some cases refuges were seen as being more likely to be poor.

**LIVELIHOOD DIVERSITY**

The majority of households both rich and poor have diversified income sources and many are involved in a combination of farm and non farm activities. For wealthier households livelihood diversity is usually a strategy of accumulation while for poorer households diversity is of a coping mechanism.

In a village in Saripul one man carries out work such as bringing water, protecting wheat and melon fields and weeding for three months in the summer. He also grazes people’s livestock for money and milk. After the agricultural work is finished he works on other types of day labour. People know he does this kind of work and approach him to carry out various tasks such as construction. In November he goes to Sheberghan and Mazar-e-Sharif for non-farm day labour until spring, and receives Afs 150 compared to Afs 70-100 in the village. He had been a sharecropper before the drought but these opportunities are now fewer as landlords are cultivating their own land. He also lost his oxen during the drought.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPRING</td>
<td>Farm Labour</td>
<td>Carpet Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Labour in Iran</td>
<td>Childcare and housework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take livestock of others for grazing</td>
<td>Cleaning and washing clothes in other houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMER</td>
<td>Farm Labour</td>
<td>Carpet Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Labour in Iran</td>
<td>Childcare and housework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting fuel wood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTUMN</td>
<td>Daily Labour inside village</td>
<td>Carpet Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Labour in Iran</td>
<td>Childcare and housework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting fuel wood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINTER</td>
<td>Daily Labour in Sherberghan</td>
<td>Carpet Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Labour in Iran</td>
<td>Childcare and housework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking after animals of others</td>
<td>Rearing Chickens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RISK REDUCING STRATEGY

Diversification of income sources is often regarded as a strategy if reducing risk in relation to the reliability and seasonality of different income sources. Therefore diversification leads to a more regular income and therefore to income smoothing. The effectiveness of diversification of course depends on the extent to which there are choices and opportunities and is also determined by the extent to which in income source is dependent on another.

It is important to note however particularly under crisis conditions that the significance of non farm income is often positively correlated with the shocks affecting crop or livestock income. During the drought it is found households shifted to carpet weaving.

DRIVERS OF POVERTY

For the poorest groups in 18 out of 21 villages studied non farm labour was the most important source of income. Labour migration in and out of Afghanistan is a coping mechanism for absorbing poverty shocks.

Drivers of poverty are the key reasons why a person or a household has become poor. Although each driver have the effect of pushing a person or household into poverty, they can be seen as working cumulatively. Collectively they can over exhaust an assets base pushing a person or household deeper in to poverty. Of course individuals are born directly in to impoverishment inheriting weak assets bases and states of poverty. The following are the drivers of poverty.
• Weak governance and services

• Corruption

• Seasonality

• Natural disasters

• Unemployment’

• Marriage

• Health expenses

• Conflict and limited rule of law

• Ethnic/ political/ religious/ true prejudice

WEAK GOVERNANCE

Governance in Afghanistan remains weak and suffers from a lack of established framework of roles and responsibilities for government actors. This is particularly true at the sub national level where institutions continue to suffer from a critical lack of resources and inability to effectively deliver expected services. Corruption, particularly in the country police and judiciary is widespread with Afghanistan ranking 117th of 159 countries in Transparency International’s 2007 corruption perception Index.

Events occurring in recent decades in Afghanistan including the Russian occupation, the years of civil war, the presence of the Taliban and the American supported bombardments have resulted in weak governance systems and poor service delivery (service is taken here in
its broadest interpretation to include health, education, agricultural and livestock support, roads, telecommunications, security and electricity services).

CORRUPTION

Corruption has proliferated (although corruption was reduced during the reign of Taliban) resulting in an increasingly challenging environment to the poor. With already limited sources of financial capital participants are placed under great pressure to survive in an environment that requires them to pay bribes in exchange for access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. As a result it appears that corruption has limited the resources and opportunities of participants weakening their financial capital and further enforcing conditions of poverty.

SEASONALITY

Seasonality including winterization and patterns of food security has negatively affected participants. Seasonality occurring in a challenging environment without any government help has reduced their assets bases and driven the participants in to states of poverty.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters have devastated the participants. As described by the participants they can have the immediate effect of decimating assets bases and rapidly delivering people and households in to poverty.
UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment has had a direct effect on participants’ financial capital. A weak economy and high under employment have produced an environment in which participants find it difficult to earn a satisfactory and unsustainable income, contributing conditions of poverty.

MARRIAGE AND HEALTH EXPENSES

The exceptionally high cost of wedding and funeral ceremonies have had the effect in a number of cases, of undermining participants’ financial capital causing them to be in debt for long periods of time. In addition exceptionally high health cost is reported as taxing to participants’ financial capital. Such expenses have weakened assets bases and driven people and households in to states of poverty.

LAW AND ORDER

Conflict can be seen as the key driver of poverty that has an interrelationship with the majority of the other DOP. Conflict and the related limited Rule of Law have been having a profound effect on the lives of participants: destroying infrastructure, undermining all forms of capital, forcing migration, decimating governance systems and services and creating an environment of disharmony and mistrust.

Decreasing rule of law including ineffectual security forces (ANA and ANP) and judicial systems has been contributing to a maintained state of poverty for participants. Without legal systems to regulate and enforce the rights of poor Afghans power abuses have become regular.
Without security forces to ensure a stable environment implementing governance systems and service delivery is extremely challenging. In addition decreasing Rule of law has affected the overall wellbeing of the participants many of whom have succumbed to aspects of tension, depression and trauma.

PREJUDICE

As a precursor to and as a result of conflict social prejudice is rife in Afghanistan and has negatively affected social capital and created an environment of disharmony that exacerbates conditions of poverty experienced by the participants.

CHRONIC POVERTY INSTEAD OF TRANSIENT POVERTY

Transient poverty is caused predominantly by the impact of major shocks that impact households or individuals that have a strong asset base. Following shock these individuals or households will rely on the assets bases including drawing on social capital to receive support to return to the state of alternative state of well being. Chronic poverty is caused by the weak assets bases are vulnerable to shock, trends and seasonalities and the impact of ineffective formal institutions.

WEAK ASSET BASES

- Conflict
- Flooding, earthquake and drought
- Decreasing rule of law
• Increasing basic costs
• Increasing population
• Food insecurity
• Winterization

INEFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

• Disabling market environment
• Weak regional governance
• Corruption
• Weak social protection programming
• Social/ power inequalities
• Weak regional services provisions

A weak assets base is vulnerable to shocks, trends and seasonality. In many cases when any progress is made in strengthening a participant’s assets base it is almost immediately vulnerable to circumstances beyond their control.

CONFLICT

The impact of conflict on participant is profound. Conflict contributes to a broad number of other maintainers of poverty: destroying infrastructure, weakening all assets, constraining the roll out of GOA governance systems and services, killings and maiming people, causing trauma, promoting disharmony and disunity, and heightening mistrust and perceptions of insecurity.
NATURAL CALAMITIES

Natural disasters decimate the assets bases of participants and the destroy material possessions and physical and natural capital. These shocks have killed and maimed many members of the participants’ families. Recovery from natural disasters requires great reliance upon various forms of capital to enable participants to return to a standard of living similar to what they had before the natural disaster struck.

EXPENSIVE BASIC COSTS

In line with growth in the national economy the cost of basic foods and household goods has been increasing. However this growth is not reflected in an increase in the income and financial capital of the participants. This means that increasingly they face mounting financial pressure to purchase basic products for survival.

INCREASING POPULATION

The population of Afghanistan is increasing considerably. If service delivery, employment opportunities and the natural resource base cannot match that population increase then it is likely that the poor in Afghanistan will face severe crisis.

WINTERIZATION

The onset of winter has been reported as an extremely harsh experience for the participants. Agricultural work, the major source of income generating activities, and access to market substantially reduced resulting in the income levels of participants dropping
significantly. Life threatening illness is also common during this period. Winterization has been strongly contributing to maintain states of poverty among the participants.16

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

“Constructive Work” is a unique concept used by Mahatma Gandhiji to express his method of nonviolent reconstruction and liberation. Human societies and nations have been liberated in the past and now by mostly violent methods. Wherever violence has been used equality has not been ensured to everyone and liberty is available to those who make the effective use of violence and the rest loose their liberty. But liberation obtained through “Constructive Work” enables every one to enjoy freedom, equality and fraternity. There is neither winner nor loser here. This is the uniqueness Gandhiji conceived the words “Constructive Programme” for which “Constructive Work” has also alternatively been used. These two mean the same more or less. The word ‘Constructive’ is an adjectival form of the noun “construction which means the act of building, designing or forming. This concept includes fabrication, structure as well as the manner of putting together the parts. Construct is transitive verb having latin roots con and stro:, which mean to ‘pile’ and ‘with reference to structure’.17

Gandhiji in his early life spoke about social work. But later on used the words Constructive Programme instead of social work to express his special approach to rebuild human and the nation. This is
what he did with regard to his significant discovery “Satyagraha”. He first used the words passive resistance. But he soon found out that these two words did not bring out what he really meant and wanted to convey to the world so the new word. Satyagraha was coined and used. Similarly the term “Social Work” was replaced by Constructive Work to bring out the full implication of the revolutionary approach of this non-violent method of individual and social transformation leading to a Sarvodaya Social Order.

Constructive programme is the passive form of the Gandhian method for realizing a non-violent social order, where as Satyagraha is the militant form. Constructive programme was designed by Gandhiji to buildup the nation from the very bottom upwards - It must mean complete independence in every sense of the expression.

**PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME**

One of the important principles of Constructive Programme is how it is performed of its own accord. It is purely a moral action which strengthens morality in human. It is not actuated by any temptation of fear. Its an expression of non-violence. It further aids in its own growth.

Cooperation and mutual aid are the essence of Constructive Work, Voluntariness and sharing are the core of constructive activities. In it the talented assist the not so talented. In traditional cooperatives, the poor and the needy cooperate amongst themselves and stand together in the struggle for existence. They organize themselves to compete
with the rich and the clever. On the other hand, Constructive Programme lays stress on the cooperation of the rich and the poor for mutual aid. The physically strong help the physically weak. The intellectuals assist the mentally weak. The mature cooperate with the immature and aid them in their growth.

Another important principle of Constructive Programme is self reliance and self-help. Gandhiji was moved when he saw the abject poverty and misery of the people. He witnessed the rampant rural exploitation under the British Regime. He held the British Government and the Indian town dwellers responsible for this unequalled crime against humanity perpetrated on the semi starved masses of India slowly sinking down to desperation. Gandhiji had the insight to realize that the emancipation of India could never be brought by the reforms and rebuilding of towns alone. Rural rehabilitation was essential if the standard of the lives of the people to be raised through Constructive Work utilizing the energies of the people to work on all the available local resources without waiting for outside help.

The fourth principle of Constructive Programme is building from below. Most of the nations of the world gather all resources at the centre and try to build the far flung areas. Half percolates from above. This is the prevalent pattern but Constructive Programme are so designed to nourish the roots so that the plant can have healthy growth and not the other way about. For example, agricultural activities according to Constructive Programmes are to be
strengthened and operated in such a manner that other industrial and commercial activities subserve the larger base and thus flourish. Here the base is important and the main thing; those above are ancillary. Whereas in the industrial culture of today the lower down activities are ancillary, the upper ones occupy commanding heights and dominate. The actual productive activities are classed as “lower”. The productive worker is ancillary, the decisions come from the centre or above- the commanding heights and thus dominate.

Constructive programme is the concrete expression of the spirit of non-violence. And non-violence was an essential component of the Gandhian revolutionary struggle for Indian independence. It was the constructive programme according to John V. Bondurant which gave content to satyagraha violence the soldier is trained in handing weapons of violence. He undergoes daily parades. He acquires skills appropriate to kill his enemy. He has to learn productive skills and distributive justice to be used against the enemies’ sp that ultimately they become friends and both live in harmony.

Decentralization is another important principle of Constructive programme. Decentralization means that the organization should be community based; such organization will be linked up at the appropriate level. This central organization will have -only moral control over the units. The decision making and the exercise of authority if any will be that of the community at the village level. Gandhiji’s idea of decentralized economic development through the
Constructive Programme was different not only from the formally similar Maoist effort in China based on the mass line, but also from the utilitarian arguments for such decentralization advanced by, Myrdal and other economists.  

**SATYAGRAHA- THE BASIS OF GANDHIAN CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM**

Satyagraha is the quintessence of Gandhian Thought. It originates in Sanskrit as a compound of two words 'Satya' and 'Agraha'. 'Satya' literally means truth and stands for truly natural right. 'Agraha' denotes earnest want or determination. Thus together they connote 'holding on to the natural rights'. And Gandhi’s practice of Satyagraha, as a way of life and force to forge social change assumes a unique re-definition. Satyagraha, even before the term was coined, has been engaged in important struggles of mankind’s history to gain justice or shake free from cruelly and oppression. Such examples may be cited in the principled sufferings of Harischandra, Prahlada, Socrates, and Jesus Christ and Gandhi did lay down rigid rules or codes to practice Satyagraha. Through application at crisis sites and for mass justice, he proved its power in a simple manner, sticking to two simple rules of non-violence and appealing to the conscience of the wrong doers.

Being universally applicable and a timeless truth Satyagraha embrace growth, evolution and adaptability to circumstances. It never stagnates and on, for-ever evolving and transcending generations. In a
way, the evolution of Satyagraha is at par with social evolution. It is truly an ever evolving science.

Satyagraha as a way of life aims at seeking justice which is the core to human societies at all times. To upkeep morals and values alive in a society, a humane approach to conflicts and crisis is essential. According to Gandhi, Satyagraha may be resorted to wherever injustice is found - in a society as a whole, a state, a family or individual level. A person, community, man, woman, child of all ages and class can successfully employ its powers.

- "In my opinion the beauty and efficacy of Satyagraha are so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children." 22

Gandhi has used Satyagraha successfully in social and political situations thereby preventing self-defeating bloodshed and yet achieving rights and liberty.

CONCEPTS FUNDAMENTAL TO SATYAGRAHA

- If Satyagraha is a unique way of life, what are its distinct features? Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills, Gandhi said. He described Satyagraha further as 'Truth Force' or 'Love Force' or 'Soul-force'. Truth, to Gandhi was supreme; and love universal. An application of these both to issues of everyday life, at all scales and societies to fight evils was the new approach Gandhi advocated. Thus Satyagraha was a resurrection of ancient values of humanity. Only that it assumed new forms with changed times. 23
Truth or Satya, the polestar of Gandhian philosophy is derived from the Sanskrit word 'sat' which means state of being or existence or living etc.

Satyagraha also symbolizes search for truth and an endless pursuit to reach truth.\(^\text{24}\) It revolves around the doctrine that truth alone triumphs at last.\(^\text{25}\) For Gandhi truth was more than a beacon to keep one on the righteous path. He believed that true existence is nothing but prevalence of truth.

Satyagraha rested on strong foundations of spirituality. Gandhi identified truth with God which is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Pursuit of truth to him was pursuit of God.\(^\text{26}\) And being a great votary of truth, Gandhi’s life was dedicated for soul-search the truth. Gandhi believed that faith in God was core to each life. Hence it is in pursuit of God and devotion to Him that lend meaning to life. God, in Gandhi’s view, was not to be perceived as some person. It was to be felt as unseen power, a living force, "and the sovereign law that governed the entire Universe. God is truth, love, conscience and dharma.\(^\text{27}\) Gandhi sought truth and found it in love, non-violence and acts of healing. He considered truth as a religion by itself - profoundly spiritual and all pervading. No compromise of truth for social, political or material gain was acceptable to him.\(^\text{28}\) Mahatma Gandhi’s life was, in his own words, a series of "experiments with truth". The highest truth did not lie for him in a search for other worldliness but in
integrity of life. In fact it would not be wrong to call truth the whole of his metaphysics and religion.

Gandhi, essentially a man of religion 'which brings anyone face to face with the maker', believed that the service rendered to the poor, untouchables, disinherited and the forlorn are indirectly services rendered to God.

"The only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by the service of all." 29

A crucial element in the Gandhian life style is the predominance of inner voice'. It represented the divine element in human nature which, Gandhi equated with the voice of God and conscience, which is the guiding light in pursuit of truth. This call of conscience, the inner voice is the highest call of all and it must be obeyed at all costs as this obedience is the law of our being.

"Every man has to obey the voice of his own conscience, and be his own master, and seek the kingdom of God from within. 30

And he believed that the human voice can never reach the distance that is covered by the still small voice of conscience.

NON-VIOLENCE

Non-violence or ahimsa, the summum bonum of Gandhian Satyagraha has been practiced and preached by seers and sages all over the world from time immemorial. The application of love in the bloody realm of agitations seems to be a dream too beautiful to be true.
"Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy... 31

Gandhi found 'Love force' as the law of all species, while 'Brute-force' remains as the law of the jungle.

"It is my firm belief that it is love that sustains the earth. There only is life where there is love. Life without love is death. Love is the reverse of the coin of which the obverse is truth. It is my firm faith, and it is my experience of forty years that we can conquer the world by truth and love. 32

Gandhi got the world to see how satya when combined with ahimsa, brings the mighty on his knees. And yet Satyagraha in all simplicity only means practice of truth-fullness and compassion in the political or the national life. 33

Gandhi asserted his faith in love as only sustainable weapon of social transformation. True love overcomes all divisive elements and destructive factors. It brings a 'change of heart' even among the most hard-hearted and intransigent persons.

"If you decide to follow the path of Ahimsa, then you should know that it will be an empty name unless it aims at the conversion of the heart of the opponent." 34
Love, is a spiritual force. It is supremely active and building block of a crumbling human society. It is the power of such love that the Satyagrahi employs in disarming the ruthless warring against him. Love transforms while hatred and violence annihilate. .  

In the relentless search for truth or the 'end', ahimsa is the 'means'. Good ends can never grow through bad means, which is a point to ponder while seeking solace from the age-old maxim that "end justifies the means". According to Gandhi, the 'end' to which he refers is no more and no less than the absolute truth to be discovered in any given situation.

"Ahimsa is the means, truth is the end... ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. .

Violence has an inherent cycle of self-perpetuation in form of vengeance and counter-vengeance, as against Satyagraha that leaves no bloody trail, bitterness or revenge. And truth is found in the lasting peace while it gets lost in the cycle of violence. .

"To use brute force, to use gunpowder, is contrary to Satyagraha for it means that we want our opponents to do by force that which we desire but he does not. And if such a use of force is justifiable, surely he is entitled to likewise to us. And so we should never come to an agreement."
The purpose of Satyagraha is 'conversion', never 'coercion'. Winning over a man with enduring love and persuading gently by arousing sense of justice that resides deep in every human heart. Because winning over with might is winning over against will and is no lasting victory.

"Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence. The reformer must have consciousness of the truth of his cause. He will not be impatient with opponent, he will be impatient with himself..." 39

Satyagraha seeks to distinguish between people and systems. Systems might be hopelessly evil but people are never beyond redemption. Satyagrahi might hate a particular system but not the people engaged in its application.

Physically coercive force may be occasionally observed in Satyagraha, it would really be just an unintended consequence of the action. Undoubtedly, to abstain from hurting some living being is a part of nonviolence but it is only an iota pertaining to its identity. The principle of non violence is shattered by every evil thought, false utterance, hate or wishing something bad unto someone. 40

The advocates of muscle power adopt a crude version of the Darwinian struggle for existence. They overlook the fundamental distinction between the animal and the human worlds and exalt a
biological generalization in to a doctrine of human destiny. If violent resistance is in our human society, our lives are in danger of being reduced to animal existence.  

THE **POWERS OF SELF-SUFFERING**

Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person. Its effect is almost always positive. It is an emission of spiritual energy against the adversary. The voluntary acceptance of suffering is the way of reflecting one's compassion for an unloving opponent. The person offering Satyagraha undergoes self-suffering with the optimistic belief that the opponent can be converted to see the truth of his or her claim by touching the opponent's conscience.

"In self-purification and penance lies half the victory of a Satyagrahi."

Love of the sufferer overcomes the enemy not by destructive power but by changing him. After all, the opponent is another human like ourselves. We see few individuals here and there using this method of invoking love in their personal lives. However, it is Gandhi's use of it as a policy and strategic plan for social and political liberation, that won him world acclaim."

"Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by god or man. ."
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Qcrgi Andreyer (2002), A survey of ethnic composition some social institutions and present political history. PP. 10-21, UN publications - Islamabad.


4. Corinna vigier (2009), Conflict assessment Afghanistan: American Friends service Committee publications PP. 27

5. The costs and consequences of civilian suffering in Afghanistan, CIVIC (Campaign for Innocent Victims in conflict) Publications (2009), Washington

6. Corinna vigier (2009), Conflict assessment Afghanistan, American Friends service Committee publications PP. 44


11. Corinna vigier (2009), Conflict assessment Afghanistan, American Friends service Committee publications PP. 73
12. WWW. Relief web/ / country profiles/ Afghanistan.com


32. Satyagraha Leaflet, No. 5, 17 April 1919.

33. Young India, Vol. II, op.cit., 10 March 1920, p. 3


42. Radhakrishnan, S., ( 1998) op.cit., PP.21-22

43. Young India, Vol.XI, op.cit., 8 August 1929, P. 263
