CHAPTER SIX
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
NGOs AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS
This chapter highlights the significant contribution of different international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society of national and regional level, supporting the cause of women in Uzbekistan. Local communities like "Mahalla" and their role in solving problems related to women of Uzbekistan are covered in the following chapter.

Non-Governmental Organizations are fast becoming the 'engines' of social development. Far from being small and ephemeral, these organizations have come of age to attain a stature of their own and become a compelling feature of the organizational universe. Beijing Conference on Women which was held in 1995 provided fresh impetus and platforms to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This conference witnessed active participation by NGOs and articulated a widespread sentiment in favour of greater power for women within and without their household. Uzbekistan, as we have already mentioned in the previous chapter that, is one of the first Central Asian Republics to sign this Beijing Declaration.

6.1 International Organizations

We have a large number of NGOs acting at the international level. There goals are usually broader as they work at international levels. They have high budgets and that means that they have to be well renowned in order to have influence and collect resources. Multinational organisations, with hundreds of millions of dollars of annual budget and thousands of paid employees, constitute the need to coordinate and carry on certain tasks that State cannot or is not willing to achieve.

In Uzbekistan, a number of International organisations have given a helping hand to the Government of Uzbekistan and to other local NGOs in order to provide technical assistance and coordinate activities (UNDP Report, 1999). In August 2004, a Gender Equality Coordination Unit (GECU) was created in Uzbekistan. It includes representatives from Asian Development Bank, The International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Embassy of Switzerland, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and
World Bank (ADB Report, 2004). These organizations play important role in promoting the possible areas of cooperation between them and the Women's committee of Uzbekistan. Apart from these international organizations, Non-profit Organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are also engaged in furthering the upliftment of women in Uzbekistan. Human Rights Watch has been published reports on problems like Domestic Violence and other additional problems (Human Rights Watch's Report, 2001).

6.1.1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been active in providing capacity-building support to the Women's Committee, highlighting gender issues through discussions on Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), and updating its Gender related materials for all working on gender in the country. It is also working with the State Statistical Committee (SSC) on restructuring of the statistical system (ADB Report, 2004). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organizes various workshops, meetings, seminars and programmes in collaboration with Government of Uzbekistan to spread awareness among people to bring gender parity in all possible ways.

Since 2006, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working in collaboration with Women's committee of Uzbekistan under the programme of "Legislative and Institutional Capacity Development for Women" in various provinces. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized one two-day seminar (27-28 July, 2007) at the country office of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the help of Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. About 30 representatives of state bodies, Mahalla committees and NGOs from Ferghana region participated in this seminar. The seminar entitled "Social protection of women, participating in migration processes in Uzbekistan" addressed issues such as women migration, interaction of various organizations in solving illegal women migration, legislation of Uzbekistan on labour migration, raising awareness of women migrants' rights, protection mechanisms of migrants' rights and human trafficking and
others. Representatives of Women’s Committee, departments of justice, internal affairs, labour and social welfare, Mahalla (Neighborhood) foundation and other organizations, located in Ferghana region, participated at the event. This was the second such seminar, organized by Women’s Committee and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Uzbekistan. The first event was organized in Tashkent region. Similar workshop was also organized in the Karakalpakstan region during 16-17 August, 2007.

Recently, representatives of fourteen non-governmental organizations for youth participated at three-day seminar entitled 'Developing capacity of work on gender problems with rural youth', held from 3-5 December, 2009. Women’s Committee, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 'Legislative and Institutional Capacity Development for Women’s Empowerment in Uzbekistan', National Association of NGOs, Tashkent-based Faol Youth organization and World Bank joined hands together to organize this seminar. The goal of the event was to create environment for participation of youth in democratic processes, teach them to work together to solve gender problems and attract their attention to gender equality issues. Participants got acquainted with such issues as human rights, women’s rights, gender, the role of NGOs in implementation of MDG’s gender equality goal in Uzbekistan, as well as impact of negative customs and traditions on the lives of women (www.undp.org). Participants also discussed possible actions and ideas on encouraging gender equality, broadening rights and opportunities for women.

On 9th December 2009, UNDP’s another project “Legislative and Institutional Capacity Development for Women’s Empowerment in Uzbekistan” in collaboration with Uzbekistan Women’s Committee held a roundtable meeting dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Poytaxt Business Centre, Tashkent (www.undp.org). The meeting was aimed to promote Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) among state agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as the general public. It was also aimed at gearing up the activities of the governmental and non-
governmental organizations in implementing and monitoring Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Representatives of the state agencies, public organizations and civil societies, working together to implement the National Action Plan on Implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on elimination of discrimination against women, participated in the event.

Domestic violence which is regarded as a major cause of concern in Uzbekistan has been taken up as a serious matter by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and it has organized a media campaign against it. On 23rd November 2009, a round-table meeting of local journalists titled “Sixteen Days against Violence against Women” was held in the city of Jizzakh in Uzbekistan. “Legislative and Institutional Capacity Development for Women’s Empowerment in Uzbekistan” - the joint project of the Women’s Committee and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the NGO "Istiqbolli Avlod" organized the event dedicated to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25th November.

The round-table meeting was aimed at assisting journalists to overcome stereotypes and informing them about the launch of regional media campaign on preventing violence against women. The campaign was held from 25 November to 10 December 2009. Within the campaign, the UNDP project in cooperation with Istiqbolli Avlod planned to conduct trainings, meetings, seminars and discussions on topics such as "Women and Their Rights", "Mechanisms of Women’s Rights Protection", “Sixteen Days against Violence”. The media campaign was aimed at improving knowledge of the public on issues of violence against women. It was also aimed at developing and strengthening cooperation between authorities, NGOs and mass media in solving problems of violence, promoting legal knowledge among population, boosting creative and professional works of journalists, supporting their professional initiatives and ideas, covering issues of crime against women and determining the best journalistic works and encouraging the authors (www.undp.org).
6.1.2 United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been actively engaged in Uzbekistan in providing financial assistance regarding gender related issues. It is providing monetary assistance to trafficking victims. It is supporting a shelter for trafficking victims in Tashkent, operated by a local NGO (www.usaid.gov). Over 8,000 commercial sex workers in Tashkent City have received HIV prevention services from the USAID Drug Demand Reduction Project (DDRP). DDRP informs female sex-workers, including those who use drugs, about HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, ways to reduce drug use, and refers sexual workers to medical facilities. The Program’s outreach workers have conducted over 20,000 information sessions, distributed nearly 12,000 educational brochures and more than 17,000 condoms (www.usaid.gov). In addition, more than 1,800 sex workers were referred for medical consultations. It is also raising awareness of trafficking through awareness programmes among youths and schools.

Additionally, United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Healthy Family Project, implemented by Project "HOPE" in collaboration with the Futures Group, organized a roundtable in February 2006 to discuss the issue of gender equity in maternal and child healthcare with the Ministry of Health. The discussion was attended by representatives from the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, local NGOs, and other donors. Presentation was made by experts from the World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Republican AIDS Center, the Uzbekistan Women’s Committee, and local youth-oriented NGOs. The discussion focused on meeting the challenges of gender equity in the context of the National Reproductive Health Strategic Plan, which is being finalized by the Ministry of Health with assistance from the Futures Group. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has recently refocused its efforts in Uzbekistan on building public awareness and capacity to improve
maternal and child health problems in three Ferghana Valley regions. It has modified its earlier programme in response to serious health problems in rural areas throughout the Ferghana Valley. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) advocates for Uzbekistan’s healthcare system to be focused more on primary healthcare than treatment by specialists, and for an increased role of communities and civil society in safeguarding public health. The Healthy Communities Support Program will focus on increasing connections between community members, rural medical facilities, and NGOs to address their health issues. It will help communities to understand maternal and child health problems, and the varied roles that different groups can play in addressing them, as well as providing material assistance to village councils to support these community health projects (www.usaid.gov).

6.1.3 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has a focus on leadership training, capacity building for NGOs on legal and political literacy, and working on legal aspects of trafficking to promote the development and adoption of counter trafficking policies. It has developed and provided training courses for law enforcement agencies dealing with trafficking. It also carries on awareness-raising programmes on human rights and women’s rights (ADB Report, 2004). OSCE along with ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) has published reports on the promotion on gender equality in various countries. The ODIHR’s Human Rights Monitoring Programme has trained women oriented NGOs in Uzbekistan thereby increasing their capacity to report on human rights issues concerning women. The Human Rights Education and Training Programme include training modules addressing women’s empowerment and rights. For example, it has encouraged NGOs to work more on women’s issues including domestic violence and the rights of women to education (OSCE Report, 2006).

6.1.4 Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Organizations like Asian Development Bank (ADB) are also working to promote gender equality in Uzbekistan since 1996. As part of its efforts to
improve gender mainstreaming, a national gender consultant has been working since October 2000 at Asian Development Bank’s Resident Mission in Tashkent (ADB Report, 2004). It has also published reports on the status of women in Uzbekistan and suggested a number of measures to Government of Uzbekistan and other international organizations for their improvement. It is also working with the local women NGOs to the extent possible. Asian Development Bank’s approach towards promoting gender equality through its projects has been divided in to three categories, namely (a) focusing on increasing employment and income-generating opportunities in the private sectors, (b) rural development and (c) healthcare and educational development. During the transition period, shrinking numbers of job opportunities in the formal sector have forced men and women to look for alternative sources of income. A large section of the female workforce found that their choices were limited to household plot production in agriculture and informal trading activities. Some sections of the workforce, which were educated and entrepreneurial, need to be supported.

Local NGOs, including the Business Women’s Association (BWA), have been able to provide valuable training and support to such sections of the female workforce. Projects of ADB aim to make access to small amounts of credit for entrepreneurs, and particularly for women, through facilitating the establishment of small credit unions (ADB Report, 2004). Additionally women entrepreneurs and farmers in the Bukhara and Tashkent Oblasts were provided business training to take advantage of new employment and income-generating opportunities. It helps women to find out about and take up the possibilities for accessing credit. Project work has been carried out in coordination with the local NGO, the Business Women’s Association (BWA), and is thus also helping to build capacity in the local NGO sector.

6.2 NGOs and Other Institutions

A number of local NGOs are working in Uzbekistan, specifically for the cause of women. A law on NGOs was adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan in 1999. Before this, the only legal category was “Social
Organization”. But now they came under the legislation governing NGOs. Government of Uzbekistan has created a number of social organizations. For example- Women’s Committee is technically having the status of an NGO. Though it works for the development of women, but it is directly under the control of the Government. As a number of NGOs spreading all over Uzbekistan, the following table VI.1 and figure VI.1 could show the territorial distribution of Women NGOs in different regions.

**Table VI.1**

**Territorial Distribution of Women NGOs by 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Unit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andizhan</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukhara</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizak</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferghana</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakalpakastan</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashkadarya</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khorezm</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namangan</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navoi</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarkand</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surkhandarya</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrdarya</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashkent City</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashkent Region</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationally Registered NGOs</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ADB Report, 2004*
Territorial Distribution of Women NGOs By 2004

The above mentioned table tells that the largest numbers of Women NGOs are working in Tashkent City, followed by Samarkand. Whereas a few number of Women NGOs are working in Navoi, Namangan, Surkhandarya and Syrdarya region. The women’s NGOs in Uzbekistan are committed to enhance the political and legal status of women and have grassroots network. Their primary foci are improvement of women’s status in the family and society, protection of women and of women’s legal rights, and expanding women’s access to new income and business opportunities. In most cases, these foci are pursued in an integrated manner, so that, for example, vocational training courses include training in legal literacy and discussions of barriers to women’s participation in public life. The greatest strength of these NGOs is in fact the women and men who staff them. They conduct training workshops and seminars, staff crisis centres and telephone advice lines, and provide women with practical support on a wide range of issues.
6.2.1 The Mahallas

The Mahallas are a typical feature of Uzbek society, which have existed for centuries. During post independence period, the government has increased the power of the Mahallas in both social welfare and public order functions. The Mahalla serves the dual character of reviving national traditions and also as the lowest administrative unit in the government structure. They are regarded as the "neighbourhood committees" or organs of "self-administration of citizens" (Coudouel et all, 1998). Its size ranges from a few hundred to several thousand people. Mahallas are mainly staffed by volunteers. The mahalla chairman and secretary get paid by the local authorities. A council of elders known as Aksakal informally advises the Mahalla chairman and act as a mediator. Each Mahalla composed of a number of committees, out of which women's committee and the reconciliation committees are the most important with regard to domestic violence.

Mahallas play an important role in handling domestic issues. Family problems are generally resolved through the Mahallas, rather than through judiciary courts. Along with the local Mahallas, District Womens' Committees have a great impact on the lives of the women (Massicard, 2003). It is the Mahalla, who decides whether or not to allow residents of their communities to refer the matter to the local police. Matters related to marital issues are mainly dealt with the Mahallas rather than police. The main objective is to eliminate the need of legal action in family disputes (Human Rights Watch Report, 2001). However, women are mostly held responsible for family disputes and forced to go back to their husbands. Even some Mahallas deny the existence of domestic violence in Uzbekistan. This was ratified by the members of "Guliston" Mahalla of Tashkent city during primary survey. The women members of the above mentioned Mahalla denied the existence of such violence and regarded those problems such as family matters (Primary Survey, 1).
6.2.2 Women's Resource Centre

The Women's Resource Centre, Tashkent, was organized as an informal group at the beginning of 1994. In July 12th, 1995, the WRC was finally registered as a public society. The center's main activities focus on health, ecology and sustainable development, cultural development, human rights and the status of women. Its objectives are -

- collection of materials and documents on women's problems, compiling bibliographic thematic surveys, information support of projects, conducting independent studies on women's problems
- organizing educational workshops and trainings on women's issues
- arrangement of discussions and conferences on women's issues
- organization of thematically exhibitions and presentations
- Providing aid and assistance to NGOs in the organization of meetings, discussions and workshops.

The centre has conducted research on the position of women in Uzbek society, addressing such topics gender issues, fundamentalism, women and violence, health, and income generation. It brings women together at round tables and conferences, and has published a compilation of laws and regulations related to women's rights. The center is comprised of representatives of the local scientific and higher education communities. Cofounder Marfua Tokhtakhodjaeva has published results of her research in several articles and two books, "The Daughters of the Amazons: Central Asian Women Speak", and "Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam" (www.hotpeachpages.net). In 1997, the centre published a textbook named as "Woman, Law and Society in Uzbekistan". Two thousand free copies of the book were distributed to universities, schools, public foundations, and NGOs in Tashkent.

This NGO has got financial support from a number of International donors like European Union (EU), Eurasian Foundation etc. Under an EU-funded project, the Women resource center investigated the economic condition of women in rural Uzbekistan in collaboration with Sapienco University in
Rome. With support from the Eurasia Foundation, the center analyzed legislation pertaining to women's rights through the project "Women and Law: A Transition Period in Uzbekistan." It has also conducted a regional study of income generating activities of large families in Central Asia, and the contributions of women to family income. The centre has also worked on a demographic survey of Uzbekistan. Some projects also include studies of the status of women working in the textile industry and pharmaceuticals for the UN University in Helsinki, Finland, and of the socio-economic status of women in rural areas of Uzbekistan. However, this organization was closed down due to pressure from the Uzbek Government in 2005 (Primary Survey, 2 & http://wluml.org).

6.2.3 Perzent--Karakalpak (Centre for Reproductive Health and Environment)

"Perzent" means "progeny" in Karakalpak. The founder of the Perzent was Oral Aniyazova was a gynecologist. In 1992, she founded the first Karakalpak women's clinic for reproductive health, known as the "Marriage and Family" Clinic. The main focus area of this NGO, are health and environmental related problems of women. The centre developed an environmental education programme, published brochures and booklets on health and on the relationship between health (particularly reproductive health) and the environment, and maintains an environmental library open to the public (www.friends-partners.org). It created the Ecological Club "Shagala" to provide environmental education programs in rural areas. Together with the Save the Children Fund, it started an environmental education program for 5-6 year old children. Perzent has carried out research on health and the environment issues in cooperation with local and international institutes and NGOs, such as a public drinking water monitoring program with Ecologia (USA), toxicological research with Russian scientists and anemia research with the Uzbekistan Institute of Hematology (www.friends-partners.org).

Perzent has also helped set up "health desks" in five towns and villages of Karakalpakstan, where local specialists give information and advice on health and environment problems to the local population. It has also
distributed humanitarian assistance through this network. Center Perzent publishes a monthly newsletter in both the Russian and Karakalpak languages, and distributes it to all Central Asian republics. This newsletter features articles on local NGOs, educational programs, and legislation that affect women. The newsletter also contains translations of materials from various international organizations and a column that answers questions from readers on issues such as pensions, stipends and labor laws (www.civilsoc.org). Perzent's international partners include Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), headquartered in Utrecht, the Netherlands, and (WEDO) Women's Environment Development Organization, based in New York. However, financial constraint and state control are some of the major hurdles for local NGOs in Uzbekistan. They do not even get money to update their websites. The official website of the “Perzent” was last updated in 1998 as it could not pay money for it. This reflects their poor financial condition.

6.2.4 Tadbirkor Ayol (Republican Women's Business Association)

Tadbirkor Ayol a local NGO helps women to develop small businesses, particularly in the rural areas of Uzbekistan. It provides both business, vocational and computer training and assists women to access business development funds (Mee, 2001). The association also provides a forum for experienced businesswomen to share their expertise with women entrepreneurs. In 1996 the association developed a program on human rights and planned to lobby members of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) for legislation protecting women from discrimination and "social and economic violence." It has received assistance from the Eurasia Foundation, other U.S. and European Community organizations, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank. With divisions in 12 oblasts, it has grown to over 3,000 members by 1997. Its branches in Bukhara, Kokand, Andijan, and Nukus are the most active branches (www.idisc.net).
The Kokand branch of Tadbirkor Ayol was founded in 1994, partly in response to a "request" from the regional department of the Fergana hakimiyat. Its leader, Ms. Irgasheva, was a leader of the Komsomol and local Communist Party during Soviet times, but since then she has helped to organize 15 women's NGOs in the Kokand region, including Nodir, a centre for mothers and their children. Additionally, conducts survey in different Mahallas to assess the problems of Uzbek women, especially in rural areas. For example, it conducted a survey at the "Dashtbogh" Mahalla, in the Namangan region in 2000 and found that 82 percent housewives have no professional knowledge. In order to address this problem, BWA a "Mokhlaroyin" Female Centre in the "Dashtbogh" Mahalla, which trained 120 women in sewing and 50 women in cookery at the end of 2001 (Manual for Makhalla and Community Based Organizations Leaders, 2003).

During Primary Survey, Ms. Dildar Alimbekova, Chairperson of this organization was interviewed. According to her, promotion and protection of economic, social rights and opportunities of women and assistance in providing financial, educational and informational resources to women are the main objectives of her organization. They provide business as well as vocational training to ladies to set up their own business. This organization’s main source of income is selling of its own products. This organization helps women in making handicraft goods such as carpet weaving, ceramics, cloth making etc. Their organization is not getting any kind of financial support from the Government of Uzbekistan. But the Women’s Committee and the National Association of NGOs supports them partially (Primary survey, 3).

A list of NGOs and Mahallas and other local and international organizations visited during primary survey (Table VI.2) has been listed below. The following table has also mentioned the number of men and women NGO officials interviewed during primary survey.
Table VI.2
List of NGOs and Other Local Organizations (Field Visit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas Covered</th>
<th>Organizations Visited</th>
<th>NGO Officials (Women Interviewed)</th>
<th>NGO Officials (Men Interviewed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International NGOs</td>
<td>National &amp; Local Madrasas</td>
<td>Mahallas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukhara</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferghana</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokand</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margelan</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarkand</td>
<td>NA.</td>
<td>NA.</td>
<td>NA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashkent City</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Visit, (Nov-Dec 2008)
Note: N.A. = Not Available

6.2.5 Ayol (Resource Centre for Women & Family)

The Ayol Resource Centre was founded in 1997. It has encouraged the participation of women and young people in public life and society's democratic transformation. The centre provides information for women on citizen rights and the non-governmental sector. It also offers seminars on such topics as reproductive health, sexual education, and family planning. The centre's Leadership Club for youth involves participation in debates and camps focusing on citizen activity. Ayol receives assistance from Counterpart, the Soros Foundation, and the Red Apple Program of The Futures Group International (www.civilsocietyinternational.org).

6.2.6 Sabr (Crisis Centre for Women and Teens)

The Sabr Crisis Centre offers psychological and medical help to women and children in Uzbekistan. Since its founding in 1996, the Center has provided consultations (both in-person and via telephone) to a large number of people. Sabr staff also conducts "mobile consultations" in
communities throughout the Samarkand oblast (http://orgs.tigweb.org). This NGO publishes its reports and articles on women related issues.

6.2.7 Centre for Women Leaders

The Tashkent Centre for Women Leaders defines its mission as "the improvement of women's legal and socio-economic status in Uzbekistan." Since its founding in 1996, the Centre has held workshops on improving women's knowledge of their legal rights, produced radio programs on rights issues for women and children published a quarterly newsletter. In August 1997, the Centre held a seminar along with the Uzbek National Center for Human Rights and the Tashkent Women's Committee, entitled "Women's Rights Are Human Rights." The goal of the seminar was to educate participants on national and international laws regarding women's rights.

6.2.8 Tashkent Public Education Centre

The Tashkent Public Education Centre promotes civic education reform for Uzbekistan's educators and schools. The Centre has developed civic education curricula and teaching strategies, published civics materials, and conducted training sessions for educators. Since 1995 more than 1,000 teachers, college students and NGO leaders from all over Central Asia have taken part in TPEC's training workshops. TPEC has published two textbooks for use in Uzbek schools, known as "The Constitution & Us," which presents the history of participatory democracy and explains the principles outlined in the current constitution of Uzbekistan; and "The ABCs of Citizenship," which describes the basic tenets of democracy (www.friends-partners.org). The group also publishes a newsletter, "Public Dialogue". The newsletter features civics lesson plans and information about textbooks and conferences for teachers.

6.2.9 Women's League of Initiatives

The Women's League publicizes information about women's issues and rights in the local press and on thirty local radio programs. It works to find employment and training opportunities for poor and disabled women and teenage girls, and helps women to develop professional skills. With
support from Counterpart and in conjunction with Uzbek Film, the league developed and produced a documentary film to publicize the third sector and activities of local NGOs that address women's issues. It also produced ten television talk shows on which women from various and occupations discussed women's problems and issues. In March 1998, with support from the German charitable group Konrad Adenour- Stiftung and other organizations, the league held a roundtable conference "Traditions and Modern Life," on the leading role of modern women in society (www.friends-partners.org). Website of this NGO was also last updated in November 1998.

6.3 State Support

The government of Uzbekistan pays a special attention for the creation of favorable legal norms aimed at supporting the civil society, as well as developing the NGOs. As a result of these measures, the NGOs are developing their participation in the decision making process. The press release of the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan actively realizes the principle "From a strong state to a strong civil society" (http://www.uzbekistan).

The NGOs are regulated by laws adopted by Uzbekistan Government and the state ensures the observance of their rights and lawful interests creates for them equal legal opportunities to participate in public life. At the moment, more than 5,000 non-state and non-profit organizations including the foreign NGOs are operating in Uzbekistan. Before 2005, NGOs were free to work in their respective areas. They were not under the strict supervision of the Government.

However, in 2005, after the Andizhan Crisis, there was a great change came in the form of formation of Association of NGOs in Uzbekistan. In June 2005 the Association of non-state and non-profit organizations of Uzbekistan was established on the initiative of over 150 national NGOs in the country. The Association represents their interests in their relations with the state. The Fund for support of the non-state and non-profit organizations of Uzbekistan has been established the same year. The establishment of the Fund is aimed at further developing the institutions
of civil society, strengthening their role in addressing the socially significant issues, enhancing the social and political activeness of the people, as well as attracting funding and rendering support for the activity of the NGOs. With a view of further strengthening the resource and technical base of the NGO’s on April 28, 2007 the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decree “On approval the Statute on state support of the non-state non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan” (http://www.uzbekistan).

The above mentioned decree has been adopted within the framework of realization of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On guarantees of the activity of non-state and non-profit organizations” and defines the order of rendering the state support by means of allocating subsidies, grants and social orders to the non-state and non-profit organizations. According to the decree, the NGOs which have passed the legal procedure of state registration with the bodies of justice and have been included in the single list of juridical entities, which have been practicing the socially significant activity and participating in the development of institutions of civil society for not less than a one year can apply for the state support (http://www.uzbekistan).

The NGOs, which applied for the state support, must specify the goals for which the requested finances will be utilized. The state subsidies are allocated and utilized only for the realization of the NGO’s goals and objectives, which are envisaged in their charter including the current maintenance, strengthening of resource and technical base, and carrying out the socially significant events. For this within fifteen days, following the adoption of State budget, the NGOs have to file a written request to the Cabinet of Ministers for the allocation of state subsidies to support their activity. Within a month from the receipt of such request, the Cabinet of Ministers shall adopt the relevant decision upon considering the views of the Ministries of Justice and Finance. The Ministry of Finance ensures funding within the approved volumes and in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, undertakes control over the purposeful spending of funding. The state grants shall be allocated to the NGOs on the competitive basis for the implementation of projects aimed at social
developments. Within fifteen days from the adoption of State budget, the Cabinet of Ministers alongside with determining the volume of grants assigns the coordinators, who shall be empowered to undertake the competitive selection of projects to be implemented by the NGOs for the state grants.

In this, both the bodies of state power and governance, and associations and unions of NGOs, which enjoy a national status (the National association of non-state and non-profit organizations, the National association of electronic mass media, the Public fund for support and development of independent print media and news agencies, and others) can be the coordinators. To receive the state grant, the NGOs shall file to the coordinator-established Commission the request in line with provisions and dates defined as such by the terms of the contest both on the Coordinator projects and those proposed by NGOs themselves. Each NGO may receive only one state grant during a one year. The Cabinet of Ministers approves the list and volume of funding allocated to the NGOs.

However, a number of other facts were also revealed in interviews and discussions conducted with different NGO officials during primary survey. This study finds the following facts-

For example, Cofounder of Women Resource Centre Marfua Tokhtakhodjaeva was interviewed during primary survey. According to her, before 2005, NGOs could publish up to 500 reports without license. But in summer 2005, a new decree was issued about registration and license of public activities and the number of publication of reports was reduced to 100. It became compulsory for all NGOs to give all information to Government regarding their activities such as Agendas, Seminars, and Reports etc. Besides, NGOs were only allowed to transact money through National Bank of Uzbekistan and Asaka Bank. But it was not easy enough to get money transferred through these banks as the procedure to get the money was very difficult. But it was made mandatory for all NGOs to get money through these banks.
As a result of this, many NGOs could not receive money from their donors and became passive. Along with it, NGOs were forced to get money in Soum (Currency of Uzbekistan) through these banks, as these banks were paying twice lower than the open market. These measures led to curtailment of independence of NGOs. Though some NGOs like Women Resource Centre circulated their reports and comments through internet and criticized the policies of the Government, however, their websites got closed in 2006 as they could not pay money to the service supplier. These measures were done by Government to curtail the freedom of work of NGOs and Human Right Activist after the Andizhan crisis.

Thus, the complex of measures aimed at the progressive development of institutions of civil society and the active participation of NGOs in the society of Uzbekistan has been gradually came under the control and supervision of the Government (Primary Survey, 4). Ms. Nigar Gapparova, Chief Representative of “National Association of Youth and Women”, Tashkent also ratified these above mentioned facts and information along with others during the field visit (Primary Survey, 5).

Hence, it has been found that there is a need to improve the legislative framework at various government levels, not only at the Ministry of Justice, which registers the various decrees, even at the national level, the Women’s Committee, Secretariat on Social Protection of Family, Motherhood and Childhood under the Cabinet of Ministers should take measures to create a mechanism for reaching out to a broad section of the female population and educating them on legal rights, protection from violence, awareness of the dangers of trafficking, etc. Apart from it, it has also been found that the local and regional level NGOs are not completely independent from the Government control to work on issues related to women, but gradually they are getting helping hands from international donors. International organizations are playing significant role in empowering and providing concrete forms of help to women and deserve further support, through both capacity building and financing of specific projects. However, these organizations have to go a long way to create awareness among people of Uzbekistan about the vital role played by women in the overall development of the society.
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* Denotes to Primary Sources