

**The Causes of Conflicts among Rural Communities of District Archi,  
Afghanistan; A Reference to Irrigation Water Management**

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with specialization in Training Rural Extension and Transformation**

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## **DEDICATION**

To the mainstay of my life: God, my Brothers Uncles and my Parents.

My life would fall apart without you. I might not be familiar with where the life's way will take me, but walking with you, God, through this journey has given me strength.

Mom, you have given me so much, thanks for your faith in me, and for teaching me that

I should never surrender, you are everything for me, without your love and understandings I would not be able to make it.

Father, you always told us to "reach the stars". I think I got my first one. Thanks for inspiring my love for the shipping.

We got it....

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## **ABBREVIATIONS, AFGHAN TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

Arbab	Former warlord
ARBP	Amu River Basin Program
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CDC	Community Development Council / Officially recognized decision making bodies in Afghanistan
CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
Dasht	Desert
Darya	River
GAA	German Agro Action
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
Jerib	One Jerib = 0.2 ha
KRBP	Kunduz River Basin Program
LGCD	Local Governance and Community Development
Malik	Individual represents interests of the community to governmental institutions / village executive
MCA	Mercy Corps Afghanistan
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
Mullah / Mawlawi	Religious leader / Scholar
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNAMA	United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UN-FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation
USAID	United Stated Agency for International Development
WUG	Water User Group
<i>Wakeel / Mirab</i>	“Water lord” in whole district
WHO	World Health Organization



## ABSTRACT

During last few decades of war conflict and tribal structure of Afghanistan has completely destroyed the infrastructure especially in rural areas. Recently, in the situation of rural communities in district Archi, there are some major conflicts that have greatly disturbed every kind of developmental activities and have also caused human injuries, loss of lives and properties. These conflicts always got the color of violence such as; inter-religious misunderstandings and disagreements, political, land and water distribution among rural community peoples, economic tensions, intolerance, injustice of the local elites and other community elders, discrimination, ethnic supremacy, political challenges, competition on scarce resources, wrong perception about NGO's, teaching of modern knowledge, cultural practices, land ownership, misuse of Islamic Knowledge, childhood or forced marriages and corruption in project implementation. Corruptions and untimely implementation of water management projects, lack of Islamic knowledge, ethnicity, *Arbab's*, *Mullah's* and *Wakeel / Mirab* has played a great role in community water management conflict; *Wakeel / Mirab* is giving irrigation water to the farmers belong to the same ethnic group without have to wait for his own turn and also the local elites like *Arbab's* and *Mulla's* are doing the same because of their power use. During project implementation most of the organizations are prioritizing projects proposed by the local elites like *Mullah's* and *Arbab's*. During conflicts, economic activities can hardly be seen; children's were not going to schools, females were not allowed to go and teach in schools or other literacy courses from Taliban side if they are doing against their order then they are receiving physical punishment. Due to the continuous war conflict between Taliban with government and international community the whole area is looking like a graveyard, also physical assaults and human lives lost, properties and houses were destroyed. The lack or because of the limited capacity of the government to maintain successful judicial structures and systems, rural district Archi relied on community based conflict resolution structures such as *Islamic Sharia*, *Shura*, *Jirga* and *Jirga "Bramtha"* for which the holy places like Mosques and big guests houses are used. *Mullahs* are giving religious approval to any decisions. When the local mechanism for conflict resolution is going to fail, other organizations are getting involved but they are mainly focusing on immediate problem solution.

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Problem Statement

In the last three decades of instability, Afghanistan's ancient community-based irrigation system has largely survived at a local level. Although, the breakdown of social systems in the last 30 years due to continuous lawlessness and conflict has had negative impacts on community based water management, the system was maintained, and has often been the sole mechanism of canal and on-farm water management (AREU, 2006). Community infrastructure such as an irrigation system is badly damaged. Participation of local communities (particularly women) in decision making for economic development has been poorly focused although community based approach for development has traditional foundations in Afghanistan. The possibilities of installing old *Mirab / Wakeel* system of water distribution among the farming community are very low. These circumstances made and still make it difficult to rehabilitate traditional irrigation schemes (Qureshi, 2002). Irrigation is a major problem in rural areas due to water scarcity, mismanagement, damaged water infrastructure as well as regional differences in water supply. Water quality, quantity, and its guaranteed availability to all people regardless of income or social status is one of the most pressing challenges faced in rural Afghanistan. Water is the most precious resource in Afghanistan and in most cases is a source of conflict causing killing and abuse (IRIN, 2003).

The above stated subject suggests investigation that how sustainable water management practices affect such traditional structures and issues and what are the causing factors of creating conflicts in this regard especially in rural district Archi, Kunduz province of Afghanistan.

## 1.2 Main Research Question

What are the causes of conflicts in Archi?

## 1.3 Sub Research Questions

- What are the causes of irrigation water management conflict among rural communities in Archi?
- What is the impact of conflicts on the rural communities in Archi?
- How conflicts are resolved by the rural community peoples in Archi?

## 1.4 Research Objectives

- To identify the causes of conflict among rural communities in Archi
- To examine the causes of irrigation water management conflict among rural community peoples in Archi through the interpretation of social structure and organization
- To identify ways of conflicts resolution among rural communities in Archi

## 1.5 Research Methodology

### 1.5.1 Primary Data Collection

For this research some literature were reviewed before field work for enough information about the context of the problem stated above. Primary data were collected by using a case study for qualitative and detailed exploration of conflict issues among rural communities in district Achi; one of the rural district in Kunduz province. Knowing the situation completely some personnel observations, 17 interviews and 3 focus group discussions of those

particular rural community based villages were done on which the main objectives of this research was held. There were also some discussions with the provincial managers of German Agro Action / Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Mercy Corps Afghanistan, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Amu River Basin program and Kunduz River Basin Program.

### **1.5.2 Secondary Data Collection**

Qualitative data was reviewed in order of having in depth knowledge for the proposed topics. The secondary data was collected from various articles, journals, reports etc. After collection of primary data from the field the secondary data were reviewed and analyzed accordingly. The extracted data was elaborated and the results were summarized in the final reports.

### **1.6 Research Limitations**

There were some limitations which countered the research activities such as precarious security situation and improper transportation in Archi district. Cultural constraints such as discussions with the local women's were strictly not allowed. Participation of women's was not allowed in any kind of meetings or decision making process for taking their ideas and justification at community level.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Conflict is said to rise from the struggle over a number of factors including, resources, power, struggle and status. Conflict has been defined in many ways, one way of defining it is, incompatibility of goals and disagreements, basically it is considered as a struggle between individuals or groups over range of issues like scarce resources, status, power and reputation etc., (Galtung, 1996). A conflict exists when two people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent. They may both want to do the same thing or they may want to do different things where the different things are mutually incompatible. The definition of conflict can be extended from individuals to groups (such as states or nations), and more than two parties can be involved in the conflict. The principles remain the same (Nicholson, 1992).

*Conflict is defined as the situation in which actors use conflict behavior against each other to attain incompatible goals and / or express their hostility (Bartos and Wehr, 2002).*

Conflict has a variety of types, political, economic, and social etc. Conflict is caused by a number of factors. In some cases these conflict overlap each other. Social conflict is the struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aim of the disagreeing parties are not only to gain the most wanted values but also to reduce the effect or eradicate their rivals, such kind of conflict may takes place between individuals, groups or between individual and groups (Coser, 1995).

Most of the times, conflict concludes after the cause of the conflict vanishes, other times, it takes more than that. Conflict goes on and on for years and decades. The conflict in Afghanistan has been going on for over three decades. Conflict is not primarily aimed at the eliminating the opponent, but rather serve to determine the relative standing, status or balance of power share in terms of scarce resources that interest group can secure in a given domain of competition. In this kind of conflict a party may lose position of dominance but may be field of competition. Political scientists also perceive conflict in terms of struggle for access to opportunities and life chances within the existing political order (Hagan, 1995).

*Chronic civil strife and its impact on the mental well-being, thinking, behavior, and ability of the population to solve problems cannot be ignored. Loretta Hieber-Girardet of the World Health Organization's unit in Kabul estimated (in May 2002) that the majority of approximately 27 million of Afghanistan's citizens suffer from some form of mental illness. A report in November 2001 by WHO in Geneva estimated that the illness is serious for one in five Afghans, some 5 million people. Dr. Lynn Amowitz of the U.S. group Physicians for Human Rights, a public health specialist who studied depression among Afghan women, said: "If half the population is depressed, you can't rebuild society. The population is vegetative, passive, pushed along, and helpless (CAII, 2002).*

### 2.2 Factors Contributing to Conflict in Afghanistan

Conflicts do not, most of the time, have one reasons. Some of the conflicts, due to their nature, are multifaceted. They have different causes. In some cases, a conflict might have one reason for the concerned parties but has another reason for other people. The various sources of restlessness were identified as contributed to more than three decades of conflict in Afghanistan. To varying degrees, there are various factors that played a key role in mapping the Afghan conflict such as; the continued threats to religion and self-respect,

ethnic repression and political exclusion, unskilled and unlawful government leadership, history of foreign interference, presence of foreign troops, elite population's role in supporting restlessness among population, lack of social and physical infrastructure, demonstration of ethnicity, party and personnel interests, demonstration of hatred, narrow-mindedness and violent behavior, expert and war related status and wealth, access to small arms and drug trafficking, environmental degradation and population migration. The above mentioned variables consistently reemerged as in the Afghan context, providing an estimate design, though qualitative picture, of the status of peace and conflict in Afghanistan (Weera, 2002).

Scarcity of natural resources also feeds conflict. Research suggests that there have always been conflicts among people in rural Afghanistan whenever there is a shortage of water. These conflicts result in tension among ordinary Afghans living in such areas. Whenever there is a shortage of water, the rural Afghan communities often have to compete with their neighbors for the vital resources which are leading to tension between communities and ultimately the cause of conflict mostly in rural areas (USAID/LGCD, 2010). The Rule of gun, human rights abuses and Political Repression in the run-up to Afghanistan's presidential election: Human Rights Watch. Scarcity of water and land creates problems among different ethnic groups, a huge number of Pashtuns were forced to leave their land and houses in Northern Afghanistan, after other minority groups tried to take over their lands and property. In 2003 it was estimated that over 50,000 Pashtuns were internally displaced from the north and living in the southern Afghanistan (IRIN, 2003).

Culture has also been a major factor in some disputes. Majority of Afghans in rural Afghanistan live in joint families, they distribute their lands among their off springs and the land gets divided with every new generations, which results in intra family disputes and lack of water and land. The rapid growth of the population contributes to an increasing scarcity of land and intra family conflicts, as inherited plots become ever smaller and are often insufficient for subsistence (Mielke and Schetter, 2007).

### **2.3 Conflict Transformation**

Conflict transformation refers to alterations in basic composition of conflict that radically alter each party's perception of the conflict situation as well as their intentions. It is a wide-ranging approach, addressing a range of dimensions like from small to big issues, its aim is to build up capacity and support structural change rather than to facilitate results and deliver settlements. It tries to engage with conflict at the pre-violence and post-violence phases with the causes and consequences of violent conflict which usually extend beyond the site of fighting (Miall, 2004).

The approach of transformation begins with two pro-active foundations: a positive orientation toward conflict and a willingness to engage in the conflict in an effort to produce constructive change or growth. The key to transformation is the capacity to foresee conflict as having the potential for constructive change. Response on the other hand, suggests a favoritism toward direct involvement and an increased thoughtful that comes from real-life experience. Both "envision" and "respond" represent the behaviors we orient ourselves toward the presence of conflict in our lives, relationships, and communities. Transformative point of view sees conflict as a precious opportunity to grow and enhance understanding of ourselves and others. Conflict helps us stop, evaluate and take notice. Without it, life would be a repetitive flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully outward. This also suggests that conflict generates life and keeps everything moving. It can be explicit as a motor of change that keeps relationships and social structures dynamically responsive to human needs (Lederach, 2003).

Education, advocacy and mediation share the goal of change and re-shaping un-peaceful relationships. They share the vision of justice, of substantive and procedural change. When justice ceases to be the goal, any particular role creativeness or strategy must be questioned. Where any approach is used as a strategy to cooperate or manipulate the less powerful and disadvantaged, it must not be persuade. While expressive in nature, also assumes an important orientation in support of a smaller amount powerful groups attaining a voice if peaceful relations and re-shaping are the desired outcomes, an orientation I believe is the foundation for peacemaking actions (Lederach, 1995).

Preventive policies need to be applied to all countries to conflict vulnerable, which consist of all countries with negative growth and countries which have had severe conflict over the past quarter of a century. Preventive action wants also to be concerned with countries in which the state is fragmenting and cannot preside over the society in a legitimate manner (Nafziger et al., 2000).

Civilian conflict transformation approaches are determined to support processes to defeat the causes of conflict and the establishment of conflict negotiation and management mechanisms within society. It means supporting the conflicting parties as they argue about ways to achieve a negotiated settlement and empowering them, in the medium term to begin a sustainable process for overcoming the conflict causes by themselves. This in turn means that conflict avoidance and conflict transformation activities are mutually dependent and must involve key state and civil society actors (Zunzer, 2004).

Integration and isolation must not be considered in taking apart from the interrelationship of the interests of the parties involved. The most unstable arrangement is the high degree of interdependence and opposite interests. Conflict in such countries can be reduced by reducing the level of their mutual interdependence. The combination of isolation and opposed interests is not as explosive, because the ensuing spatial isolation and political polarization regulate relations and reduce frictions between the parties (Vayrynin, 1991).

## **2.4 Conflict Management Strategies**

Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot essentially be resolved, but learning how to deal with conflicts that can decrease the chances of nonproductive growth. It involves acquiring skills associated to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict skills and establishing a structure for management of conflict in environment. Practicing conflict management skills leads to more successful engagement in conflict with outcomes or relief, understanding, better communication and greater productivity for both individual and team (Reimann, 2005).

Conflict can be managed through force, where one party has the means and fondness to win regardless of whether the other party losses and whether or not the process of winning causes harm to personnel relationships. In some cases properties or resources to the legal system is also a form of force in that one party can use their better-quality resources to buy better advice raise the stakes. Some less understandable but often no less powerful forms of force including adversarial negotiation procedures, political appropriateness, manipulation of the electoral system, use of media to rally public support, public protest, witch hunt, slander and threat of withdrawal (Warner, 2000).

*Withdrawal is an approach to conflict management suited to those parties whose desire to avoid confrontation out weights the goals they are trying to achieve. The power (either positive or negative) of withdrawal should not be underestimated, not least since it can be used as threat to force reluctant and sometime more powerful parties to negotiate in a more consensual fashion. Types of withdrawal*

*of funding; avoidance of volatile locations within a wider project area by NGO's, certain stakeholders opting out of a project or a negotiation process, deployment of delaying tactics, postponing project decisions, temporary boycotts and strikes such like withdrawal of labor (Warner and Jones, 1999).*

It should be noted that the practice of handling conflict is often lengthy and dynamic. The entire conflict may go through several phases of negotiations, during which the parties may change their conflict management styles. The mediator or the third party who is called to help or engages itself after its own reasons, in order to assist both conflict parties (and eventually one of them). Conflict management approach has been and continues to be measured by a variety of different taxonomies. There are various styles of behavior by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. One of the conceptual schemes for classifying conflict revolved around a simple cooperation competition dichotomy (Deutsch, 1949).

Accommodation is allowing the other person's requirements to be met, usually at the expenses of your own. This is a constructive conflict management strategy if you do not care about the issues or if you have little power in the relationship or circumstances. Also letting the other person having their way once in a while may preserve or even build a relationship. However, being too accommodating too often can grow weaker your position to the point where your voice is by no means heard (Swinton, 2006).

Self-awareness we can more efficiently manage our conflicts and therefore our professional and personnel relationships. Furthermore, by discussing issue related to conflict management, team can set up an expected protocol to be followed by team members during conflict. All teams and organizations have a conflict culture, the way the team responds to conflict. However most of teams never discuss what the conflict culture is, therefore providing the opportunity for individual team members to make suppositions that can be counter useful to the team. Practicing individual conflict management skills leads to more successful engagement in conflict with outcomes of relief, understanding, better communication and greater productivity for both the individual and the team. When we manage our conflicts more effectively then we use less energy on the burdensome tasks such as systematic conflict and get to spend more of our energy on our projects at work and building our relationships (Lambert and Myers, 1999).

## **2.5 Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution refers to all processes oriented activities that means to address the root causes of direct, cultural and structural violence. Structural violence defines the social, political and economic structure of a conflict situation when an imbalanced power, domination and dependency are perpetuated, while cultural violence refers to the social and cultural legitimization of direct and structural violence (Reimann, 2005).

In rural Afghanistan peoples are using the traditional and local mechanisms for conflict resolution however this do not employ proactive measures in order to resolve conflicts but instead of resolving they are reactive. These traditional structures of conflict resolution exclude women and young from the decision making process which can further make worse socio-cultural tensions and protect established inequalities. These traditional structures do not have the clear formula for resolving conflicts but instead using a variety of methods e.g. *Urf*, *Pashtunwali*, *Sharia*, local customs as well as the country's formal legal code etc. The main purpose is to reach an agreement rather than to uncompromisingly uphold particular norm or law including that of *Sharia*. Traditional *Shuras* are effective because they are trusted by the local community members, relatively quick to reach decisions, do not need paperwork and are not perceived to be corrupt or as abusive as the courts and police are in Afghanistan (Nawabi, 2008).

In Afghanistan the institution of *Jirga*, its main forms and the different societal context in which each form works as a mechanism for conflict resolution. *Jirga* as a traditional Afghan institution is closely bound up with the social and economic realities of everyday life in Afghanistan and is deep-rooted in the culture and history of the people of the country. The *Pashtun* model which is more elaborated and followed to varying degree by the *non-Pashtun* Afghans as well. The effectiveness of *Jirga* as a mechanism of conflict resolution depends on the extent to which it is perceived as a rightful by various segments of the Afghan population. It kept maintained and continued its need for resolving many contemporary local, tribal and national conflicts in post-war Afghanistan (Carter and Connor, 1989).

*In addition to the basic requirements of Islam, Pashtuns observe the code of Pashtunwali. It is simple but demanding. Group survival is its primary imperative. It demands vengeance against injury or insult to one's kin, chivalry and hospitality toward the helpless and unarmed strangers, bravery in battle and openness and integrity in individual behavior. Much honor is given to Pashtuns who can successfully arbitrate the feuds that are endemic among them. Fines and blood money are devices frequently used to limit violence among rival families. Pashtunwali is a code that limits anarchy among a fractious but vital people (Newell and Newell, 1981).*

When disputants adhere by community authority or social compromise or agreement such as *Shuras* or *Jirgas*, are providing the most effective, socially legitimate and enforceable instruments for conflict resolution. In institutions where disputants do not adhere to community based authority or social consensus, intercession may be more appropriate. Intractable disputes involving one or more disputants who may be significant, powerful or otherwise unbounded either community authority, social consensus may require to apply pressure at political levels to ensure meaningful resolution. Evidence from this and other projects suggests that a spectrum of flexible conflict resolution mechanisms must be developed that are applicable according to variables likewise nature of the disputes and its participants. Certainly, all land conflict resolution mechanisms should be united in the rule of providing socially legitimate and practically enforceable resolutions engaging all direct and indirect stakeholders in the dispute (Deschamps and Roe, 2009).

In Afghanistan, the *Jirga* is the product of Pashtun tribal society and operates according to the dictates of the *Pashtunwali*, an inclusive code of conduct guiding all aspects of Pashtun behavior and often superseding the dictates of both Islam and the central government. In the tribal areas local *Jirgas* are setting in all issues unless assistance is requested from another tribe or the government (Carter and Connor, 1989).

Conflict resolution programs encourage the development of useful skills for resolving conflict peacefully that can be applied across the lifespan. When implemented comprehensively, such programs promote a positive school climate. There are a variety of approaches but the most appropriate and effective is a comprehensive one that strives to train and support all members of the school community. A conflict resolution program is not an instant solution but it is a long term commitment requiring patience, training and support at all levels of the school community and ongoing evaluation to tailor the program to the needs of the school (Nadine and Garner, 2008).

Multiple intelligences to draw out students' differing learning styles, the program encourage students to develop and increased wakefulness of how they use the various intelligences to think about and deal with conflict and conflict resolution. The program teaches students about the multiple intelligences, presents activities that need one or more of the intelligences to be activated in order to complete them, and ask students to reflect on which intelligences and activities are strengths for them (Gardner, 1983).



Alternative dispute resolution is seldom used to describe a wide range of disputes resolution mechanisms that are short or alternative to full scale court processes. Everything from facilitating agreement negotiates directly with each other prior to some other legal process. The process is designed to manage community stresses or facilitate community development issues can also be included. Negotiation system create a structure to encourage and facilitate direct negotiation between parties to a dispute without the involvement of a third party between the disputants, either to mediate a specific dispute or to resolve their relationship. Mediators and conciliators may simply facilitate communication or may help directly and structure a settlement but they do not have the authority to decide or rule on a settlement. Arbitration systems authorize a third party to decide how a dispute should be resolved (CDG, 1998).

## **2.6 Concept of Water Management Conflict**

Observations show that conflicts raises in both of the situations, when there is cooperation and where there is no cooperation. Conflict is a concept that is independent of cooperation, not always opposite to it. In certain circumstances conflict may be an integral part of inducing and sustaining cooperative behavior and both may co-exist in various social setting (Craig, 1993). By definition, water management is actually a conflict management. Water unlike other scarce and consumable resources is used to fuel all facets of the society from biology's to economies as well as spiritual practices (Wolf, 2008). In the current discourse on water, the idea that the coming wars will be about water and the counter idea that water could lead to cooperation and peace instead of leading to conflict, have emerged as "hegemonic" concept. Sometime water availability is not sufficient to satisfy the need which creates the one common idea is this is liable to lead conflict or even war over water (Cosgrove, 2003). It is also explained that the idea of hegemonic may not always be perceived in the same way from weaker state's opportunity of advantage or superiority point (Zeitoun and Warner, 2006). Conflict over resources takes place when people are competing for the same resources, when there is a dispute over who has the right to certain resources and when people want to take someone else's resources or prevent someone from getting needed resources (Mertz and Liber, 2004).

## **2.7 Impact of Irrigation Water Conflict on the Politics of Rural Community**

Though economic, conflict that rises from water is also a political problem. People who are strong can get water from the source whenever they want, and people with weak political and tribal backgrounds get water when it is not used by the powerful ones. It is therefore, can be concluded that the control of water is a reflection of political power in an area. Those farmers who were first to build reservoirs and pipes have first priority in water use "first come first serve principle", causing an unequal allocation of water. Hence, water use rights strongly reflect local power relations, with members of local elites controlling the water conveyance system by tapping water directly from the source and by claiming a bigger share than others, since the less power would not dare to interfere. Powerful farmers have the opportunity to take water from different sources and are able to use legal pluralism at community level to their own benefit and to diversify risks in a rapidly changing environment (Neef et al., 2004).

In some neighbors of Afghanistan, there is a well-developed system of water supply. Those systems reduce chances for feuds arising from the shortage of water. In Pakistan, traditional irrigation water rights are defined by a "*warabandi*" system, where water supply is determined by rotation and individual's water allocation is measured by the time based on time equitable system. Inequity in irrigation water distribution is the most serious problem for the farmers. Along an irrigation canal, there is generally inequity in water uses between its upstream and downstream sections which very keen in Pakistan. Observations revealed that traditional *warabandi* is no longer held, it has been eroded by an increasing variability in the

water flow in the canal and non-adherence to standard operational rules, both of which are in turn related to a combination of physical and institutional factors. When farmers try to organize themselves and select their representatives in a Biraderi system, a feudal system, or faction-ridden society, their village society may be disturbed, creating additional political conflicts. These could lead to even more difficulty in water distribution. The winner may monopolize the water, and the loser may be deprived completely. This would cause water dispute and even drive people to violence (Nakashima, 1998).

A number of factors seem to influence the management of water in rural areas. Ethnicity, gender, tribal affiliation, affiliation to a political group and social status influence water management. Water scarcity is widely recognized as one of the causes of significant violence and conflict within nations. Many disputes erupt in water stressed areas especially among canal end point farmers and other irrigation water. In rural community there are various kinds of factors that are directly linked with irrigation water management conflict like: political faction struggling for power, lack of basic resources, corruption involving access to opportunities and funds, discrimination regarding gender, age group, ethnicity, tribal status and lack of common vision (Gehrig and Rogers, 2009).

Water conflicts cause tensions not only among local communities in rural areas but also among states within a country and also among different neighboring countries. Due to loss of irrigation water at local level can lead to politically destabilizing migrants to cities or neighboring countries and the local instability can destabilize regions. The dispute on India's Cauvery River sprung from the allocation of water between the downstream state of Tamil Nadu, which had been using the river's water for irrigation and upstream Karnataka, which wanted to increase irrigated agriculture. The parties did not accept a tribunal's adjudication of the water dispute, leading to violence and death along the river (Aaron et al., 2005).

Regulatory approaches to water resource allocation require high levels of capacity in the catchment management bodies and corruption has proved a major weakness to such approaches in various countries, and institutional inaction and capacity limitations especially at local levels are also major constraint (Mokgope et al., 2001). The people who currently control the customary water conveyance system afraid of losing power and influence; other villagers fear that the Royal Project will be the main user of the new reservoir and will not be able to work out an adequate user scheme. Those villagers, however, who are disadvantaged by inequalities in the customary system, are positive towards a big reservoir and external intervention in water use regulations. They argue that the local water management group does not have enough power to ensure equitable access to water (Neef et al., 2004).

Violent conflict has an effect on water usage activities since it was not possible to irrigate overnight and also it was said that during that time it was easier to manage water since there were fewer people. On farm and also on commission and committee level labor force decreased due to violent conflict in Nahumpuquio and the number of people to work in irrigation activities decreases. After armed conflict, migration processes to resettle the area had also affected water usage activities, water allocation; water management on committees' level is more difficult because there are now more people with different backgrounds, some of them are Andean people who had lived in cities during conflict with different customs and religions joined together affecting irrigation activities (Gonzales, 2008).

One of the major problems in some countries in water management is the use of agricultural water for non-agriculture purposes. It leads to the scarcity of water and more conflicts. In Bolivia, France and South Africa on the arrival and integration of non-agricultural users in agriculture irrigation management systems, the agriculture and non-agricultural users put increasing pressure on the demand of water. Since several centuries multiple activities related to water like domestic uses, hydraulic energy, irrigation, etc. were all integrated

through networks, rules on access to water and organizations that resolved conflicts on water use. Up to the 19th century, water has been the social bond between all inhabitants; water nourishes the city, the city consumes the agricultural products from the irrigated lands and inhabitants are often farmers themselves. Nevertheless, the 19th century marks the separation of agricultural and domestic uses. Since then, the various territorial authorities strongly influence the management of the irrigation associations in turn for their financial support through investments. In this way the associations became a means of establishing and managing public infrastructures to modernize the ways of production and incidentally improve the living situation of rural areas. An irrigation association becomes an authorized syndicate association on decision of the Prefect: it must specify the majority of its objectives on a list (irrigation, drainage, water treatment), with the exception of drinking water (Keetelaar, 2004).

Irrigation water is the country's most critical natural resource and a key to normal life and wellbeing for the Afghan people. In Afghanistan and as in the rest of the world, the availability of access to water or its absence can also be a source of conflict or a driving force for migration. The total irrigated area has fluctuated over the past 30 years; by the mid-1970s Afghanistan was almost self-sufficient for its food supply. This has dropped to about two million hectares due to unrest and war, drought, flood damage, aggravated by the failure to operate and maintain irrigation systems at a community and national level. The total area under irrigation is increasing again, but as much as a third of the total available land previously irrigated is not being cultivated due to water shortages. As a result the irrigation infrastructure has seriously deteriorated and many farmers returning to their land cannot secure a reliable water supply to resume farming. Some provinces that rely heavily on the ground water for irrigation are particularly vulnerable, with drought and water shortages impacting directly on livelihoods. At a larger regional scale, access to water resources in Central Asia including Afghanistan can often be both a source of local tension as individual and inter communal disputes and a source of friction interstate relations between the farmers are in upstream and downstream (NEPA and UNEP, 2008).

## **2.8 Impact of Irrigation Water Conflict on the Economy of Rural Community**

Conflicts, regardless of their nature, have affected peoples' lives. They affect political, social and economic lives of the people concerned. Same is the case with the conflict that rises from water. Water is very unlikely to be the direct or only cause of a war in southern Africa; it is very likely that water will become a contributing factor to regional instability as demands for water approach the limits of the available supplies. Inevitably water dispute will occur first in those areas where water is in shortest supply; these will then tend to spread further afield as more of the scarce as more and more of the scarce water resources are used directly or transferred further afield to meet rising demands (Ashton, 2003).

During last three decades of armed conflict in Afghanistan have displaced a large portion of the population, impeded access to farmland because of landmines, and destroyed many irrigation systems or rendered their maintenance impossible. Millions of Afghans are food insecure and these desperate conditions have triggered local-level conflict over land and water. Extensive irrigation in Pakistan and India places Indus water resources under heavy stress, with about 90% of the basin's available water flow utilized. Population growth and increasing industrialization continue to drive up water demand for drinking, irrigation, and hydropower purposes. There are many internal water conflicts between individual communities or provinces (NPBC, 2009).

Tarawa was the scene of violent confrontations between irrigators from Arbioto and inhabitants of the nearby town of Tarata both damaged infrastructure associated with Laka Laka multi-purpose project: a dam and associated pipelines, canals and treatment facilities to supply domestic water to Tarata and irrigation water to Arbioto. But other water users at

the household level are small-scale productive uses like irrigation of small gardens, keeping a few livestock or home-based micro enterprises like beer-making, also domestic activities and the differences on these definitional issues were a key factor in the conflict at Tarata (Bustamante et al., 2004).

The more than 33 years of war conflict in Afghanistan has created a number of local conflicts majority of who are land related conflicts among different ethnic groups, clans and tribes. Millions of Afghans are either seasonally or chronically food insecure. Beyond hunger, these desperate conditions have also triggered local-level conflicts. Six provinces across Afghanistan, nearly half the respondents regarded land and water issues as major causes of disputes (Oxfam UK, 2008). Conflict between stakeholders occurs about natural resources usually when they compete for scarce resources, and when they have incompatible interests and priorities (Anderson et al., 2000).

## **2.9 Impact of Irrigation Water Conflict on the Socio-Cultural Structure of Rural Community**

The Locational centralization of power and influence, executive committee member who is regarded as the farmer entertaining most contacts with governmental and NGO's officials, this kind of differentials in distribution of the benefits definitely cause a disturbance in the social atmosphere and affects future participation adversely. It was found in community where the water users are more enthusiastic and ambitious regarding collective actions for the management of their water resources than they reported to be at present. The highlighted from the elderly water users; they criticized their youth, saying that they have become lazy due to the availability of new facilities that as young farmers, they had worked very hard. Due to serious changes in power and influence sequence, it is difficult for the old executive committee to organize all shareholders. Many irrigation developments have affected the small landholders, particularly in terms of land tenure patterns, and have mostly negatively affected their 'terms of trade' with their counterparts who have relatively large holdings. Due to their disadvantaged position in their social organization, they are not receiving their due share of benefits. Only a perceived scarcity of water may be regarded as a general tendency on the part of the farmers to complain about the shortage of water, especially when research is being conducted on irrigation problems. Only a small number of the water users admitted that the water supply suffices their demand, only when they get it regularly in the sanctioned amount (Chaudhry, 2005).

Because of the population growth in the South Asia, the region is vulnerable to water conflicts. Due to the shortage of water resources there is a possibility that different nations will get engaged in conflicts like ethnic groups in a nation. South Asia is becoming increasingly short of water, the water conflict within and between nations is widespread all over the world where water demand is high because of population growth and development needs. Nomads essentially follow water or the pasture that is nourishes. There was a time when settled communities could move on to new water resources, when numbers were relatively sparse and there were empty land to fill. No more populations, and distinctive subunits within them, each with some kind of identity or socio-cultural tag and enthusiastic of its well-being. In India internal differences has arisen from time to time between states, or regions, within states, on the sharing of water, or the pattern of water they use (Verghese, 1997).

Rural women and small farmers are particularly affected by Pakistan's water crisis. Women bear the primary responsibility for obtaining water, but have been traditionally been shut out of government water-planning and decision-making processes (WWICS, 2009).

People with strong political affiliation and social status have access to the water every time. Small farmers and women who have no power and whose political and tribal affiliation does not matter to anyone always face problem of water access. Experience shows that government officials who are responsible for the management of water also becomes partial which causes tension not only among different clans and tribes but also among the government officials and the ordinary people. Water use rights are strongly reflect local power relations, with members of local elites controlling the water conveyance system by tapping water directly from the source and by claiming a bigger share than others, since the less would not dare to interfere (ISCO, 2004). In the field of irrigated agriculture, conflict is endemic. It can be seen between many individuals and groups competing for the control of scarce resources. The conflict between farmers and agency personnel is as common as that between cultural and ethnic groups or that between landlords and tenants (Bandaragoda and Firdousi, 1992).

## **CHAPTER III: THE STUDY AREA**

### **3.1 Rural Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is an agricultural country. During 2008 the agricultural sector contributed 31% to the country's GDP (CIA World Fact book, 2010). This is due to the fact that 77.6% of the country's population lives in rural areas and are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture for its livelihoods. Afghanistan has five major river basins: the Hari Rud, the Murghab, the Helmand, the Kabul (Indus), the Northern as well as the Amu Darya. Whereas the catchments of the other four basins entirely within the country, Amu Darya is part of larger transboundary catchment, which includes areas within the neighboring countries of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Nearly 60% of water resources come from the Amu Darya in the north of Afghanistan (Rout, 2008). Irrigated agriculture is fundamental to the rural sector, poverty reduction, and national economy of Afghanistan and produces up to 80% of agricultural output (ADB, 2005).

### **3.2 The Region-Kunduz Province**

The total area of Kunduz province is 8,040 km square with population of 833,300 which contain 2.87% of the country's total population (Law, 2010). Kunduz province is composed of seven districts and majority of the population living in rural areas, among them one is the district of Archi, which having an area of 820 km square with a population of 57150 in 150 villages and 91 community development councils as a whole. Archi is a diverse ethnic district, having 45% Pashtun, 40% Uzbek and 15 % Tajik. Average land ownership is 2.5 acres (5 Jeribs) per family and access to basic healthcare services is 60% (MRRD, 2007).

### **3.3 Rural Culture and Politics**

Afghanistan has diverse socio-cultural status. This diverse cultural and structural form of Afghanistan portrays a tribal structure. This tribal structure possess two characteristic features: life is based on some understanding of the notion of honor (especially related to women in rural areas) and on rivalry that is largely expressed through agnatic enmity. The desire for honor and agnatic rivalry is converted into desire for power (Canfield, 1973). In the rural society of Afghanistan marriage of mothers was defined by their first delivery under the age of 16 years; maternal autonomy in seeking healthcare at the household level based on the grouping of the two variables of 'requirement for permission from the head of the household to bring a doctor to see the child and requirement for an accompanying person to visit a health facility with the child'; and mother's preference for a physician of a specific gender to seek consultation for the child (Mashal, 2008). Over the past four years, Afghanistan has made remarkable progress in laying the basis for the country's recovery. But in spite of its significant economic growth, the country's recovery is fragile and it cannot be sustained without prolonged international assistance. One aspect of rural politics in Afghanistan is that when elections are held, and candidates are elected, their opponents (who too were candidates for the election) do not allow him to work easily in his area. They think that if he makes roads, constructs buildings, he will succeed in coming elections too. As a result, they try their utmost that those peoples on chairs can't do anything (Jalali, 2006).

### **3.4 Education**

For the ensuring of good class education and reasonable access to education and skills are the key ways to raise human capital, decrease poverty and facilitate economic growth. The overall literacy rate in the whole Kunduz province is 33%, 40% of men and 24% women are literate. The situation for men is slightly better like 15 and 24 aged with 44.6% literacy rate

where actually this decreases the figure for women around 20.7%. The *Kuchi* population is in a low level of literacy rate with 1.0% of men and 0.1% of women can only read and write. Children between 6 and 13 are enrolled in school is about 62%, where boys percentage is 69% and girls percentage is about 52%. 16% of the boys and 5% girls are attending school from *Kuchi* population in the province during summer.

The total primary and secondary schools are 252 in the province which are catering for 214,793 students. Boys are account for 63% of students and schools for boys' are 82%. There are around 4970 teacher in schools in Kunduz province, where one quarter are women (25%).

There is an agricultural vocational high school with 6 teachers catering for 116 students as a total in number, where all are male studying in that agriculture vocational high school and a commerce girl's school with 75 female students. In the year 2005 12 students graduated from commerce school. There is also a teacher training institute which had 212 students with 67% male and 33% female students. Six hundred new teachers graduated from teacher training institute in the year 2005 including 36% female and 64%male (UNAMA, 2006).

### **3.5 Health Services**

Health is a basic infrastructure of health service exists in Kunduz province. In the year 2005 there were 3 hospitals and 26 health centers with a total of 82 beds. Also 90 doctors and 240 nurses employed by the ministry of health in the province which represented an increase of about 37% in the number of health service staff compared to 2003, also there are 95 privately owned pharmacies in the whole province.

The majority of rural communities do not have health worker which are permanently present in their community. Men and women *Shura's* have reported that there was no any community health workers present in their community and both groups mostly said that their closest health facility is basic health centers or clinics without beds are primary health support items. 13 have a health center out of 903 villages within their boundaries and 45 villages have dispensary. More than 56% households have to travel more than 10 kilometers to reach their closest health facility (ASY, 2006).

### **3.6 Social Protection**

Security of extremely poor and vulnerable Afghans, building capacities and opportunities through a process of economic empowerment is essential in order to reduce poverty and increase self-reliance. There is relatively low level of economic hardships in Kunduz, around 17% in the province reported about the problems satisfying their food needs at least 3-6 times a year and around 19% faced these problems up to three times this year. A quarter (26%) of the population is estimated that they are receiving less than the minimum daily caloric intake necessary to maintain proper and good health but this figure is lower in rural population like around 23% and urban 34%. In both rural and urban areas 40% of the population has low dietary diversity and very poor dietary food. 16% of the population of Kunduz province received allocation of food aid in 2005, reached a total of 93,757 beneficiaries and 13% of household reported that they are taking out loans, 28% said that main use of loan or the largest loan was to buy food. Further use of the money 11% for to cover the health expenses on emergency basis. More than 36% of the households in the province reported feelings that their economic situation had remained the same compared to years ago and 17% felt that it has got worse or much worse.

In 2005, more than 28% households in the province report having been affected by some the un-expected event in the last year which was not under their control. Rural households were less vulnerable to such kind of shocks, 27% rural household affected where as 33%

opposed of urban households. People living in urban areas were vulnerable to shocks related to natural disasters, financial problems and drinking water while those in rural areas were most at risk from natural disasters and drinking water problems (UANAMA, 2005).

### **3.7 Women's Political Rights**

Most of the Afghan women's are facing restriction on their freedom due to cultural norms. Fifteen complaints were received regarding the exercise of Afghan women's political rights. The exercise of these rights is undermined by a variety of factors and influenced by cultural and structural constraints. Including limited access to resources, lack of support from family members, lack of identification documents and general lack of acceptance of women's right to public life. The number of threats, harassment and intimidation incidents reported to UNAMA including from different candidates own families indicate that attempts by women to claim public space through the electoral process are still not fully acceptable in many parts of the country.

Targeted attacks and acts of intimidation against candidates, electoral officials, supporters and voter alike are likely having an impact on the ability or intension of Afghan citizens in exercising the political rights during the rest of electoral process. There were several incidents reported incidents in which the rights to freedom of expression are undermining. Also these kinds of things have impacted the media's ability in some areas to gather and relay information to voters

Female candidates running for provincial council seats accounts as 10% of all the provincial council's candidates which were representing the overall increase of 20% on the previous provincial election council elections. While this was an encouraging step forward the cultural limitations and insecurity have constrained women's ability to campaign as a candidate or supporter to work for the independent election commission or to lodge complaints. While most of the female candidates were complaining so actively, the constraints under which they were campaigning render it difficult for them to directly compete with the male candidates (UNAMA, 2009).

### **3.8 Authority of Decision-Making in Rural Areas**

It is the "power" of an individual to decide any matter or influence any decision in a community. A community is rarely a homogenous entity. Within a community there are different numbers of social groups based of age, gender, social status, power, ethnicity etc. (Paul-Lee, 2002). These differences create imbalances in society, where some people are more influential than others do. Due to patriarchal society the imbalance in power found everywhere especially in rural areas. This kind of situation is very dominant in rural areas of Kunduz, where decision-makers are local elites. All social matters in a village are greatly influenced by the local elites (warlords and *Mullah's*). Usually, they resolve all conflicts including water stealth and transfer of turns of getting canal water in a social formal gathering headed by them. However, often these decisions are fair but, sometimes these are biased decisions. Once a decision has taken by the leaders (warlord and *Mullah's*), everyone has to obey it.

### **3.9 The Afghanistan Typical Village; Unit of Rural Area**

Due to the lack of state penetration and territorialisation of the local level, different terms and contested local concepts regarding the *loci* of the rural community life exist in Afghanistan today: *qarya*, *deh*, *qishlaq*, *manteqa* and *kelay*, just to mention the most commonly cited ones. The fact is often ignored that this type of standardized village, which was introduced



by the state, is rarely to be found in the countries that have not completed a state-building process of their own. There are no clear or commonly understood labels for rural settlements because categorization and territorialisation of rural areas into villages did not take place (Mielke and Schetter, 2007). A typical village in district Archi of Kunduz province has four distinct categories based on social status and function. The first factor is the presence of former warlords; they dominate in different matters of the village. Among them is the *Arbab* the heads of village by force during war conflict. The warlords tend to deprive those who possess inferior social status, so that they live as their dependents or subordinates. Similarly, they create hurdles for external interventions because they do not want to see people educated, facilitated and honored.

The second group is a living remainder of the duties of the religion, the *Mullah's* or the religion functionary who supervises religious obligations and offers certain religious duties. In rural areas the local leaders usually appoint them. The third group comprises of poor farmers, carpenters and daily wage workers etc. They usually do odd jobs and mainly serve as the tenant force for former warlords. This group leads a very hard life and can be forcibly evicted for disobeying warlords as warlord have domination over village. This appointment is not based on official agreement. Fourth group is that community members elected by the community to serve as its decision-making body. The community development council is the social and development foundation at community level, responsible for implementation and supervision of development projects and liaison between the communities and government and non-government organizations. Officially they are authorized as decision-making bodies in the village.

### 3.10 The Kunduz River Basins

Afghanistan is basically divided in to five main river basins such as; Amu Darya, North, Kabul, Western and Helmond river basins. The Kunduz basin consists of seven rivers and about 50 smaller watercourses.

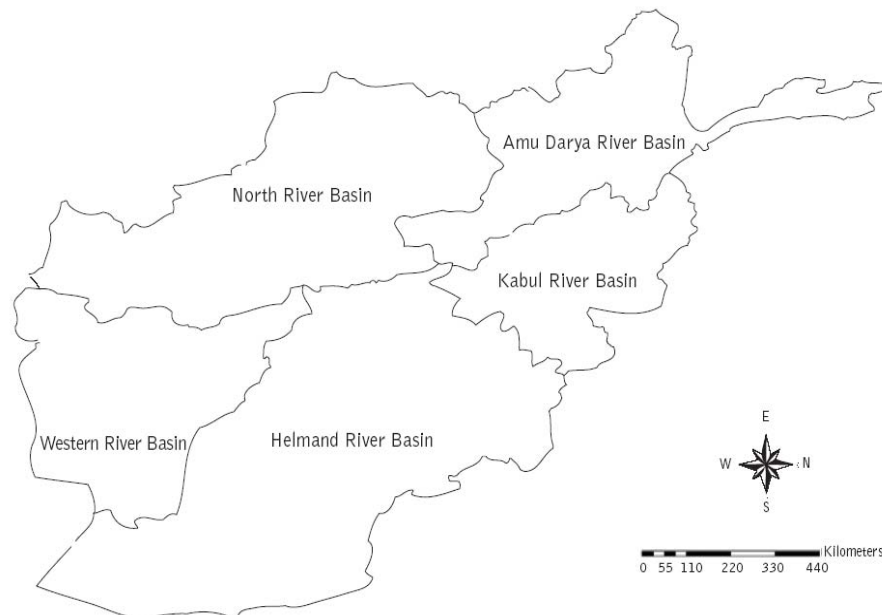


Figure 3.1: Afghanistan river basin division  
Source: Varzi and Wegerich, 2008.

Management of river basins is carried out by splitting it in to sub-basins and that in the each sub-basin a working group would be established and that sub-basin working group would compose of local community peoples.

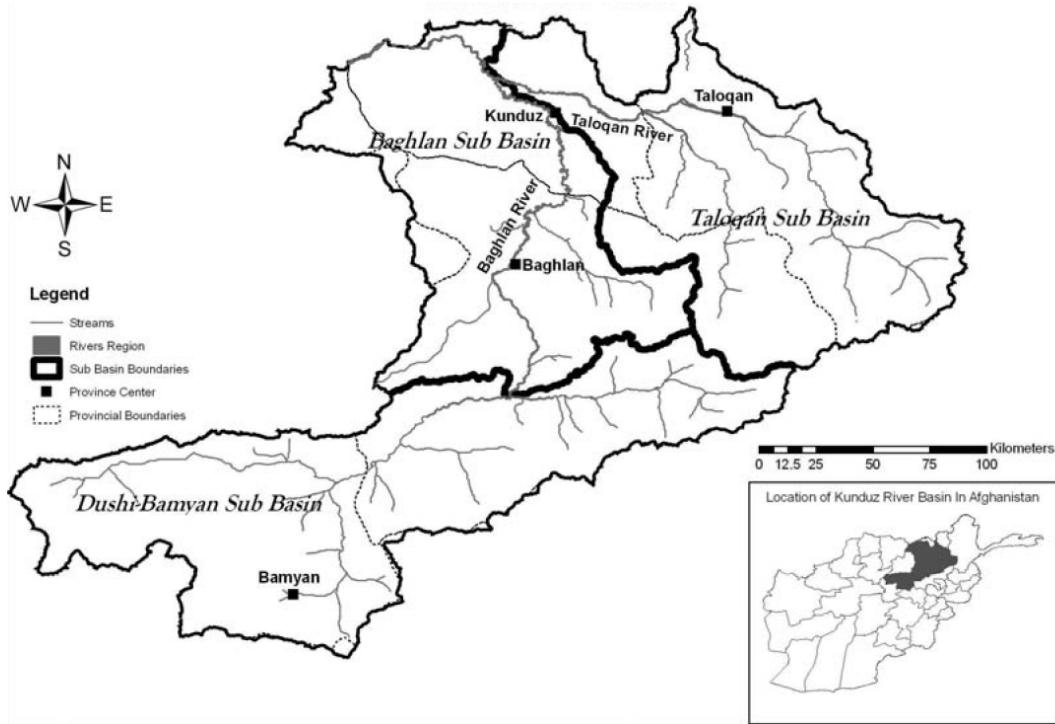


Figure 3.2: Kunduz River basin and its sub-basins  
Source: KRBP map archive

For the Kunduz river basin as it is consisted of seven rivers and about 50 smaller watercourses. It would have been uneconomical to have a sub-basin authority for each sub-basin. It was decided to establish only three sub-basins: Dushi-Bamyān, Baghlan and Taloqan (KRBP, 2005).

### 3.11 Irrigation Systems

In Afghanistan many rural communities, irrigation development is a prerequisite to community development and often has been affected by conflict and migration. For example, emigration from the Soviet bloc in the 1920s influenced the expansion of irrigation systems in Kunduz Province. By constructing storage and diversion dams, lined canals and control structures, the schemes were designed to overcome the water supply and distribution problems inherent in informal systems. Some storage schemes also had hydropower production capacity. The structure of scheme operation and management entails strong government support, leaving farmer responsibility largely confined to the lower levels of distribution. During years of conflict in Afghanistan, the schemes became heavily degraded due to lack of funding and loss of technical and institutional capacity to support operation and maintenance. As a result, they are now operating well below capacity and require major rehabilitation and investment. Considerable potential exists to enhance performance and productivity of irrigated agriculture, thereby improving food security and livelihood sustainability in rural communities. This may be achieved through rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems as well as, in the longer term, through improved development of water and land resources (AREU, 2008).



Figure: 3.3: Rehabilitation of Archi canal  
Source: UNAMA, 2009

Three decades of conflict have adversely affected the performance of irrigation systems and the ability of communities to sustain them in traditional ways. The impact includes destruction of infrastructure, the lack of maintenance and loss of labour due to migration as a result of conflict and drought, approximately half of the irrigated area (and presumably systems) required rehabilitation (Jonathan, 2007).

The Archi Irrigation canal will irrigate 160,000 acres of land in the north-east of Afghanistan. More than 27,000 families will benefit from the reconstruction of the 68 kilometers long canal which starts in the Khujaghar district of Takhar province and ends in Kunduz province. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have funded the project in conjunction with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (UNAMA, 2009).

Since 2001, several initiatives have been launched to develop the irrigation sector and better manage water resources along with natural resources and the environment. Undoubtedly, this huge task requires a long-term strategy and investment. MEW, the lead government institution for irrigation system rehabilitation and development, receives support from international agencies and bilateral donors. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) also implements a number of NGO supported programs for irrigation rehabilitation as part of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). Other government stakeholders include the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (responsible for on-farm irrigation development and management) and the Ministry of Mines and Industry (responsible for groundwater management) (Ahmad and Wasiq, 2004).

### 3.12 Irrigated Agriculture

Within the Amu Darya Basin, the best estimate is that 1.16 million ha are now being irrigated. That figure includes all the active irrigated land in Northern Afghanistan; however, irrigated land in the sub-basins of rivers that have permanent flow to the Amu Darya is only somewhat over 385,000 ha, including 21,000 ha of inactive irrigated land. The total area under rain-fed agriculture in these sub-basins is 780,000 ha (DAI, 1993).

Most agricultural activities are confined to valley floors. In the upper reaches valleys are narrow, and while water is sufficient, arable land size and growing period are both limited. At lower altitudes where the valleys widen and the climate is more moderate, the constraint is water rather than land. In 1978, irrigated land produced nearly 80% of all wheat and 85% of all crops. Double cropping is high in Kunduz Province (73%). The main crops are irrigated wheat and rice, and rain fed wheat and barley. Melons, cotton, maize, grapes and other fruits are also cultivated in significant quantities. Close to the rivers and canals, land is heavily subdivided and intensely used, while further from water sources cropping is rain-fed or opportunistically irrigated. Irrigated farms are typically small and medium holdings with an average size of a farm household being about 11 persons. The major labour derives from the household labor forces, but most of the farms hire labour from outside during peak season (June - October). Afghan farmers are skilled farmers and the country has a long history of irrigated agriculture with schemes going back centuries, most are run of river and have no storage (KRBP, 2005).

### 3.13 Area under Control of Taliban

Since last eight years, Kunduz as the Northern Province has been relatively peaceful, far removed from the insurgency in the Taliban heartlands of Kandahar and Helmand in the south but the past year has brought such a dramatic Taliban comeback in Kunduz. Local officials and residents say two of the province's districts are almost completely under Taliban control. There, girls' schools have been closed down, women are largely prohibited from venturing outdoors unless they are covered from head to toe, and residents are forced to pay a religious "tax," usually amounting to 10 percent of their meager wages.

When people have problems, they don't go to the government. They don't go to the police but they are contacting with the Taliban, and the Taliban decides for them. There are no files and no paperwork (Mrastial, 2010).

Kunduz is also home to a complex mix of armed groups, including the Hezb-i-Islami militia, loyal to warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar; the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan; and the Haqqani network, led by former mujaheddin commander Maulavi Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son. All these groups are loosely affiliated with the Taliban. Immediately after assuming control in Chardara, the Taliban ordered that girls be allowed to attend school only for the first three years. The elders said the Taliban mandated that girls could return to school only if they were sequestered and had female teachers, but there are none in the district. Immediately after assuming control in Chardara, the Taliban ordered that girls be allowed to attend school only for the first three years. The elders said the Taliban mandated that girls could return to school only if they were sequestered and had female teachers, but there are none in the district. Women in Taliban-held areas are mostly prohibited from venturing out alone or without their burqas. "When women are sick or have to go to the doctor, they have to get permission from them (Keith, 2010).

# CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1 Introduction

The research was conducted as a qualitative research method for which semi-structured interviews were used and information collected during interviews, focus group discussions and meetings with project stake holders like GTZ, KRBP, ARBP, MCA and UNHCR involved in social conflict in the area. The main findings were from the results of interviewing 17 local community peoples including five warlords (*Arbab's*), five *Mullah's* and seven poor farmers (those farmers which were economically not in a good positions and only dependent on agriculture, farming or daily wage labors) and three focus group discussions (six teachers, 12 higher school students and nine elders of the local community). In this chapter the main objective is to present the findings of the research. This chapter also presents discussions of the major findings that were demonstrated through document review, personnel observation and analysis of different project stakeholders.

The research area has in figure five, it also shows that the information were collected from two warlords, two *Mullah's* and two poor farmers from Mangalha area where different ethnic groups are living the same area, while Bajawri area only one warlord, two *Mullah's* and three poor farmers were selected same as well as with near attached area of Speen Jumat.

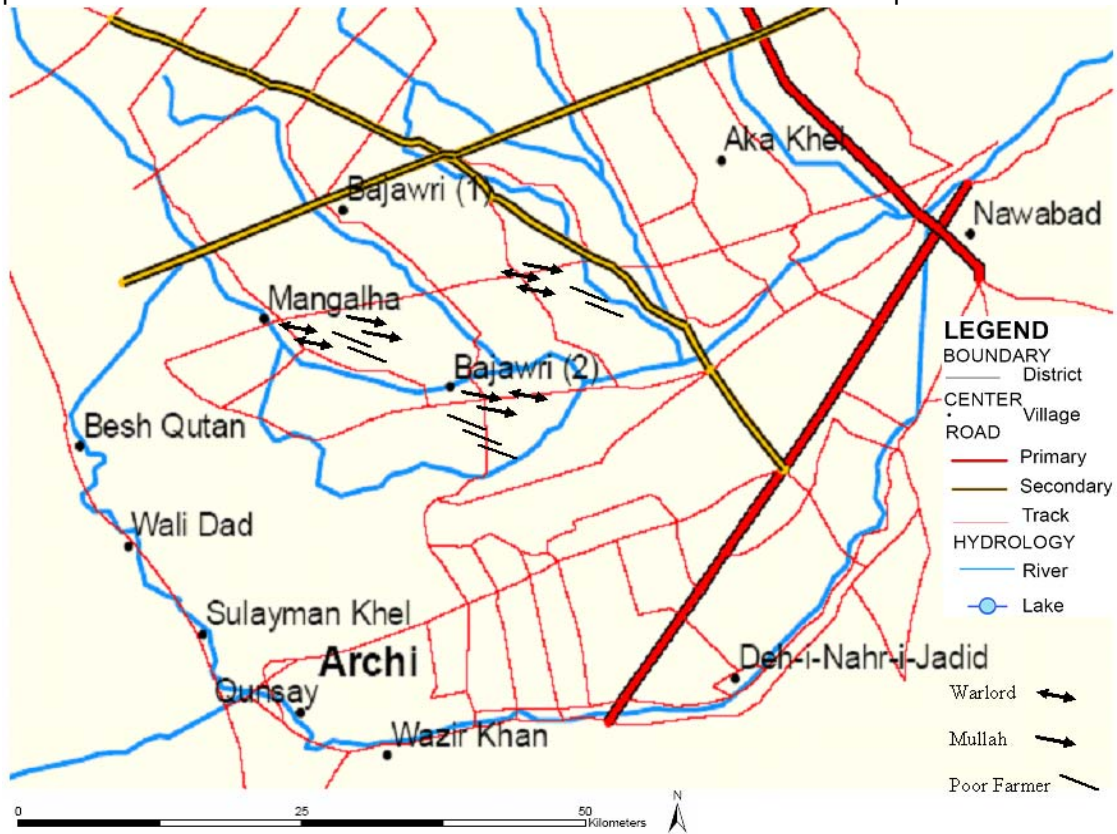


Figure 4.1: Showing map of research area (data collected)

## 4.2 Major Conflicts among Peoples of Rural Communities

It revealed from the field work that recently there are some major conflicts that have greatly disturbed every kind of developmental activities in the study area. While interviewing the Arbab of the village *Haji Zarghoon* he was saying that most of conflicts among community peoples had so many human injuries and losses of lives and properties are recorded. According to the discussions with focus groups and other stakeholders every kind of conflict is violent and there is no any kind of conflict which is not violent. The major conflicts in the said areas are political indifferences, inter-religious disagreements, land litigation and ethnicity said by *Mahmood Mullah*.

From the discussion with a group of educated peoples it was revealed that inside community some of the reasons of conflicts are religious misunderstandings, and disagreements on some issues with the nominees for national assembly, land and water distribution among rural community peoples, economic tensions, intolerance, injustice of the local elites and other community elders, discrimination, ethnic supremacy, political challenges, competition on scarce resources, wrong perception about NGO's, teaching of modern knowledge, cultural practices, land ownership, division of property among offspring's and corruption in project implementation.

*Childhood marriages have also created a big conflict among the peoples of rural community in Archi. Most of the engagements are taking place during childhood when they become younger they do not like each other or totally refusing to marry. In Islam before marriage the girl and boy have the right to see each other and they can choose their own life partner under the Islamic rules and regulations "it is Sunnah" but the parents are not giving permission to their son and daughters to choose their own life partner they are considering that this is against of their culture, said by Mursalin Dard.*

A respondent said that childhood or forced marriages is one of the major conflicts among community peoples. Recently a childhood marriage was decided, while reaching to maturity stage the lady talked with his brother in law to kill her husband after killing she will marry his brother. That person was killed by her brother in law while she was in a stage of pregnancy according to the promise she has to marry with his brother but at that moment there Taliban were in dominant position. According to the Islamic Sharia rules, they killed the brother in law of that lady who killed the husband of the lady and after giving birth to her child she will also be killed according to the decision. There were so many cases like that the result of childhood marriages were not good and make a cause of conflict among communities. In the study area marriages by own choices are very rare no one have the courage to say his / her parents or other family member that he or she is want to marry with someone he / she like. If this happen they are giving physical punishments to their son and daughter by saying something like this, they were not given the choice to decide by own for their life and future. The parents are considering this kind of actions out of their culture and society so; those are kicked from that society or even from that area.

From the above described findings it revealed that some of the major conflicts among community peoples in the study area are religious misunderstandings, disagreements, injustice of the local elites, cultural practices, land litigation and irrigation water rights.

## 4.3 Fueling Variables that Accelerate Conflict in Rural Communities

By studying the rural community environment in Archi, which is a fueled violent conflict having many root causes. It was noted from a meeting with the community mobilization manager, facilitation officer of MCA, field assistant UNHCR and national poultry officer UN-FAO in Kunduz; they stated that factors like political exclusion, incompetent and illegitimate

government leadership, history of foreign intervention, the role of elites in sustaining discontent, environmental degradation and migration, internally displaced persons and destroyed social and physical infrastructure had played a vital role in creation of conflict in varying degrees. *Mullah's* of the local community members said that it has been proven in many cases that the continued threats to religion and dignity, manifestation of ethnic, party and personnel interest, war-related status and wealth are the primary and major fueling variables of conflict among rural community peoples in Archi district.

The above finding revealed that illegitimate government leadership, foreign intervention in cultural affairs of the rural community peoples and destruction of infrastructure has accelerated violent conflict in the area.

#### **4.4 Violent Conflict since 2001s**

From the abovementioned analysis it was noted during studying the environment of the study area and discussions with the various community members which were directly or indirectly involved in violent conflict, some of the major violent conflicts were identified. These include war conflict between Taliban with the government of Afghanistan and international community, ethnic, land and water distribution and conflict over resources. Another category of conflicts were identified were locating of various projects and services but mostly conflicts are in between Afghan police and rural community peoples also with the Taliban, between community peoples and follower of the current government and supporters of the international community, inter-religious conflicts and conflicts between members of different political parties. The abovementioned were the factual elements of conflict among rural community peoples which were the causes of violence in Archi. It was noted that irrigation water conflict among rural community peoples arise from the existing mistrust on *Wakeel / Mirab*, local community leaders, political leaders and governmental authorities. For example, a community health clinic was constructed for the purpose to provide primary health facilities to a few villages in Archi where the peoples of other villages were totally refused to get assistance from health clinic.

The field work shows that there were several longstanding inter-ethnic conflicts and conflicts among various groups of the rural communities in Archi district. These conflicts arise due to the migration of different ethnic group from various country sides. There were clashes among different ethnic groups on water distribution and on governmental lands that handed over to migrants from government side for the settlement of their families.

#### **4.5 Perceptions of Conflict**

From the findings of the interviews of the local community members like *Arbab's* and *Mullah's* in Archi, perceptions about conflict were expressed as; conflict is a misunderstanding and disagreement of issues that directly leading to violence, disturbance and destruction of properties also considered as a conflict. While in meetings with the provincial managers of Un-FAO, MCA, KRBP, ARBP and GTZ in Kunduz, they described that conflict is a situation where two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitude or perceive their interest as actions that damage the other parties. Also the seven poor / powerless farmers explained their main idea that it is a situation where two or more peoples are fighting over resources such as land, drinking and irrigation water etc., all kind of conflicts are violent is the idea of most of the male students of grade 12 in *Wazir Muhammad Gul College in Qaria Haji Zarghoon*. When there is conflict there is a violence means there is no any conflict which is not creating violence. During discussions with the group of seven peoples of village Haji Naeem about knowing their idea about conflict, conflict could be the cause of violence or not? Their answers explanation was that all kind of conflicts happened among rural communities in district Archi were violent.

Therefore different peoples have different perceptions but the most common among all were is conflict about competition among rural community peoples, access to resources and disagreements on issues. Every kind of conflict is leading to violence among the peoples of rural society.

#### **4.6 Division among Peoples in Archi**

The field work results shows that, political, religious, ethnicity, land and water distribution has brought division, hatred and vindictiveness to powerless political groups among the peoples living in rural district Archi. During the interviews, it was found that inter-religious, work based differences and disputes have brought divisions among the peoples. Due to Taliban dominancy in the area, Taliban and their supporters are considering their enemies which are working with the governmental and other non-governmental agencies. Community members accused that Mullah Umer the Taliban representative has said to kill all those peoples who are supporting and working for the government of Afghanistan and other national and international organization. Locally peoples are divided in to two groups the supporters of Government or international community and supporters of the Taliban; Taliban are calling non-Muslims to the supporters of government and Muslims to those who are supporting and implementing Taliban's idea.

Thus these political, religious and ethnicity divisions has played a vital role in creation of conflict which directly leads to violence and has caused the destruction of the social structure of rural community in Archi. Because of these divisions some peoples were ignored and kept silenced but some were giving better opportunities and more chances to make better their economy and life standards than the other ethnic and religious groups.

#### **4.7 Cultural Diversity of the Peoples of Rural Community**

*According to Sheikh Sadruddin the former Head of Archi District he said; Archi is one of the most dense ethnic district is Kunduz province, where the residents came from different country sides with different ethnic backgrounds, political, inter religious and cultural differences available among the peoples of rural communities in the said district. Political peoples and politics has brought divisions and different opinions among the people, half of the family is supporting Taliban and also working with them and other half of the family is totally on the side of Karzai as Government of Afghanistan. In religious circle the places where Taliban have domination, all the local community peoples divided in to two main categories; the peoples who are supporting Taliban are called Muslims and those who are working with the government or other non-governmental organizations are called as the supporters of the Western World or simply non-Muslims.*

The field work showed that there are differences among the rural community people in Archi, these differences according to the focus group discussion consist of nine elders of the local community after the decision making process of land dispute between two families in *Shinwari /Speen Jumat* village they all agreed that culture is one of the major differences among community peoples because of the influx of peoples from different parts of the country. These cultural differences were as a result of migration of peoples from different parts of the country during the government of late King Zahir Shah the former president of Afghanistan, those migrants has covered more than 55% of the land. Migrants did not came from one place but they came from different places with different values, norms, customs and traditions and because of all these differences had brought a lot of problems on land ownership in the community. According to the decision made by king Zahir Shah all migrants



has received land of the government which are officially considered as their own property but still the former residents with the support of warlords are claiming on those lands.

The opinions of the respondents shows that, in those areas of Archi District where Pashtuns are living; ladies are more restricted to work out side there houses but in areas where other ethnic groups like Tajik and Uzbek with different cultures are living; they have fully allowed to work outside their houses. Different clan and families have different systems for dealing with the society during conflict like; there was a former warlord and the head of a bigger clan said to his peoples that I never want to hear afterward that you peoples are remained poor. Use any kind of legal and illegal means for collecting and saving money.

Also during the distribution of irrigation water, *Mirab / Wakeel* is giving priority to those peoples who belong to the same culture; this is also because of the selection of *Mirab / Wakeel*, those peoples which has supported during his selection. This is also one of the reasons of the giving priority and supporting them because he does not want to see his peoples with poor economic situation.

In short, the peoples came from different parts of the country and settled during King Zahir Shah which has occupied more than half two-third of the land in Archi and have different cultural background. They came from different country parts different values, norms, customs and tradition. These cultural differences have brought lots of problems on land ownership and irrigation water.

#### **4.8 Factors of Conflict in Archi**

From the findings it revealed that political, religious, economic and ethnic is the top most major factors of conflicts in Archi district.

##### **4.8.1 Political Factors**

All the respondents (powerless / poor farmers) interviewed expressed that some of the causes of political conflicts are the cruelty or un-justice of the political leaders, selection of the head of CDC's, appointment of *Wakeel / Mirab* by force having strong hold in government, project implementation without consideration of the vulnerability of the communities, competition for taking over and governing on peoples, involvement of the foreign agencies for getting various benefits from and across the country but the landlords / *Arbab's* were stressing that the major causes are to take revenge from each other by using hateful languages by the political leaders and their followers. The political leaders are using their own language to make happy his followers for getting their support during the last and current election campaign. According to *Sheik Sadruddin* sayings; the linguistic conflict is also a kind of political conflict as governmental peoples / officials knows the national languages but they do not want to talk in national language that is his followers are not willing to talk in other than his own language. It was said by one of the person during focus group discussion that the peoples are giving vote to those candidates who are not talking other than their language and only working for those peoples who speaks the same language. During the current parliamentarian election campaign the local peoples do not want to see the flyers and posters of candidates who are not from the same linguistic group. There were some local radio, television channels which were working for some of the political groups and now working for the parliamentarian election campaign of some of the candidates which were creating a kind of conflict between two candidates and their followers.

*A few months ago one of the election candidates for provincial assembly was invited by the peoples of district Archi that they are fully supporting him and they will vote for him but in reality those peoples were totally against the current government and its peoples. That candidate was in Archi for some days to speed up his election campaign, after some days he with one other person was fired and killed by those peoples said Salim Jan.*

In line of dealing and experiences with conflict, information received during focus group discussion every one explained his ideas about conflicts happens in the recent years; during the war conflict among Taliban with the government and international community; lots of peoples lost their lives with small children's, school girls, females cannot work outside their houses, girls are totally avoided to study in schools, females people migrated so many times and properties were destroyed. This was the worse violent conflict in the history of district Archi as well as in overall Afghanistan. Land dispute is also a big problem and the cause of conflict in the rural community and mostly it has created violent conflict due to the result of various political benefits. In so many cases where people were migrated due war conflict in Afghanistan the peoples who stayed during war they were using the production of the land whose owner is not available and when migrants returned to their own homeland they were saying that those lands are their own and those peoples which had a bit power in government or in Taliban they were totally supporting them and by force they received the land as a whole or at least some part of the land.

#### **4.8.2 Religious Factors**

It was noted from discussions with a group of eight peoples that were almost religious group, they said; that religion is one of the strong tool and weapon that peoples are using to create a serious conflict in Archi. Hundred percent of the population in the district are Muslims. There are inter-religious conflicts among the community peoples like; *Sunni*, *Shia* and among *Sunny* there also other groups. They didn't mentioned the name of the group that there are some groups which are imposing such rules and regulations which cannot be acceptable even in Islam but the community people should have to follow what they are saying to them because there are no proper arguments and power authority with the community peoples to discuss about any kind of issue. According to Qayum a poor farmer, there are lots funds for the poor peoples, those funds were always misused by the religious leaders (Imam) and not given to the right and vulnerable person and there is no any accountability of all those funds.

As a result of discussion with Nashir, the former district governor of Archi about war conflict since 2001, war conflict between Taliban with the international community and government of Afghanistan the Taliban supporters claims that this war is between Muslims and Non-Muslims but in reality this is just the wrong kind of interpretation of Islamic knowledge which most of the peoples of district Archi are supporting them in terms of war with the international community and with the government of Afghanistan. Taliban are continuously in struggle of killing all those peoples who are working with NGO's, international community, government of Afghanistan and those peoples who are working for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. The national and international staffs of the government and NGO's are not allowed from Taliban side to work in the area under their control.

#### **4.8.3 Ethnic Factors**

It was noted from discussions with various groups from different ethnic backgrounds that ethnic conflicts are present in Archi District where all ethnic groups are present and they are not living with peace. The unequal distribution of authority was noted in different situations as all these distributions were based on ethnicity. There are almost all ethnic groups present in the research area; there are disputes on land and water among ethnic groups and

disagreements on ethnic based positioning. Everyone have the feelings of inferiority and attempts to secure more power or access to more resources were among some of the causes of ethnic conflict in Archi rural community. Every ethnic group want to show superiority on other group for that purpose each and every group is trying for the district governor to become from their own ethnic group to work for them and to take all those revenges happened in the past from other ethnic groups. Each and every ethnic group is always competing for resources and reaching to power on other ethnic group. Ethnic groups are supporting candidates for parliamentary election which belong to the same ethnic group.

#### **4.8.4 Economic Factors**

According to the opinion of Dr. Abdul Qadir Noori, the national poultry officer UN-FAO in Kunduz he said that distribution of project materials could be the cause of conflict among rural community peoples. He further told about the case of conflict faced due to distribution of chickens to local women's. UN-FAO poultry project has distributed 15 chickens per project beneficiary to rear and when reached to hatching stage they can buy the eggs in local markets and this will be a source of income for small home female farmers. There was one female house farmer who received chickens and became a project beneficiary but there was another female who did not received, she mixed poisons with the poultry feed by this way she killed all the chickens of the female house headed farmer and similarly this create a conflict among females in the house. When an organization is implementing any project in an area the residents are getting happy but those peoples whose areas do not have any projects are totally against the peoples on whose area where project was going to implement. They are making propogandas and trying to diminish the project because the sometimes only the residents can directly get benefit from the project. There is strong possibility of conflict among rural community peoples due distribution of project materials for small and medium size businesses.

Therefore the above stated suggests that political, religious, ethnic and economic were from the top most factors in creation of violent conflict among rural community peoples. Ethnic conflict is mostly on land ownership and irrigation water in the study area but religiously and politically it has been supported through various means of funds, misrepresentation of leaderships and distortion of the truth with an objective of destroying other party or ethnic or inter-ethnic groups.

### **4.9 Irrigation Water Management Conflict in the Study Area**

The research conducted revealed that during last few decades of war conflicts and tribal structure of Afghanistan has completely destroyed the infrastructure especially in rural areas. The local elites, Mirab/Wakeel and ethnicity has greatly contributes to the Irrigation water management in district Archi.

#### **4.9.1 Role of Local Elites in Irrigation Water Management Conflict**

It revealed from the interviews with the respondents that, during the appointment of *Wakeel / Mirab* the local elites like *Mullah's*, warlords (*Arbab's*) having a great role in the selection of Mirab / Wakeel. These local elites are selecting according to their own wish without taking idea from the local farmers and community members. When a *Wakeel / Mirab* is selected then he is following the sayings *Arbab's* in terms of provision of irrigation water any time they feel the need of it but the other local community farmers were kept ignored. During interviews with the farmers it showed that religious leaders like *Mulla's* and / or *Imam's* are getting benefit because of their illiteracy and lack of Islamic knowledge as they

are using water for irrigation without having to wait for their own turn. If the poor farmers are saying something then *Mullah's* are using the various ways for the punishment of farmers. . While in a discussion meeting with the community mobilization officer, he said that in so many cases without giving free salaries to *Mullah's* it is impossible to implement any project. They want money from the organizations which is going to implement projects in his area of control otherwise there will completely risk of destroying machinery as well as risks of lives of the staff of the organization involved in project implementation.

According to Abdul Nazar Head of *Qarluq* CDC, it has been showed so many times that corruption and untimely implementation of water management projects has also created conflict among community peoples, local elites have dominancy on implementation of those projects which are going to implement in his areas. Governmental and non-governmental organizations cannot implement any project without having to take prior permission from the local elites and from elders of the community, also during project prioritization they are going to prioritize all those projects which were proposed by the elites or *Arbab's*. Once a project being implemented and handed over to the community the poor farmers have no any power or permission to use and get benefit from it without having prior permission from the *Arbab's*.

*Haji Naeem head of CDC said; last year district governor itself was visiting with his security during night that either every farmer is using irrigation water on their own turn or the local elites are using water as usual without having their own turn. Two times the security peoples / police of district governor were killed.*

According to NSP district CDC's officer; if any NGO or governments want to implement any kind of irrigation or other projects, first they should take permission from former warlords or *Arbab's* because it is impossible to construct any project prior to the permission from warlords. The warlords are not giving permission unless to hire his own peoples to work in the project and receive monthly stipend from the government or NGO or they should give cash money before starting any project

Recently there were three cases of conflicts among rural community were closely observed by the mobilization team of MCA like:

#### Case 1.

*Due to the construction of water divider there was a serious conflict among community members because the equitable water distribution to the farmers was not kept in mind and was not according to the land / area covering and farmer's size per divider. Same water using rights were not given to each and every farmer during construction of the divider.*

#### Case 2.

*Conflict between landlord and community members due to the construction of water intake. Water was not equally distributed according to the need of the farmers of top users and downstream users. EC was going to construct a water intake which can help for equal water distribution but the landlord was not agreeing to start working on the project. The landlord was from the top water users and had dominancy on irrigation water. He was using water for irrigation any time he feel the need but the rest of farmers who were mostly at the end of canal were suffering the shortage of irrigation water every time. The end user were not able to receive proper water according to the need of their crops but also they were facing problems every time with the drinking water because there are no water well for drinking water and almost peoples of the community are using canal water for drinking and other daily consumptions.*

### Case 3.

*Community peoples have been constructing traditional sand and gravel or raw material protection wall every year to mitigate flood affections there was agricultural land of a prominent ex-commander opposite to the area of the river and he occupied the governmental land illegally and similarly commander also builds gravel protection wall every year in his territory in the edge of the river for the protecting his agriculture land. When commander saw the construction of the protection wall project he ordered by force to the engineer to construct another protection wall in his territory on another side of the river. Commander warned that he would punish and his life might be in danger, whoever attempt to build wall in the area because to avoid any damages to his personnel land or territory.*

During discussions with a farmer in village *Bajauri*, having power in community has stopped irrigation water from other farmers because the water canal passed in his land and he was saying by force that he is not letting water to pass from his own land but the farmers who were getting irrigation water from the same canal were saying that water is flowing in the same canal from more than 50 years, but suddenly he stopped irrigation water flowing in his canal. They have no any power or enough access to the authorities to solve the problem but the one has stopped the canal water has more power and access to the authority that is no one can accept this on him. This has created a big conflict among that person with the other community farmers who were getting benefit from that canal water.

*In the next few years water management departments and directorates will be finished completely and all the responsibility of irrigation water distribution and other consumption will be handed over to the water user association and water user groups. Water user groups will be fully authorized of water size measurement and allocation and distribution of water according to the land size and need based as per written in Water Law, MoEW signed copy from Hamid Karzai the president of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and now under process to be approved from supreme court and we can minimize conflicts among rural communities by implementing water law, said by Naimatullah community mobilization officer, MCA .*

According to the one of respondent as a daily wage labor with a women whose husband died during post war conflict said that there are lots of families which having no any male in family to take part is decisions that is why the whole farming are managed by the females but during any decision about irrigation water no one is going to ask from those families about their ideas. Women are not directly involved in any kind land, agricultural and water decisions and also they have no any role in the selection of *Wakeel / Mirab* but their message can be reached another neighbor or relative but it is not trusted to be given any attention or importance to her message.

#### **4.9.2 Role of Mirab / Wakeel in Irrigation Water Management Conflict**

The field work shows that, *Wakeel / Mirab* following the sayings of *Arbab's* in terms of provision of irrigation water at any time when they feel the need of it but the other local community farmers are kept ignored. According to *Mirab / Wakeel* the top users or farmers are growing crops which needs more irrigation water and they do not care for the need of middle and end users. The top water users are using more water and almost of the end users are facing problems in terms receiving less irrigation water or some time water cannot reached to the end users. In some places due irrigation water scarcity rice cultivation is strictly not allowed from the government but landlords are growing rice because of having power and domination on every kind of activities inside community.

#### **4.9.3 Role of Ethnicity in Irrigation Water Management Conflict**

Findings revealed that ethnicity is one of the major components of irrigation water conflict which has played a vital role in creation of rural community water management conflict. *Wakeel / Mirab* is giving priority to those who belongs to their own ethnic group and freely they can use water according to their need. Every ethnic group are showing superiority on other group for that purpose each and every group is trying for the district governor to become from their own ethnic group to work for them and to take all those revenges happened in the past from other ethnic groups. Every ethnic group are competing for resources and reaching to power on other ethnic group. Ethnic groups are supporting those candidates for *Mirab / Wakeel* to become from their own ethnicity and afterwards they are receiving more irrigation water than other ethnic groups and in some cases they are not waiting for their own turn. They are using irrigation water without having to wait for their own turn because they know that they have the support of *Mirab / Wakeel*.

In conclusion from the above findings, it revealed that irrigation water conflicts among community peoples can lead to politically destabilizing migrants to cities or other country parts and neighboring countries. In creation of community level conflict on irrigation water use and rights all political parties, ethnic groups and religious leaders linked directly or indirectly have played its role in terms of supporting some groups, peoples and neglecting others. The local elites are using irrigation water without having to wait for their own turn; they are using power and knowledge for their own profit and getting benefit from the unawareness of the religious knowledge and poverty of the local community peoples. There are some ethnic groups in the area which are supporting *Mirab/Wakeel* belong to the same ethnic group and once he has selected again he is giving priority to the farmers belong to the same ethnic group because they have supported him for becoming *Mirab/Wakeel*. The results illustrate the presence of non-customary organizations, such as local elites (warlords and *Mullah's*) and the influential peoples (have money) in the area played a vital role in destabilizing local community cooperation or in the worst case, cause violent conflict or tension among community peoples. Mostly the community peoples are dependent on agriculture and almost ignored their irrigation water rights and forced to accept any kind decisions of the local elites in the area. Current irrigation water conflict issue for community peoples has been the resistance by warlord and *Mullah's*, which continuously posed serious challenges in terms of implementation of irrigation water projects and giving rights to the poor farmers of the area.

#### **4.10 Conflict Management Strategies Used in Archi**

The findings revealed that there has been and continuous conflict management approaches measured by an assortment of different categorizations. The collaboration or listening, non-threatening confrontation, identifying concerns and analyzing are the means to manage conflict that cannot be done by a single individual. It also approved that compromising or giving up of something to both parties to consider themselves as the winners; this has played a role in managing conflict at local community level. There are different styles of behaviors by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. In Archi rural community / society it has been observed from so many decades that strategies used in managing conflicts are by the intervention of elders of other tribe or the elders from the same area and tribe but having no any connection or contribution in creation of conflict with any of the party

Traditional *Shuras* are the unorganized structures comprised of elders and other prominent peoples, usually representing different tribe and families. Traditional and local methods for conflict resolution however do not make use of positive measures in order to resolve conflicts; they are instead reactive. The focus of organizations is on immediate solution of problems. These traditional structures have exclude women and young's from decision making process which can further make worse socio-cultural tensions and protect

established inequalities but in some families the women's itself do not want to set in any of the traditional decision making process because of some cultural issues. Due to the absence or because of the inadequate capacity of the government to maintain successful judicial structures and systems, Afghanistan rural community peoples have relied on community conflict resolution structures such as *Jirgas* and *Shuras* to resolve their conflicts which was also elaborated by Nawabi in 2008.

Therefore, it shows that almost conflicts are managed through local methods. These traditional structures do not have a clear formula for conflict management but variety of methods are used manage such as giving up of some thing to one side, *Pashtunwali*, Sharia and local customs etc. these local methods are effective because they are trusted, giving respect to the norms and values of the local community peoples and relatively reaching quickly to manage and do not often considered as corrupt.

#### **4.11 Strategies for Conflict Resolution in Rural Community**

Majority of the respondents interviewed revealed that conflict among community peoples can be resolved in so many different ways like; community members are sitting together in a central guest house or in mosques discussing every kind of issues. Sharing their ideas with each other and trying to find out a solution for problems. In Archi there are former warlords who are showing superiority on others and they can decide what they considering to be good, not all the decisions are acceptable to the peoples but there is no any other choice that is why every party must obey what has been decided. If a problem cannot be solved, the rural community peoples are using above mentioned common method for the solution of problems or conflict among peoples of the community. The holy places like Mosques are used for the resolution of various kinds of small problems or conflicts, peoples are sitting together in a big guest house of the community or guest house of the landlord or warlord / *Arbab*. Mullah or former warlords like *Arbab* is playing a leading role in the resolution of disputes, conflicts or misunderstandings among community members. Jirga system is also a traditional system for conflict resolution among rural communities in district Archi and across the region. The local and religious leaders are available in Jirga along with both parties having conflict with each other to find out solutions. First they are taking authority from both sides for whatever decision should be acceptable to all parties involved in conflict. They are listening to every party and after analyzing they are going to decide what they are considering to the best for all parties. Another Jirga system is same but they are receiving something, property or money as "*Bramtha*" if any party is not going to accept the decision the people of Jirga is not returning *Bramtha*. If all the above mentioned systems fail to work then national and international organizations are interfering to find out solution to the conflicts which having better effect by having police and security for pressurizing community peoples to accept any of the best way of solution.

According to most of the respondents, they always want to find solution to the problems according to the Islamic Sharia that is why religious leaders are asked for the solution of the problems among community peoples but the poor, powerless farmers (farmers economically weak) wondering that the religious leaders are using the Islamic laws for their own benefits because they are illiterate and do not have full *Sharia* knowledge and most often they supporting the warlords and peoples have given money to them and also caring for the ethnicity. The religious leaders are taking the authority from the peoples who are involved in dispute, problem or conflict and taking signature from both parties for what they are going to decide should be acceptable to both parties.

From the above results, the community peoples are using various mechanisms for conflict resolution like; *Shura, Jirga, Jirga (Bramtha) and Islamic Sharia*. These traditional organizations are semiformal and unorganized structures except Islamic Sharia (if it followed according to the rules and regulation of Islam) comprised of community elders, *mullahs* and influential people, usually representing different clans and families. Traditional and local mechanisms for conflict resolution however do not employ proactive measures in order to resolve conflicts but some time they are instead reactive. The focus of these local organizations is on immediate problem solution. Traditional structures are generally exclude women and young peoples from the decision making process, which further aggravate socio-cultural tensions and preserve established inequalities.

#### **4.12 The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution**

The opinion of former district governor and project staffs involved in local level conflict resolution showed; years of conflicts and fighting with each other have severely impaired the social structure of rural society. Strong community relationship that was existed previously has been destabilized and the capacity of community institutions to resolve local disputes and conflicts has been significantly reduced. Interviewing *Arbab's* which were currently the community leaders, their main focus was, the lack or because of the limited capacity of the government to maintain successful judicial structures and systems, traditionally rural peoples has relied on community based conflict resolution structures such as *Jirgas* and *Shuras* to resolve conflicts among community peoples. Mostly conflicts, weather over land, water or family disputes are resolved through local *Jirga's*. Traditional *Shuras* are the semi-formal and a non-properly organized structure consists of elders and influential people, usually representing different tribes and families. The local mechanisms for conflict resolution do not employ practical measures in order to resolve conflicts; they are instead reactive. Organizations are focusing mainly on immediate problem solution. According to the in charge of CDC's at district level, new *Shure* structures were been formed over the last 15 years, the governmental and non-governmental agencies are predominantly using of transferring money to communities and manage the delivery of projects, they have some authority and can be relatively representative but it also depends from area to another. Most of these traditional structures do not have one clear formula for resolving conflicts but instead use a variety of methods like; *Pashtunwali, Sharia* as well as the local, the main purpose to reach an agreement rather than to inflexibly uphold particular norm or law including that of *Sharia*. Traditional *Shuras* trusted by the local peoples that is why it is effective and also relatively quick to reach decisions. Religious leaders like *Mullah's* play a vital role in local level conflict resolution. The village *Mullah* is giving the religious approval of the *Shura's* decisions. There are chances that the losing party may refer the case to a *Mullah* in order obtain a more favorable decisions if the *Shura* has no *Mullah* involved in the process.





Figure 4.2: Showing Jirga system for conflict resolution

One young man from *Shinwari* village expressed his views and was saying that he was 5 years old when his father died during war conflict and now no any old man is available to represent our family in decision making process. These traditional structures generally exclude women and young peoples from the decision-making process, which can further make worse the socio-cultural tensions and preserve established inequalities. The problem of women's rights in Afghan society has been at the center of the great efforts between modernization and tradition. There are a number of particular issues that limit the presence of Afghan women in conflict resolution processes but in some cultures women themselves are unwilling to participate in the *Shura's*; some women believe that it is not appropriate for the Afghan women to sit in these *Shura's* and they limit their own progress and access to decision making process as well.

It revealed from the above findings that religious leaders play a crucial role in local level conflict resolution in the study area. In many instances the village mullah is present to give religious approval of the *Shura's*, *Jirga's* and *Jirga (Bramtha)* decisions. If the *Shura* has no mullah involved in the process, the chances are that the 'losing' party may refer the case to a mullah in order to obtain a more favorable decision. Civil society has come under increasing pressure from Taliban and often feels separated by government interventions.

#### **4.13 Effects of Conflict on Rural Communities in Archi**

It was noted from personnel observations, focus group discussions and information received from the meetings with various organizations working for the elimination of social conflicts among communities, it was noted that conflicts among community peoples has greatly affected the every community in Archi.



Figure 4.3: Showing no any agricultural and developmental activities from Kunduz center to the center of Archi

As per findings from the respondents interviews, during and after all those conflicts, economic activities can hardly be seen; children's are not going to schools because of the fear of attack on Taliban from government side or from the international security because Taliban are very active in the area, females were not allowed to go to school and to teach in the schools or other literacy courses from Taliban side if they want to work or go to school they are giving physical punishments and also the every time the chances of attacks can also be expected every time.



Figure 4.4: Showing local villager's buries some of the victims of conflict in Kunduz province

My sister was teaching in girls school nearby, one day at morning time when I came out from my house I saw a notice hanged by Taliban that after this day if your sister tried again to teach in school they will give punishment / it could be killing of the person who is going to teach as they did so many times in many different places, said by Nazifullah.

As per information received from UNHCR mobilization team, Archi District is looking like a graveyard, when any one was going out from their houses the family members were not sure either he or she will come back alive or not. There were physical assault, human lives lost and properties and houses were destroyed due to the continuous war conflict between Taliban with government and international community.

It is impossible for the peoples working with the government or organizations to come and visit their families, according to the current situation which Taliban are in power and government is weaker in Archi; if any staff of the government or organization is going to visit will directly be killed from Taliban side as happened so many time in the last few months. Government and other national and international organization's staff afraid of their lives and most of the staff migrated to the other parts of the country. Peoples remain very poor as compared to the peoples living in other peaceful places, hunger and jobless peoples are increasing day by day.

From the above findings, it revealed that conflict has seriously affected community life. Economic activities can hardly be seen, physical assaults, punishments and lives lost, a very little number of children's are going to schools and girls are not allowed to teach and get education outside their houses, poor agricultural and irrigation systems in the study area in Archi district.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusion from the results of the study and offers some major possible recommendations which are based on findings. The conclusion is answering to the research questions.

### 5.2 Conclusion

The research was conducted at rural district Archi situated in the northwestern part of Kunduz. Archi have borders with Khan Abad and Kunduz districts to the south-west, Imam Sahib District to the north-west, Republic of Tajikistan to the north and Takhar province to the east with the dense ethnic population in Kunduz province. Economically the district is poor and widespread destruction of housing and infrastructure. The sustained conflicts in the area have seriously affected the agriculture and the unemployment rate is much higher than other districts of Kunduz province. Most of the residents receiving drinking water from canals which are poorly constructed and as a result the end users are facing problems of water shortages. Archi is accessible from Kunduz via Imam Sahib and through Takhar province, roads are poorer but almost villages are accessible by roads of sorts. There is no formal accommodation for humanitarian workers and visitors, although the community peoples are providing accommodation for guests.

The findings of the study show that there are notable variations in terms of irrigation water availability, access and use between individuals and communities. The major causes of irrigation water conflict among community peoples were political, religious and ethnic divisions which have directly leads to violence and caused the destruction of the social structure of rural community in Archi. Ethnic groups are using irrigation water any time because of the support from Mirab side and supporting by the political leaders too. The local elites are using irrigation water without having to wait for their own turn. When any one of the poor / powerless farmer is going to complaint against them they are considering their insult in the community and in the reaction they are receiving physical punishments in terms of not giving water rights for some time. They came from different country parts with different values, norms, customs and tradition. These cultural differences have brought lots of problems on land ownership and irrigation water. Because of these divisions some peoples were ignored and kept silenced but some were giving better opportunities and more chances to make better their economy and life standards than the other ethnic and religious groups by growing and producing more in the area. It makes clear that irrigation water conflicts among community peoples can lead to politically destabilizing migrants to cities or other country parts and neighboring countries. The local community peoples are dependent on agriculture and almost ignored their irrigation water rights and forced to accept any kind decisions of the local elites in the area. Current irrigation water conflict issue for community peoples has been the resistance by warlord and *Mullah's*, which continuously posed serious challenges in terms of implementation of irrigation water projects and giving rights to the poor farmers of the area. Conflict among community peoples has badly affected the research area; small number of children's are attending schools and girls are not allowed to teach and get education outside their houses, economic activities can hardly be seen, physical assaults, punishments, lives lost, poor agricultural and irrigation systems in the study area in Archi district.

Community peoples are managing conflicts through local methods. The traditional structures do not have a clear formula for conflict management but variety of methods are used manage such as giving up of some thing to one side, *Pashtunwali*, Sharia and local customs etc. these local methods are effective because they are trusted, giving respect to the norms

and values of the local community peoples and relatively reaching quickly to manage and do not often considered as corrupt.

There are various mechanisms that the community peoples are using for conflict resolution like; *Shura, Jirga, Jirga (Bramtha) and Islamic Sharia*. These traditional organizations are semiformal and unorganized structures except Islamic Sharia (if it is followed according to the rules and regulation of Islam) comprised of community elders, *mullahs* and influential people, usually representing different clans and families. It revealed from the above findings that religious leaders play a crucial role in local level conflict resolution in the study area. In many instances the village mullah is present to give religious approval of the *Shura's, Jirga's and Jirga (Bramtha)* decisions. Some time conflict resolution does not employ proactive measures in order to resolve conflicts but some time they are instead reactive. The focus of these local organizations is on immediate problem solution. These traditional structures have excluded women and young peoples from the decision making process, which can further aggravate the socio-cultural tensions and preserve established inequalities.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Recommendations that I believe will address the countless of Archi rural communities conflicts for the strengthening, stabilization and making secure in the long term.

1. The role of NGO's in a stable state or government should be introduced and accurately described by the government for the elders and influential peoples of the local community who are involved in the community decision making process.
2. Strengthening of local methods by the NGO's to promote social justice, build peace and sustained efforts for developing and strengthening local methods for dealing with violence. NGO's staff should closely work with the community elders and train them on how to deal with a conflict situation.
3. The teachers who are teaching about religion in the start of every morning should also talk about peace education and avoidance of violence.
4. Local community peoples should be given equal rights by the government to select their *Mirab / Wakeel* to avoid conflict on irrigation water management among communities.
5. The religious leaders should teach to the community peoples about irrigation water rights according to the Islamic principles, every one have equal rights in using irrigation water and no preference should be given to any one in water distribution.

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## ANNEX 1

### Semi-Structured Interview Check List

Interviewer ..... Date .....

Respondent ..... Age .....

Land under this canal ..... (Jeribs)

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1. How long have you been living this community?
2. Are there any differences between the peoples in the community? If yes give examples for the differences?
3. What is your understanding about conflict?
4. What are the major conflicts in and among communities since 2001s?
5. What could be the reason for these conflicts?
6. How the conflicts were managed by the community peoples?
7. What kind of conflicts is common in this community?
8. Did the conflicts lead to violence in the community? If yes what kind of violence was?
9. Are conflicts rampant? What is the basis for conflict?
10. Did properties and life destroyed in conflict?
11. What do you think how to deal with conflict?
12. What kind of mechanism community peoples are using to resolve conflict?
13. How effective is the local mechanism for conflict resolution?
14. Women's are involved in any decision making process?
15. How did you deal with the conflict when not fully resolved?
16. What are the effects of conflict on community?
17. What is the government and international community role in conflict management?
18. Were you satisfied from the role of the government and international community?
19. For how long have you been involved in agriculture? ..... (years).
20. For how long is this Mirab working? ..... (years).
21. What is the procedure for Mirab's selection and its criteria in your canal?
22. Are you satisfied with the performance of Mirab?
23. When is your turn? Day \_\_\_\_\_, Time \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Do you usually receive water on time?
25. Have you ever faced difficulties from other farmers on your turn of water use?
26. What do you do, when you don't receive the allocated amount of water?
27. What happens to water, when you do not need it?
28. In your view, what changes should be brought to ensure equal and timely distribution of water?

Remarks/Comments

## ANNEX 2

### Revised Semi-Structured Interview Check List

Interviewer ..... Date .....  
Respondent ..... Age .....  
Land under this canal ..... (Jeribs)

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1. How long have you been living this community?
2. Are there any differences between the peoples in the community? If yes give examples for the differences?
3. What is your understanding about conflict?
4. What are the major conflicts in and among communities since 2001s?
5. What could be the reason for these conflicts?
6. How the conflicts were managed by the community peoples?
7. What kind of conflicts is common in this community?
8. Did the conflicts lead to violence in the community? If yes what kind of violence was?
9. Are conflicts rampant? What is the basis for conflict?
10. Did properties and life destroyed in conflict?
11. What do you think how to deal with conflict?
12. What kind of mechanism community peoples are using to resolve conflict?
13. How effective is the local mechanism for conflict resolution?
14. Women's are involved in any decision making process?
15. Why women's and young peoples are not involved in any decision making process?
16. How did you deal with the conflict when not fully resolved?
17. What are the effects of conflict on community?
18. What is the government and international community role in conflict management?
19. For how long have you been involved in agriculture? ..... (years).
20. For how long is this Mirab working? ..... (years).
21. What is the procedure for *Mirab's* selection and its criteria in your canal?
22. Are you satisfied with the performance of Mirab?
23. What do you do, when you don't receive the allocated amount of water?
24. What happens to water, when you do not need it?
25. In your view, what changes should be brought to ensure equal and timely distribution of water?

Remarks/Comments