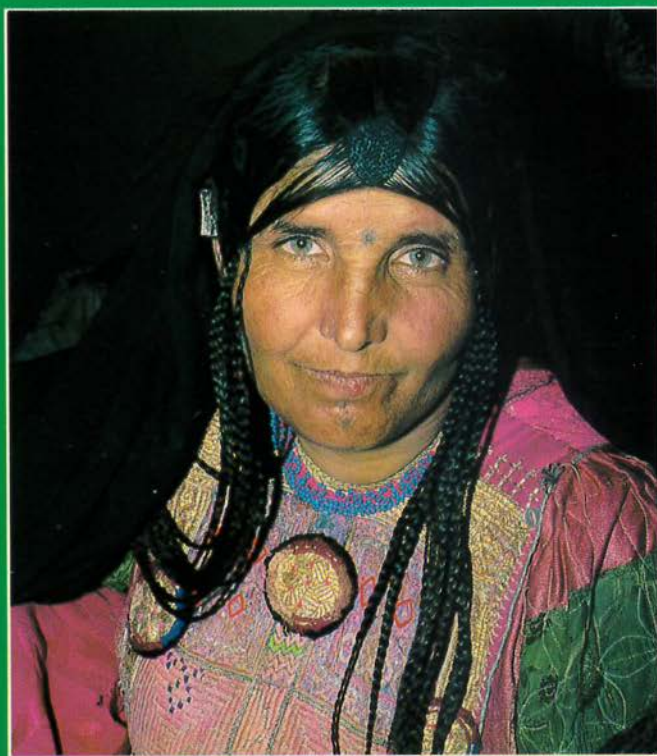




UNRISD *Report*

The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A Chance for Rural Afghan Women



Hanne Christensen

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A Chance for Rural Afghan Women

Hanne Christensen

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

English edition first published in 1990.
Layout: Françoise Jaffré.
Printed by SADAG, France.

Cover photograph: Fay Haffenden.

UNRISD Report 90.3

ISBN 92-9085-001-9

Copyright © United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

Short extracts from this publication may be reproduced unaltered without authorization on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. UNRISD welcomes such applications. UNRISD publications can be obtained from this same address.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute.

PREFACE

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN: A CHANCE FOR RURAL AFGHAN WOMEN

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the public life of the country was almost completely paralysed. Many years of civil war, followed by a period of relative stability, had left a legacy of poverty and despair. A period of reconstruction and development was needed to bring the country back to a state of normalcy.

As a result of the Soviet withdrawal, a large number of Afghan refugees had fled to other countries. The reconstruction process would be greatly helped if these refugees could be encouraged to return to their country. It is therefore, a duty of the international community to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and to help the Afghan people to rebuild their lives and to restore the country to a state of normalcy.

The author, Dr. Christine Chantler, has spent her time working among Afghan refugees in England, and has been involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Afghan people. She is the Director of the Afghan Agency of Oxford, as part of her work within the UNHCR research programme on the Social Integration of Refugees in Developing Countries. She returned in 1986 to conduct a survey of 2,000 households spread over 10 villages, and then went back once more in special autumn 1989 to the Shana Khatel refugee camp in the North West Frontier Province.

In the following pages, Christine Chantler draws upon her experiences, and particularly upon her field research work, to explain the current position of rural Afghan women of the Pushtun group who have had to adapt to the conditions of life as refugees in Pakistan and who now await repatriation. Over the years, refugee families have made considerable efforts to survive and sustain their

PREFACE

Although the issue of women's participation in development is important in all countries, it is perhaps unusually important in the case of Afghanistan. The position which women should occupy in the public life of that society has been the subject of contention over many years; and the dislocation of much of the population as a result of civil strife during the late 1970s and 1980s has only heightened the urgency of resolving this question in a manner ensuring equal opportunities for all Afghan people.

As steps are taken toward the eventual repatriation of Afghan refugees currently resident in Pakistan, all parties to the repatriation process will find it necessary to engage in actions which affect the future role of women in society. In doing so, they should be oriented by a general understanding of the place of women in traditional Afghan culture, as well as by a vision of how women's lives and expectations have been affected by the experience of exile.

This study contributes to providing such background. The author, Hanne Christensen, first carried out field work among Afghan refugees in Pakistan during 1982 and 1983, when she visited Baluchistan and the Frontier area, including the Tribal Agency of Orakzai, as part of her work within the UNRISD research programme on the Social Integration of Refugees in Developing Countries. She returned in 1986 to conduct a random-sample survey of 2,300 households spread over 58 refugee villages, and then went back once more to spend autumn 1989 in the Akora Khatak refugee camps in the North West Frontier Province.

In the following pages, Christensen draws upon these experiences, and particularly upon her most recent field work, to explain the current position of rural Afghan women (of the Pushtun group) who have had to adapt to the realities of life as refugees in Pakistan and who now await repatriation. Over the years, refugee families have made noteworthy efforts to recreate and sustain their

traditional forms of social organization, in which women's interaction with the world outside their families is severely restricted. But, at the same time, the circumstances of exile have encouraged inventiveness and creativity as women have been required to contribute to the household economy, developing income-generating projects in ways which broaden networks of social relations without stepping beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour within their own culture.

In fact, men's often low and irregular earning capacity, as well as their occasional absence during unpaid *Jihad* service, have made it imperative for many refugee women to engage in moneymaking activities; and in some refugee families the realities of war imply that there are no able-bodied males at all. Therefore, although women's moneymaking activities are usually carried out within their homes, and are in consequence not visible to the outsider, they form a vital part of family survival strategies and will continue to do so if the households return to Afghanistan.

Christensen argues that in planning and implementing the reconstruction of Afghanistan, schemes to promote employment, as well as health and education, must be structured in ways which take women specifically into account. Given the pervasiveness of the institution of *purdah*, home-based micro-enterprises could provide appropriate employment opportunities for many women; and health and education programmes should similarly include outreach services which allow women to gather and learn within the setting of their homes. In a situation where certain parts of the population may not move about freely, it is important to recognize the need for aid programmes to go to the recipients, rather than simply relying on people themselves to come forward for assistance. The research report concludes with a series of detailed recommendations for rebuilding rural Afghanistan in ways which should permit the entire population to benefit.

Dharam Ghai
Director

November 1990

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study was supported by a grant from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation. UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and UNOCA (Office of the Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan) provided invaluable assistance in doing the field work. The study was carried out in co-operation with Besmina Hamid, University of Peshawar. All support is gratefully acknowledged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
General	1
The setting	3
Destruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan	9
Chapter 2: THE REFUGEE SETTING IN PAKISTAN	15
General	15
Effects of the war	16
Chapter 3: THE SITUATION IN THE CAMP	21
General	21
Productive women	27
Food producers	33
<i>Purdah</i>	35
Chapter 4: WOMEN AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS	41
General	41
The women in the household	46
Chapter 5: AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN	57
Chapter 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
Women and work	65
Lessons from Pakistan	66
Rebuilding rural Afghanistan	70
Specific recommendations	75
WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83
REFERENCES	89

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
1	Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION
1	General
2	The setting
2	Destruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan
12	Chapter 2: THE REFUGEE SETTING IN PAKISTAN
12	General
12	Effects of the war
21	Chapter 3: THE SITUATION IN THE CAMP
21	General
22	Productive women
22	Food producers
22	Funeral
41	Chapter 4: WOMEN AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS
41	General
42	The women in the household
52	Chapter 5: AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN
62	Chapter 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
62	Women and work
62	Lessons from Pakistan
70	Rebuilding rural Afghanistan
72	Specific recommendations
81	WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN
82	BIBLIOGRAPHY
82	REFERENCES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

General

In the 1970s, the role of women in the social and economic growth of developing countries was seriously examined by social scientists. The emerging modernization of Third World societies was found not to be advantageous to women. Modernization often impaired women's conditions or increased their workload and their control over resources was found to have decreased. Traditional women's roles in agriculture were to some extent eliminated by mechanization and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, while lost functions were not replaced by meaningful new ones. The new jobs that were created by industrialization were mainly occupied by men (Boserup, 1970). Attention was drawn to the fact that rural development policies would not have their intended effect, or might even produce unintended negative results, if the role and position of the woman in the household was not explicitly taken into account. Policies were called for which could both promote women's contributions to the alleviation of poverty in their countries and improve the women's own conditions.

Since then, the question of women's position in society has been an issue both within the social sciences and in current development debates. In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year to encourage full integration of women in all development measures and to enhance the efforts of women to strengthen world peace. The decade 1976-1985 was devoted to world-wide achievement of a greater degree of equality, development and peace for women by the United Nations. Three international United Nations-sponsored conferences have been held - in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985 - to increase awareness of women's conditions and to discuss

adequate strategies for advancement. Recommendations of the 1980 conference in Copenhagen were adopted in resolutions by the General Assembly that same year (General Assembly resolution No. 35/56). The participation of women in the development process as agents and beneficiaries was emphasized. Measures were called for which would generate profound social and economic changes and remove structural imbalances that compounded and maintained women's disadvantages in society. In 1985, a number of strategies for the advancement of women during the period 1986-2000, mentioned further in this paper, were adopted, first at the conference in Nairobi and subsequently, without a vote, by the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly (resolution No. 40/108). The validity of such measures and the importance of overcoming obstacles to their achievement during the period 1986-2000 were recognized (United Nations, 1986). The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women monitors the implementation of the strategies.

Although the issue of women's participation in development is relevant to most countries, the situation of the women of Afghanistan is a special case. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Afghan women's role in society was not visible, and her participation in education, health care and other development opportunities was among the lowest of any nation in the world. Civil strife in the late 1970s and 1980s to a large extent halted or destroyed the progress which had been achieved.

Contemporary studies of Afghans portray a legendary spirit of liberty and self-determination, a people who are clear-sighted about what they want, but whose perceptions of life vary. As a result, a balanced set of values has been difficult to obtain. The position of women is one of the hottest controversies of Afghan society this century. Any modernization of women's conditions to date has been the result of government action. Improvement of their status in legal and social terms has been seen by traditionalists, who have had a strong impact on Afghan society for decades, as an undesirable Western, non-Islamic influence. It has been perceived as a threat to tradition, which would cause unrest in family and community life. Women's participation in public life, in formal education and in the labour force, has therefore been strongly resisted (Myrdal, 1960; Dupree, 1980). Consequently, any improvement of their status that has been introduced by small enclaves of progressives has been met by a corresponding counteraction by traditionalists.

The setting

Afghanistan is landlocked, the shortest distance to the sea from the border being about 450 kilometres. It is mainly a mountainous country, covering some 635,000 square kilometres marked by great variations in altitude, with plateaux, protected valleys and lowland plains and deserts. Vast plains in the north and west contrast with jagged mountains that dominate the centre and east. About 43 per cent of the area comprises regions over 1,800 metres above sea level, including 10 per cent higher than 3,000 metres. Some 46 per cent consists of hilly, elevated areas at an altitude of 600 to 1,800 metres. The remaining 10 per cent of the land is below 600 metres, including 1 per cent below 300 metres (Humlum, 1959). Because of the topography, human habitation is rather scarce in many areas. The country suffers from poor rainfall, except in high areas, plus limited access to reliable water resources and high evaporation in lowland arable regions.

The earliest archaeological evidence of human existence in Afghanistan, dating back about 5,000 years, refers to a transhumant culture, agriculturalists with animal husbandry, moving between habitats at different altitudes. Some scientists believe transhumance was the original form of livelihood (Dupree, 1980); others suggest nomadism first and transhumance and settled farming later (Ferdinand, 1979). What is certain, however, is that the agricultural resources of part of the country can only be exploited in a rational way through pastoralism, since escarpments are too steep for farming.

Most of the population used to be concentrated in lowland areas (300 to 600 metres altitude) and on the plains (1,000 to 1,800 metres) in northern and eastern regions of the country. There were exceptions though. For example, the Hazara and Nuristani tribal groups resided in highland tracts at 2,000 to 4,000 metres altitude. Basic values of the Afghan society, marked by a deep faith in Islam, firm belief in traditions, private property rights and private enterprise, prevail in their purest form among the rural population. Agriculture, based on farming and animal husbandry, has provided the life blood of the Afghans for centuries. Altogether, 10-15 per cent of the total area was arable, although requiring irrigation and fertilization, while about 25 per cent was pasture land (Jentsch, 1973; Humlum, 1959). Transhumance and pastoralism have been integral ingredients of the economy of Afghanistan throughout history. The semi-settled and nomadic pastoralists moved around the areas at 600 metres in winter time and tracts at 2,000 to 3,800 metres in summer, bringing goods and commodities from lowland groups and main trading centres to highland people settled in remote areas

only accessible by horse or camel trekking (Ferdinand, 1962 and 1979).

The rural economy of Afghanistan has encouraged a society based around the family. Communities are scattered over the habitable areas of the valleys and plains and in this situation people tend to live among their relatives, the communities consisting of closely knit clusters of such groups. Thus, the family is the most important social unit in Afghanistan. A typical compound generally includes the paternal couple with children and their families, patrilocality being the norm. A newly married couple usually moves into the compound of the husband's family and girls are generally considered as links between the families, that is between her biological family and that of her husband. Marriage is the norm and most people marry when they are very young. In the 1970s, one third of the population was estimated to be married before the age of 20, and only 1 to 2 per cent of either men or women were estimated to remain unmarried (Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 1981; Government of Afghanistan and USAID, 1975).

Since Afghanistan became a state two and a half centuries ago, the dominant group has been the Pushtuns (Dupree, 1980). The Pushtuns, made up of the Durrani and Ghilzai tribes, have always formed the government, including the present régime in Kabul. Until 1978, the rulers were of Durrani origin, then the Ghilzai came to power. Two official languages are spoken in Afghanistan, Dari and Pashtu, Dari being the older official language and the lingua franca by tribal language speakers in northern Afghanistan. Various ethnic languages are also spoken locally by the different groups. Some 10 per cent speak Turkish dialects.

Afghanistan has been a part of the larger Muslim community for almost 1,300 years and virtually all Afghans are Muslims. The vast majority conform to Sunni Islam, while some 20 per cent adhere to Shia. For centuries women's position in Afghanistan has been influenced by Islamic law, the *Sharia*, of which the Hanafi school (one of the four Islamic schools of thought) is applied in Afghanistan. The *Sharia* gives women inferior status to that of men in various areas, including marriage, inheritance and the law. Marriage is considered a contractual relationship which is arranged by the fathers of the bride and groom. Ideally the couple should approve it, but, in practice, they are seldom consulted. A formal price is part of the marriage contract which is to be paid to the bride's family. Some of it is paid at the wedding, and the remainder subsequently. If the man should want to divorce, the woman can keep part of the price as her personal life insurance. The price can be paid in money, property, land or livestock. A man can have up to four wives, but a woman can

have only one husband. Children of a marriage belong to the patrilineage and they stay with their father in the event of divorce.

Patrilinearity also applies to inheritance, which passes from father to offspring. Women are entitled to half the share of their brothers, but often refrain from claiming it. Instead they obtain the right to support from their fathers or brothers in needy periods. If a woman's husband dies and has no brothers or sons, she can inherit from him for a temporary period. A widow is often remarried to a cousin or a brother of the deceased husband (the custom of levirate). Women can own property through the price fixed for the marriage contract, through dowry from their fathers and through inheritance.

The husband or father of a woman decides whether she can engage in paid work outside the home and women do not have the right to keep their wages. The money is considered to be at the disposal of the husband or father. In the eyes of the law, women have only half the rights of men, for example, two women witnesses are needed for every one male witness. Formally, women have the right to attend the mosque and participate in pilgrimages, but they seldom do so because of *pardah*, an institution which is widely enforced by the Afghans. *Purdah* (meaning curtain) prescribes that women keep out of the sight of men who are not part of their household. This is done by separating men from women through veiling or seclusion of women at home or in separate women's quarters. Similarly, in public areas, women screen themselves with the veil or turn their backs on male strangers.

Female seclusion involves the co-operation of men. Boys learn from early childhood to warn women relatives when men approach the compound walls, to respect the privacy of women and to adhere to the norm that they are not allowed to enter a compound unless permission is granted. The control over *pardah* lies largely with the eldest male household member. Strictly speaking, it is he who decides whether a woman can leave the compound or not. He is also the major decision maker on female education and women's participation in training and employment.

Purdah is one important component of the honour code; honour and honourable behaviour being the most desired status symbol of Afghan society. They are imperative components of the cultural codex and are ascribed to the family or individual members by the outside world. Family life in Afghanistan is nourished by the degree to which honour is bestowed upon the household, and women are crucial in this. They are seen as the bearer of the honour of the family, and the honour of the man is measured by others through the reputation and actual behaviour of his wife and daughters. If they are seen to deviate from the norm by prominent figures in the community, the reputation of the entire household suffers, and the

(male) householder is regarded as incompetent or unable to control his home affairs. Shame, the single most status-depriving social stigma, is then ascribed to the entire household.

In social terms Afghanistan is heterogeneous. It forms the world's largest tribal setting with people of different ethnic and linguistic origin. Before the current civil strife, some 25 tribal groups existed, totalling 12 million between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Almost half of them belonged to the Pathan or Pushtuns, the world's largest tribal group. The majority of these lived in east Afghanistan and the minority in the northern areas of the remainder, some 25 per cent consisted of Tajiks, 20 per cent Hazaras, Uzbeks and Turkmen, and 5 per cent of Baluchi or Nuristani origin. The tribal distribution now is likely to be different, as part of the population has been severely reduced by war casualties, but no exact information is available. Tribal affiliations cut across the settled and nomadic populations, but pure nomadic groups still existed a few decades ago. Since then, part of the nomadic population has gone into farming and the transport sector (Pedersen, 1985). Some 80 per cent of the nomadic population is Pushtun, the remainder mainly Baluchi (Glatzer, 1983). The composition of the population reflects the position of the country as one of the major crossroads of Asia, and people have penetrated and settled Afghanistan for millennia. They came to the country along the Silk Route from Iran or China, or travelled there from the Soviet Union or Pakistan and India.

Afghanistan is also divided along other lines, and observers speak about two Afghanistans, the rural, tribal one and the urban, modernized lifestyle (Carter, 1989). Although Afghanistan has been a state for two and a half centuries and government administration has eventually spread to the entire country, tribal rule has continued to pervade society and tribal structures have worked as parallel political and cultural institutions of immense importance, especially in the countryside. Nation-building has mainly taken the form of subjugation of non-Pushtun minorities and the installing of loyal, powerful Pushtun groups in their regions (Tapper, 1983). Otherwise, troublesome Pushtuns (Ghilzai) have been obliged to observe prevailing Pushtun rule (Durrani). Seen from the perspective of the countryside, Afghan history is an account of resistance against attempts by the state to interfere with the rural lifestyle. Town-dwellers, the minority, were the educated who were employed in government service or private enterprise and dressed in Western-style clothes. Country people, however, the overwhelming majority, were the illiterate agriculturalists or the unemployed, dressed in traditional clothing. 'Reforms' were initiated by the modernized urbanites in a setting where the content ran counter to traditions and had not yet proved valuable to daily life.

In 1958, the sedentary farming population was estimated to number 10 of the total 12 million people. The transhumants and pastoralists made up the remaining 2 million. In 1979, the time of the first census in Afghanistan, the two sections of the population were estimated to be 13 million and 2.5 million respectively, although the semi-settled and the pastoralists were not actually counted by the census-takers (Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 1981). About 85 per cent was living in the rural areas distributed over 2,200 small-scale communities. The urban population amounted to about 2 million, with 900,000 in the Kabul area, and the remainder in five other cities and 57 towns whose populations were more than 50,000 and 2,500 to 50,000 respectively.

In 1979, agriculture accounted for about 82 per cent of the gross national product, and the agricultural sector was the principal supplier of raw materials to industry and the most important source of exportable surplus. About 70 per cent of cultivable areas were cultivated under irrigation. Wheat, maize, barley, rice, cotton, sugar beet, sugar cane, oilseed, fruit and vegetables were the main crops. Animal husbandry was based on cattle, sheep and goat production. Most of the population were small-scale independent farmers. Large landowners existed, especially in the northern provinces, but were rare in irrigated areas where landholdings were commonly 5-6 hectares. Figures are at best estimates, because a nationwide land tenure survey has never been undertaken. Agriculturalists were largely engaged in a self-sufficient structure of production and also produced surplus for the cities and for exports. Export items included fresh and dried fruits, cotton, karakul skins, animal hides, wool and carpets.

In 1979, medical services were poor and unevenly distributed; there was provision for only about 25 per cent of the population and facilities were concentrated in urban areas. Life expectancy was only about 40 years for women and 42 years for men, which makes Afghanistan one of the few countries in the world with a higher life expectancy for men than for women. Observers have noted widespread cruelty by men towards women (Bailleau Lajoinie, 1980; Delloye, 1980). The estimated total fertility rate was seven births per woman (Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 1981). The infant mortality rate was about 190 of 1,000 live births, i.e. almost one in five. Children died from infections, insufficient nourishment and poor hygiene. The most frequent causes of infant death were respiratory infections, tuberculosis, diarrhoea, malnutrition and measles (UNFPA, 1978).

In 1979, some 80 per cent had not yet had any formal schooling, whereas religious education in Koranic schools held in the mosques was widespread. Formal educational facilities were mainly

concentrated in the urban areas, especially higher level institutions. About 30 per cent of the male population above five years of age was estimated to be literate, compared to only about 4 per cent of the female population.

Per capita income was estimated at US \$160 but this probably applies to only a small fraction of the population (World Bank, 1981). The labour market consisted mostly of men. About 70 per cent of the adult male population was considered economically active, earning some cash income, while women were estimated at less than 8 per cent (Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 1981). Gainful employment of women was considered to reflect shamefully on the husbands, though, so many instances of working women are likely not to have been reported. Most women were employed in urban areas, the highest percentage being professionals, administrators, technicians and typists employed by the government. A smaller segment was in self-employment or in sales and production (Knabe, 1977). Rural women were mostly self-employed in handicrafts. For example, carpets were made by rural women in various regions of Afghanistan, mostly around Herat and Kandahar, and embroidered products were produced in almost all provinces. Women are reported to constitute 87 per cent of workers producing handicraft items for sale (Hatch Dupree, 1989).

Women's conditions began to change in the 1920s, when Amanullah, King of Afghanistan, initiated a reform programme. In 1921, the first girls' school was established and higher educational institutions followed. He attempted to abolish the practice of female seclusion and women were encouraged not to wear the veil. People were accorded the right to choose their own marriage partners, and women were allowed to form their own associations. Rather provocatively and forcefully, Western dress for both men and women was introduced (Hatch Dupree, 1978). The reforms provoked anger and in 1929 the population rose up in resistance. Civil war broke out, and the king fled the country. Nine months later a new king was proclaimed. All previous reforms relating to women were halted and Islamic law reintroduced to reinforce women's traditional position within the family and society. In the 1930s, female educational programmes were resumed at a low pace.

In 1959, Daoud, the prime minister, resumed the challenge to *purdah* and the wearing of the veil. Again, resistance was organized by traditionalist segments of society, mainly by *mullahs*, who formed the religious hierarchy. The reformers held sway, though. Lower and higher education for women was increased. Women were allowed to enter universities. Women's participation in the work force was encouraged. In 1964, women were recognized as equal to men in law and they were given the vote. From 1965 to 1972, four

women took their place in parliament; two became ministers (Rahimi, 1986). In 1971, the marriage law was amended. People were now legally entitled to choose their own marriage partners.

The next phase of reforms was launched in October 1978, some six months after the Saur revolution, when married life was regulated by a new law, and female education improved in a rather unusual manner. The government of Afghanistan issued a decree with the explicit intention of ensuring equal rights for women and the removal of what they perceived as unfair patriarchal and feudalistic ties between husband and wife. It was recognized that women were economically exploited in Afghan society, and the decree therefore outlawed traditional, cultural practices which were economically significant. It was prohibited to put a price on the bride and the woman's dowry was limited. Forced marriages and the practice of levirate were outlawed and marriage through subterfuge or coercion prohibited. A minimum age of marriage was set for both genders, 16 years for women 18 years for men. Literacy programmes were expanded with the objective of supplying all adult citizens with basic reading and writing skills within a year. In contrast to earlier literacy programmes, coercion was used to persuade women to come to classes (Edwards, 1988).

The content of decree No. 7 and the coercion of women into education were perceived by some as unbearable interference in domestic life. The prohibition of the bride-price also prevented the traditional transactions and ruined the economy of many households who had counted on this bride-price as convertible capital for the future. Compulsory education was also disliked because the male householder could no longer be in control of the women and their external relations; if women were not in *purdah* then the reputation of the household was at risk. These kinds of sentiments against the reforms are taken by many observers as the main reason for the early resistance (Boesen, 1986; Edwards, 1988). Reaction was soon to follow. After the announcement of the decree, serious resistance against the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) régime was organized in Paktia and spread rapidly to other areas of east Afghanistan.

Destruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan

From 1979 to the present time, Afghanistan has been torn apart. An estimated 8 million people are now uprooted. About 3 million have fled to safer areas inside Afghanistan, another 3 million to Pakistan, and about 2 million to Iran. The social structures of the country are split between groups residing inside the country and those abroad. The lives and economy of millions of people are

ruined. Able-bodied men are caught up in the war, and women face a radically different situation, whether they remain in Afghanistan or join the streams of refugees to Pakistan and Iran.

The war is estimated to have claimed about 1 million lives so far (Sliwinski, 1989). There are still several million land mines spread over the countryside in the *mujahiddin*-controlled areas (UNOCA, 1988). The vast number of mines creates not only immense anxiety but will inevitably claim more lives. Three times as many men as women have been killed, and, as a result, the ratio of men to women in the Afghan population has changed. In 1979, the population was estimated to comprise 51.5 per cent men and 48.5 per cent women, which is the normal ratio. By 1987, there were estimated to be more women, 50.2 per cent, as against 49.8 per cent of men. The human loss is greatest in the age range 31 to 50 years, the age when most men participate actively in the resistance, and also the prime work age. In addition, some 300,000 people are estimated to have been maimed, most of them women (Sliwinski, 1989). Some 700,000 women are estimated to have been widowed as a result of the casualties (UNOCA, 1988).

The agricultural sector of the country has been seriously affected, particularly those who live by subsistence farming. More than 50 per cent of the farming population is estimated to have had its fields bombed, about 25 per cent its irrigation systems destroyed, and about one third its livestock killed. Total agricultural production in 1987 is estimated to have reached only 53 per cent of the pre-war level of 1978. Wheat, the staple of the Afghan diet, which accounts for more than half of the cropland, has also declined significantly, irrigated wheat by 33 per cent, dryland wheat by 50 per cent. The decline is partly caused by the effects of the war, but also because families have been forced to move, so that consequently they are smaller in number. For the same reason, hired labour is no longer available to the same extent as in 1978 (Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 1988).

The infrastructure has been seriously damaged. Two thirds of the country's schools have been abandoned or destroyed. Gross primary school enrolment is estimated to have dropped from about 30 per cent in 1978/79 to about 18 per cent in 1986/87, with girl pupils constituting only one fifth of the latest figures. Actual attendance is most probably considerably lower. More than 60 per cent of the rural health centres have been destroyed, while urban facilities seem to have been relatively unaffected. Infant mortality is estimated to have increased to more than 220 per 1,000 live births and life expectancy to have dropped to about 38 years for both sexes. More than one third of the villages existing before the war have been demolished. Thousands of people are now homeless. They have gone to stay with

relatives in other areas, caves in the mountains or areas controlled by the Kabul régime, in search of safety, access to medical services and casual employment in order to survive. The population of Kabul is reported to have swollen to 3 million people. Other towns controlled by the Kabul government have also experienced considerable population increases (UNOCA, 1988).

Following the Geneva Accords of April 1988, the United Nations has designed a comprehensive programme of rehabilitation of the country for the period 1988 to 1993 and hopes to return as many Afghan refugees as possible to their original homes. Although war is obviously still affecting Afghanistan, there are areas where people can live in relative peace, and reconstruction projects have already been launched by a number of agencies.

The programme includes nationwide rehabilitation of people's livelihoods and emphasis is placed on the rural sectors. For each year, a separate plan of action is envisaged. The plan for 1989 was drawn up for the specific purpose of (a) preventing food shortages, malnutrition and further suffering by war-affected populations, especially vulnerable groups; (b) ensuring that conditions are conducive to prompt rehabilitation of returning refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin; (c) implementing projects contributing to longer term rehabilitation of the Afghan economy; and (d) initiating data collection and planning activities for longer term reconstruction and training of the Afghans. Mine clearance in unsafe areas is a priority as is reconstruction of the physical environment to make the countryside inhabitable again, and to reconstruct and rehabilitate the infrastructure of Afghanistan, including the repair of roads and improvement of health and educational facilities. It aims to provide shelter for the displaced population and return them to their homes. A systematic return of agricultural production to its previous levels and the replacement of lost agricultural technology are envisaged. Food aid to people in dire distress is also planned for a limited period until other means of livelihood have been developed (UNOCA, 1989b).

Clearly, a new era of development is foreseen. The reconstruction is on a mammoth scale and rapid progress will require the positive contribution of all Afghans, men and women alike. The question of who exactly will be involved has so far only been partially addressed. While vulnerable groups have been identified for special programmes (disabled people, orphans, widows, etc.), no mention has been made of the needs of Afghan women specifically or of their potential for participating in the rehabilitation efforts. They seem rather to be clustered with the disadvantaged groups (UNOCA, 1989b).

The fact that women are not mentioned is not unusual for a national reconstruction plan - men are not mentioned either. The emphasis is on the country as a whole, not on a segment of its population. Yet the conditions of the women of Afghanistan, as described above, are such that they call for special consideration if women are to be assured their share of development, and the rehabilitation programme offers a unique opportunity to incorporate projects which will activate their potential on a huge scale. It would be an obvious task and an opportune time for the United Nations, in collaboration with the wider international community, to design and implement strategies already adopted in principle for the advancement of women's conditions. An extract from the strategies recommended at the 1985 conference will serve as example.

"The gender bias evident in most development programmes should be eliminated and the prejudices hindering the solution of women's problems removed. Particular attention should be given to the restructuring of employment, health and education systems and to ensuring equal access to land, capital and other productive resources. Emphasis should be placed on strategies to assist women in generating and keeping income, including measures designed to improve women's access to credit."

(United Nations, 1986)

A first step has already been taken. In August 1989, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) organized a workshop, the aim of which was to draw attention both to the specific problems of Afghan women and to the remedies. The workshop very explicitly recommended involving Afghan women in the planning of the reconstruction of the country and a number of concrete strategies were recommended to ensure their active involvement. A focus on women in the context of their homes and communities was stressed; so was the involvement of men in development programmes targeted for women, in order to gain their acceptance and support of women's projects. It was also emphasized that women's needs can often be met by their own kinship-based networks, reaching women through other women (Christensen and Haffenden, 1989).

The study presented here is an independent investigation which UNRISD decided to undertake, in order to draw attention to the vulnerable segments of Afghan society, in terms of their marginality as well as their resourcefulness. It examines the role of rural Afghan women within the household economy and their

potential for improving the standard of living of their families. The study was originally intended to concentrate on women inside Afghanistan, but was reoriented to focus on Afghan refugees in Pakistan as the security situation impeded field research in Afghanistan at the time. The aim was to discover the niches these women could fill in the present reconstruction process and in the future and to suggest feasible projects at household and community levels. A small sample of various Pushtun groups in a cluster of camps in Pakistan was selected for interviews. Pushtuns are considered to be the most conservative Afghans, in terms of their view of women's work and position in society. By studying their situation, information about women's involvement in the household economy at the lowest level and for a large part of the population will be available to help with the future reconstruction programming.

The study is based on documentary analysis and field work carried out in Pakistan, particularly in the Akora Khatak refugee camps in the North West Frontier Province, during autumn 1989. It also draws on previous research on the Afghan refugee situation carried out by the author at UNRISD, including two focused studies of the food situation and related social aspects of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan (1982-1983) and a large-scale representative random-sample socio-economic survey of 2,300 households spread over 58 refugee villages representing all refugee-affected provinces in Pakistan (Christensen and Scott, 1988).¹

NOTE

1. The three studies were carried out under the UNRISD research programme on the Social Integration of Refugees in Developing Countries, which the author led from 1983 to early 1990. In 1982 and 1983, field work was carried out in a few refugee camps in Baluchistan and the Frontier, including the Tribal Agency of Orakzai. The author also stayed with refugee families in the camps. The research, which was based on in-depth interviewing and participant observation, focused on the living conditions of the refugees, their relationship to the surrounding Pakistani population and the development potential of the refugee communities (Christensen, 1983, 1984 and 1987). The relationship between the social structure of the refugee communities and reception of aid was demonstrated. Recommendations were made for improvement of the distribution system and for development-oriented policies and programmes. The survey of 1986 was conducted with a team of interviewers and compiled by statistical computer analysis. It focused on the employment

structures of the refugees, their levels of income and reception of aid. The self-sufficiency potential of the refugee populations was examined at group and household levels. Large groups of vulnerable refugees were identified (Christensen and Scott, 1988; Christensen, 1989). The research reports of all the three projects have been widely distributed within the international community and to agencies operating in Pakistan. Findings and recommendations have been used extensively by United Nations agencies and NGOs for adjustment of projects and policy design. The reports are used as teaching material at several universities.

Chapter 2

THE REFUGEE SETTING IN PAKISTAN

General

When the Afghans started fleeing their country around 1978, the majority headed for Pakistan, as mentioned earlier. Families, hamlets and segments of tribal communities are known to have fled together into Pakistan or to have sought to join one another in exile. Millions of head of livestock are thought to have gone with the refugees, although nobody knows the exact number.

Some evacuees headed for the immediate rural border areas adjacent to Afghanistan. Others went straight to urban centres or drifted there after a brief period in the countryside. Some settled down among tribesmen or on land belonging to Afghan landlords among the refugees and to Pakistani tribal kinsmen (Pushtuns among Pushtuns, Baluchis among Baluchis). Tenure arrangements were made with tribal communities and landlords in a locality, or refugees were located on government land. Accommodation areas mushroomed in various provincial districts and tribal agencies, some rather small, while others became huge concentrations of cramped human habitation. It was noticeable that the leaders of the former hamlets and tribal communities in Afghanistan were active in finding suitable areas of settlement and motivated their people to resettle together.

Up to 1979, refugee sustenance was provided by the government of Pakistan and the local host population, or the refugees supported themselves. From 1980 onwards, the international community launched various large-scale aid programmes to supply the basic needs of the refugees. Food, a tent for shelter, cooking utensils, clothing, footwear, quilts for bedding and other essentials were distributed and medicines provided. The government supplemented this aid with a subsistence allowance, which was paid to the refugee householders.

In the early phase, the government authorities co-operated with the refugee leaders of the various *mujahiddin* groups to identify and register the refugees. Over time, the parties appear on the whole to have successfully enrolled the leaders of the refugee communities in their ranks, and gradually these leaders were in turn able to enlist other refugees. The leaders were directly involved in the various distribution efforts. Government personnel and the staffs of the international community were too small to implement the programme unaided. Responsibility for the various assistance measures was handed over to the parties and the refugee leaders residing among the refugees. As government staff increased, a new procedure was introduced. Refugee householders were issued with ration cards and aid was given upon presentation of the card direct to the government staff.

At the end of 1989, the Afghan refugee population in Pakistan was estimated to comprise between 2^{1/2} and 3 million people. Most of them had entered the country before 1981, i.e. in the early stages of the civil strife, but refugees were still arriving at the end of 1989. Some 350 camp-like villages have been established and are administered by the government of Pakistan. They are spread over three of the four provinces of Pakistan, the North West Frontier Province (the Frontier), Baluchistan and Punjab. About three quarters of the refugee population is now settled in the Frontier. The refugee/local population ratio averages one to six in the province. But in some areas, the refugees are as numerous as the local population, or they outnumber the Pakistanis. About five sixths of the total refugee population is settled in government schemes, and the remainder has settled independently in the major towns, especially Peshawar.

The refugee settlements are mostly crowded accommodation. They are situated in Pakistani residential districts in both rural and urban areas. Usually, an Afghan refugee village is a separate unit, but in some cases, local villages and refugee villages are interconnected.

Effects of the war

The decimation of the Afghan population, particularly men, has had a devastating effect on the refugee communities. Of adults actually residing in Pakistan, women have been found to outnumber men by five to three. One fifth of adult married women are estimated to have been widowed due to war casualties (Sliwinski, 1989). In addition, at any given time, a certain percentage of adult men and older boys are absent on *Jihad* in Afghanistan. In 1986, about 8 per cent of the entire male refugee population was found to be absent

from the camps on *mujahiddin* service in Afghanistan (Christensen and Scott, 1988). Although these figures do not directly relate to war casualties, they do point towards a considerable temporary (sometimes permanent) absence from the home community of Afghan men.

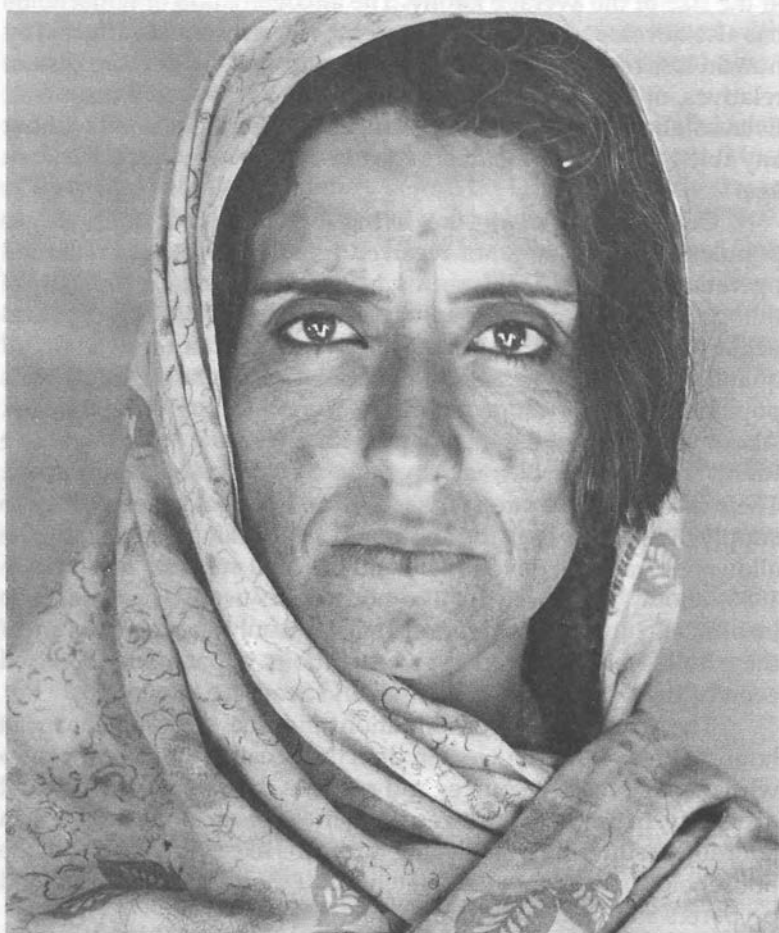
In the refugee communities, the average family size is 8.5 members as against 6.2 in Afghanistan. This is due to the health service having been extended to refugees since 1980, which has improved living conditions of the population and reduced the infant mortality rate by more than 20 per cent, leading to an overall increase in the size of the average family. The amalgamation of households has also developed as a coping strategy, whereby people affected by human loss regroup into larger compound units with more distant relatives, or in exceptional cases with friends, and pool resources. Even so, about 12 per cent of the refugee households are still without any able-bodied male members aged 18-50 years, i.e. the prime work age.

Other issues mark the living conditions of the refugee population. They have not received regular deliveries of the aid operation as intended. This seems inevitable, given the complexity of the programme, but the refugees are obviously directly and negatively affected by it. When food rations are not received in full quantity, they have to find an alternative. Most of the adult male population have developed sources of income through employment. About two thirds of the men in the prime working age group have found employment, the majority of them in the casual labour force. Their incomes are in most cases low and irregular, too scanty to supply the cash needs of the household, even taking into account the allowance from the government and the food supplies received. In 1986, about 70 per cent of the households were found to have insufficient incomes for bare essentials, and only about 20 per cent of these households received full wheat rations. Other food rations fell even below this level. (Christensen and Scott, 1988).

The inadequate food situation and the scarce incomes at household level hit the women directly, because they are the ones who manage these resources and see to it that there is food to eat every day. In times of shortages, women are particularly strained. In addition to suffering from having no means like everyone else in the household, they cannot adequately fulfil their crucial role as food preparers and household managers.

Observers have repeatedly noted that Afghan women refugees suffer from depression and emotional imbalance. This is particularly so among groups who have been directly affected by the casualties. The roots of their depression are manifold. Part of the refugee experience is multifaceted emotional stress combined with a

limitation of choices to make in life and the limbo conditions of exile. There may be less to do for many women and there is evidently more reason and time for worrying. Widows suffer from grief over the loss of their husbands, mothers and sisters over their dead sons and brothers. Unhappiness with the changed position, which such deaths cause, is also noted. In Afghan tradition, a widow would be remarried to a cousin or a brother of the late husband (the levirate). Often, the widow and the children would have to move to a different compound and adjust to the new household as secondary members (Anderson, 1982; Boesen, 1986).



Part of the refugee experience is multifaceted emotional stress combined with a limitation of choices to make in life and the limbo conditions of exile. Afghan refugee women are noted to suffer from depression and loneliness. Some feel they are shadows of themselves compared to what they were in Afghanistan.

UNHCR/D.A.Giulianotti

Women have also been found to feel somewhat redundant in their daily lives. The functions they have now are different. The food they consume requires less processing. Wheat rations in grain form are received once a month, if deliveries come through. As much fresh food as they can afford can be bought individually by the households. The compounds are smaller than in the home environment in Afghanistan and require less daily work. Boys may be at school, the men may be working or absent on *Jihad* in Afghanistan, and the women and girls are left behind in crowded refugee villages. Women feel lonely when male family members are absent, on *Jihad* or seeking employment. They tend to regroup them-selves in one dwelling with women neighbours or kin from nearby compounds in order to benefit from the mutual support and emotional security which physical and social proximity to others in somewhat similar situations can give. The medical service centres, which are attended by refugees with psychosomatic disorders as well as the physically ill, reportedly also function as places of 'excursion' which women visit to seek the company of others (Taft, 1987). Feelings of loneliness, fear and guilt over having left relatives and friends behind in Afghanistan are reportedly overwhelming psychological problems, created by the refugee situation (Hatch Dupree, 1988).

By contrast with the depressive illnesses suffered by women in the refugee communities, female independence is evolving. Afghan women have found their own way of contributing to the household economy. Afghan girls start learning domestic handicrafts in early childhood as part of the ongoing socialization process which continues through adulthood. Girls are normally trained at home - a tradition which has been continued in the refugee setting by the refugees themselves as a coping strategy, and which has also been developed into professionalism. At the national level in Pakistan, about 9.5 per cent of the women above 11 years of age in camps were active income-earners in 1986. Practically all were set up in self-employment inside their compounds; 2 per cent were in casual labour employment, mainly as domestic servants for other refugees, and less than 1 per cent were in permanent employment in the health sector of the refugee operation. The majority of the self-employed women are 25-50 years old, but substantial numbers of girls aged 12-17 years and elderly women assist in paid self-employment. In most cases, the women earned very little - on average less than Rs.100 or about 8 dollars per month - but 5 per cent of them earned enough to support an average-sized family (Christensen and Scott, 1988).

Given the age and sex structure of the refugee population, there are approximately 64,500 women in the female work force, if the refugee population of 2.6 million registered by the government of Pakistan at that time is taken as the basis for calculation. Of this total

female work force, about 62,800 are self-employed, 1,300 work as casual labourers and around 400 are in permanent employment, mainly in the health sector of the refugee operation. The self-employed, who form the majority of working women, are an interesting group. It consists of enterprising women, who in the course of a few years have found a formula through which they can obtain means of living for the benefit of the entire household, while still observing the strong cultural customs that bind them to their homes, and, at the same time, keep an eye on infants and household matters. In by far the most cases these women have developed their own employment situation spontaneously, without any support from the agencies. In 1986, income-generating projects for Afghan refugee women were still at the experimental stage. At most a few thousand were part of NGO- or United Nations-sponsored projects. They are an important pool of resources for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan, because they have found a solution to the problem of how women can contribute to the development of their country in a way that is acceptable to the culture of their society.

To many of those involved in the Afghan refugee situation, the employment and income-earning of the refugee women is a surprise. Because of the social structure of the refugee communities, women lead a largely hidden life and are often invisible in the villages. Whatever information exists about their situation has taken years to compile and it is only other women who can have access to them and evaluate their needs and potentials. As is the case with many other refugee situations elsewhere in the world, agencies involved in the Afghan refugee operation have few female staff, so that in-depth knowledge about the problems and potential of the Afghan refugee women has been scarce.

The following chapters report on the role of women in the household economy in the Akora Khatak refugee camps in Pakistan. The effect of women's work at the household level is discussed and implications for future aid programming are summarized.

THE SITUATION IN THE CAMP

General

Akora Khatak is located in a rural area about 80 kilometres west of Peshawar and now forms the hinterland to Akora township, a place which is reported to have blossomed since the establishment of the refugee camps. Nowshera, a garrison town, which accommodates the local district administration, is 10 kilometres away. Some of the Afghan resistance parties also run local offices there. Akora Khatak is a cluster of eight camps. In total, the camps accommodate some 50,000 refugees or about 8,700 households according to the registers of the camp administration. The first camp was established in 1985, the others subsequently. At the time of the study, camp number eight was a holding centre for a few thousand new arrivals from Afghanistan who were in transit, awaiting relocation to a brand new camp to be constructed nearby. The new arrivals were living in precarious conditions. Tents had not yet been distributed. Food supplies were scarce, and the refugees were desperate. They had been in Pakistan for two or three months and were starving. Their money had dried up, and they were sleeping on the ground without proper cover. UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the Pakistani authorities were sorting out their situation.

Akora Khatak covers about 10 square kilometres. It is a hilly area. Accommodation is located in the hills, with infrastructural facilities like schools and market places in lowland tracts. Some of the camps are interspersed with farmland belonging to residents of Akora. Apart from camp number eight, most refugees live in self-made *katcha* housing¹, a few in brick-built houses. Quite a lot of new construction was shooting up. Compounds were enlarged by more rooms, *mehmankhanas* (guest rooms for men) and stables for

livestock were being built. All compounds are fenced in with metre-high *katcha* walls to conceal the female inhabitants from passers-by.

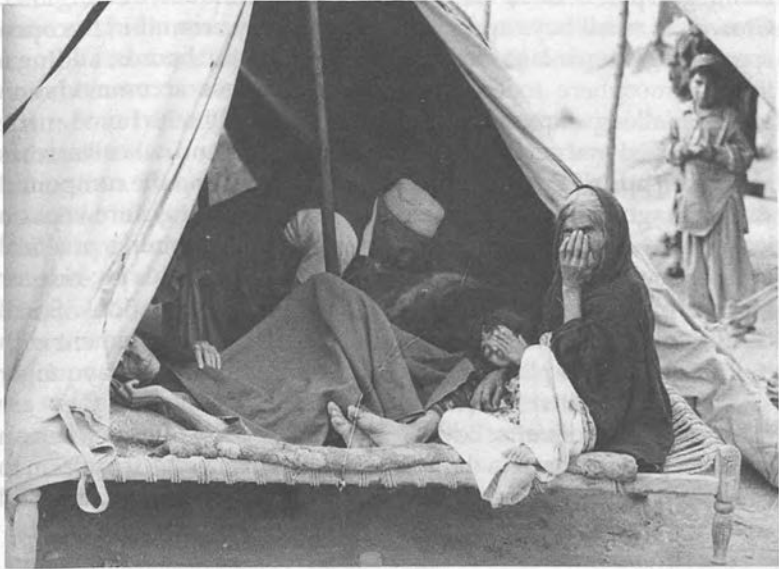


Most refugees live in self-made katcha housing. Compounds are fenced in with metre-high walls to conceal the female inhabitants from passers-by.

UNHCR/D.A.Giulianotti

Compared with earlier periods of the settlement process, the camps now give the impression of being habitable (except in the case of camp number eight). There is a distinctly human look about them. The compounds are built as small-scale farm houses or urban terraced housing and there are people in every corner of the camps. The compound walls echo to the sounds of yelling and joy, the ringing of school bells or announcements from loudspeakers in the mosques. The presence of domestic animals is notable. The refugees keep dogs to watch their compounds, donkeys to carry ration supplies from the distribution centres to the homes, and cows, goats, sheep and poultry in and outside their compound yards. A refugee dustman collects the waste from the compounds and tracts in between, and both camp and compound areas are on the whole kept neat and clean. Mice, on a constant hunt for the grain rations or sugar bits, are observed both in the compound yards and inside the houses, and are obviously a daily nuisance, especially to the women and children.

Housing and vegetation are intermixed. Trees, bushes and flowers grow in and outside the accommodation areas. Streets and lanes of the main concentrations wend their way around the hills and neighbourhoods. Bazaars mushroom everywhere, offering a wide assortment of foods and commodities. Wood sellers put up wood sheds in many lanes, providing the refugees with access to firewood.



Apart from camp number eight, few were still in the tents supplied during the initial settlement period.

UNHCR/S.Errington

The refugees came from the provinces of Nangrahar, Kabul, Baglan, Loghar, Lagman and Kunar in eastern Afghanistan. A small group came from Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan. The refugees are mostly Pushtuns. Small enclaves of Tajiks and Nuristanis live among them. Both the Durrani and Ghilzai Pushtun tribal groupings are represented. The former is the more numerous and includes the sub-tribes of Mohammad Zei, Mughal, Issa Khel, Omar Khel, Safi, Sawzo, Shinwari, Toumari and Tara Khel; the Ghilzai comprise the Kharud, Khatak Khel and Sama Khel.

The camps are divided into large areas of cramped habitation and small-scale settlements around the periphery. Farmers and urbanites live in the concentrations, nomads and transhumants on the outskirts. Usually, the two groups belong to the same tribes, but the latter have deliberately chosen to live in small groups away from the mainstream areas because they find cramped habitation claustrophobic. Most of the refugees live among their close relatives.

Many had previously been assigned to other camps in Pakistan where they lived among strangers. Others had tried their luck as self-settled, non-assisted refugees in Peshawar but had found living conditions there too harsh.

As noted earlier, the fertility rate of Afghan women is high and children are visible everywhere. A special children's universe is now an integral part of camp life in contrast to the situation in 1982-1983. Crowds of small boys and girls roam joyously around in the open spaces and narrow lanes in between the refugees' houses, adding a lively atmosphere to the somewhat colourless accommodation areas. Smaller groups or individuals play happily with home-made toys of wood and scrap-iron. Miniature trucks and wheelbarrows are driven up and down the hillsides in the lanes and the compound yards. Dragon kites are flown in the air, butterfly toys are kept on leads by toddlers. Older boys ride donkeys, combining practical errands such as buying food at the camp bazaars with a joy-ride, or they help the bazaar owners with their price calculations. Small children study the mud for *katcha* construction and experiment with it. The older girls play mainly with each other or their younger siblings and relatives inside the compound walls, or they are occupied by handicrafts. Boys and girls have pillow fights when an occasion presents itself in the *mehmankhanas*. In general, they seem to be happy children who enjoy playing together or being creative and useful.



A special children's universe is an integral part of camp life. Older boys help out the bazaar owners with their price calculations.

UNHCR/A.Diamond

There are boys' schools in each of the camps, but only one for girls. Literacy rates for the camps are not available. At the national level in Pakistan, the rates for the refugees are 41 per cent of the males (51 per cent of the boys aged 5-11 years, 53 per cent of those aged 12-17), and 3 per cent of the females (4 per cent of the girls aged 5-11, 1 per cent of those aged 12-17). There is still strong opposition to girls being educated. Some parents would like to have their daughters educated at home as long as girls' schools are in short supply in the camps and a qualified school teacher has started giving lessons to volunteers at home in the afternoons.

Boys typically wish to hold clerical positions in banks or local administrative offices in Afghanistan after completion of their education. They believe that such jobs will give them an easy and carefree life with a steady income and guaranteed housing. The traditional occupation of parents in agriculture is felt to be too remote, and the education they have received in the camp has created different expectations. They would, however, like to have a piece of land and animals to care for in their leisure time, or as a fall-back position, should clerical jobs not be available when they return to Afghanistan. Girls mainly wish to stay at home or work in trades inside the compounds. A few would like to work at a health centre.

Projects to sustain the refugees in the camps are implemented within three parallel structures, namely, the Pakistani government administration, the resistance parties and NGOs. The government office functions as the local village administration. It records migration in and out of the camps, births and deaths. It receives and distributes food and other relief rations to the refugees (wheat, milk, sugar, tea, edible oil and kerosene). It supervises law and order in the refugee communities. Public schools and dispensaries established by the government in the camps are also under its supervision. The administration operates as a separate enclave in its own quarters, usually located at the entrance to the camp. The relationship with the administration is dealt with by the adult male refugees or older boys. Women refugees are seldom in touch with them, apart from widows without older sons. Women refugees know little about the administration, except in their crucial role as food managers.

The parties run schools in the camps and health facilities in Peshawar. They recruit and train *mujahids* from the camp and organize the *mujahiddin* service inside Afghanistan. In principle, they recruit from every household with able-bodied males above 18 years. In practice, younger boys also participate in *Jihad*. All seven parties of the Alliance are represented in the camps and the entire adult male refugee population seems to be enrolled. At the time of the study, the two strongest ones were Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party, led by Gulbadin Hekmatyar) and Jamiat-e-Islami (Islamic Society,

led by Burhannudin Rabbani). All parties have their own perceptions of the woman's role in society, but these two are at the extremes of the scale; Hizb-e-Islami at the conservative end and Jamiat-e-Islami at the more liberal. However, both parties support the *purdah* institution and believe that the woman's place is primarily in the home. The presence of the parties is an integral part of camp life. Party affiliation follows kinship networks and party officials and other members in the camps are all related and live alongside one another. Women are well aware of the parties. Knowing that their children can be educated and trained through the party structure and that treatment can be obtained for the sick, they are prepared to support the projects of the parties as an alternative to those of the Pakistani government.

NGOs manage income generation and training programmes for a small segment of the camp population. They are based in Peshawar but have out-reach workers who supervise the work in the camps in specific centres or directly in the homes of the refugees. In many cases, projects are designed to be a closed self-supporting circle, trained refugees are hired by agencies after the courses, or materials for handicrafts and other production are provided by an agency which at a later stage also buys up the products. Over the past few years, income-generating schemes have focused increasingly on women without male providers, because experience has shown that tribal and kinship structures operating in the camps are unable to support many of the households that have lost their able-bodied adult men during the war. Handicraft production, tailoring and carpet-making are the main trades developed for women. NGO project staff are known to the refugees and they function as channels of communication between the camp population, the management layer of the agencies and personal contacts in the NGO community. Refugees voice their needs and concerns to them about the lack of opportunities, and the agencies receive useful information about the situation of their projects and the general conditions in the camps.

The three structures do not operate independently. Apart from the official exchange of information, news travels freely and informally. Some of the local NGO staff members are enrolled in the *mujahiddin* parties, and refugee party members work as auxiliaries for the camp administration or as employees in the public schools and dispensaries. Each structure knows about the project and plans of the others. New policies can reach the refugees and become the subject of discussion in the communities and individual households before the projects are actually launched.

Introduction of income-generating schemes for women is a case in point. It is considered an extremely sensitive issue by many agencies and salient difficulties simply in raising the issue, let alone

launching the schemes, are reported from various camps (Kaldor, 1988). When project ideas are discussed initially with the tribal elders of the refugee communities, certain individuals may be in favour, but the collective reception is sometimes unenthusiastic and sometimes completely disinterested. Proposed projects have often been simply refused, so that a good deal of persuasion can be required to arrive at some sort of acceptance. When projects have been launched, prominent community figures such as *mullahs* have in some cases overtly obstructed project meetings and harassed women who wanted to participate. Husbands of project beneficiaries have been pressurized to forbid the women from leaving the compound for the collection of tools and materials. Although women have disagreed with the reaction of the *mullah* and their husbands, they have had little possibility of overruling their authority. Problems have typically been solved by elderly women who have defied male authority and functioned as intermediaries between project staff and beneficiaries. NGO project officers have also been exposed to pressures, in some cases to violence, from the male community, and in Pakistan there is a general consensus among the agencies that supporting income-generating activities among Afghan women is a constant source of trouble. Implementing these kinds of projects is still thought to be difficult, because it affects both the traditional role of the Afghan women in their communities and men's pride. Nonetheless, it is regarded as a very important project area to develop. It is merely a question of finding feasible strategies.

When the kinds of situations described above are discussed with the refugees, they are convinced that projects have been made known to the men beforehand and that a general attitude in accordance with prevailing norms has been agreed by them before the public meeting takes place. They argue that for this reason it may be a disservice to the cause in the short term to introduce women's projects through public meetings with tribal council members. In an Afghan setting, it advertises poverty and male ineptitude since the needs of the women are supposed to be taken care of by the men. Few would be willing to participate positively in the meetings because of the implicit criticisms. To show interest at meetings and support the resolutions in public later on is tantamount to signalling failure and a dereliction of duty on the part of men. Both men and women know this.

Productive women

The size of the group of women engaged in the official income-generating schemes is a couple of hundred for all Akora Khatak, and

various NGOs have set up projects there. The phenomenon of women working for income is quite widespread though, and most of them have developed their own employment discreetly, without involving the community. In 1986, almost 4 per cent of the female camp populations in the greater Peshawar area were engaged in gainful employment (Christensen and Scott, 1988). In the case of Akora Khatak, the number of working women would be 955. In the field study, 40 out of 50 households visited at random had one or more women engaged in self-employment, set up in business inside the compound. None was part of a project, but they knew projects had been established for others and would have liked to have participated as they felt it would give them a more regular flow of income. About 30 of the 40 women had already worked for money in Afghanistan. Both working and non-working women knew of other women in the neighbourhood who had started working after settling in the camps or who had left the camps temporarily with their husbands to help them out with labour service for nearby Pakistani farmers.

The self-employed women were mostly engaged in traditional female pursuits. Those who had already worked in Afghanistan were in their old trades. Those who had not had simply commercialized skills learned during childhood. Tailoring, carpet-making and embroidery occupied one half, one third and one tenth respectively, while one woman had established herself in quilt-making and two were food vendors. The tailoresses were mainly from Nangrahar, carpet-makers from Baglan, and embroiderers from Kunduz and Kunar. Tailoresses had bought their machines locally in Pakistan, most frequently in Peshawar or wherever prices were competitive. Carpet-makers had bought timber from local merchants and the men of the household had built the looms. The means for the equipment came from savings brought along from Afghanistan or loans obtained from relatives.

It was mainly mature women whose first-born children could take full care of themselves who earned income. Young women were either from very poor households or had no children yet. Two thirds were 30-40 years old, 15 per cent were 20-25, while about 10 per cent were either younger than 20 years or older than 40 years. In about half the cases, which constituted almost all the weavers and the embroiderers, two or more women of a household work jointly on the same carpet or major item of embroidery (prayer mats for instance), but only one of them is counted as the income-earner, and that would be the older woman. When large-sized carpets are made (e.g. 4 by 6 metres), five to six women work jointly on it. Typically, a mother is assisted by her teenage daughters and even younger ones. More rarely, two in-laws co-operate - primarily two sisters-in-

law. The tailoresses work alone though, because sewing is perceived as an individual task. Women look after their sewing machines with affectionate care and lend them only reluctantly to their closest relatives. A sewing machine is as much an intimate status symbol to an Afghan refugee woman as a firearm is to an Afghan refugee man.



An Afghan refugee tailoress with her sewing machine. Sewing is perceived as an individual task. Women tend their machines with affectionate care and lend them only reluctantly to their closest relatives.

UNHCR/A.Diamond

Most of the working women earn very little. A few are high-level earners. Ten women earned Rs. 50-75 per month, 15 obtained Rs. 100-200 per month (low earners), 10 had about Rs. 300 per month (medium earners), while five women earned more than Rs. 1,000 per month (high earners).

The level of earnings is determined by the length of time the woman has been employed and by the kind of products she makes. The low earners are those who have started within the past year, or whose products relate to seasonal festivity only. Those on an average income have been employed for several years but have irregular sales, or work part-time. The high-earning women have all been engaged for four to five years in Pakistan and were also self-employed in Afghanistan. They are typically members of households where the entire family forms a closely knit production

unit with a carefully co-ordinated division of labour between men and women. The women produce while the men or sons arrange for an adequate supply of materials and effective marketing. Women on high incomes were found among producers for both the internal camp market and external markets. With three exceptions, those with average or high earnings were tailoresses and carpet-makers.

The participation of women in income-earning work is related to several issues. There is a strong need component. In 10 of the families, deficient food rations were a constant problem and they had started work to be able to purchase what they did not receive from the distributions. But the prime motive was money shortage in the household because of low and irregular male earnings, male unemployment or men's commitment to unpaid *Jihad* service. Clearly, women engage in remunerated work in periods when income obtained by their husbands or other adult male household members becomes unstable or ceases altogether. The women supplement the men's efforts and replace their contribution to the household economy as needed.

In 10 of the 40 households only women were the sole income-earners. Three households had no able-bodied males at all. Four had widows at the head of the family and the sons were minors. In three households, the householder was too old to work and grown sons were away on *Jihad*. In half of the households, female earners had low incomes, four had average earnings and one had high earnings.

Most households depend heavily on the women's earnings. In about a third of the cases, female income makes up as much as a quarter of the total household income; in half of the cases, nearly half of the total income; and in a fifth of the cases, more than three quarters of the total income. It is the incomes of the low- and high-earning women which make up the large proportion of the total household incomes. The earnings of the women carry the households over in periods where men earn little or nothing. Only two of the households could do without the incomes of the women. They were the wives of school teachers who were in permanent, relatively well-paid employment.

Women's incomes, though, are mostly irregular or seasonal, partly because they supply seasonal needs. *Eid*, for instance, is a good period for all of them, but embroiderers have limited sales beyond that time. Tailoresses and carpet-makers sell all year round, but carpet-makers often experience long and unpredictable periods when they sell nothing because the professional buyers come only occasionally to the camps or are difficult to contact.

Income-generating work gives the women greater self-confidence but also stressful periods when finished products pile up in the compounds and sales are slow. They feel that they fulfil an

important and meaningful function for the household. They understand clearly that they are (co-)providers for the family and that expenditure on food and other essentials is dependent on their earnings during periods of little or no male income. They consider themselves as active, constructive participants in the household economy. But they suffer from frustration and feelings of worthlessness if they cannot offload their products in times of need. This obviously applies particularly to women who are the sole providers for their households.

The work also has other values for the women. It offers escape from worrisome thoughts by helping them to concentrate on other matters. In other words it is a form of therapy. They all find that the work has made their life more tolerable and all of them want to resume work after repatriation to Afghanistan, if conditions so require. About three quarters wish to resume work in any case, including the women of 4 of the 10 households who did not work in Afghanistan.

In line with traditional Pushtun values, all of those interviewed, women and men, think of the males as the bread-winners, whether or not they actually do provide for the family in financial terms, unless, of course, a woman is the only adult in the household and it is obvious to everybody in the community that there is nobody else to support it (with the exception of the situation where men are present but incapacitated or otherwise unable to work). Women's income is generally regarded as supplementary, even if it is actually more than this. Apart from households with a woman at the head, the initiative for women's work came from husbands who had asked the women to help secure the future of the children.

Tailoresses and embroiderers had developed their own circle of customers among female kin and neighbours in the camps and were running a business on their own. Religious and tribal customs require extensive ornamentation of the houses and of the women themselves, in particular at times of religious festivals but also in daily life. A small but constant domestic market exists in the camps based on the purchasing power of the more affluent refugees, and the tailoresses and embroiderers rely on it and on the demand from the local bazaars of Akora. Carpet-making women were dependent on male household members and external carpet-dealers to market the products. The carpet-makers produce for external markets in Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi.

In all the cases, husbands and householders were agreeable to the women's work. None of the women worked clandestinely, without the knowledge of the male household group. Nobody dared to do so. But a low profile was kept vis-à-vis the community in order

to avoid being stamped as shameful. Wherever possible, the knowledge that a woman is earning an income is kept within the household or a close group of kin and friends. Both men and women are eager to conceal it, except the educated who have managed to establish their own norms in the community; men, because they risk loss of prestige within the community for having allowed their women to perform men's tasks; women, because they have feelings of solidarity with their husbands or because the latter want them to be discreet. It was necessary to interview several families more than once because it was discovered that a women was working but this had not been disclosed at the first interview. It was too sensitive to be voiced in the first instance.

An important factor in determining the amount of a woman's earnings is the degree of constant support she receives from adult male members of the household. Although men can originally suggest that a woman develops an income, the support they give to the working woman in daily life can vary depending on three factors: education, occupation and tribal affiliation. The better educated the husband and/or householder is, the more understanding and appreciation are expressed for women's work and the higher is her income. High-income women earners belong to the Toumari and Mughal tribes of the Durrani. Among the non-formally educated, pastoralists fully support women's work and encourage it by involving their young daughters. Those in sedentary occupations, however, are traditionalists. They belong to the sub-tribes Khatak Khel and Kharud of the Ghilzai Pushtun and Omar Khel and Safi of the Durrani. While the men know that women's income is needed and can make a solid contribution to the maintenance of the household, they still think it would be better if the household could do without the work of the women because it is against traditions. They feel split between acute need and their own inability to provide properly for their families. They sense that they do not live up to what is required of them as real Pushtun men, so they support the women only half-heartedly.

The households without women earners belong to the Sawzo, Mohammad Zei and Shinwari sub-tribes of the Durrani grouping. The 10 households covered both poor and well-off households. Women were not allowed to work by the men in the well-off households, nor were they interested in doing so. The women of the poor households had permission to work and seemed motivated, but had not yet been able to establish self-employment or develop other opportunities.

Data show, however, that men's attitudes are shifting in favour of women's income-generating work. When women earn enough to support the household alone for months, men tend to give full

support. Unemployed men feel relieved of the stress which shortage of money usually causes them in idle periods, and employed men realize that the women can replace their income during periods of *Jihad*.

Food producers

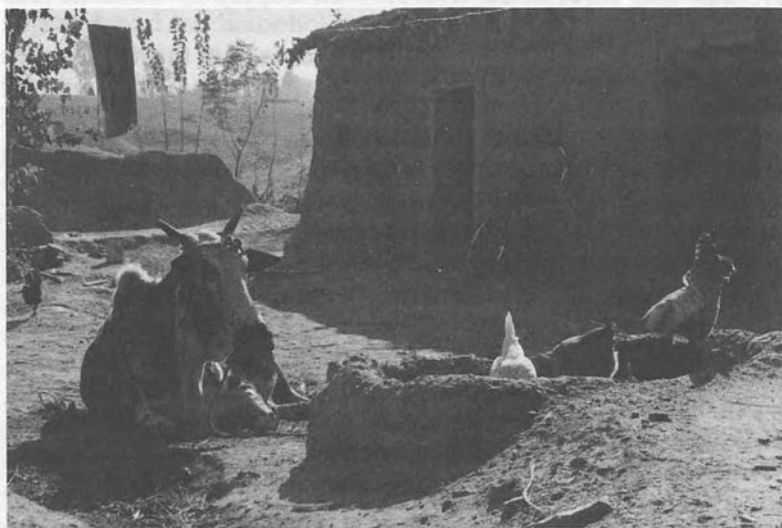
Refugees are not allowed to own land in Pakistan, at least not in government-controlled areas. In the tribal agencies, some of the camps are located on land belonging to the refugees' own tribesmen. On a national scale, only a few per cent of the refugees have access to crop land in Pakistan, whereas an unknown but similarly small number have found pasture land for their animals.² Some refugees have established kitchen gardens inside the compound or nearby in the camp. The proportion of refugees cultivating land in Pakistan is uncertain, but horticulture can be observed in rural districts of the Frontier and Baluchistan wherever the supply of water in and around the camp allows for it.

In Akora Khatak, some refugees have entered into land tenure agreements with local farmers. Kitchen gardening and animal husbandry are being developed in the compounds. About 10 per cent of the households visited had rented small plots from Pakistani farmers, ranging from a few hundred to a couple thousand square metres, where they grow potatoes, onions, spinach, lady's finger, cabbage and maize or fodder crops. In most cases, the crops are for home consumption and the yield is consumed quickly. Apart from sun-drying, crop-storing methods are unknown to the refugees. The rent was Rs. 15 per month for every 100 square metres. Another 10 per cent assisted local farmers at peak work periods and received green fodder as pay. Some 20 per cent had developed horticulture inside the compound yard and were growing cabbage and potatoes interplanted with fruit trees yielding figs, plums and oranges. Kitchen gardens were about 100 square metres in area. About 15 per cent cultivated fast-growing bushes for fuel wood inside the compound or in vacant spots in the neighbourhood. Horticulture and fuel wood cultivation had been developed because incomes were too low for regular purchase and the distribution of rationed fuel was irregular.³

Horticulture was initiated three years ago by former farmers from Nangrahar and seems still to be confined to refugees from that province. Two nomadic families started vegetable and green fodder cultivation in and around the compounds two years ago. They consult their farmer neighbours in case of doubt. Men are the main cultivators, but the women take over when the men are on *Jihad*. The

produce is sufficient for a few months of consumption at best and only supplements ration supplies.

All informants breed poultry and, apart from new arrivals, the entire camp population keeps chickens for regular supplies of eggs and meat for special occasions. Chickens are fed on chaff from the wheat received through the ration distributions. One refugee household was found to breed quails for home consumption and sale. Some 10 per cent raise cows and goats or sheep. Cows and goats are kept inside the compound. A household normally has one or two cows producing about 5 litres of milk a day. Sheep are raised in the neighbourhood areas or on pastures outside the camp. Animal husbandry was reported to have increased in the camps since spring 1988, after the peace scheme for Afghanistan was signed. Cows were originally introduced by nomadic people and taken up by neighbours in the camp. Some had brought in animals from Afghanistan. Others purchased livestock locally and now sell the offspring to fellow refugees.



Except for the newcomers, everybody breeds poultry, and about 10 per cent raise cows and goats or sheep. Cows are kept inside the compound.

H. Christensen

The initiative for food production was reported to have come from both men and women. Men began the farming and horticulture, women the animal husbandry. Men rented plots from local farmers after having worked for them as casual labourers at sowing, weeding and harvest times as soon as sufficient means had been accrued. As means increased, young animals were procured.

Women saw the raising of animals not only as a source of reliable supplies of milk, eggs and meat but also as safe investments for the household against which cash could be raised for major household expenditure, like weddings, or as convertible initial capital for resettlement in Afghanistan. The presence of animals in the compound was reported to have a calming effect on the household members, especially children and women, and the animals are treated as pets. Livestock was only procured when reliable supplies of fodder had been secured.

Purdah

Purdah implies submission, respect and abnegation. In its strictest form it involves the isolation of the woman within the compound and precludes her from any form of contact with men other than her husband, father, brothers, mother's brothers and maternal male cousins. In practice, it means that women are enveloped in veils day and night, even in sleep. In some cases, the veil is replaced by a cloak (*burqa*). When external errands are necessary, wealthy women go out cloaked from head to foot, with a small embroidered 'grille' to enable them to see.

The veil and cloak symbolize the seclusion of women. Young girls and women walking around outside the compound make sure that their heads and necks are completely covered. In public areas they stand with their backs to adult foreigners. Inside the homestead, the veil symbolizes the separation of women from most male visitors.

Purdah is a strong social institution which is differently applied by various age groups. Adolescent girls from puberty to marriage are allowed to leave the compound on their own to collect water. From marriage until the birth of the second child, a young woman is restricted to the compound and dwelling and allowed to visit her father's and brothers' compounds and those belonging to her sisters' husbands only when escorted by her husband. Likewise, she may not attend the dispensary unless her husband accompanies her. Women with more than two children may make unescorted trips to visit family members or neighbours or to attend the health facility. After the age of menopause, women are again granted the liberty to move around the area unaccompanied. Thus, *purdah* in its strictest form applies to young married women.

Purdah cannot be enforced without the co-operation of men. Boys and men warn the women of their compound whenever an adult male approaches it and make sure they are not visible to the visitors, before they are allowed to come in. Boys are taught by both their mothers and fathers to respect the seclusion of women and not

to enter a compound as adults before the householder or his replacement has explicitly granted them permission.

When closely related visiting adult males present themselves at the compound, the host's wife and other young women (frequently his unmarried sisters) remain in the house and cook for them. Eventually, these women may form a separate listening group during subsequent discussions, also in case the visitor is led into the *mehmankhana*, screening themselves with their veils. They may also communicate with the visitors in whispers through their veils. The same happens when one adult male compound member visits a neighbour's dwelling. When other male groups approach the compound, these visitors are either led into the *mehmankhana* or young girls withdraw from the host's dwelling.

Purdah is also applied in interaction with other women. Younger ones, for example, extend their veils in front of them, hiding their faces, in order to honour older women, such as, for example, their husbands' paternal aunts.

On occasions when women feel insulted by male relatives or their husbands, *purdah* is used as a refuge. In such cases, the women withdraw to the kitchens or stand with their backs to the men. A newly married woman may also practice avoidance behaviour to indicate disapproval of strong emotional relationships between her husband and his sisters, or to express a general aversion to her new family.

As applied in the refugee communities, *purdah* appears at first glance to be exclusively controlled by the immediate male relatives as far as exchanges between women and other men are concerned. In fact, however, the degree of application of *purdah* within a circle of closely related men, turns out also to be determined by the woman's personal character. The observance of *purdah* also varies in degree, depending on the economic situation of the family.

Contrary to most observers, who think the *purdah* system has been reinforced in Pakistan (Boesen, 1986; Taft, 1987; Hatch Dupree, 1988), refugee women have different perceptions. On the one hand, *purdah* is reported to have been strictly observed by people who live in small enclaves among multiple unrelated groups in the camps, including highly educated women, and by nomadic women who were not subjected to *purdah* in Afghanistan. Anxiety about exposure to strangers practising different customs and traditions was reported to have caused the reinforcement. On the other hand, *purdah* is reported to have been relaxed by newly arrived refugees who live in tents and move in open areas where women's activities can be seen by crowds of neighbours. Women of high status families of urban background who, in the refugee setting, now have their relatives closer to their compounds than before in Afghanistan also

reported less strict adherence to *purdah*. They felt they could move around fairly freely. Unrelated neighbouring women who had developed strong friendship ties with each other were also seen entering each other's houses.

In general, the distance covered by unescorted women was taken to be less now than it used to be in Afghanistan, because people live in more cramped accommodation in the camps. The close proximity of the neighbours, though, has made it possible for the women to visit more homes on their own. Women can now enter a full cluster of compounds by entering one directly from another from the inside of the compound yard without being seen by passers-by, because compounds are contiguous with connecting gates. Where compounds are located at the edge of the community, women walk on special pathways behind the compounds.

Women sometimes use a *burqa* when making unescorted errands in the community and it is clearly considered a status symbol by non-nomadic women. But as the *burqa* is too expensive for everyday wear, the veil is more frequently worn. Alternatively, women use the *burqas* of their relatives.

Purdah is deeply ingrained in Afghan life and to observe *purdah* has positive connotations for Afghan women in the camps, yet not all manage to do so. *Purdah* is most strictly observed by marriageable young girls and married women with one or two children, but those of low-income families are exempted from *purdah* in order to be able to work. In nine tenths of the households *purdah* was practised, while women of all ages of the five poorest households were free to move around in the camps with the consent of their husbands or sons. Whenever women join their husbands to work for the Pakistani farmers, for trips to the bazaars of Akora Khatak or Peshawar or to attend marriages in other refugee camps, they wear *burqas*.

Afghan women respondents practising *purdah* are unanimously in favour of it. They feel protected by it and find that it ensures them privacy and the right to withdraw from unpleasantness. Without exception, they feel revealed if they do not observe *purdah*. Although to outsiders it seems to limit their personal freedom and physical mobility, they themselves see no restriction. They think that they have a large measure of control over their freedom and feel that they can go everywhere they want to. They are convinced that they can persuade their husbands to let them go further away than the nearby compounds, if need be. None of the women found that *purdah* restricted their work and, contrary to what an outside observer might think, the women do not believe that *purdah* locks them up in their own separate universe; it merely keeps out men.

Purdah as an institution is rationalized in a number of ways. Many Afghans think that *purdah* originates in Islam and there are passages in the Koran which can be interpreted to support seclusion and the veiling of women. The fact that the Koran prescribes that women remain in their homes, to cover part of their bodies with a veil, and that the Prophet's wife is to be addressed from behind a curtain is interpreted as Koranic support of *purdah* (Arberry, 1955; Knabe, 1974).

In reality, however, *purdah* is much older than that. It was already practised in ancient Greek town cultures and by the later Christian communities in the Byzantine and Zoroastrian cultures in Iran (Dupree, 1980). Arabian crusaders migrating between these areas and Afghanistan in the centuries following the death of Prophet Mohammed are assumed to have taken on the custom as a cultural loan and transmitted it to the Afghans (Rahimi, 1986).

Purdah is also interpreted differently by them. Pushtuns are noted for regarding both men and women as lustful, as tempting each other and for seeing the separation of women as an effective means of avoiding mutual temptation (Anderson, 1982). *Purdah* is regarded as a safeguard for women against physical attacks from men who are not related to them (Boesen, 1986). It is considered as a kind of protection for threatened communities against a dangerous and unpredictable world, which safeguards the security and privacy of the women (Hatch Dupree, 1988). But it can also be seen as a mechanism of male control over women's movements and participation in societal institutions. There are undeniably fewer to challenge those who participate in public life, if the number of participants is limited by exclusion of half the adult population.

NOTES

1. *Katcha* houses are built of bricks made of dung, grass and wheat stalks mixed with mud and water.

2. In 1981, unofficial estimates from Pakistani government sources held that 80,000 pastoralists had crossed the border to Pakistan with their animals and were living either from nomadism or as registered refugees in camps. The pastoralists are noted for having attempted to cope with the situation in Pakistan, in four ways: some continued pastoralism in the border areas of Pakistan, or bought up land there to have legitimate access to pastures (Ahmed, 1982); others exploited the limited grazing areas in or near the major towns of Peshawar, Islamabad and Rawalpindi (Glatzer, 1988; Pedersen 1987/1988), or sought pastures in the northern settled

districts of Dir and Mansehra in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Sweetser, 1984). For discussions of the evolution of nomadism among the Afghan refugees, see cited references.

3. The irregularity of the ration supplies to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan is well known and repeatedly documented (Christensen, 1983 and 1984; Christensen and Scott, 1988). Ever since the operation started in 1979, the monthly distributions have been irregular and mostly deficient. A few dry food items are handed out. Fresh food is not distributed. Wheat in grain form and kerosene for cooking and heating are the items most regularly distributed. Even so, a 20 per cent deficiency is not uncommon.

WOMEN AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

General

Afghan women in camps in Pakistan live in a relatively familiar universe in which traditional patterns play an important part. They see their main tasks as caring for the household members and keeping the house properly. Work outside the home is clearly of secondary importance. The compound environment is the universe of the women. All domestic activities are carried out there. Female kin and friends can discuss things freely there, especially how well the men are providing for the family or the behaviour of the children, as well as their upbringing. In addition, a day may be spent to make beautiful dresses, how to ornament themselves with jewellery, how to arrange children's hair, to do hair and make up the face. Ornamentation and make up are used extensively to enhance their own appeal. Women's femininity is expressed in traditional facial expressions and beauty, modesty, a neat appearance, dignity and domesticity.

The women manage the household, they pay the bills, they are in the training and education of their children, who are in the sick or the hospital who have been wounded or in the war and nursing them with care and love. They arrange the distribution of food and necessities, prepare the meals for the family and clean the compounds. At the time of the study, many women were also engaged in preparing food, clothes and chimneys for a short run in the approaching winter season, and the children of the household who had been being orphaned thoroughly and retained.

Afghan women have a very heightened sense of beauty and its importance. Ornamentation is integral to all aspects of their life, from birth to death. Making jewellery and ornamenting

Chapter 4

WOMEN AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

General

Afghan women in camps in Pakistan live in a distinctly feminine universe in which traditional pursuits play an important part. They see their main tasks as caring for the household members and keeping the house properly. Work outside the home is clearly of secondary importance. The compound accommodates the universe of the women. All domestic activities are carried out there. Female kin and friends can discuss things freely there, especially how well the men are providing for the family or the achievements of the children, as well as their upbringing. Instruction is also given in how to make beautiful dresses, how to ornament themselves with jewellery, how to arrange elaborate hairstyles and how to paint the face. Ornamentation and make up are used extensively to increase their sex appeal. Womanliness evidently is perceived to consist of facial expressions and beauty, modesty, a neat appearance, fertility and domesticity.

The women nurture the babies, play happily with the toddlers, see to the training and education of older children, take care of the sick or the *mujahids* who have just returned from the war and massage those with sore limbs. They arrange for the purchase of food and commodities, prepare the meals for the family and clean the compounds. At the time of the study, many women were also engaged in fabricating *katcha* stoves and chimneys for indoor use in the approaching winter season, and the clothes of the household members were being overhauled thoroughly and repaired.

Afghan women have a very heightened sense of beauty and its importance. Ornamentation is integral to all aspects of their life, from birth to death. Making handicrafts and ornamenting

themselves, their children and the compound give them great pleasure. They spend considerable time on these occupations and would not be without them. Even in poor households women were found to possess materials for handicrafts. Embroidered aprons are made for men to use when they are shaving. Covers are made for beds and hangings for the walls. They make cloths on which the food is presented and covers for coffers in which household supplies and utensils are kept. They make embroidered pillows which are used as chairs. Or they weave carpets both with traditional patterns and new, war-related ones which they have learned in Pakistan. Embroidery and carpets are produced for home consumption, as wedding presents and as reserve valuables which can be traded off in needy times.

Women also consider handicraft as a kind of therapy, a mental escape from the worries of a life in exile, idleness and the longing for the past. They feel they had a fuller life back home in Afghanistan, which occupied them differently. They were emotionally balanced, without worries or feelings of guilt concerning missing children and relatives. There was a daily supply of food from the fields or herds to process for sale or home consumption. There were more animals to care for and cut fodder for. They felt they were whole human beings at that time. In the camps, they are like shadows of themselves.

Visits are made regularly to relatives in other camps. Visits are considered the **outings** for the refugees, a pleasant change from the daily routines and worries. Families go together, men with women and children, or women alone with their children escorted by older sons if the householder grants them permission. They leave the camp by cars, trucks or buses owned by fellow refugees or by the parties and pay a minor transport fee (Rs. 12 for adults - no charge for children at the time of the study). Visits are mostly made in connection with weddings or funerals. News of both kinds of event is transmitted by word of mouth and finally announced in the mosques of the camp. Weddings are the single most popular event, and they create an atmosphere of excitement in the entire neighbourhood. People rush to the bride's place eager to participate and have a good time.

Children are one of the major sources of a good and meaningful life. They are considered as carriers of happiness, wealth and security for their parents in their old age. Birth control is seldom practised, except by those educated in the towns.

In Afghan Pushtun non-nomadic society, the birth of a boy used to be celebrated with great festivity, whereas the birth of a girl was often greeted with silence, if not regret (Knabe, 1977; Boesen, 1980). Among the nomads, though, the birth of girls was celebrated

(Ferdinand, 1962; Tapper, 1977; Tavakolian, 1984). These customs are still in practice in the refugee setting. For the non-nomads, boys and men are perceived as more important human beings. They count far more than girls and women. There is a deep-rooted premise of inequality between the genders built into the social structure.

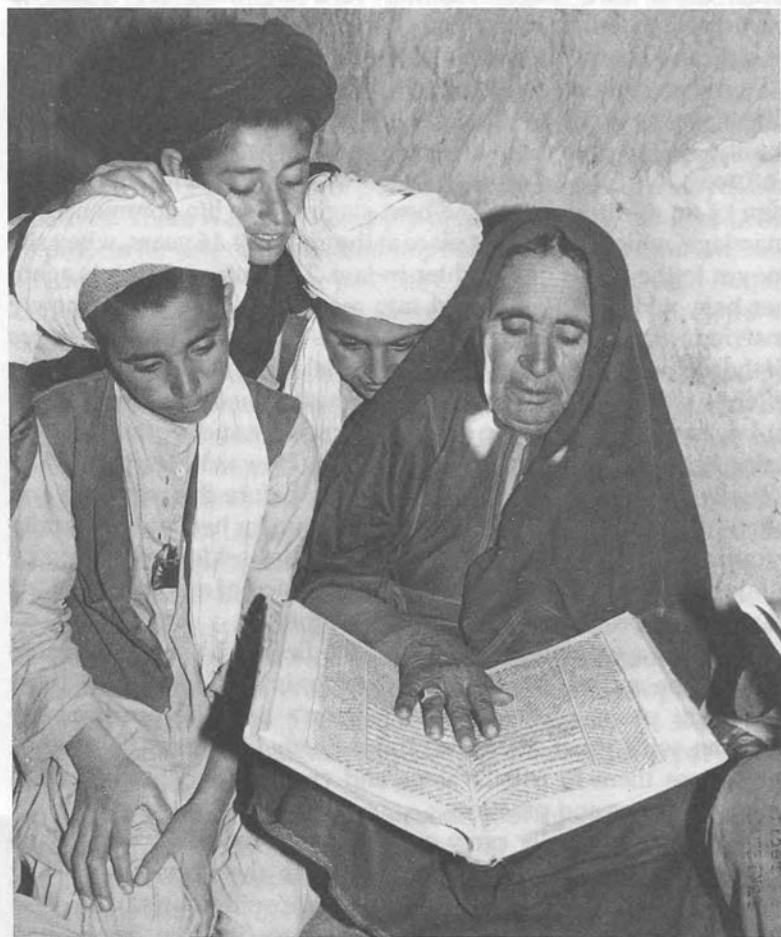
Children of both sexes grow up in intimate proximity to their mother and other female relatives of the compound. In early childhood, they move freely between the male and female groups in the household. At the age of eight to nine years, segregation of girls from boys is practised. The boys spend most of their time with their fathers and elder brothers, who instruct them in male virtues and tribal laws. Girls begin wearing veils and they are urged to participate in female household chores. Boys begin feeling superior to girls and show this to their sisters by ignoring them.

When girls reach the age of puberty, *purdah* is enforced and direct contacts are then restricted to the males of a girl's immediate family, i.e. to those whom she cannot marry. When *purdah* is enforced, it is marked outwardly by her growing hair, which is the sign of an adult woman. The next stage of her life commences at marriage, which often takes place at the age of 14-16 years, when she moves to the status of daughter-in-law. The outward sign is again her hair, which is now parted into many small plaits. The newly married woman serves her in-laws and is ascribed the lowest status of the women in the household. The initial period after marriage can often be particularly stressful and onerous for the bride. Her mother-in-law has a certain right to demand her service and is often noted as using her to rid herself of unwanted tasks (Howard-Merriam, 1988). Usually she has not met her new family before the marriage and often suffers deep-felt loneliness and longing for her paternal family group. Visits from her biological family are seldom practiced or allowed by her in-laws during the initial period of marital life. She is to stand the problems of the transition alone.

When a woman gives birth to the first child she gains more status. She enters motherhood, which is the ideal and most important phase of the Afghan woman's life. She nurtures her children with great attention, trains them in decent behaviour, introduces them to tribal values and customs and teaches them religious mores and practices.

Women normally carry out the search for suitable marriage partners for their sons and discuss it with their husbands. They usually make the initial proposal to the bride's parents and do a good deal of homework beforehand in order to find the best suited candidate. As marriages seal long-term relationships between families, it is important to find a girl who can provide the right connection. Through this the mother plays an important part in

framing the future of the son and in establishing the supporting network of the household. When the first grandchild arrives, the status of the woman is again favourably changed and, at menopause, the highest level is achieved. She now has a large measure of physical mobility and can leave the compound at her own will. She is the distinct authority in female matters within the household and she may play a significant advisory role for the adult male household members in their affairs. If married sons settle in the paternal compound after marriage, the mother will be the manager of a rather large household with considerable direct influence over the lives of her sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren.



Afghan women instruct the children in tribal values and customs and teach them religious mores and practices. Often the grandmother is essential in this process.

UNHCR/S. Errington

The *pardah* institution puts great demands on the women to develop close and co-operative relationships among themselves because they spend most of their time together. The demands are particularly heavy for the junior women who have to comply with their mothers-in-law. If conflicts occur, all are affected, but the younger ones are likely to suffer most because they occupy marginal positions in the household. Junior women often feel unwanted until they give birth to their first child, and they have nobody to relate to if their husbands do not support them in quarrels with the in-laws. Many are never really accepted by them.

The woman's prestige is nourished by her fertility and, especially, by the number of sons she produces. The more sons she has, the stronger the family line will be in the future. A woman without any children is destined for an unhappy life. Her position within the household is weak, and the man usually takes another wife. Dubious remedies based on superstition are turned to, or the health clinic is constantly visited for advice and explanations. Responsibility for childlessness is usually ascribed to the woman, unless it is known to the entire community that the husband is impotent, or has proved unsuccessful at becoming a father through several marriages.

Marriage for the Afghans is of the utmost importance because it is the only legitimate way of bearing children. As mentioned previously, the choice of marriage partner is almost exclusively made by the parents. At very best, the bride and groom may be consulted. The marriage is considered a contractual affair between families with the woman as the object of exchange. Preferences of the future bride and groom are considered irrelevant. Marriage is regarded as a connection between a man and a woman (or several women) based on mutual loyalty, in which affection may - if at all - develop over the years.

Marriages are usually regarded by others as great events. *Purdah* is suspended at marriages. Kinsfolk, friends and neighbours rush to the particular compound in eager willingness to attend. A plentiful meal is served and joyous festivities are held, accentuated by shots fired into the air to signal the new ties between the families. The marriage may have been arranged to make new political alliances or to signify the cessation of former kinship and tribal feuds. In cases where considerable bride-prices can be claimed, it may also have been arranged to increase the means of the bride's family at a given time. The girl may be married to a paternal first cousin with whom she played as a child. Or she may be married off to an elderly man from another locality. In the refugee situation, exchange marriages with no bride-price involved were reported to be the most practised custom, with the girl wedded to a young man

in return for a marriage between his sister and the girl's brother. Few of the refugees see any other way of making marriages. In most cases, their means are too meagre for bride-prices. In the interviewed households, one 15-year-old girl had been married off by her family for approximately US \$4,000 to a wealthy 50-year-old Afghan Tajik refugee, settled in a camp in Baluchistan, as his second wife. He was obviously euphoric about the marriage, but she had sunk into paranoid depression. Her father was restless, her mother haunted by feelings of guilt. The bride-price was planned to cover the repatriation to Afghanistan.

In marriage, the woman enjoys in principle the right to be provided for. If her material needs are not met, or if she is treated in a cruel way, she can seek refuge in her own paternal family or with her brothers, although this seldom happens (Bailleau Lajoinie, 1980; Delloye, 1980). However, the option is there, known both to her and the husband, and this sets some limitation on possible mistreatment. Alternatively, she can turn to practising magic and cast spells on him. If her emotional life is too frustrating, she can playact by reciting romantic poetry or take the risk of an extra-marital relationship. Pushtun poetry (*landays*) provides plenty of love songs made by and about women, giving their imagination free run about the adventures of non-marital love affairs. In reality, if a man is dissatisfied with his wife, he can divorce her (though this is seldom done in practise), take another wife, or like her, seek extra-marital partners. Such relationships do seem to be extremely rare, given the degree of control the *purdah* system sets on the movements of the women. When they do occur, however, it is often kept secret by the women. The solidarity among the women of a household can be stronger than a mother's loyalty to her son. There is obviously considerable risk involved in extra-marital relationships. Custom prescribes that the husband take revenge if he discovers it by killing his wife and this is actually done, both in Afghanistan (Boesen, 1983) and in the camps of Pakistan (own field data, Orakzai refugee community, 1983).

The durable character of the marriage makes the woman invest her efforts in becoming as good a wife, mother and housekeeper as possible. As one informant said, "We do not decide on our lives or choose our marriage partners. Therefore, we do all we can for our husbands to make them love us, to have the most gorgeous children and the best kept houses" (extract from interview, autumn 1989).

The women in the household

A compound is usually inhabited by an extended family: the parents with their daughters and sons, nephews perhaps, and the

families of adult sons and nephews. The nuclear families have usually each built their own houses but share the men's *mehmankhana*, pantry, a pit latrine, and possibly a stable for the animals. Otherwise, the families have a room each in the same house. There are separate kitchen facilities, and each married woman with her children has her own oven. The yard in the compound is shared. There is no screening between the families but there is between these and the outside world. The yard functions as a living space for the inhabitants and animals during the day, as they wish, and as a playground for the youngest members of the household. The size of the yard varies with social status from about 100 to 800 square metres. The more prosperous the household, the bigger the yard. The same applies to the habitation. Often, the yard is about 300 square metres. About 20-30 square metres per household is the usual room size. A household normally consists of eight to nine persons, including two to three adults over the age of 18 years, and the rest under that age. A compound usually comprises two to three households, making a total of about 20-25 people spread over three generations.

The Afghan refugees are sociable. They overtly enjoy the company of visitors, while displaying spontaneity and pleasure. Sometimes such visits can become hilarious, perhaps especially when women gather together. Tasks are performed by individuals or groups in company with others. Kin and neighbours are continually around. There is a constant coming and going of men, women and children from adjacent or nearby compounds. Women, men and children are seldom alone. There is always somebody to talk to, to share grief and pleasure with, or to play with. A chance for solitude has to be sought out deliberately. The escape for the women is to walk to the water source. In contrast, the dispensary is attended when company is wanted or gossip or news is to be intercepted.

Emotional attachments are particularly noticeable between the mothers and their sons and the fathers and their daughters. A boy would be helped by his mother to buy pencils for school, even in periods of shortage of money for food. A young lad is cheered up by his mother in case of misfortune, or by his elder sisters. A beautiful three- or four-year-old daughter might twist her elderly father or grandfather around her little finger and persuade him to take her to the tea shops at the market. A 15-year-old girl is followed by the thoughtful eyes of her father or elder brothers.

The division of work within the household is quite static and uniform irrespective of tribal affiliation. It reflects complementarity, both within the sex-specific tasks and with regard to the distribution of work between the sexes. Women and girls can relieve other women and do so often, while men and boys relieve other men.

Men's work and women's work are an extension of each other, and the work of one depends on that of the other. They are partners, as Nancy Hatch Dupree (1989) has said more clearly than other experts. Co-ordination between them is a criterion for smooth family life. Both men and women are very aware of the mutual complementarity and dependence and speak openly about it. It helps to define the social reality for them. They know what is required of them and what they can expect others to do.

The complementarity and partnership in the division of work between men and women is illustrated by their different tasks in the farming activities that have been developed in the camps. All tasks to be done outside the compound yard or immediate areas are performed by males. Tasks which can be done at home are confined to females. Men and older boys till the rented field and harvest the crops, but women assist the men in collecting the green fodder for the animals outside the camp areas when there are spare hands, and they take care of the kitchen gardens inside the compounds and adjacent plots. Men take the animals to pastures outside the camp, herd the flocks and bring them back. Women cut the fodder in the compound. Men dry the fodder on the roof of the house, women store it in the pantry afterwards and feed the animals and keep them clean.

Despite the complementarity of their work, women and men live in sharply separated worlds - women among women in segregated privacy and primarily within the walls of the house. In families in which *pardah* is enforced, only older women, in principle, can leave the home without permission from the householder, although they often ask him anyway just to be on the safe side. By contrast, men's lives are directed outwards directly. They spend them in full publicity in the community. They can go where they like in the camp and its immediate surroundings and do not stand to account to anyone. For longer trips, the householder must be informed and agree.

Women and men eat together except for breakfast in cases in which the men work outside the home. Then, the men eat first, and the women and children later. The main meals, breakfast and dinner, are the two occasions when the everyday worlds of men and women come together. Here, the household tasks for the day are allocated, including the daily shopping, looking after the animals and the children's schooling, if any. Co-ordination often takes the form of male monologues. The men do not talk with the women, they talk at them. In case of disagreement, the oldest mentally able woman is the one who can make objections. Younger women may need their sons to express their opinions.

Relationships between husbands and wives involve the complex patterns of protection and compliance. The social codes

prescribe that (a) he takes care of her needs for clothing and jewellery, accompanies her to the dispensary or other public places when necessary to make sure that socially unacceptable adult males do not approach her; (b) she organizes her daily workload to fit in with his movements and needs so as to make him comfortable or give him a hand whenever necessary. Men often voiced the opinion that their main duties were to provide for their families and to work for a successful repatriation of the Afghan people. The usual stoical behaviour could sometimes give way to sudden unpredictable anger. The refugees' perception of masculinity seemed based on the ability to cater for the family in material and protective terms. A relatively wealthy, determined and somewhat aggressive male seemed to fit the ideal image of the man.

The woman's status in the household has not yet been affected by paid work, even in the case of high-income women. The gainfully employed are in the minority in the family and they are regarded as looking after a function that is required to meet a family need and benefits the whole family. They are therefore still subject to the constraints applying to all women, i.e. age, domestic skills and maternal characteristics. However, women with paid work are exempt from domestic tasks while they are working, but not otherwise. The working hours are normally between nine in the morning and five in the afternoon. Daughters, sisters, mothers or mothers-in-law look after their domestic duties in the meantime and look over the working women's shoulders or help as needed. The gainfully employed woman is typically the centre of a little circle of other household members, including men and older boys, relatives from other households, or neighbours, who use her activity as an excuse for discussing things or to do their handicrafts alongside her. At times, discussions go on too long and distract her attention or quarrels erupt when the working woman finds herself surrounded by strident voices, while she is trying to concentrate and do something useful.

The women who are oldest, but still mentally agile, are in charge of distributing the work among the other women and superintend its proper performance, including the work done by the gainfully employed women, even when the older woman does not understand it herself. The oldest woman also arranges for religious instruction for the household's women. She either takes care of this herself or calls in a female expert from outside. The gainfully employed woman decides in her own time if she has an understanding husband who does not mind her working when he is there or if she should work alone. If it is the former case, she can begin

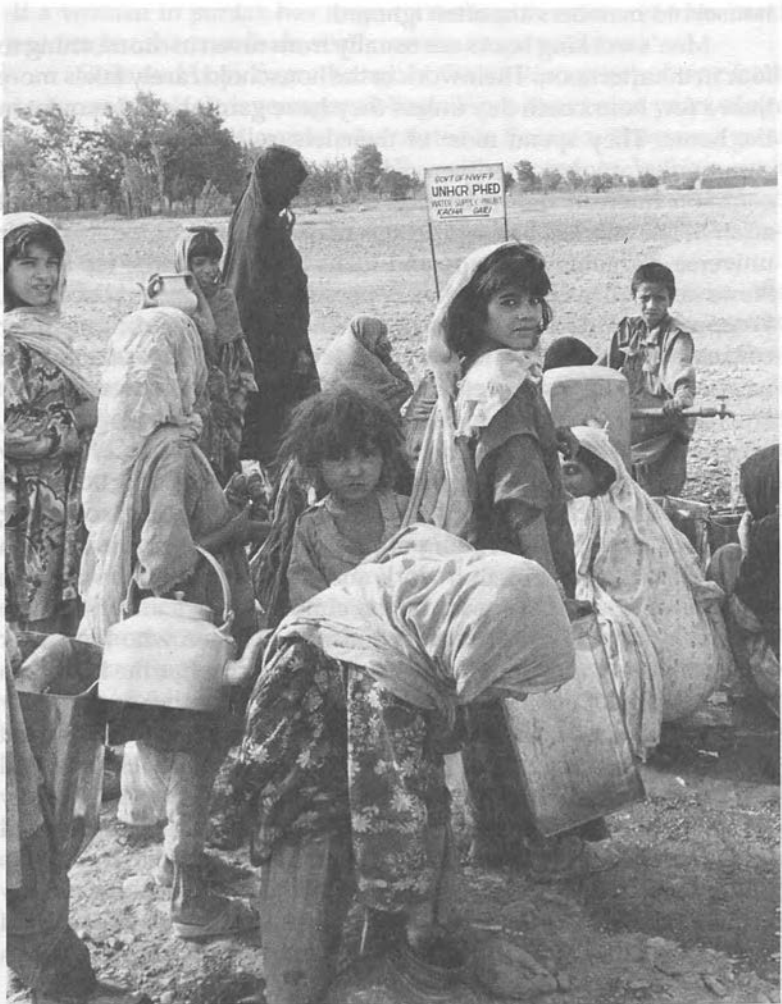
her work when it suits her and spend as many hours on it as she likes; otherwise, the husband, the mother-in-law or the oldest woman in the work group will make those decisions.

With the exception of fetching water and washing clothes, all tasks outside the home are carried out by men or boys. On the other hand, the women participate in all domestic tasks, including house-building and repair work. The women clearly have the longest working day in most homes, working from five in the morning until nine in the evening, with a number of prayer periods and tea breaks in between. Some feel they have to work like slaves. Others find the workload makes the days and years pass by pleasantly and quickly.

They start the day's work before dawn by making breakfast for the men who are going to work or to seek work, and then feed and milk the animals. It takes a couple of hours to make dough and bake bread, then there is the washing-up and cleaning of the house and yard, washing clothes and bathing babies and infants. Midday dinner is then prepared. This is the most important meal of the day, while the evening meal is usually made up of leftovers from dinner. The wheat received from the camp administration is sieved to separate the wheat from the chaff. Animals are fed and milked, and the milk is made into cheese or yoghurt and *lassie*. Dough is prepared again. The daily consumption is one to two loaves per member of the household. Vegetables and, very occasionally, meat are cleaned and cooked. Rice, aubergine, potatoes, onions and tomatoes are the vegetables mostly commonly eaten. The afternoon is spent on handicrafts and art. The work is all done together with the other women in the household, nearby relatives and neighbours. The women usually work in groups of three to six. In between, there are breaks for the regular religious instruction (once or twice a week) with the learning by heart of favourite passages from the Koran. A group of closely related households will receive instruction together. After the evening meal and the washing up, work continues on the handicrafts, etc. The day's work ends at about nine in the evening and the family goes to bed. In the vast majority of families, there are only one or two beds which are also used for sitting on in the shade during the day. Where there is only one bed, the parents sleep on it, while the children sleep on the floor; babies sleep in wooden cradles slung from the ceiling.

The younger women do the heavy housework. For example, they bake the bread, which is a particularly onerous task. They have to sit with their arms in an oven which is about 75 centimetres underground and burning hot. They bake bread on a raised site in the yard, mostly during the hottest time of the day. They also wash clothes and clean the compound and stable, and collect manure, which they dry in the sun and use for fuel. They also fetch water if

they do not have big children to do this for them. Women walk either alone or in small groups of five to six to get water. Special pathways are followed to avoid being exposed to the attention of the adult male community. If the water source is far from the compound, women who can afford to do so cover themselves in a *burqa*. Few then know who is inside, while the woman, through the embroidered 'grille', can look at all the passers-by, not least the handsome and attractive men of the neighbourhood who just incidentally happen to be around at water collection times.



Women and girls collecting water.

UNHCR/A.Diamond

The older women participate in the lighter cooking tasks and help the younger women with the care of the children, especially the infants from two to four years old. They manage the household supplies and, if possible, take care of replenishing the stocks. They carry the keys to the coffers where kitchen utensils and food are placed to keep vermin and hungry children out. They are the housekeeping treasurers, being responsible for the small amounts of money needed for shopping. The householder keeps larger sums. In some households only the householder and other men keep the money. Pleas from the women for utensils or clothes for the household members are often ignored.

Men's working hours are usually from seven in the morning to four in the afternoon. Their work in the household rarely takes more than a few hours each day unless they have gainful employment in the home. They spend most of their leisure time out in the local community among other men, with whom they discuss matters of common interest, the resistance work in Afghanistan and tribal affairs. The market belongs to the males. It accommodates their universe. Bargains are made and loans arranged in the tea shops. News as well as rumours and personal affairs are discussed. Weapons are cleaned and tested, the *katcha* buildings under construction providing the targets for practice. Discussion about weapons take up quite a lot of their energy. Guns and other firearms are bargained for at the bazaars or in individual compounds, especially when the *mujahids* return from Afghanistan. The new equipment and supplies are examined and tested out with absorbed attention. The time for the household is spent on shopping, collecting firewood, collecting aid rations and possibly herding animals. Men do most of the construction work and the work of improving the compound. They make a lot of the children's toys and build the women's weaving tools. There are also many men who look after their baby sons, and grandfathers regularly look after the infants in the compound. Only in one of the households visited was a man ever observed to take part in cooking. It was an elderly man who cleaned and peeled the vegetables daily for the main meal. He was old enough to have relinquished his duty as householder, yet too healthy for senility. He overtly enjoyed the transition period which afforded him the freedom to show his admiration for and solidarity with his daughter-in-law. This innovative Tajik among so many traditionalistic Pushtuns was known to the entire neighbourhood and sympathetically accepted. He may have expressed an unreleased urge of many others.

The identity of the men is predominantly associated with public life. They obviously enjoy being with other men outside the private compounds, without questioning the inherent exclusion of

women. Men also tend to take for granted that women and older girls should serve them at whatever time they may return home. Many apparently spend months away in search of employment or for bargaining purposes, without leaving word as to when they would expect to be back.

Men and older boys ensure that *purdah* is observed, which means checking on who enters the compound and which of the younger women leave it for places other than nearby houses and the water source. If other men come visiting, they also ensure that women of childbearing age are hidden from the view of the guests. If a woman in *purdah* has to go to the health centre, her husband escorts her there or finds someone else to go with her.

Girls and boys from the age of five or six up to puberty fetch water and look after younger siblings. From about nine years of age they participate in all work tasks related to their sex. They are a great help in the household, especially with regard to looking after younger siblings, thereby relieving their mothers of some of the load and enabling them to concentrate more on looking after the youngest child or other work.

In households with women in gainful employment, the division of work between the women shifts, while that between the sexes has remained constant. It is primarily the daughters and then the older women who deputize for the working woman. Sometimes, the bigger boys have to spend more time looking after their younger brothers, and men take on the job of buying materials. Only in a very few of the households visited had the men gone actively into selling the women's products. It did not occur to most of the men that that might increase sales and they did not know that other men had tried it. Men keep quiet about the help they offer to their wives.

All able-bodied members of the household have tasks to take care of and for which they are responsible. There is widespread understanding and solidarity between men and women to get the daily chores done. The timeliness of one's own or the other party's tasks is not questioned. The division of work and effort are taken for granted and performed as a matter of routine. In no household were any problems observed in getting the work for the household done, even though they must occur. Rather, the view was expressed that the refugee situation had increased the solidarity within the household and brought a shared experience that survival and progress is dependent on common effort. Both men and women envisage also having to work together to establish a life in Afghanistan and are aware that they may have start from scratch again just as in the refugee situation.

Women's income-earning work creates other patterns of behaviour within the household. It both increases the co-operation

within the family and gives rise to conflicts. The household often gathers around the gainfully employed woman, who becomes the focal point for other work-like activities, such as children's homework. Other women from nearby compounds come with their handicrafts or just watch, and the women spend a while together, talking and exchanging advice and experience. There is a clear tendency for the occupationally active woman's work to have a positive influence on other, non-active women in the household and the immediate surroundings, and they feel they get more done if they associate with the woman earning an income. Gainful employment also seems to spread from one woman to others living nearby. In 10 per cent of the households, women with paid work had inspired other women in related households to establish a similar work pattern.

In a household with full male acceptance of the woman's paid work, the partnership between the women and the men is strengthened. The men are required to purchase materials punctually and perhaps carry out selling work, while the women are encouraged to produce more. A mutual work dependence arises, where the results, production and income, reflect the efforts of both. In the vast majority of cases, however, it takes some time, usually one to two years, for the men to reach full acceptance of the women's work, even though they originally took the initiative for this. This applies particularly to unemployed men and older men, who find it difficult to accustom themselves to their women helping to keep the family when they are home anyway. For this reason they often nag income-earning women, or they become so frustrated that they lose their self-control and physically punish them. A few of the women interviewed had marks on their bodies from having been beaten. Some of the younger men would like to be able to establish themselves in self-employment in the home, either together with the women in their work or in a related trade. Conversely, it comforts the men when they are out on *Jihad*. They feel it makes it easier for them to abstract themselves from their feelings of guilt at not being able to support their families adequately at the same time. A tendency to longer *Jihad* service in households where women had good incomes was also reported.

Most of the women in income-earning occupations feel that the work has made their situation in the household easier in the period when the men are on *Jihad*. The time passes more quickly for them and they see replacing the man's contribution to the household economy as a meaningful task on which to concentrate. In some cases, women regard their situation as worse. They feel burdened and made responsible for a function that is not their own, strictly speaking. This is particularly pronounced in women who have

difficulty in getting their products sold. Many younger women were quite pleased when their husbands had gone for *Jihad*, while the elderly ones sorely missed their husbands. Where affectionate relationships existed between younger marriage mates, photos of the husbands absent on *Jihad* cover the inside walls of the *katcha* houses. They are constantly admired and the women talk to the photos again and again during periods of absence.

Women's paid work was not in itself observed to be a cause of conflict, but it does bring latent conflicts between rival members of the household to the surface. Poor relations between a man's wife and his sister are aggravated if the wife is allowed to do paid work and the sister then has to take over some of her duties in the household. The daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship clearly suffers if the paid work of one leads to a heavier burden of work for the other. The same applies to the relationship between concubines if one gets paid work and the other's household work increases. A conflict between son and father is magnified if the daughter-in-law gets paid work with the son's consent but without the father having been consulted. However, paid work was only regarded as the catalyst for conflicts that would have arisen for other reasons, connected with the social structure of the household.

In the carpet-weavers' households, conflicts to do with the way things are run emerge most clearly, both among the women themselves and between women and men. The weaving tools are often placed in the living room (unless the family's tent from the first period in the camp is still intact), where the family also spends its time, eats and sleeps. (The looms are of different sizes. Frame looms of 1 by 2 metres, 2 by 3 metres or 4 by 6 metres are often used.) The other members of the household feel that the woman's weaving work is intruding so much into the rest of family life that it is difficult to function properly as a family at the same time. They see a danger of family life taking secondary importance and the women not in gainful employment becoming second-class members of the household. This fear is expressed in quarrels between the two sets of women.

Sometimes, pressure from outside is brought to bear on a household with gainfully employed women. In particular, the tribe elder in the refugee society may tell old householders whose daughters-in-law have work incomes to find another way to run the family's economy. The householder is the liaison between the household and the tribe, and old householders are especially sensitive to tribal pressure because they have the highest obligation to ensure that agreed norms are observed in the home. The pressure takes the form either of saying directly that shameful conduct has been observed in the household or by the community

looking askance at the householder and talking about him behind his back.

In families with financial problems, the man and wife join forces when attacked from outside either by denying or concealing what the gainfully employed woman is doing or by drawing attention to the fact that the income finances the family's living costs during the man's *mujahiddin* service. The latter is a plausible manoeuvre. It is accepted in the local community and no further approaches are made nor is any other action taken. In less pressed families, the woman and her husband stand more alone with the problem, which is often solved by her taking a break from her work until the attention on the household has died down or by her stopping her work if her husband tells her to, depending on how sensitive he is to social pressure from outside. His reputation and the prestige of the whole household is affected and he must have the resources to make himself respected by more traditionally minded men. Several of the informants gave examples of such pressure. None had yet stopped working, but two women had found it necessary to take a break.

The resistance to women's paid work encountered in the traditional, norm-setting circles is due to the fact that it touches fundamental concepts of the relationship between men and women and their respective functions in the local community. It is not women's work that is regarded as a violation of the norms. The women have always worked in and for the household in unpaid form, and that is recognized. It is the income obtained from the work that is regarded as objectionable because it affects the man's obligation to keep his family and supply his wife's material needs. Women's work income is regarded as dangerous to the established social order. There is a risk that the work division will become so specialized that the women will be drawn out of the home and become a public spectacle, casting shame on the home, or it is feared that the women will change and demand equality, as the men know has happened in other societies. The traditionally minded are well aware of the direction the development can take and so fight against it. The question is, for how much longer?

Chapter 5

AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

Men are reported to have developed a distinct warrior mentality in certain areas of Afghanistan where the war has claimed their time and commitment for more than a decade. They have been reoriented from agriculture and other rural occupations towards military service and the excitement and absurdity of the war. Training and employment projects are reported to be difficult to launch (UNOCA, 1989a). Military training courses to refine their guerrilla skills would stand a better chance of mass popular attendance.

Children have been scarred by the war. The primary education programmes in areas controlled by the *mujahiddin* have been seriously reduced, as mentioned in the introduction, in some areas practically to nil. Rural children's traditional engagement in farming and animal husbandry is limited. The fields and pastures have to a very large extent been bombarded and infested by mines. Conditions for children to grow up in a carefree and innocent way are non-existent within Afghanistan. The traditional intimate contact with adults of the household and close kin is restricted because of the upheaval and human loss, which has diminished the strength of the family network. The freedom to roam around in the fields and on the pastures no longer exists. Instead Afghan children grow up perceiving war as the norm. They have to be cautious with their movements and to watch for land mines. The single most important part of their fathers' lives is military service, and Afghan boys, whether inside the country or in exile, are conditioned into the spirit of resistance. Some of the children who have been orphaned by the war are brought up by the parties and join guerrilla groups as soon as they can. Pierre Centlivres (1988), one of the only scholars to have examined the impact of the war on the socialization of Afghan children, warns against the militarization of the children. If the aid

programming does not effectively counteract the spirit of destruction, the generation which must institutionalize peace in Afghanistan may lose its orientation.

A very close relationship between the civil population and the various *mujahiddin* groups in Afghanistan is reported to exist. Private homes accommodate unknown *mujahids* on flight from the enemy. At the time when the refugees were still in their own country, they offered shelter and food to *mujahids* who presented themselves at their compounds. The *purdah* rules of female seclusion were reported to be observed only half way. Women were normally kept out of sight of the visitor but were allowed to be present, screening themselves with the veil, when the *mujahid* told his escape story and the latest news from the killing fields. Women reported that they had been in mortal fear at night when fugitives knocked at the compound gate, not knowing whether a friend or the enemy was waiting outside. But the men had comforted them and let the fugitives in. *Mujahids* in Akora Khatak confirmed that resistance fighters are still given shelter in Afghanistan, even in households where no adult male is present.

The war is also reported to have affected people's lives in other ways. The relationship between men and women in the rural areas of east Afghanistan (e.g. Nangrahar, Paktia, Paktika) has changed. It has been noted that women and men unknown to each other communicate directly with the consent of the males of the women's household, and that some women take part in resistance activities in areas relatively far from their homes. Women are reported to take turns at guard posts when there are no men around, to bring food to men on guerrilla duty, to take care of the sick and the wounded and, in certain guerrilla groups in Nangrahar, also to participate in the actual fighting. In Loghar, where vast numbers of men have been lost, women are observed to farm the land assisted by children. Agricultural work is undertaken in the fields outside their villages and domestic animal production at the farms. Such new relationships between men and women in Afghanistan and the new functions of rural women are confirmed by observations of NGOs that have worked inside Afghanistan for years or monitored conditions in the country over the past decade (Afghanistan-komitee i Norge, 1985; Terrenoire, 1987).

In most cases refugees took flight after warnings from the *mujahiddin* groups of their locality. *Mujahids* also led many safely through to peaceful areas and arranged the onward transportation, which meant mostly by horse, to Pakistan. Pregnant, old and disabled women, infants, and luggage were loaded on the horses; others made the flight on foot. Many informants lived as internally displaced persons in hiding in the mountains before finally leaving

Afghanistan, waiting for peaceful times to return, or for an opportunity to rebuild their houses. Some have relatives still living in caves in Afghanistan, trapped in the warfare. The *mujahiddin* of the areas reportedly take care of them.

Although women were not involved in making the decision to flee, they often determined the outcome. Many women reported they had been reluctant at first when the men had proposed that the household take flight. They would not acquiesce until the *mullah* of their community had sanctioned it by explaining to them that flight was an integral part of the Islamic faith, that the Prophet himself had taken flight from Mecca, or until tanks had approached their area or bombardment had destroyed the place. Once they were on the journey, it had been the women who figured out how to get around inquiring government officials and road blocks, for instance by pretending they were on their way to a marriage in another province.

The escape from the country and the continued warfare have not precluded communication between the civil Afghan population on either side of the border. Refugees receive tidings regularly about the home areas and relatives and friends in Afghanistan. The *mujahiddin* group members of the camps serve as communication links between the refugee communities in Pakistan and those in Afghanistan. Refugee marriages, which bring together sizeable numbers of people, provide the forum for news to be communicated beyond the compound level. The refugees travel considerable distances (commonly 100-200 kilometres) to attend the festivity and to hear the news from Afghanistan. Residents of Afghanistan were also found to visit relatives in the refugee camps in Pakistan. People living near Kabul go to Peshawar by bus via detour routes to avoid unsafe areas and return after a stay with refugee kin. One purpose of such a visit is to become better acquainted with the refugee reality in Pakistan, should hostilities in Afghanistan spread to their communities and necessitate flight.

The refugees anticipate going back to Afghanistan, men and women together as one group. Few women and men would want the women to be left alone in Pakistan. A survey shows that 95 per cent of the women and 86 per cent of the men wish to return together (Boesen, 1989). Most of the refugees anticipate returning to their own village or town, i.e. 80 per cent to Baluchistan and 61 per cent to the Frontier, while 14 and 22 per cent are reported to be prepared to go wherever they will be needed in Afghanistan (Connor, 1988).

However, unofficial estimates were circulating in Pakistan at the time of the study, that only 50 to 75 per cent of refugees actually want to return home once peace reigns again in Afghanistan. So far, the main traffic continues to flow out of that country. About 60,000 people are estimated to have entered Pakistan in 1989. As time

passes in exile, the percentage of those who will remain is likely to increase - other things being equal. Experience from similar situations in Africa shows that attainment of a higher standard of living than in the home country can affect refugees' attitude to repatriation negatively. Those who have achieved improved conditions are likely to remain in the host country, irrespective of whether they have visited the home country regularly and keep a close eye on the situation back home (Christensen, 1985).

As there is no comparative information on the level of living of the Afghan refugees in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is difficult to estimate the size of the group that is likely to remain in Pakistan. But the Afghan refugees, more than many other refugee populations, have consistently voiced their intention to return. And all parties of the Alliance take a very firm stand on the issue in favour of repatriation of all refugees when the Kabul régime is ousted by political means or removed by force.

The Afghan refugees in Akora Khatak were unanimous about their intention to go back and said that they were only waiting for a positive signal from the *mujahiddin* parties, which was expected to be given the moment an Islamic government was established in Afghanistan. The women were found to know very little about the politics of the return and were relying on the men to tell them when to go. For their part, they were praying intensively to Allah, asking for such a government to be set up in the country, and for a quick and safe return. Women had done so ever since their arrival in Pakistan.

Plans about the future in Afghanistan come readily to mind. The years in exile have been spent thinking about the past back home and the future there. The refugees intend to return to their home area, even those who know for sure that their houses and fields have been destroyed or are infested with land mines. They rely on the *mujahiddin* groups to find them a new place to live in if the old one is not habitable. Apart from the young men who have grown up and been educated in Pakistan, men are mostly planning on resuming their former occupations, i.e. farming or craftsmanship. Nomads, however, are less certain about this. Those who expect to have accrued sufficient livestock by the time of repatriation want to resume transhumance or pastoralism. Others plan to farm vacant areas and supplement their incomes by casual labouring.

Without exception, informants in the camps had no knowledge of any planned rehabilitation in Afghanistan, let alone a specific plan of action to that end. The great majority of both women and men respondents voiced no expectation of being assisted once back in Afghanistan, which seems surprising given the amount of aid that has been given to them over the years as refugees. They envisage rather having to start from scratch and survive on labouring or using

whatever skills they have. They are planning on transporting the possessions they have collected in Pakistan back to Afghanistan, including the tent they received when they came to Pakistan, their sewing machines, and their arms and ammunition, and on starting off by camping where they lived before. For transportation, they plan to use vehicles owned by fellow refugees - the very same vehicles that are now taking refugees for visits to relatives in other camps - or by the buses owned by the parties. Only the transport fee had not yet been set. A few mentioned that they would probably have to put themselves in debt, either to wealthy kin or to fellow villagers, in order to be able to build a house in Afghanistan. Others thought that reconstruction ought to take place under extensive aid schemes, including credit schemes for the purchase of modern farm equipment. Some said that they would not return until the roads had been reestablished in Afghanistan and expected to be supplied with emergency aid at the roadside.

Refugees were found to know little about the land mines in Afghanistan. They knew land mines had been laid, but did not imagine their plots could be affected, although minefields are being identified by the guerrilla groups inside Afghanistan. With a few exceptions, only *mujahids* had actually seen a land mine, and that had been mostly in preventive training courses arranged by the parties and supported by UNOCA. Only a few of the *mujahiddin* among the refugee informants were found to be instructing own household members and kin about the risk of land mines in Afghanistan - and then only other men. Women had not yet been informed.

A few households were reported to have left Akora Khatak clandestinely after having heard that their areas were calm and inhabitable. But in most cases the refugees were living in limbo, waiting for the possibility of return to materialize while concentrating on making ends meet and feeding the members of the household.

There are many signs that might indicate, however, that refugees expect a longer term stay in Pakistan and that they are making investments for a life there, at least for the foreseeable future. The ongoing expansions of the compounds in the camps, the planting of fruit trees, bushes for firewood and flowers in the compound yards, and the purchase of livestock, suggest the possibility of such an expectation. The yields will also be for later use. Alternatively, these activities may simply indicate that the refugees are giving in to a natural inclination to make themselves comfortable whenever possible. Spending years in a refugee camp in Pakistan can discourage even the strongest personality, unless a microcosm of the familiar and the liked is recreated in the immediate surroundings.

Unrest and insecurity also mark the refugee communities in the camps. Members of households who were living in an insular way among crowds of non-kin neighbours expressed deep anxiety of the unknown surroundings. The compounds were guarded by fierce dogs, and doors were locked with heavy padlocks. Incidents of refugee violence were noted both by the Pakistani camp administration and by the refugees to have increased over the past year. People's houses had been attacked during intensive neighbour strife. There was outspoken fear that KHAD (the secret police of the Kabul régime) spies were operating in the camps, and refugees living among strangers felt distrustful of their neighbours.

The situation needs monitoring. As is well known, the refugees are a heavily armed population. If refugees become desperate through frustration, they may have supplies enough for genocide. Arms are cherished cultural symbols of independence, courage and honour to Afghan men, and guns and other weapons are acquired from childhood onwards. They invest in weapons as others would in a savings bank. Prestigious arms, captured from the enemy - Kalasnikovs not least - or bought from fellow refugees, are sold at incredibly high prices at the bazaars of Peshawar.

In Peshawar, six men known to be progressivists had been assassinated during the previous year. Some of them had signalled understanding of the women's issue. Afghan women articulating women's rights were subject to intimidation and threats on their lives. Two had been resettled overseas by UNHCR for that reason. Special security measures were required for a few Afghan women NGO staff to avoid harassment. Expatriate female NGO staff working on women's programmes had purchased a *burqa* which they used for errands at the bazaars of Peshawar to avoid being recognized. Fundamentalist party officials were frequently blamed for unpleasant incidents, but it seemed uncertain that they were the sole culprits. As one informant put it, "There is now so much of it that it cannot possibly be ascribed to them alone".

Very few agencies have female staff employed at the upper levels. The aid community has also been reluctant so far to attach particular importance to women's issues in the assistance programming, feeling it would damage the co-operation with the Afghan resistance parties who function as implementing parties of projects both inside Afghanistan and in the camps in Pakistan. It is feared that giving a high profile to aid to women could shift the attention of the donor community towards the women refugees (or women inside Afghanistan) rather than to the refugee (Afghan) population as a whole. What seems to be forgotten is that women are always present in the camp, or in the communities in Afghanistan, and that it is extremely difficult for most of the households to make

ends meet when men are absent on *Jihad* or unemployed, unless the women have secured the necessary means. A shift towards massive involvement of women in the aid programme to generate income and improve agriculture would benefit not only the women, but the entire population. They can be counted on for a total commitment, borne out of their concern first and foremost for their families. There is no danger of divided loyalties between the resistance and the upkeep of the household.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women and work

The marvellous property of Afghan women is their highly adventurous tradition, which helps them to spend most of their lives within the compound walls and only leave the home when permission is granted by the household. The predominant Afghan culture underpins women's work and female education outside their homes. Traditions hold that the men should be the economically active members of the household. Women working outside their homes are a rare sight. As such, a limited feature of a modern, Westernized lifestyle, which according to public opinion, is taken as reflect negatively on the male household. Although women more about internationally within the compound because of the social institutions, they are often seen inside the compound. They are in a very large extent the biggest supporters of the Afghan society, male as well as female, in matters of teaching and education, and management of household and even engaged in agriculture.

Up till and including the 1970s, when women in Third World countries started to gain access to the office labour market and to attain literacy, Afghan women were, virtually totally, represented as poorly educated and contributing little to the national income in official statistics. Fewer than 10 per cent were reported as participating in the official labour force, and less than 5 per cent as being literate with basic writing and reading skills. It must be many more women than the official statistics may have participated in remunerated work, because their household were short of income, but chose not to disclose the income and their household as requiring a bad reputation.

the most serious problem is the lack of a national identity. The country is a patchwork of tribal and ethnic groups, each with its own traditions and customs. The government has failed to create a sense of national unity, and the people are divided along tribal and ethnic lines. This is a major obstacle to reconstruction, as the government cannot effectively govern a country that is so deeply divided. The first step must be to create a national identity, and this can only be done by promoting a sense of unity among all the people of the country.

The second major problem is the lack of a strong central government. The country is currently divided into several provinces, each with its own government. This has led to a lack of coordination and a fragmented approach to reconstruction. A strong central government is needed to coordinate the efforts of the various provinces and to ensure that reconstruction is carried out in a consistent and effective manner.

The third major problem is the lack of a strong economy. The country's economy is largely based on agriculture, which is highly vulnerable to drought and other natural disasters. This has led to widespread poverty and a lack of resources for reconstruction. A strong economy is needed to provide the resources necessary for reconstruction, and this can only be achieved by diversifying the economy and promoting trade and industry.

In addition to these three major problems, there are several other challenges facing Afghanistan. These include a lack of infrastructure, a high level of corruption, and a weak legal system. All of these factors are likely to hinder reconstruction efforts, and they must be addressed if the country is to achieve lasting peace and stability. The international community has a role to play in helping Afghanistan overcome these challenges, but it is ultimately up to the Afghan people to build a better future for themselves.

Many of the people who are employed at the upper levels of the government are corrupt and are more interested in their own pockets than in the welfare of the country. This is a major obstacle to reconstruction, as the government cannot effectively govern a country that is so deeply corrupt. The first step must be to create a strong legal system, and this can only be done by promoting a sense of justice among all the people of the country. The second step must be to create a strong economy, and this can only be achieved by diversifying the economy and promoting trade and industry. The third step must be to create a strong central government, and this can only be done by promoting a sense of unity among all the people of the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women and work

The overwhelming majority of Afghan women observe *pardah*, a century-long tradition, which implies that they spend most of their lives within the compound walls and only leave the home when permission is granted by the householder. The predominant Afghan culture underrates women's work and female education outside their homes. Traditions hold that the men should be the economically active members of the households. Women working outside their homes are a rare and, for many, disliked feature of a modern, Westernized lifestyle, which, according to public opinion, is taken to reflect negatively on the entire household. Although women move about inconspicuously within the communities because of the *pardah* institution, they are active once inside the compounds. They are to a very large extent the hidden developers of the Afghan society, main actors of daily life, instructors of traditions and education, and compound-bound assistants to men employed in agriculture.

Up to and including the 1970s, when women in Third World countries started to gain access to the official labour market and to attain literacy, Afghan women were, naturally enough, represented as poorly educated and contributing little to the national income in official statistics. Fewer than 10 per cent were recorded as participating in the official labour force, and less than 5 per cent as being literate with basic writing and reading skills. In reality, many more women than the official statistics may have participated in remunerated work, because their households were short of income, but chose not to disclose the fact to avoid their households acquiring a bad reputation.

During the past four decades women's participation in the labour force has been increasing worldwide, especially so since the 1960s. In the industrialized world, women's participation in the official labour market increased considerably after the Second World War, in response to increased demands for labour, created by the needs of a society growing in complexity. In the developing world, women joined the labour market as the countries integrated into the external market economies, a process which likewise accelerated after the Second World War.

In Sweden, the country with the highest female labour force participation in the modern world, about 80 per cent of able-bodied women are employed, in Denmark 74 per cent, and in the USA and the European Mediterranean countries about 40 per cent. Female labour force participation clearly has both positive and negative consequences for the women as well as for other members of their households. In some cases, the children pay the price for the absence from home of their working mother. Yet, once they start working, women seldom want to stop, unless they are subject to considerable group pressure.

Two historical trends are important influences behind the massive increase in the number of women in the labour force: rapid technological change and massive expansion or rehabilitation of productive sectors of the national economies; that is, greater numbers of workers are needed to supply the increased capacity and men and women can perform the new tasks equally. In the case of Afghanistan, both aspects will apply in the near future. Once peace reigns sufficiently to allow extensive development of the rural areas, the planned rehabilitation programme (Operation Salam) will include both aspects. After a period of extensive de-mining of the countryside, and with the use of intensive mechanization, huge areas of non-productive war-torn tracts, or regions with extremely limited production, will be transformed to become productive sectors. Women's role in the implementation of this project is exceedingly important. The scale of the reconstruction is such that it calls for the participation of the entire Afghan population, otherwise it will take decades to rebuild the country. For the past 10 years, the commitment of the men has been split between the welfare of their families and guerilla activity, whereas the women have been concerned with bearing and rearing children and looking after the household.

Lessons from Pakistan

Some of the women in the refugee situation in Pakistan have already realized the need for their involvement, not just when they are back in their own country but also now, while they are in exile.

Women have become very productive workers. A process of modernization is taking place, and the changes are borne out of need. A notable group of the women are challenging traditions. Women who never worked for remuneration before report that they are now working in Pakistan, and many are planning to continue working after repatriation to Afghanistan. The women feel rewarded by their work. They perceive themselves as useful and responsible persons, capable of performing new functions, and life is felt to be more meaningful than it was before. At the individual household level, many men support the women. Some also actively assist their working wives and can see all kinds of promising perspectives in women's work for the household, as long as it does not overtly challenge the *purdah* institution.

Afghans have lived under distinctly insecure conditions in the refugee villages for years, not knowing when it would be safe for them to return home, with irregular food supply distributions, without secure sources of employment for adult men to sustain the households, and with the male population wholeheartedly committed to resistance to the Kabul régime. Women's work can be seen as a positive reaction to all that uncertainty. They have done it with confidence to help the men when, forced by circumstances, it was difficult for them to meet their family obligations. Although the earnings of the refugee women are mostly modest and irregular, they are still important to their households and they rely on it because there is generally a shortage of funds. Female income is generated to substitute loss of male income through unemployment or non-salaried *Jihad* service and it carries the household over periods when the kitty is low. Women also engage in work if there are no able-bodied adult males in their household.

Women's work takes the form of self-employment inside their compounds, mostly as tailoresses, carpet weavers and embroiderers. In 1986, about 64,500 Afghan refugee women were estimated to be working; 62,800 of them inside their homes. This type of women's work is admitted to only reluctantly by rural Afghans. So the real figure may have been higher and in any case is likely to have increased since then. The war has taken more of the men's time and energy. Many women, however, do not have a viable market outlet and feel disheartened when unsold products accumulate in the compounds. They need to learn product refinement and to manufacture a wider assortment of marketable products. Instruction in marketing and sales is also needed. In about 10 per cent of the households, women tend cattle, sheep or goats. Others have established kitchen gardens and small orchards inside the compounds or in nearby areas where vegetables and fruits are grown. In a few households, small plots are rented from local

farmers for fodder cultivation for the animals. Women are mainly responsible for the animal husbandry; men take care of the small-scale farming.

The women have developed what is immediately around them, by resuming old trades, exploiting skills commercially, or producing much needed food by using vacant spots within or near the compounds. Their choice is framed by the known. When asked whether they would like to do something else, their answer is often negative, modified by resignation. Their life experience is limited and their vision narrow. They know of no other opportunities, except in the case of the extremely poor, who, forced by necessity, are willing to try out almost any new trade. These include women who were marginalized in Afghanistan because they were widows, wives of disabled or unemployed men, or wives of landless tenants. They had to help provide for their families and were farming or raising livestock with their husbands and children, or engaged in tailoring, embroidery or carpet-making. A few were food vendors or supervised grinding mills in their compound yards. Others had previously worked as servants for wealthy fellow villagers. Their life experience is different from those who have a male provider in the family. Not only is their mobility greater, but they have a far wider range of contacts. They know that they have to rely on their own talents and recognize the importance of investing in children. They are prepared to take up unconventional trades to earn a living now and once they are back in Afghanistan.

Whether they belong to the poorest segment or not, women are willing to learn, the more so if it is related to their daily life or to the resettlement in Afghanistan. Skills training in practical trades relevant to the maintenance of the household and the compound appeal to them when brought to their attention. So do horticulture and experimentation with new crops which can also be of use in Afghanistan, as long as they can be cultivated at home within the compound or in nearby areas.

The initiative for women's work is usually taken by male household members. All men know when their wives or daughters are engaged in income-generating work and are in principle agreeable; some, however, more so than others. Education, occupation and tribal affiliation are decisive factors in this. Men with secondary education, nomads and tribesmen, favourably inclined towards modernization, are particularly supportive to the women. They see it as an integral part of the evolution of society. The others look askance at the women or nag them. They obviously feel they themselves should be earning the income. They seem jealous of the women because they have succeeded in generating means for the family and its upkeep, even though the means are mostly very modest.

Women's work creates new needs for them. They would like to share a special place within their living area, where they can gather in large groups of 20-30 women and work together - a kind of *mehmankhana* for women. Carpet-weavers are particularly keen on this, but tailoresses and embroiderers are also in favour of the idea. Their tools take up so much space that private households can only accommodate a few weavers at a time - space which is needed by the household for other purposes as well. They believe that their productivity would increase if the production were moved to special premises. They would have more peace in which to work and would not have to pack all their equipment together after working hours. They would gain inspiration from other weavers for new patterns and colour combinations, and could create a far more enterprising and creative environment.

The number, 20-30 women, is a familiar group size for Afghan women and one that they are accustomed to functioning in. It corresponds to many women's immediate network of close relations within their own biological families and in-laws. It is the number of women and girls who gather for joint religious instruction and is the size of the group that gathers in a compound when a guest arrives, when something is to be exhibited or when a common matter is to be discussed. It is also the size of group that can be used for other purposes - for example for training programmes and other forms of instruction. Many women are aware that it would be to their advantage to be able to read and write and to have a broader knowledge of home economics, and they are willing to acquire such skills, especially when they are related to their daily life.

In the cramped accommodation of the refugee communities, it is easy to know what others are doing, both good and bad. Neighbours learn of each other's activities. When there is a working woman in their midst, others seem to follow suit. This applies also to women who take up horticulture. Neighbours of working women copy them and develop a venture themselves after having learned from their friends next door. Former nomads acquire farming skills from farmers in nearby compounds. Social control over women's work is, however, exercised by the community. Prominent community members, *mullahs* and *maliks*, keep an eye on the economically active part of the various households to make sure that traditions are maintained. Consequently, women's work for income is often concealed from fellow villagers among the more distant neighbours. Sometimes householders are subjected to pressure by tribal leaders who request them to find other solutions to the household's economy than incomes generated by women. At times, such pressure is projected onto the women, and they are blamed for their initiative.

Two more issues stand out. First, in households where both women and men are occupied by the work process in interdependent tasks, as partners of a small firm - the woman in production, the man in sales and management - high incomes are obtained and the woman's role in the household economy is fully accepted. There are no objections raised to her work. They are even proud of speaking about it. Second, plausible manoeuvres exist for getting around the objections of traditionalists in the community. It is tacitly accepted that women may have to work while able-bodied men are on *Jihad* to keep famine away from the compound. When there is interference from prominent members of the community, women's work can be disguised as tailoring for the family or as a service to friends.

Rebuilding rural Afghanistan

Afghanistan is broken to pieces and needs to be rebuilt. The possibility of constructing a creative and fair society with due consideration for the potential of all population groups is at hand. But the reconstruction of Afghanistan entails a classical development dilemma: that of counterbalancing adverse interests of various target groups in order to avoid that improvement of the conditions of one group is strongly resisted by another, or that no group is lost in the process. In the case of Afghanistan, the task of implementing the reconstruction programme in such a way that the entire population will benefit directly from it will not be an easy one for the United Nations or for the voluntary agencies. It will take time, because cultural values will be affected and the relative strength between groups gradually altered. Programmes which involve improvement of women's conditions are likely to be ignored or declined, at least initially, by the important male figures, both at the party level and in the communities, and aid staffs and decision makers will be exposed to heavy pressures. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the operation can be instrumental in softening the existing repressive structures through dialogue between the aid staff and the Afghan people and appropriate project design.

It would be important to apply the principle of positive discrimination in favour of the women in the rehabilitation programme, in order to ensure that women are not left behind again in the development process. Positive discrimination does not, however, automatically imply segregated programmes for women only. Integral programmes for both genders may be equally appropriate, but projects which explicitly promote women's conditions should be given priority. There is a deep-rooted premise of inequality at work in the Afghan society. Repressive attitudes

against the improvement of women's conditions are likely to be revived during the rehabilitation of the country, if the aid programme does not effectively counteract this by its programme design. The issue of suppression of women as exercised by certain groups in Peshawar needs to be tackled within this context. It is clearly more important to promote the conditions of a vulnerable group than to give in to extremists.

The United Nations is committed to the principles or strategies for development agreed by the General Assembly. Although such strategies are often intended as guidelines for the member states, they have to be observed by the system itself. This is a must for the entire United Nations family. In the case of Afghanistan, two kinds of United Nations principles need special consideration: strategies for the advancement of women's conditions and promotion of human rights.

Firstly, in planning and implementing the reconstruction of Afghanistan, it would be highly beneficial to women if the United Nations system were to ensure that schemes for employment, health and education are structured in such a way that women will have the same access to them as men (cf. introduction). The same applies to access to land, capital and other productive sources. Emphasis must be placed on strategies to assist women in generating and keeping income, including measures designed to improve women's access to credit schemes. Prejudices hindering the solution of women's problems should also be removed. Given the pervasiveness of the *purdah* institution in the Afghan society, home-based micro-enterprise or cottage industry plants could provide appropriate employment opportunities, since work can be structured in such a way as to be done by women in their own homes. Health and education programmes, in particular, will need outreach services if the total population is the target.

Secondly, the United Nations system should ensure that the pertinent, recognized human rights principles, as formulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, are fully integrated into the reconstruction programme. The ICESCR contains a number of the principles included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The content of the Covenant relates to the strategies for the advancement of women's conditions mentioned above, as it accords equal rights to men and women to the enjoyment of the right to work, education and health on a non-discriminatory basis. Since the ICESCR was ratified by the government of Afghanistan in 1983, there is all the more reason to incorporate these principles explicitly in Operation Salam. If the reconstruction programme leaves the situation of women at its present level in the rural areas, or launches programmes at a level

considerable lower than that for men, human rights institutions may voice objections and criticism at a later stage.

There are various types of rural Afghan women who can contribute significantly to an improved level of living for their families and the reconstruction of the communities. There are those who, forced by circumstances, have engaged in employment or agriculture in Afghanistan and who may or may not be skilled. There are the 64,500 or more women who have gone into employment in Pakistan, and those who have developed animal husbandry and horticulture in Pakistan. There are those who have received education or training by the aid agencies in Pakistan. In addition, there are about 700,000 women who have been widowed by the war and who are in need of a sustainable future. There are also physically handicapped women who may need to be engaged in work.

Extremely poor and marginalized women would be an obvious first target for rehabilitation projects, since their survival could be threatened if they were not offered any assistance. By targeting this group especially, the operation could both alleviate extreme poverty and encourage development from below. That in itself would be a notable landmark. The focus on the extremely poor should be combined with programmes for other women interested in employment, education, health, etc. Relatives and neighbours would follow the example set and the numbers of working women would soon multiply. Healthy competitive feelings might be encouraged and otherwise shy members of groups might come forward for assistance, as has been found to happen in the refugee setting.

Yet supporting the Afghan women does not only depend on the attitude of the woman and her husband and/or the householders. Prominent men in the community also play a part, and men need to arrive at a collective conviction before it will work for all in practice. In Pushtun culture, change must find consensus within the male part of the community. If significant community actors are not in favour, they can make life impossible for others, unless they are informed and actually involved in a sensible way at an early stage. It needs to be explained to them that assistance will be directed both to the household as such and to the community in order to ensure a proper standard of living for the individual families and the local communities. When men discover that assistance is available to household enterprises involving women, consensus among the men will also be influenced by the attitudes of the men who are interested in attracting support for their own households.

In order for any potential aid operation to be able to capture both the vulnerable and the innovative after repatriation, it could be

useful to issue a special card in Pakistan for use in Afghanistan by refugee women who have established a special need or talent for income-generating, or who have been trained. Such a card could also register information on assistance received by the holder in Pakistan, and the type of training attended. Skilled women could then be identified, and those requiring additional training could be found. Women could also be used as door-to-door relief distributors in Afghanistan to other women to ensure that all needy households receive emergency relief. Elderly women enjoy the kind of freedom of mobility needed for this purpose, and they also are ascribed the necessary respect to be able actually to fulfil such a function.

Given the uncertainty about the return of the refugee population, it is important to plan for projects both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. If conditions are not ripe for projects to be established in Afghanistan, they could be tried out meanwhile in Pakistan.

Two strategies would be needed: one for widows and households with only able-bodied women, and a unified household strategy covering both male and female members. Afghan women and men of rural backgrounds are used to working in partnership and find distinct pleasure in it. Co-operation between them very much reinforces their sense of belonging and emotional security. Given the strong tradition of partnership at the household level and the extensive use of the *pardah* institution, a large part of the Afghan population forms the obvious setting for cottage industry as mentioned above, where men and women are occupied by manufacture of a common product or undertake mutually dependent tasks of a given work process. A unified household strategy could also help diffuse tension between unemployed men and their working wives. The frustration of the husbands will be converted into productivity.

In order to implement these strategies, it is important to recognize the need for the aid programme to come to the recipients, instead of relying on the target groups to come forward for assistance. In a situation where the social structure is such that a certain part of a needy population may not move about freely, developers should plan projects accordingly. Because of the *pardah* institution, many women will not be able to come to a major centre located far from their homes, at least in the near future, but they may be able to come to a smaller place near their compounds. Elderly female relatives who have greater physical mobility, could also be used as intermediaries. Since Afghanistan's social structure differs from Western ones, Western-based models for delivery of development measures may not reach the target group properly. A number of alternative models could be tried out, including service delivery at (a) integrated rural development centres for delivery of

multifunctional measures; (b) women's *mehmankhanas* in the neighbourhoods for focused measures; and (c) women's personal networks, with elderly women serving as mediators for individualized development assistance.

In the longer term, delivery of services could be effected through multifunctional, integrated rural development centres, to which health, water supply, educational and training facilities, a library, agricultural extension services, veterinary services and cottage industry plants would be attached, and with separate departments for men and women. Such centres could also serve co-operative movements or co-operative organizations of the community at a later stage. Women already have access to health facilities, and water collection has always been within their domain. By combining services to which they have so far had limited access, like education and training, with health and water supply facilities, all could become part of the culturally acceptable area of mobility for women. The plan to construct multifunctional rural development centres has already been discussed with the refugees. Both men and women were receptive to the idea and thought it would be well accepted in the communities in Afghanistan. They also indicated that the construction of such centres could in itself revive community life in the war-broken countryside.

Obviously, it will take time to establish multifunctional community centres. In the shorter term, existing women's projects could be enlarged. Income-generating schemes could be combined with literacy and numeracy programmes, rudimentary health education, etc. Education, such as functional literacy courses and courses in elementary health training, could be offered to the female population at dispensaries, attracting the attention of the patients while they wait for treatment. Horticultural training programmes and adult education in animal husbandry could be arranged within existing income-generating programmes, or as extension programmes of the dispensaries. At any rate, under the present circumstances, dispensaries would be the optimal place for distribution of tools, equipment and seeds to women, because of its status as an acceptable meeting place for women. Moreover, wherever possible, women's *mehmankhanas* could be established in the neighbourhoods. *Mehmankhanas* would primarily function as workshops for 20-30 women carpet-makers and tailoresses of the nearby areas, but would also accommodate related education and training programmes. Arrangements for the care of children would obviously have to be provided in connection with the *mehmankhanas* or in compounds nearby.

Specific recommendations

To enhance Afghan women's contribution to the rehabilitation of Afghanistan in general, and to improve the levels of living at the family and community levels, the following suggestions are made.

I. All options for integrating women into the reconstruction programme on a short and long term basis should be considered, including the following:

- (a) Some women do not want to take part, but wish to concentrate on child care and household chores;
- (b) Some want to work at home;
- (c) Some want to work in their community;
- (d) Some want to work both at home and outside.

The extent to which Operation Salam is adequately geared to the needs and potential of the Afghan women should be carefully re-examined, especially the components concerning agriculture, micro-enterprise, small-scale industry, education, training and health. The implications of each option should be clearly formulated, and the women consulted and informed about the plans of the relevant organizations.

II. On the assumption that women's participation in the development of agriculture will be enhanced, the following should be considered:

- (a) **Small-scale farming: production, refinement, handling and sale**
 - Training in kitchen gardening, focusing on highly nutritious vegetables and fruits, including appropriate planting practices, crop complementarity and manuring. The training should also cover soils and climate, fertilization, crop rotation, compost, how best to utilize different plot sizes as well as appropriate food storage methods, e.g. sand clamps for better preservation of vegetable crops like tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, lady's finger and chinese radish.
 - Training and support in drying of fruits for home consumption and sale combined with hygienic practices, packaging and presentation. This would include almonds, walnuts, raisins, peaches, apricots, figs, plums, cherries, apples and pears. Dried fruit was a major source of income for the national economy before the strife, and there is a market for it among the Afghans.
- (b) **Livestock: production, refinement, handling and sale**
 - Establishment of livestock and poultry schemes, including cows, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys and quails. The

meat, egg and milk products would improve the diet of the people; wool would be used to provide clothes and carpets, and feathers and down for pillows, quilts and sleeping bags.

- Training in improved fodder preparation and storage techniques to be applied inside the compound; in animal hygiene, massage/ stimulation and milking techniques.

- Training in improved techniques of milk processing, including yoghurt, cream and cheese; in various food smoking practices for goat, beef and lamb.

(c) **Horticulture, etc: production, refinement, handling and sale**

- Training in horticulture and afforestation, focusing on fruit trees to help generate the lost orchards of Afghanistan and fast-growing trees like poplars to recreate the green cover of Afghanistan, to increase the supply of wood for fuel and leaves for fodder.

- Establishment of bee-keeping schemes. Bee-keeping is traditionally done by men, but the honey can be processed and packed inside the compound by women. No socio-religious taboos seem to exist against it. Quality control techniques would be essential to produce good products and be competitive.

III. Training programmes, income-generating cottage industry and small-scale industrial schemes should be launched to improve the living conditions of the Afghan people. The following suggestions are made on the assumption that the men are fully informed about the schemes and involved in so far as these tasks are suited to them. The following are examples:

(a) **Light vocational training and installation support**

- Training to refine existing tailoring skills, to make quilts, mattresses, sleeping bags, duvets and pillows as a protection against cold climates; to make clothing for men, women, children and infants, including nappies and rompers for babies.

- Training in leather work and support for fabrication of (hand) bags, wallets, photo binders, spectacle cases, school bags, rucksacks, shoes and boots.

- Training women in photography to ensure women's pictures and bride pictures are taken. Polaroid photography would be important. This can be done by women inside the compounds or by women with limited mobility. There is a market for pictures of women but, as the photographers are male, few photographs are taken.

- Training in and support for textile industry with home-

based fabrication, including spinning, knitting and crochet work (sweaters, socks, etc.), weaving (lingerie), embroidery products (wall hangings, coffer covers, tablecloths, veils, burqas, dress ornamentation).

- Training in and support for terracotta production and ceramics, including water jars and containers for wheat in the form of grain and flour form to diminish attacks from animals, flower pots for compound ornamentation, pottery, wood stoves and heaters for indoor use in the winter season and ceramic chimneys.

- Training in and support for fabrication of beadwork and jewellery, including necklaces, bracelets and earrings of precious metals and stones. There is a market for jewellery and refined beadwork among the Afghans. It is an essential part of the traditional bridal ornamentation.

- Training in and support for manufacture of bird-cages and wheat sieves.

- Training in and support for preparation of fast foods, bakery and patisserie products.

- Training in and support for hairdressing and flower ornamentation.

- Training in and support for manufacture of photograph and poster frames. There is a market for metal and wooden frames in the camps in Pakistan as well as inside Afghanistan. Everybody loves to see the pictures of beloved ones especially deceased *mujahids* hanging properly on the walls.

- Training and support of men and women (as home-based assistants) in micro-enterprises, including mechanics, carpentry, masonry, *karaze* (underground drainage system) construction and brick-making, metal work such as coffers and wheelbarrows, grinding mills and quality hand tools for farming. It is also important that refugee human resources are used to make the much-needed tools in Afghanistan. They will be the future users and will be able to transport small supplies into Afghanistan during the repatriation. The distribution will thus be facilitated.

(b) Business promotion support: credit schemes

- To help towards the establishment of micro-enterprise, self-employment credit schemes would be needed. A credit institution, located in Peshawar, is already envisaged for the agricultural reconstruction of Afghanistan, and its activities could be expanded to include schemes for micro-enterprise directed towards the household, so that women would be recognized as credit-worthy and also able to take care of widow-headed families.

(c) Technological infrastructure: training, education and production centres

- Establishing technical training centres, as a support structure for small- and medium-sized enterprises for men for the production of small-scale solar heaters and windmills. Cooking could start in pre-heated water. Fuel costs would be reduced and electric power might thus be available for water pumps and eventually, at least partially, for lighting or cold storage plants. In western Afghanistan (south-west of Herat), windmills of *katcha* construction were in use in the period 1955-1960 for the grinding of wheat (Ferdinand, 1963). Local technological knowledge could be revived and refined.
- Training women and men to produce small *katcha* cellars, which when refrigerated with ice-cubes would provide an excellent storage place for milk products and perishable foods.
- Establishing small-scale carpet factories, lingerie and clothing industries with home-based extension programmes for women. Refugee women suggested regions of Baglan and near Jalalabad as test areas for such projects with a view to wider dissemination.

The horticultural and cottage industry programme for women should be connected to technical training courses for men in improved farming and husbandry techniques, welding, mechanics, carpentry, masonry, electricity, sales promotion, accounting, administration and management techniques, combined with intensive literacy and numeracy courses, to enable the men both to participate in the manufacture of goods and promote sales.

IV. Education based on functional courses directed towards the rural reality in Afghanistan or in the camps in Pakistan should be launched. Many women want to learn, but they and their husbands need to realize the full relevance and advantages of education. It would be of paramount importance to include mine-awareness in all educational programmes.

(a) Education: literacy

- Training elderly ladies and *mullahs'* wives in functional literacy and numeracy and stimulating personal networks.
- Teaching functional literacy and numeracy to the religious female teachers (*bibis*), who go from house to house and give lessons in recitation from the holy Koran, and stimulating multiplier effect. Often, *bibis* give lessons to 10 adult women and 20 girls, i.e. the entire female group of an extended family.
- Establishment of home-based female Koranic schools.

(b) Para-health care training

- Establishing education through the dispensaries should be

given top priority, with programmes in nutrition, baby care, sanitation, hygiene, rudimentary nursing and physiotherapy for the wounded *mujahids*. All courses should be combined with functional literacy and numeracy to achieve improved living conditions and enhance the well-being of the household members.

- Training traditional birth attendants (*dais*) in health education, nursing and rudimentary medicine, particularly with reference to children's diseases and gynaecological diseases. It will take a very long time before Afghanistan is adequately supplied with rural health centres, but, in the meantime, the *dais* could fill an important function as health auxiliaries.
- The possibility should be considered of identifying the *mullahs* and elderly women who are working as lay psychiatrists and providing them with psychological or psychoanalytical training.

V. In order to ensure that women's conditions are taken consistently into account in the reconstruction programme, it is vital to increase the female personnel at all levels of the operation, especially the top levels, both within the United Nations system and as NGOs, and to place women in positions which cannot be bypassed. It is extremely important to indicate to the Afghans that women are responsible, competent partners, who can contribute meaningfully and constructively to the reconstruction of the country. More particularly, the following is suggested:

- The appointment of a high-level women's issues adviser to the Co-ordinator of UNOCA at headquarters. Over the past few years, such advisers have become an integral part of national and international humanitarian assistance agencies to ensure that women's aspects are taken into account at both policy and project level. The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation and UNHCR are examples of organizations which have institutionalized this function.
- The setting up of a co-ordinating committee consisting of high-level United Nations and NGO staff and prominent external researchers to ensure that women's conditions are constantly taken into account by all components of the operation and all participating agencies. The committee could also serve as a think-tank for new project ideas and be entrusted with programme evaluation.
- The launching of a large-scale multidisciplinary research project on the situation of the Afghan women inside Afghanistan as soon as the security situation allows this. The

research should record functions carried out by women in their communities and within the household during the civil strife. It could also monitor the progress of women-related programmes.

Women have made a notable, positive contribution in the refugee setting by seeking solutions to an often desperate situation. They have proved an asset to their households, and they ought to be recognized as such. It would be plain neglect if the aid operation did not learn from such constructive forces and efforts available in the Afghan society and give positivity a chance. Those who have the bright development ideas, courage and activeness should be supported. The women should be allowed to help revive and restore Afghanistan.

A shift of the operation towards a unified household strategy which focuses on the people in the communities and activates the potential of the women with the involvement of men, would be appropriate. Now that donor attention has shifted to Eastern Europe, it is time to come up with innovative approaches. A strategy focusing on the extremely poor, the marginalized and the innovative development actors could draw world attention back to Afghanistan.

Women are an obvious choice as development actors, because their concern is for the welfare of the entire household. Development efforts invested in them will produce effects far beyond the immediate ones. New experience will benefit the entire household and be passed on to younger generations. Their commitment to the household is undivided and wholehearted, and they have proved responsible when the men were inept. Afghan women now form the majority of the population. Their voices should be heard. They ought to be given full access to envisaged development measures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN

"...It is not exaggerated
 To say that the essential
 Problem of Afghanistan is
 That of women,
 And it is from that problem that all
 Others are derived
 Because the women's situation
 Influences all aspects of Afghan life.
 Consequently a reform of their situation
 Would necessarily herald a real change in the country..."*

* Claude Sérignan (1960) (Extract translated by the author).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Afghanistankomiteen i Norge (Norwegian Committee for Afghanistan, NCA)

Kvinner i Afghanistan, Oslo, 1985.

Ahmed, A.S.

"Resettlement of Afghan refugees and the social sciences", in **Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1982.

Anderson, J.

"Tribe and community among Ghilzai Pashtun. Preliminary notes on ethnographic distribution and variation in eastern Afghanistan", in **Anthropos**, Vol. 70, 1975.

"Social structure and the veil: Comportment and the composition of Interaction in Afghanistan", in **Anthropos**, Vol. 77, Nos. 3/4, 1982.

Arberry, A. J.

The Koran Interpreted, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1955.

Bailleau Lajoinie, S.

Conditions de femmes en Afghanistan, Editions sociales, Paris, 1980.

Boesen, I.

"Women, honour and love: Some aspects of the Pashtun women's life in Eastern Afghanistan", in **Afghanistan Journal**, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1980.

"Conflicts of solidarity in Pakhtun women's lives", in B. Utas (ed.), **Women in Islamic Societies: Social Attitudes and Historical Perspectives**, Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Studies on Asian Topics No.6, Curzon Press, London, 1983.

"Honour in exile: Continuity and change among Afghan refugees", in *Folk*, Vol. 28, 1986.

Afghan Women in Repatriation and Reconstruction, paper prepared for the Seminar on the Potential for Recovery in Afghanistan and the Role of International Assistance (Geneva, 5-7 May 1989), University of Neuchatel, UNOCA and IUED.

Boserup, E.

Women's Role in Economic Development, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1970.

Carter, P.

"Afghanistan, crossroad of Asia - Again?", in *Asian Affairs*, Vol. XX, Part III, 1989.

Centlivres, P.

"L'innocence en question: Les enfants afghans dans la guerre et l'exil", in *Nouvelle Revue d'Ethnopsychiatrie*, No. 12, 1988.

Christensen, H.

Sustaining Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: Report on the Food Situation and Related Social Aspects, Report No. 83.3, UNRISD, Geneva, 1983.

Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: From Emergency Towards Self-Reliance: A Report on the Food Relief Situation and Related Socio-economic Aspects, Report No. 84.2, UNRISD, Geneva, 1984.

Refugees and Pioneers: History and Field Study of a Burundian Settlement in Tanzania, Report No. 85.4, UNRISD, Geneva, 1985.

"Spontaneous development efforts by rural refugees in Somalia and Pakistan", in J.R. Rogge (ed.), **Refugees: A Third World Dilemma**, Rowman and Littlefield, New Jersey, 1987.

"Afghan refugees", in **Refugee Participation Network**, No. 4, 1989.

_____ and W. Scott

Survey of the Social and Economic Conditions of the Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, Report No. 88.1, UNRISD, Geneva, 1988.

_____ and F. Haffenden

Planning and Afghan Women: Report from the Workshop 21-23 August 1989, UNIFEM/UNICEF, New York, 1989.

Connor, K. M.

Skills Inventory of Afghan Refugees in the North West Frontier and Baluchistan Provinces, UNICEF, New York, December 1988.

Delloye, I.

Des femmes d'Afghanistan, Edition des Femmes, Paris, 1980.

Dupree, L.

Afghanistan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980.

Edwards, D. B.

"Origins of the anti-Soviet Jihad", in G. M. Farr and J. G. Merriam (eds.), **Afghan Resistance: The Politics of Survival**, Vanguard Books, Lahore, 1988.

Ferdinand, K.

"Nomadic expansion and commerce in central Afghanistan: A sketch of some modern trends", in *Folk*, Vol. 4, 1962.

"The horizontal windmills of western Afghanistan", in *Folk*, Vol. 5, 1963.

"Nomader som stammefolk" (Nomads as tribesmen), in *Folk*, Vol. 14, 1979.

Glatzer, B.

"Political organisation of Pashtun nomads and the state", in R. Tapper (ed.), **The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan**, Croom Helm, London, 1983.

"Afghan nomads trapped in Pakistan", in B. Huldt and E. Jansson (eds.), **The Tragedy of Afghanistan**, Croom Helm, London, 1988.

Government of Afghanistan and USAID (United States Agency for International Development)

National Demographic and Family Guidance Survey of the Settled Population of Afghanistan, Afghan Demographic Studies (ADS), Kabul, 1975.

Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan

Statistical Yearbook, Central Statistical Office (CSO), Kabul, 1981.

Hatch Dupree, N.

"Behind the veil in Afghanistan", in *Asia*, July/August 1978.

"Afghan refugee women in Pakistan: The psychocultural dimension", in *WUFA*, Vol. 3, No.1, 1988.

Women in Afghanistan: Preliminary Needs Assessment, UNIFEM, New York, July 1989.

Howard-Merriam, K.

"Afghan refugee women and their struggle for survival", in G. M. Farr and J. G. Merriam (eds.), *Afghan Resistance: The Politics of Survival*, Vanguard Books Ltd., Lahore, 1988.

Humlum, J.

La géographie de l'Afghanistan: étude d'un pays aride, Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1959.

Hussain, S. S. and A. Husain Rizvi,

Afghanistan: Whose War?, El-Mashriqi Foundation, Islamabad, 1987.

Jentsch, C.

Das Nomadentum in Afghanistan: Eine Geographische Untersuchung zur Lebens- und Wirtschaftsform im Asiatischen Trockengebiet, Verlag Anton Hain, Meisenheim am Glan, 1973.

Kaldor, K.

Assisting Skilled Women: Personal Observations and Considerations regarding Implementation of Income-Generating Projects for Female Afghan Refugees, working paper prepared for the Austrian Relief Committee, Peshawar, May 1988.

Knabe, E.

"Afghan women: Does their role change?", in L. Dupree and L. Albert (eds.), *Afghanistan in the 1970s*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1974.

Frauenemanzipation in Afghanistan. Ein empirischer Beitrag zur Untersuchung von sozio-kulturellem Wandel und sozio-kultureller Beständigkeit, Afghanische Studien Bd.16, Verlag Anton Hain, Meisenheim am Glan, 1977.

Myrdal, J.

Resa i Afghanistan (Travel in Afghanistan), P.A. Norstedt and Söners Förlag, Stockholm, 1960.

Pedersen, G.

Nomadisme og bosætningsanalyser: En behandling af Barths og Salzmans nomadeanalyser med henblik på forståelsen af bosætningsprocessen - inkluderende et modelforslag og en analyse af bosætningsprocessen blandt Ahmadzai i Afghanistan (Nomadism and settlement analysis: A treatment of Barth's and Salzman's analyses of nomadism with relation to an understanding of the settlement process - including a suggestion for a model and an analysis of the settlement process among the Ahmadzai in Afghanistan), unpublished dissertation in social anthropology, University of Århus, Moesgård Århus, 1985.

-
- "Det er bedst at være rig!" (Best to be rich!), in *Stofskifte, Tidskrift for Anthropologi*, No. 16, 1987/1988.
- Rahimi, F.
Women in Afghanistan, Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanistanica, Liestal, 1986.
- Sérignan, C.
 "La condition des femmes en Afghanistan et son évolution récente", in *Orient*, Vol. 4, No. 14, 1960.
- Sliwinski, M.
 "Afghanistan: The decimation of a people", in *Orbis*, winter 1989.
- Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
The Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan, Vol. 1, Peshawar, May 1988.
- Sweetser, A.
 "Afghan nomad refugees in Pakistan", in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Vol.8, No.1, 1984.
- Taft, J.
Issues and Options for Refugee Women in Developing Countries, Refugee Policy Group, Washington, D.C., 1987.
- Tapper, N.
 "Pashtun nomad women in Afghanistan", in *Asian Affairs*, Vol.VIII, No. 2, 1977.
-
- "Acculturation in Afghan Turkistan: Pashtun and Uzbek women", in *Asian Affairs*, Vol.XIV, Part I, 1983.
- Tavakolian, B.
 "Women and Socioeconomic Change among Sheikhanzai Nomads of Western Afghanistan", in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.38, No.3, 1984.
- Terrenoire, M.-O.
 "Guerre d'Afghanistan: images de femmes", in *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1987.
- United Nations
The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women: As Adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievement of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985), United Nations Department of Public Information Division for Economic and Social Information, Report No. 86-44198, New York, April 1986.

UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities, now United Nations Population Fund)

Afghanistan: Report of a Needs Assessment for Population Assistance, Report No. 3, New York, 1978.

UNOCA (Office of the Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan)

First Consolidated Report, Report UNCA/88/1, Geneva, 1988.

Salam 3. Mission Report (7 October - 19 November 1988), UNOCA/SALAM/3, Geneva, 1989a.

United Nations Plan of Action, 1989: Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Relating to Afghanistan, Geneva, 1989b.

World Bank

1980 World Bank Atlas, Washington, D.C., 1981.

REFERENCES

Bacon, E.

Central Asians under Russian Rule. A Study in Cultural Change, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1966.

Centlivres, P. and M. Centlivres-Demont

Et si on parlait de l'Afghanistan? Terrains et textes 1964-1980, Editions de l'Institut d'ethnologie, Neuchatel, 1988.

Ferdinand, K.

"Preliminary notes on Hazara culture", in **Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser**, Vol. 37, No. 5, 1959.

"Marriage among Pakhtun nomads of eastern Afghanistan", in **Folk**, Vol. 24, 1982.

Glatzer, B. and U. Siebert

"Ethnic relations under stress: Punjabis, Pashtuns, and Afghan refugees", in D. Bernstorff and D. Braun (eds.), **Political Transition in South Asia**, Monahar Publications, New Delhi, 1989.

Hatch Dupree, N.

"Revolutionary rhetoric and Afghan women", in M.N. Shahrani and R.L. Canfield (eds.), **Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan**, Institute of International Studies, Research series No. 57, University of California, Berkeley, 1984.

"The Afghan refugee family abroad: A focus on Pakistan", in **WUFA**, Vol. 2, No.4, 1987.

"The role of Afghan women after repatriation", in **WUFA**, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1988.

Kaldor, K.

Trees and Women: A Pilot Project, working paper prepared for the Austrian Relief Committee, Peshawar, April 1989.

Knabe, E.

"Women in the social stratification in Afghanistan", in C. van Nieuwenhuijze (ed.), **Commoners, Climbers and Notables**, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1977.

Koranen (The Coran)

Borgens Billigbøger 34, Borgens Forlag, Copenhagen, 1967.

McC. Pastner, C.

"A social, structural and historical analysis of honor, shame and purdah", in **Anthropological Quarterly**, Vol. 45, No. 4, 1972.

"The status of women and property on a Baluchistan oasis in Pakistan", in L. Beck and N. Keddie (eds.), **Women in the Muslim World**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1979.

Orywal, E.

Die ethnischen gruppen Afghanistans: Fallstudien zu Gruppenidentität und Intergruppenbeziehungen (The ethnic groups of Afghanistan: Case-studies of group identity and intergroup behaviour), Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) No. 70, Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1986.

Papanek, H.

"Purdah: Separate worlds and symbolic shelter", in **Comparative Studies in Society and History**, Vol.15, No.1, 1973.

Rao, A. (ed.)

The Other Nomad, Böhlau Verlag, Köln, 1987.

Stucki, A.

"Horses and women" in **Afghanistan Journal**, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1978.

Tapper, N.

"Direct exchange and brideprice: alternative forms in a complex marriage system", in **Man**, Vol. 16, 1981.

and R.

"Marriage preferences and ethnic relations among Durrani Pashtuns of Afghan Turkestan", in **Folk**, Vol. 24, 1982.

Tapper, R.

"Nomadism in modern Afghanistan: Asset or anachronism", in L. Dupree and L. Albert (eds.), **Afghanistan in the 1970s**, Praeger, New York, 1974.



The Author:

Hanne Christensen, former project leader at UNRISD, is a sociologist specializing in social processes of integration of refugees in developing countries. She now works as project co-ordinator for human rights and development issues at the Danish Centre for Human Rights, Copenhagen. She has done field work in Mexico, Pakistan, Somalia, Tanzania and Zambia and is the author of several publications and articles on refugee issues.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) was established to promote in-depth research into the social dimensions of pressing problems and issues of contemporary relevance affecting development. Its work is inspired by the conviction that, for effective development policies to be formulated, an understanding of the social and political context is crucial, as is an accurate assessment of how such policies affect different social groups.

The Institute attempts to complement the work done by other United Nations agencies and its current research themes include the social impact of the economic crisis and adjustment policies; environment, sustainable development and social change; ethnic conflict and development; refugees, returnees and local society; the socio-economic and political consequences of the international trade in illicit drugs; and the impact on participation of changes in the ownership of the means of production.

**United Nations Research Institute
for Social Development**

Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

☎ (41.22)798.84.00
(41.22)798.58.50
Fax(41.22)740.07.91