

**ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN WOMEN  
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT TAKHAR PROVINCE OF  
AFGHANISTAN.**

**CASE STUDY OF AWARSA**

**BY**

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**November- 2019**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of MBA  
at Kardan University, Kabul, Afghanistan.**

### **Declaration of Authorship**

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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## **Acknowledgment**

All praises to Almighty ALLAH for blessed me with guidance on the right path by granting me knowledge, and strength, and for the good health and wellbeing that were necessary to peruse Master degree in Business Administration (Management) at the Kardan University, One of the best Private University of Afghanistan.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to Professor Kalimullah Bangash., my thesis advisor, who approved to proceed with this research and significant supported me to complete it successfully. I am extremely thankful and indebted to him for sharing expertise, and sincere and valuable guidance and encouragement extended to me during thesis development.

I take this opportunity to express immensely gratitude to all my respected professional lectures from MBA department faculty members for their help and support. I also thank my parents, family members for the unceasing encouragement, support and attention. I am also grateful to my colleagues who supported me through this venture.

Finally, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my family who supports me in any field of my life, particularly in my educational career.

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**List of abbreviation:**

1. ANPDF- Afghanistan National Peace Development Framework
2. LNGO- Local None Government Organization
3. AKF- Aga Khan Foundation
4. SHG- Self Help Group

## **ABSTRACT**

The main aim of this research study is to find out the effectiveness of AWRASA as an organization towards women empowerment in rural areas of Takhar province. The questionnaire is designed, and the scheduled interviews are conducted with 60 respondents as the beneficiaries of the subject organization. The qualitative research methodology used in the study and the sample of 15 out of total population of 60 women were randomly selected as a primary data source for analysis of the information and the conclusion is made based on these sample data.

Women are still vulnerable Afghan women have historically been disadvantaged in all aspects of life. They face discrimination, stigma, and violence thereby limiting their opportunities for education, employment, representation in leadership and decision-making, and participation in social life. Despite improvements in the last decade since the end of the Taliban regime, , women at national and rural level still face widespread challenges such as discrimination and human rights abuses, unregulated employment , limited educational opportunities, limited access to economic opportunities. Women are facing double of these challenges in rural areas despite of the implementation of development interventions through development actors as INGOs, Government, and LNGOs. The effectiveness of LNGOs toward women empowerment is further studied in this research. .

This research paper suggests the following important factors which should be considered to and recommendation that the international community, Government of Afghanistan and other development actors need to consider in order to design and implemented the projects in rural areas through local NGOs which will significantly contribute to women empowerment by addressing the ground needs and realities.

Based on the findings of the study it was revealed that most of the implemented projects by AWARSA organization were short term and the respondents highly recommended to AWARSA to consider long term interventions if the organization is expecting tangible outcomes. Similarly, the respondents pointed out to a simple point but literally it seems to be very important to consider during designing any project around women empowerment in rural areas. Considering the dynamic context, cultural and traditional barriers the literacy level of women in villages and districts is low, and few women are educated. The respondents suggested to AWARSA that upon designing any



intervention and project it should segment the beneficiaries in terms of educated vs uneducated and implemented the projects based on their actual needs. For instance; the educated respondents proposed educational capacity building projects such as English and Computer leaning course, trainings and awareness around women rights, whereas the illtreated respondents proposed vocational Skill development interventions, Handcraft and Tailoring, Carpet weaving projects as drivers for women socio-economic empowerment.

Basically women empowerment is a long term process and focusing on short term projects might not lead to optimum results therefore development actors such as Donors, INGOs, Government of Afghanistan, and other interested actors must offer first an enabling environment for women and concentrate more on long terms efforts approach and implement long term projects to ensure fundamental resolution of women socio- economic challenges in rural areas.

## CHAPTER NUMBER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.0 Introduction:

This chapter is exploring the issues and challenges which the women in rural areas of Takhar provinces are facing. However numerous development projects have been implemented around the country in Takhar provinces as well around women empowerment but most of women in rural areas women are still suffering from poor economy and lack of access to employment opportunities. This chapter is focusing both on the effectiveness of LNGOs role providing women centric interventions, plus gaging the impacts of such development interventions on the life of beneficiaries.

#### 1.1 Background:

Women are still vulnerable Afghan women have historically been disadvantaged in all aspects of life. They face discrimination, stigma, and violence thereby limiting their opportunities for education, employment, representation in leadership and decision-making, and participation in social life. Despite improvements in the last decade since the end of the Taliban regime, , women at national and rural level still face widespread challenges such as discrimination and human rights abuses, unregulated employment , limited educational opportunities, limited access to economic opportunities. These challenges remain largely unstudied due to the lack of domestic interest and capacity on gender, women empowerment in research circles. However, development actors such as Government, Donors, INGOs, and Local None Government Organizations have implemented numerous development projects to improve Gender and women empowerment but the public has been criticizing the aid efficiency due to the nature of short-term projects and not contributing to long-term positive change and impacts on the lives of women.

In addition; since women in rural parts of Afghanistan are more vulnerable towards these challenges and facing problems and the focus of development actors mainly INGOs, and Government has been limited. Therefore, through this case study the focus would be to explore and find out about the role and effectiveness of LNGO called AWARSA claiming to have implemented projects in rural areas of Takhar for the improvement quality of life and women empowerment. AWARSA- Afghan Women Rehabilitation and Skill Building Association is

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established and registered the ministry of Economy. The main mission of the organization is empowering of rural women communities to reduce poverty through advocacy, education and coordination of socio-economic services.

### 1.2 Problem statement:

Women in rural parts of Afghanistan is facing a **number** social, cultural and economic **of** problems such as unregulated employment, limited educational opportunities, limited access to socio- economic opportunities. The major challenge for rural women is poor economy with low or no income at household level. The only source of income that women are involved with is traditional handcraft business but most of those women face lack of skills and knowledge with limited access to training opportunities. Since the major focus of development, actors INGOs, Donors have only been on the major cities and limited to centers therefore women in rural areas are deprived widely benefiting from development interventions and opportunities.

In the northern and central regions women produce carpets and kelims, activities that primarily takes place within the homes and they generate some minor income from the selling the products at low price. AWARSA as Local NGO based in Takhar province has been implementing development interventions helping women in rural areas to enhance both the knowledge and skills of beneficiaries in handcraft sector. However, the handcraft may not boost **the** quality of life of these women and we need to find out alternatives and interventions which may boost the economy of women, develop their skills in order to empower them both economically and socially.

### 1.3 Research Questions

#### Research Question1:

Whether AWARA is contributing to Women Empowerment in rural areas of Takhar?

#### Research Question2:

What factors should be considered for women empowerment in rural areas from beneficiaries' perspective.

### 1.4 Research Objectives

1. To find out whether local NGO AWARSA as an organization is effective in terms of development interventions toward women empowerment in Takhar province.
2. To explore factors of women empowerment in rural areas from beneficiaries' perspective in Takhar province

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### 1.5 Significance of the study:

Afghanistan as a war-torn country has faced numerous challenges for 4 decades and people including men, women and children. The people of Afghanistan has been struggling with hard living during these decades of war and as result negatively affected socially, economically, lost infrastructure, limited or no access to education. However; following the fall of Taliban government vast number of donors and international development actors stepped in to the country and implemented development projects mostly in the provincial and district level and the people in rural areas specially women did not equality benefit from those development initiatives due to a number of factors due to harsh geographic area, remoteness of rural areas, security reasons, limited accessibility and presence of international organizations within those communities. On the other hand, the growing number of LNGOs in the country provided somehow facilitated the partial opportunity for the expansion of development interventions to remote and rural areas. LNGOs or CSOs as being local development agents have higher acceptance level within communities and they are in the better position to assess the actual needs of the deprived communities and then address them to the level possible. Studying the achievements of AWARSA organization which has been able to focus specifically on women economic empowerment in rural areas of Takhar province will provide a clear picture for all development actors what areas of interventions to consider whenever designing projects or programs around rural women empowerment. This case study will also elaborate on the role of LNGOs in delivery of development interventions and reaching out to remote areas and empower women.

### 1.6 Scheme of Thesis:

This part of the paper describes the important parts of the research study, theme of each chapter is discussed and explained. The important parts of respective chapter are elaborated in few sentences to make reader understand, what is discussed in the given chapter.

#### 1.6.1 Chapter No 1: Introduction and Overview

This chapter discuss Problem statement, Research Questions, Research Objectives and Significance of the study.

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### **1.6.2 Chapter No 2: Literature Review**

This chapter discusses the literatures about the role of LNGOs in delivering development interventions for women empowerment in rural areas. The research which is been already done regarding the women empowerment in country is discussed and important literatures are reviewed and discussed to present a clear picture around women empowerment interventions at the local rural context.

### **1.6.3 Chapter No 3: Methodology**

This chapter discusses which type of data and how it is collected, the methodology for collecting the data, how it organized and analyzed, which techniques are used for analyzing the data, the population and size of the data, the research design and which methodology of research is used.

### **1.6.4 Chapter No 4: Analysis and Findings**

This chapter is one of the important chapters which discusses significant part of the research study the analysis of each question answered by the respondent and in the light of the analysis and arguments of the respondent findings are discussed.

### **1.6.5 Chapter No 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The last chapter of the research study, which is the most important and valuable part of the study. It discusses the finding of the research and result of the whole research paper. The conclusion of the study is explained in detail and the recommendations for what factors to consider when designing programs for women empowerment in rural areas, also to find out if the LNGOs are effective local development actors in delivering women empowerment interventions. The references of the material are given and the questionnaire for data collection is attached.

## CHAPTER NUMBER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates research studies which is already done in regarding women empowerment in Afghanistan, studying numerous approaches for women empowerment from different research papers. The main aim of this chapter is to explore women empowerment in Afghanistan context from the perspective of different development actors, touch base the challenges toward women empowerment interventions, approaches considered for the projects toward women empowerment in the country.

#### 2.1 Women Empowerment in Afghanistan context

The term empowerment is consisting of two words Em, and power, which literally means giving authority or entitlement to someone to perform a task in a better way. Or in other words power is representing to control resources in terms of physical, intellectual or human, assets, financial resources, plus to have control over ideology such as beliefs, attitude, and values. We may conclude it if power means control, then empowerment would better represent as the process to get control. According to (Women's economic empowerment in conflict and post-conflict countries-by Maria Elena Ruiz Abril-2009) defines Women's economic empowerment-WEE based on World Bank Gender Action plan definition that creating markets to work for women and enable women to compete in markets.

The literature briefly discusses the role women which makes half the humanity, but they are marginalized socially, economically and politically. There could be diversified approaches for empowering women and depends on the interventions of organizations. National governments, NGOs and International development agencies are well informed decades ago and been worried about the women status for the past several decades, national governments, non-governmental organizations and international agencies have been aware and concerned about the status of women. These actors have reacted and taken steps to promote women's literacy, improve health condition and build the capacity of women to ensure their capacity growth and empowerment. (Tauffiqu Ahamad&Hemlata&Ananta Narayana-2015).

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In addition, the literature review has mainly focused on the role of Local NGO in delivering developments interventions for the empowerment of women in rural areas of Afghanistan. There have been various approaches and interventions to facilitate for women empowerment, but the context should be considered as issues and challenges are mostly contextualized as one intervention might not be the solution for all women in different communities. Likewise, the definition of women empowerment should be also considered comprehensive in way that covers the ground realities. As generic term women empowerment is a process to improve the capacity of individuals or groups for self-sufficiency and have control over their life and resources. (Women's Economic Empowerment Rural Development Project-September 7, 2018-Agriculture Global Practice-South Asia Region-World Bank Report)

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Empowering women is one of the most crucial concerns of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of women to independently make choices and to transmute those choices to more tangible outcomes which will enable them to act for increasing their own self-sufficiency, claim their independent right to make choices and to control resources " (Keller and Mbwewe, 1991).

## 2.2 Women social development

Overall the life both for men and women was very hard during the Taliban era in Afghanistan and women were suffering the most in a couple of means, the ill treatment of Taliban which completely ignored women rights. After the occupation of the United States armed forces into Afghanistan in 2001, Afghan women's rights was the on the top of the international community's agenda. Since the misbehavior and ill treatment of Taliban toward women was obvious and it was further reflected by the media outlets that encouraged government departments and international development actors such as NGOs and international NGOs to help Afghan women to get liberation from the aggressive situation. However, Taliban has still presence in the country but there have major improvements and work done toward gender equality and women empowerment through the government and development actors in Afghanistan since the fall of Taliban. As war torn country lost almost everything during the past 40 years and the new interim government had to start almost from scratch and hard efforts and works had to be accomplished to improve the living condition for women in the country. There has been significant advancement in Education, Health, legal rights, participation in politics, allocation of specific quota for women in parliaments, Act on Violence against Women signed and approved. Despite of these development women are still suffering with many

challenges out of capital level especially in rural areas where women have limited access to education, health and economic growth facilities. Women active participation in politics and major decision-making process is still challenging and the given legal rights is not practical and remains only in words on paper of laws. (Odell, Heather C. (2016) "Economic Empowerment: An Avenue to Gender Equality in Afghanistan).

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Significant changes and efforts are needed to maintain these achievements in practice. According to the argument made in this paper that however it is very vital for women empowerment and gender equality in Afghanistan to have access to education, enjoy legal equal rights, represent in political platforms, and have physical security. On the other hand, economic empowerment should be the top priority which is very influential culturally well adopted method for the long-term improvement women rights in the country. Ground realities show that those women who have gained economic skills they are well respected and valuable within families, community and they will ultimately have more political impact to fight for their rights. (An Avenue to Gender Equality in Afghanistan-Heather C. Odell).

However significant improvements in the lives of women could be observed mostly at the capital and province center levels as women political participation have increased, 27% seats been allocated in the lower house of Parliament and they have active presence there. Besides; significant freedom the field of education school enrollment and improvement in live of women is in the health sector is observed where the number of infant mortality rate declined.

Despite of the recorded improvements women in rural areas are facing a couple of challenges since Afghanistan has secured low score in the HDI-Human development index in the field of social indicator related to women. According to (Empowering Women through Development Aid August 2013), women are predominantly facing significant economic, social, political restrictions due to long term Civil conflicts, and the problems doubled for the movement of rural women due to strict cultural and tribal codes which are barring women in performing outside household activities in order to preserve their honor.

### 2.3. Gender Inequality Vs Equality

The overall living situation for all Afghans either Men or Women was difficult during the Taliban regime as they were not enjoying human rights equally and mostly women and girls were greatly suffering who were not allowed for education or work outside of home. Fortunately, right after the collapse of Taliban government in 2001, the gender equality and



supporting women to enhance their capacity and advocate for their rights the development actors and international organizations gave priority for promotions of women and girls' rights in order to bring improvement in their life. In addition; the Government of Afghanistan established the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), approved - Elimination of Violence against Women Law (EVAWA) to tackle violence and avoid discrimination women in country, approved, National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) back in 2008 with the main goals to empower women and gender equality.

In the light of these existed laws and other policies for preserving women and girls rights and advancing their significant role in the country international development actors such as International no-Government organizations-INGOs, local non-government organizations-LNGOs initiated and developed various inter-organizational approaches and strategies ensuring women empowerment and enhancing women position in Afghanistan.

However as outcome of the Afghanistan Government and international development actors the women accessed to important achievements based the survey conducted by (Asia Foundation in 2011), but Afghan women are still facing a couple of challenges such as high mortality rates due to limited access to health facilities and doctor especially in rural parts of the country, lack of economic rights and opportunities, high rate of violence and discrimination, abuse (Women & Gender in Afghanistan-Ahmad Khan). In addition; great gender equality gap is existed around the globe that women are still dependent on men, women participation rate in the market is lower than men, women do most of the unpaid work and they hold lowest salary positions.

#### **2.4. Women's Economic Empowerment**

According to World Bank income generation interventions are necessary and helpful for rural women and several microfinance programs been implemented where in 2013, out of 400000 microfinances client's women presented 38 %. World Bank argues that women participants have positive perception toward micro finance programs, but the process should be managed cautiously in a male dominant society in order to increase household economic status of women. Traditionally any program which is supposed to work with women you need to go through male channels either through the husband or other family members of a women and in case of micro finance one must be alert that giving loan money and handling micro finance through male member of the family will improve the livelihood of women temporarily but experiences from the Afghanistan and other countries suggests that there should a platform for

women to gather and meet to enhance their knowledge and skills in a proper way and also advance decision making power which will have comparatively positive and productive impact on women's overall livelihood situation. (World Bank 2014: 117).

As per UNDP midterm evaluation report emphasis on the dependency of rural women economic empowerment on income generation interventions consisting of business development strategies, establishing of training centers, enhancing the capacity of women entrepreneurs enabling them to run cooperatives smoothly.(UNDP Afghanistan Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Project Mid-term Evaluation Report- Gana Pati Ojha Ahmad Zubair Fattahi 2-22-2015).

One of the dominant approaches to reduce poverty is to give priority for women economic empowerment regardless of discrimination among men and women. Women can play same role as economic actors and change agents as men. This is significant to manage women economic empowerment correctly which will contribute tremendously toward society growth and development and poverty reduction.

#### **2.5. Women's Empowerment from the Afghanistan Government policies perspective:**

NAPPWA-National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan is representing the government strong stance toward women empowerment. The document affirms the commitment of government to safeguard full political and active role and socio-economic participation of women in the area national development. Afghanistan government has included budget for the Economic Empowerment of Women for the purpose of poverty reduction, it committed to invest around USD-250 million for WEEP- Women's economic Empowerment Program. However, the document states to of further commitments for seeking ways that will increase women's mobility, improving the gender equality, and providing women further credit opportunities and easy access to markets but apparently all these fancy commitments stays only in words. (National action plan for the women of afghanistan-napwa-2007).

#### **2.6. Afghanistan's gender strategy ensuring Equality**

Both the constitution of Afghanistan and The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework is also representing the stance of government for provision of equal citizenship rights for women plus reduce poverty through the socio -economic opportunities and widely engaging women in the market. -The document in consisting of five pillars with the dedication to implement the global commitments on human rights, security, women freedom from

domestic violence. Similarly, the other pillars are inclusive of full access to services such as education at all levels, health, starting the WEENP-Women's Economic National Priority program, advance the presence and role of women in government and business, and finally execution of laws for ensuring women's rights. (ANPPF- page 27-Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework)

### **2.7. Role of development actors in around women economic empowerment through Income generation projects**

However, the Afghanistan government has made couple of commitments for advancing women empowerment across the country but apparently it has failed in doing so due to the existed bureaucratic system in place. Fortunately, the development actors such as INGOs, domestic NGOs have been able to launch and implement women empowerment specific intervention across the country. NORID as one of the international organizations has implemented a couple of projects in norther provinces of the country focusing mainly on increasing access of women to income and credit opportunities towards women's broader empowerment. According to the organization the implemented income generation interventions are believed to have positive effects on improving the livelihood of women in rural areas. (NORID-Report-10-2014-p18). NORID case study further argues that another partner organization Aga Khan Foundation-AKF played significant role in supporting income generation intervention for women economic empowerment in rural areas through small grants. According to (NORID-2014-p19) narrates that "Of the various activities they have supported, poultry farming is considered most successful. Women have been given around 50 chickens as well as basic training. They pay for the construction of the sheds. Since this requires some assets the women are typically not amongst the poorest in the village. Women report sales of around 30- 80 USD per month, (with the start- up package amounting to around 380 USD.)

The study is more optimistic that through the mentioned interventions number of positive outcomes have been received such as the positive social change, increased prestige with family and community, increased decision-making power whenever she brings money. This claimed is also supported by the impact assessment carried out by NRC organization from its implemented projects in Faryab province. The interviews 231 of 350 of the beneficiaries revealed that there was explicit positive change and women reported improvement in their live.

The beneficiaries also reported that more than 50% project women beneficiaries enjoyed an increase in self-confidence and respect from household and communities.

ACTED another international development organization interviewed 21 self-help community-based saving groups in Faryab province, with the question of what the most important changes resulting from the program were. 16 Around half of the group's responses centered around self-confidence and respect. (NORAM P23).

Organizations should consider horizontal rather than vertical approach whenever designing income generation interventions. According to NORAD research the focus of development actors when developing and implementing women focused interventions should pay serious attention to lay the foundation for sustainable empowerment of women. Instead of endeavoring wider coverage it will be more effective to concentrate on limited scope of products or interventions and involving women actively to gain skills and improve their ability for self-sustainability and to link them with different markets at local and national level.

## **2.8. Role of International NGOs involvement in women's empowerment**

International NGOs have long background of existence in Afghanistan and they poured with wider number following the fall of Taliban in 2001. Currently there are 265 registered International NGOs working in Afghanistan providing aid services and implementing development projects and programs across the country. International NGOs are focusing on wider sectors vs national NGOs such as Education, Health, Agriculture, IDPs, Women Rights, Human Rights, Peace Building, Conflict Resolution, Infrastructure, Food Security, Media, Environmental protection, Livestock, Microfinance, Wash/Water, Governance etc.

International NGOs have implemented numerous development projects across the country and spent Billions of Dollars and there has been progress and positive changes observed in all the sectors. There have been also specific women centric programs considered to advocate for gender equality, preserving women and girls' rights and empower women. International interest in and definitions of women's empowerment have altered over the intervention years, though acknowledgement of the rank of supporting Afghan women has remained equitably constant, peaking at moments of crisis (e.g. when a controversial bill undermining women's rights is on the parliamentary agenda). Stances on how Afghan women can and should be supported by foreign aid have varied over time and, importantly, between donors, with some, such as the World Bank, attempting to maintain a largely apolitical stance and others, such as

UN Women and the Scandinavian donor agencies, taking a more transformative approach. Consequently, donor spending on women's empowerment has enlarged. The UK Department for international Development (DFID) announced a stand-alone woman and girls' portfolio in 2014 (currently allocated £3.1 million). The US Agency for International Development (USAID) presented in 2014 its largest single program ever implemented specifically to promote women's empowerment, globally, with a commitment of \$216 million from the US government and a further \$200 million pledged by other donors for the five-year program in Afghanistan (USAID, 2014). (Women and power Mobilizing around Afghanistan's Elimination of Violence Against Women Law-Anna Larson Report February 2016).

However; several projects and programs implemented all the country, but women in rural areas are still facing lots of challenges and one may find it difficult observe change around women empowerment. According to Anusha claiming through her research that most of the projects implemented in Afghanistan are not designed through a customized research or considering the actual ground needs of communities and context of the country. Local Afghan staff were even not involved in the planning and decision-making stages of implemented. It was also observed that developed plans were not fully implemented and that resulted to dissatisfaction of communities, stakeholders, and government from the outcome of the projects.

Similarly; projects sustainability was the major challenge that implanting organizations did not consider thoughtfully during the design and initiation stages and lack of sustainability measures caused projects failure, plus raised concerns about the project life among government and stakeholders. (Assessing Participation in Women's Development Projects in Afghanistan-Anusha Ahmadi-2013)

International organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations have also focused on women's issues, especially the empowerment of poor women in rural areas. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have moved beyond the traditional focus of women's health and education to addressing the underlying causes of deprivation through the promotion of economic and social empowerment. (Narayan, 2002; Sadik, 1988). (Role of NGOs in Women Empowerment: With Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh Tauffiqu Ahamad, Hemlata, Ananta Narayana). Literatures suggest that NGO interventions positively contribute to women empowerment. This Paper focus on the role of NGO's located in areas of Uttar Pradesh. (Ahsan Ullah, 2003: 21).

## **2.9. Role of National and Local NGOs around women empowerment**

Literature identifies the non-governmental organization (NGO) as any non-for-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is established either locally, nationally or internationally consisting of likeminded people having humanitarian agenda such as human rights, environment or health to offer wide humanitarian and development services to communities. Their role is to connect people and government, advocate for people rights, (Role of NGOs in Women Empowerment- Tauffiqu Ahamad, Hemlata, Ananta Narayana-2015).

Currently there are more 1800 local and National NGOs registered officially with the Ministry of Economy of Afghanistan. These organizations are scattered in Kabul and around 34 provinces of the country involved in delivering aid and development services to communities in need in remote areas. Field experiences show that NGOs in general can play a significant role as entry point to communities where local and traditional NGOs have higher acceptance level and community consider them as credible change agents whereas new NGOs with new knowledge and skills may play more dominant role in dealing with new social issues within communities. According to (Civil Society Organizations and Empowerment of Women-Milad Pournik IGIS WP 06/GGP WP 04-May 2013), it is significant to consider the actual ground society realities and struggle to change mentality of women roles at the grassroots level. Solving issues is lengthy process and should be resolved gradually by reflecting local dynamics and approaches. The experience from Iraq plus from Afghanistan itself has shown that while proposing any change in society own cultural sensitives and norms should be highly considered as simply copying or replicating interventions from the West will not be practical instead, we must pay attention to the needs of own society.

The paper further narrates Mahdi's insight most of NGOs have motivated their beneficiaries specifically girls and women to produce quality goods which have market at small scale and give priority to quality vs quantity. Through this approach girls and women have gained high feeling of self-value to examine the capability of producing something and, they have obtained self-confidence from such income generation interventions. The findings further insist that Civil society organization such NGOs play significant role as incremental basis where they implement small scale interventions which promises applicable changes.

There have been a couple of other researches around women economic empowerment mainly focused on rural areas proposing the issuance of micro grants to women enterprises. It is important that the interventions must be contextualized to ensure the productivity and success. Through the micro grants focused on food processing and agricultural interventions is helping female entrepreneur not only improving economy by increase in income but it will also provide employment opportunity for other female community members.

Economic development, food security, and education should be at the forefront of any development actor agenda particularly considering the economic empowerment of women as the rural family's economy is women driven as well and there is flexibility and great potential for growth and development. (FAO. 2015. Empowering women in Afghanistan – Reducing gender gaps through Integrated-Dairy Schemes, by Boros, R. & McLeod, A. Rome, Italy).

Considering the history of Afghanistan specially during the Taliban era, local NGO community played critical vital role in service delivery to communities in need and hard to reach areas. Afghan women believe that the gender dimension of men and women needs should be considered whenever designing and implementing any project. It is also tremendously significant to establish communication channel through the grassroots to upper level development among women leaders, rural women plus among existed active women groups and networks to ensure that the project consider women needs and address them. During the Taliban period women headed NGOs were able to reach out to women in communities through social networking and solidarity programs and they played the eminent role of social change agents for reconstruction, education and soft and hard skills trainings. Indeed, these women head NGOs also supported rural women through the provision social and economic opportunities such as income generation interventions which extremely contributed to the welfare of both families and communities in need in such critical time.

According to (Role of Civil Society in Empowering Pakistani Women Shehzadi Zamurrad Awan- F.C College University) Civil Society organizations for instance women NGOs can have noticeable role in spreading awareness in various fields such as bringing socio-economic awareness among women relevant to their social, economic and political rights. The study further elaborates that in the context of Pakistan, to empower women only the efforts of Media, women organizations, political parties is not productive if the male dominancy mentality has not changed in the society. Therefore, the positive change may occur through provision of

widespread education, awareness, the acceptance of equal status man and women through properly understanding of Islam and its narration that refers to equal status of women. Generally, the study reveals the positive role of Civil Society women focused organizations and insists on their key role in spreading awareness among women, implementing development interventions aimed for women empowerment and it also signifies the role of Media in changing the negative perceptions around existed inequalities.

The literature elaborates the significant role of NGO playing around women empowerment specifically in rural areas. The study illustrates that “Voluntary action promoted by voluntary agencies engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level in the regions of Uttar Pradesh for the success of rural development which is dependent upon the active participation of the people through Non-Government Organizations (NGO)”.

The literature is not limiting the role of NGOs only to few sectors it insists that NGOs can perform wider roles in delivering aid and services in field of Education women in rural areas, developing numerous model and experiment, encourage women’s participation for empowerment, resource mobilization, strengthening and representing rural women and finally NGOs may build capacity of rural women through the provision of effective need based training and awareness interventions (Role of NGOs in Women Empowerment- Tauffiqu Ahamad, Hemlata, Ananta Narayana-2015).

(Streeten P 1997) affirms that the interventions of NGOs had impact on women in Uttar Pradesh-India and positive change occurred in the livelihood and quality of life of women who benefited from the NGO’s interventions. As the result those women have income generation now, they enjoy the rights of independency, feel more self-confident, plus they are enabled to in taking some decisions and share their suggestions around family issues. The study further observed significant change in NGOs’ efforts for advancing the literacy level plus measures in the area of health of women as they considered interventional initiatives in implementation. However, NGOs have implemented numerous interventions around women empowerment but there is still a great need to improve the situation. The literature additionally concludes that women from poor families are not actively participating in the meetings and they don’t play role in decision making process. Finally, the study insists on the significant role of NGOs playing capacity building and social mobilization of women in rural areas, (Non-governmental Organizations and Development. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 554: 193-210). According to Streeten P 1997, there are couple of advantageous



functions which NGOs perform such as: They have better access to hard to reach areas and mobilizing those poor communities, they support local institution and empower poor community members to take control of their lives, NGOs implement projects with cost efficiency compared to government and other major INGOs, and lastly NGOs striving to promote long term development

#### **2.10. Diversified Interventions aimed to women economic empowerment**

One of the useful concepts as income generation has been replicated to the context of Afghanistan deemed productive for women economic empowerment called the community self- Help Group which are voluntary (financial) saving groups consisting of a small similar group of people in a local community. The main idea is to collect people specifically women on regular basis such as weekly, bi-weekly or even monthly for the purpose of saving jointly small amount of cash from their personal money. The amount depends on each member of group affordability it can start from 20, 50 or 100 AFN per member. The group cashier assigned for the managing of saving as they keep money in a saving box, the cashier records collected saving from members into a book plus members passbook. The saving can be issued as loans to members only based on agreed terms and conditions. The main idea behind promoting of the Self-Help Groups is to struggle with reduction of poverty, contribute to the social and economic development and empowerment of women.

The Self-Help Group module is very successful in the context of Afghanistan as it is led by community themselves, they take the ownership, experience tangible benefit for their social and economic empowerment. But it should be implemented through the close support of facilitating organization with considering feasible exit strategy approach.

The SHG module is quite different from other development approaches and interventions as being long term if the group members keep it running, also it provides a platform for group solidarity, socialization and welfare and building economic networks which can support individuals and families. (The self-help group approach in Afghanistan, report prepared for people in need (pin) consultant: Annika Schmeding).

#### **2.11. Women Increased Mobility and Join Gathering Creates Enabling Environment**

Ground experience from the Afghanistan context shows that the income generation interventions such as micro credit and CBSG-Community Based Saving Groups have offered significant opportunity for the solidarity and sense of unity among women who are supposed

to meet and gather at least once or twice a week. According to NORID-Report-2014) that some organizations performed well compared to others for instance the Aga Khan Foundation reported that the Bamyan CBSG groups who met on weekly or bi-weekly basis appreciated the chance of meeting other women that enabled them to share experience and enable each other. Similarly, NAC-Norwegian Afghanistan Committee who supported SHG- Self Help Groups reported the same regular meetings among the groups.

The Afghan women are facing considerable challenges especially in rural areas and they necessitate multi-player approach to resolve them. Therefore, the empowerment of women should be considered at all economic involvement such as at livelihoods level, as employees and as business owners. In order to promote the success of women in such field the enabling environment should be primarily developed. However, women occupied a strong stake during the Soviet occupation as they played significant role in academic and professional field who served as doctors, engineers and professors but women had to suffer and loss the position during the Taliban era. Hence to engage women successfully in economy only empowering of women will not be enough and productive it is equally important to empower her environment on 3 levels consisting from her family, her community, and her work station.

The three levels of enabling environment is not fully existed in Afghanistan and to support the creation of enabling environment for Afghan women to fulfil their potential intensive efforts are required primarily to change the mentality of both women and men through awareness. The enabling environment where family and community are supportive will enable women to go to school, get employed and have a suitable location to sell her products, ultimately the provision of such of enabling environment will present a woman as a productive member of the society. (NORID-Report-10-2014-p20).

### **2.12 Obstacles toward women economic empowerment**

Despite of implementation of various development projects mainly focused around women social and economic empowerment in the country but the expected results are not satisfactory, and beneficiaries have critics about the approaches and reach out. One of the fundamental factors for the deficiency could be the obstacles which should tackle down prior implementation. There are numerous hindrances to women's economic empowerment. These of these obstacles could be both external and internal relevant to economic atmosphere and functioning of the economy at the country level for instance (increased unemployment and scarce infrastructure which may and would disturb similarly both men and women. The Low

legal literacy and – Low level of education are entrenched in gender-biased social institutions and norms including a discriminatory legal system. According to (Women's economic empowerment in conflict and post-conflict countries-by Maria Elena Ruiz Abril-2009)- states that" these obstacles interfere with the different stages of a women's economic empowerment sequence, such as obstacles to access to and control over economic resources, female illiteracy; women's lack of information and often low levels of critical social capital (e.g. business networks), and gender discriminatory norms that preclude women from accessing and/or owning land are examples of factors which influence women's access and control of economic resources. Low decision-making power".

In addition; these obstacles have also contributed to the low self-image and self-esteem of women and ultimately affected women to loss self-confidence which such cases are existed in Afghanistan context as well.

Alongside the mentioned dominant hindering factors toward economic empowerment of women the ignorance of needs-Top Down approach vs Bottom Up Development is another obstacle in the field. This is the major obstacle that has caused to hamper the progress around women empowerment in rural parts of the country is the development actors usually ignore the needs of communities and interventions are selected as top down method. According to Zulfacar (2006)" claims that throughout Afghanistan's history and continuing today, the disconnect between social reality and centralized, political decisions has resulted in policy decisions made ignorant of the needs of the populace, thus failing to sustainably impact women's lives". (Educating Girls and empowering Women: Gender and Post-Conflict Educational Reform in Afghanistan-Jamie E. Vinson- Harvard University Graduate School of Education).

Other researches have also discussed the top down approaches with its shortfalls and instead insisted on considering the Bottom-up development approach which is the significant part of participatory planning and development. Razavi and Miller describe that the process of bottom-up development, promoted by some women and development advocates, focuses on collective action. Considering collective action approach might be somehow complicated but it is smooth when the local NGOs can play central and effective role in here NGOs are playing a central role in unifying women for joint actions by seeking community actual needs. (The Gender and Development (GAD) Paradigm: Empowerment of Rural Afghan Women through Collaborative Initiatives-Samar Khan)

NORED research indicates another factor which is contributing to weaken the process of women empowerment in rural areas. As a male dominant society and due to dynamic political changes in the Afghanistan the gap of awareness among families and communities have been existed for longer which affected the smooth environment for women in society. Thus, the NORED-Reprot-2014 claims that increased awareness should be replicated among girls and women to ensure women success and productivity. They should be provided with information and benefits of women can be also involved in economic interventions and women can be also successful as men holding various roles in different fields such as a farmer, leader, business owner, employees, politics and academia. Spreading the awareness can be carried out by any type of development actors such as INGOs and LNGOs which have been in close contact with communities and they have higher acceptance. Concentrating the actual needs of communities can be the key to success during the implementation and this is only possible that there is a frequent and comprehensive coordination and cooperation among development actors and organizations which will enable them to address and consider women fundamental needs around economic empowerment during the design phase of any project.

### **2.13. Lack of coordination as a common ground among INGOs, LNGOs**

Based on the ground experience another factor which is significantly contributing to ignorance of targeting and providing development support to women in rural areas is the lack or limited coordination among development actors be it INGO, local NGOs. This is an acknowledge common problem among NGOs and they admit that there is a great need to improve coordination and cooperation among organizations. In most cases there is overlapping of interventions and such is criticized both by people and government as well. Thus; the existence of weak coordination rural women must suffer, and their needs are not being addressed and it make it difficult to measure positive outcome. The issue of coordination is common in some of neighboring countries are also existed. According to ((Civil Society Organizations and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Iran Milad Pournik- May 2013)., that lack of coordination between NGOs more specifically among women headed NGOs is existed in IRAN and that NGOs are not aware about the work and role of other organizations which also caused overlapping of development interventions. The paper explores that the interviewed NGOs had limited information about other NGOs, and they did not indicate about collaboration with other NGOs and they mentioned about the unity among various organizations is apparent

only at the meeting. The study further proposed organization of increasing regular coordination meetings among the senior management to bring challenges.

diagram

#### 2.14 Conceptual framework:

Women empowerment is a development intervention which is a lengthy and continued process and needs comprehensive efforts and contribution from different actors such as Government, private sectors, NGOs. Government at any country is not able to deliver development services to communities alone to meet the needs of people. People in communities in development countries face issues and challenges which both men and women are affected but women are significantly affected and can not access to basic life services such as Health, Education, Economic opportunities due to several factors mainly limited scarce resources and limited development interventions. Therefore; women empowerment emerged as an important agenda for all development actors Government, Private sector and NGOs.

NGOs are providing volunteer services to promote and develop communities and play significant role for rural development at grassroots level specifically empowering women. NGOs have wider roles to play such as conducting needs and impact assessments, contributing and supplementing government development programs, by mobilizing communities in terms of educating, spreading awareness through conducting effective trainings and workshops on roles and rights of women and promoting women leadership at rural level and representing them at different level, design and implement development interventions to ensure rural women are empowered both socially and economically and enjoy improved quality of life. (Role of NGOs in Women Empowerment: with Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh- International Journal of Applied Research - 2015)

**Commented [kk16]:** in below diagram, why have you included INGOs and other IVs. I think no need to mention other things. Just mention role of local NGOs and dependent variable.

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**Commented [JA19R18]:** Considered as below.

**Figure 1. Logical Framework**

Independent Variable

**Role of Local  
NGOs**

Dependent Variable

**Women Economic  
Empowerment**



### **2.15. Findings and Conclusion of Literature Review**

The research literatures presented above clearly supports the hypothesis of this paper and affirms effectiveness of local and national NGOs in identifying the actual needs of communities and addressing them through development tailor made interventions. Secondly the studies precisely justify the significant role of NGOs they play toward women empowerment and their performance effectiveness as having better access hard to reach areas and mobilizing those poor communities, they support local institution and empower poor community members to take control of their lives, local NGOs implement projects with cost efficiency compared to government and other major INGOs, and lastly NGOs striving to promote sustainable development through diversified approaches of income generation interventions which tremendously contribute to women empowerment in rural areas. The 3<sup>rd</sup> major finding of the research papers suggests various approaches for income generation interventions if contextually replicated will greatly subsidize to socio-economic empowerment of women.

## **CHAPTER NUMBER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The research methodology for this research paper is discussed in this chapter thoroughly which explains that how data has been collected, how it is analyzed, which kind of data is gathered and identifies the sources of the data. The chapter also discusses kind of data sample, its size and how it is evaluated and analyzed. The qualitative research methodology is used for this research study.

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

The interpretivist philosophy of research is used for this research work. This research philosophy is used for qualitative research more appropriately than quantitative research work. The primary data is collected through interviews and observations, which is the normal approach for gathering the data related to the study. The interpretivist philosophy main attention is on subjective meaning and it supports the researcher to interpret the collected data through interviews and observation.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

The research approach for this case study is qualitative- inductive. The women empowerment is generally discussed through the literature review and then discussed role and effectiveness of local NGOs around women empowerment in rural areas of Takhar province.

#### **3.3 Research Purpose**

The purpose of the research is measuring the effectiveness of local NGO in delivering development intervention focused on women socio-economic women empowerment in the rural area of Takhar province. Similarly exploring factors and recommending the interventions which are more contextual that may play significant role in empowering women at rural areas.

#### **3.4 Research Methodology**

The research methodology used in this study is qualitative case study methodology. This method is helpful in figuring out the effectiveness of development projects and interventions aimed for women empowerment.

### 3.5 Interview Protocol

The interview protocol is elaborated in the interview questions that the reason conducting the interview is only for academic purposes as a part of MBA degree fulfillment and the title of the research is role of local NGO AWARSA as an organization in terms of women empowerment in Takhar province. The interviews are conducted advanced planned timetable which occurred both in AWARSA office and project site. The total expected time for each interview is approximately 20 minutes and the information provided by either by the AWARSA staff members or beneficiaries who take part in the interview will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any entity or individual under any circumstances. The data provided by the respondents will be analyzed and evaluated for the research purpose only. The questionnaire is designed in two main sections, the first section is introductory information of responding to the questions asked in section two of the questionnaire. Section two includes the main questions. The first main research question is subjected to internal team members of the organization “Whether AWARA is contributing to Women Empowerment in rural areas of Takhar” whereas the second question is subjected to beneficiaries that “What factors should be considered for women empowerment in rural areas from beneficiaries’ perspective”. These main questions are additionally asked in detailed manner through dividing them through sub questions and they are explained with specifics in appendix of this research paper.

### 3.6 Population and Sample

The population for this research has been AWARSA organization staff members and the beneficiaries of 2 projects Handcraft and Youth Capacity Building. AWARSA has more than 20 employees currently and implemented several projects in Takhar city as well as in district level. The sample covers both the employees and project beneficiaries. Total 10 beneficiaries and 10 staff members are interviewed. There are limited local NGOs which are serving for improving for quality of life for women in Takhar province. AWARSA is one of the functional, professional organization with long background in development and implemented numerous projects for women empowerment in remote areas of Takhar province and that is why the selection of AWARSA for the research was a suitable entity for consideration.

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**The Respondents Profile Table 1:**

S. No	Gender	Designation	Number of Participants
1	Male	AWARSA Health Project Facilitator	1
2	Male	AWARSA Health Project Facilitator	1
3	Female	AWARSA Health Project team member	1
4	Female	AWARSA Health Project team member	1
5	Female	AWARSA Health Project Facilitator	1
6	Female	Admin Officer- AWARSA	1
7	Male	Finance Officer- AWARSA	1
8	Female	Trainer-Hand Craft Project- AWARSA	1
9	Female	M&E Officer- AWARSA	1
10	Female	Program Officer AWARSA	1
11	Female	Student at Youth Resource Center Kalafgan District- Beneficiary	1
12	Female	Student at Youth Resource Center Kalafgan District- Beneficiary	1
13	Female	Student at Youth Resource Center Kalafgan District- Beneficiary	1
14	Female	Student at Youth Resource Center Kalafgan District- Beneficiary	1
15	Female	Student at Youth Resource Center Kalafgan District- Beneficiary	1
16	Female	Handcraft Project Beneficiary	1
17	Female	Handcraft Project Beneficiary	1
18	Female	Handcraft Project Beneficiary	1

19	Female	Handcraft Project Beneficiary	1
20	Female	Handcraft Project Beneficiary	1

### 3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The primary data is obtained through direct interview with 20 respondents (10 beneficiaries, 10 staff members) that took place in Takhar province at AWARSA office also at project site Kalafghan district. The respondents have been randomly selected for the interview. The schedule for the mentioned interviews was pre-planned and enough time 20 minutes was allocated for each interview.

### 3.8 Data Analysis Method

The research methodology for this study is qualitative, thus the primary data is obtained from conducting interviews about the effectiveness of local NGO's interventions towards women economic empowerment in rural areas of Takhar. All the research steps of the qualitative research are followed, and the method of the data analysis is relational data analysis. The primary data collected from the respondents answering each question is typed and recorded, similarly the common problems, and obstacles pointed out by the respondents are combined for analysis, by interpreting the meaning of the data the recommendation and conclusion is developed and presented.

### 3.9 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced the following limitation during the process of research work:

- a) The low literacy level of beneficiaries which they could not provide much details
- b) The study could not cover wider districts of Takhar province as it was only limited to City center and district of Kalafghan.
- c) Exploring the social empowerment of women in details was not possible.
- d) Limited access to literature or study around the role of Local NGOs in Afghanistan context.

## **CHAPTER NUMBER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS AND FINDING**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter analyses the questions asked in the interview from different respondent as a part of qualitative research study. The two major interview questions were further divided into sub-questions for more detailed finding of the research and for getting in detailed responses to reach to the objective of the research. After analysis of each question finding are prepared and elaborated respectively for each question.

#### **4.1 Analysis of Research Question One (RQ1)**

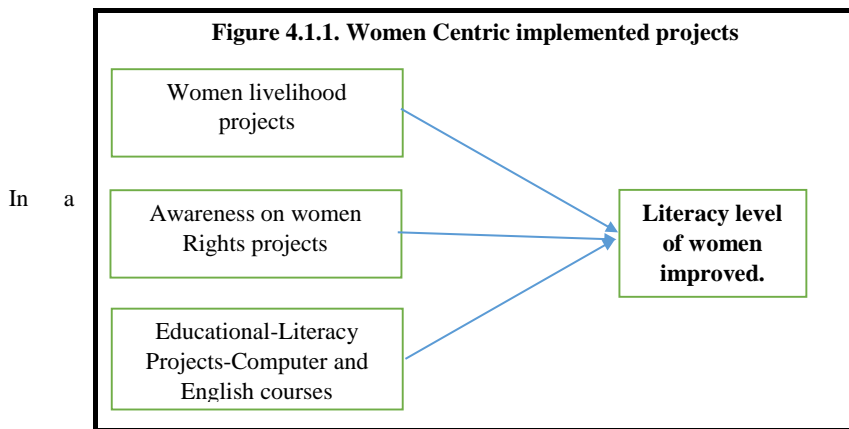
The main objective of the research question has been to find out the type of interventions implemented by AWARSA aimed for women empowerment. The question is asked in interview questionnaire as “IQ1: What specific women centric projects have been implemented by AWARSA?”. This question has been asked from 10 internal staff respondents in different interview session separately on the pre-scheduled date and time.

##### **4.1.1 Analysis of the Interview Question (IQ 1.1)**

Q1.1: What specific women centric projects have been implemented by AWARSA?

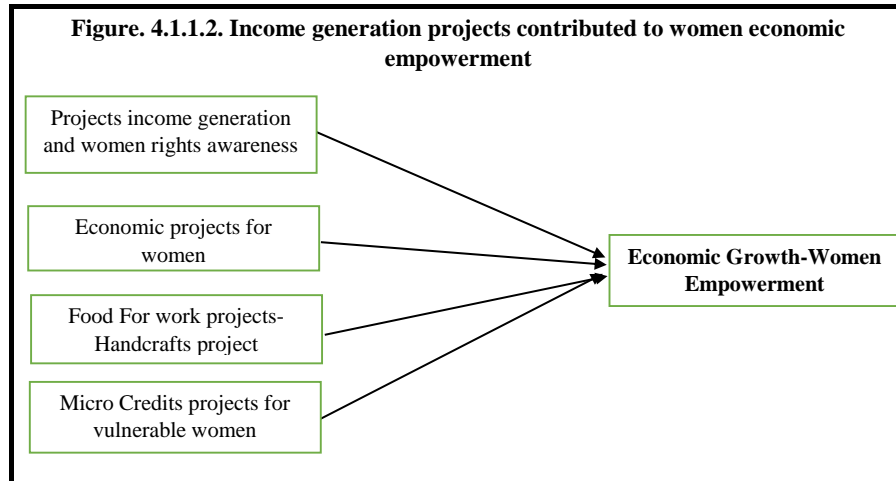
This question was asked from the employees of AWARSA in an interview took place on Dec-22-2019 in Takhar province and the responses from different interviewee about (IQ 1.1) were as below:

*“AWARSA has implemented a couple of projects since many years such as Advocacy, Awareness, and Handcraft for economic empowerment of women in Takhar province, projects in Education such as English And Computer courses”.*



second interview with one of AWARSA employee as the respondents took place on Dec-22-2019, the response of the interviewee was as below:

*“AWARSA organization has implemented a couple of projects such as Skill Training for improvement of women, Micro Credit program for Vulnerable women, Elimination of Violence Against Women awareness, Advocacy awareness, Skills Training for improvement in livelihoods options for women. Computer Training for women, Graph weaving, Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)”.*



In another interview took place on Dec-23-2019, with a staff member of AWARSA the response toward the IQ.1.1 was as below:

*“AWARSA as Local NGO has implemented many projects from 2006, such as women rights, Awareness, Hand Craft for economic empowerment of women in Takhar province, women literacy, Education such as English And Computer courses”.*

Almost the same response and information was revealed in another interview occurred on Dec-23-2019 which stated:

*“AWARSA has implemented a couple of projects in education sector, Micro grant projects, Computer Course, Food for Work, Handcrafts, training for girls, Musharikat projects, and girls sport tournament”.*

#### **4.1.2 Finding of the Interview Question (IQ 1.1)**

Almost all of the respondents for the subject question(IQ.1.1) confirmed that AWARSA organization has implemented numerous women focused projects which includes but not limited to literacy and educational projects such as spreading awareness among women toward their rights, English Language and Computer program courses, interventions around sport such Sport tournaments among girls, and similarly implemented projects to improve economic conditions of women such as Handcraft, small grants, Food for work.

#### **4.1.3 Analysis of Interview Question (IQ.1.2)**

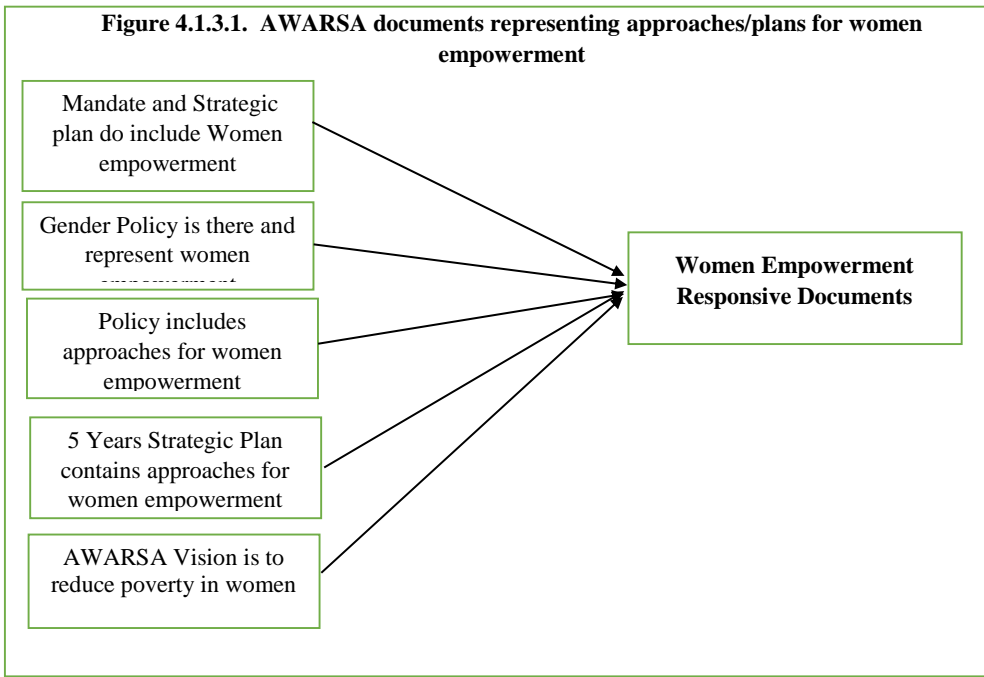
**IQ.2:** Is the mandate and policies of AWARSA are representing approaches/plans for women empowerment?

This question was asked from the employees of AWARSA in an interview took place on Dec-22-2019 in Takhar province and the responses interviewee was as below:

*“Yes, their mandate is, and Gender Policy are representing plans to empower women through various interventions and projects”.*

The same question was asked on Dec-22-2019 from another interviewee and the response was as below:

*“Yes, plans for women empowerment is included in Gender policy of AWARSA, documents its vision is to reduce poverty in women and striving to offer services for women empowerment in rural areas”.*



In interview with another interviewee as the AWARSA staff the question (IQ-1.2) was asked and the response is quoted below:

*“Yes, as far as I have seen AWARSA documents its vision is to reduce poverty in women and striving to offer services for women empowerment in rural areas”.*

#### **4.1.4 Finding of the Interview Question (IQ.1.2)**

The findings of question (IQ.1.2.) asked from the respondents who are the employees of AWARSA show that the organization have a couple of documents in place such as 5 years Strategic plan, Gender policy, and the mandate as the vision well represents the plans and approaches for women empowerment and poverty reduction. This means that almost every individual respondent agrees that AWARSA is a woman focused organization and actively working for women empowerment by following a clear guidelines and roadmap.

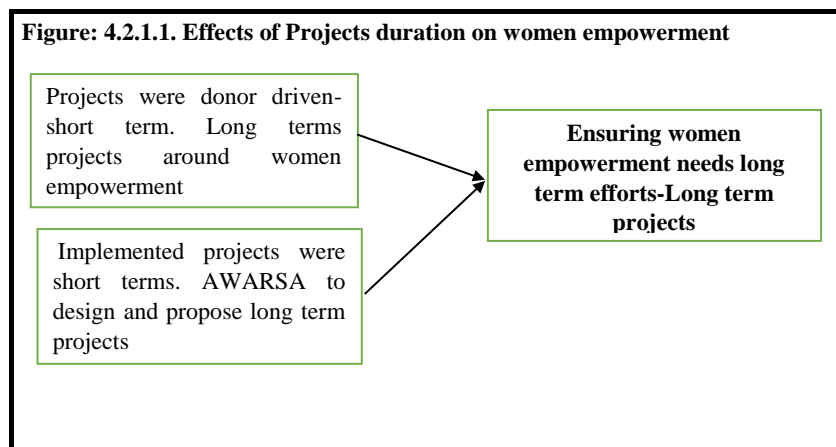
#### 4.2.1. Analysis of Interview Question (IQ.1.3)

IQ.3. Did the projects length contributed beneficiaries to benefit from the projects for longer? This question is mainly discussing the project period in order to get the inputs and perception of interviewees to what extend the timeline of an intervention plays role in women empowerment. The question was asked from the employees of AWARSA in an interview took place on Dec-22-2019 in Takhar province and the responses from different interviewee about (IQ.1.3) were as below:

*“The current project which I am working with is called Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) which is short term but considering the needs and situation of women AWARSA should also design and implement long term projects such as literacy, Handcrafts, Carpet waving and awareness projects in future”.*

In another interview which was conducted on Dec-22-2019, the respondent replied to the question as below:

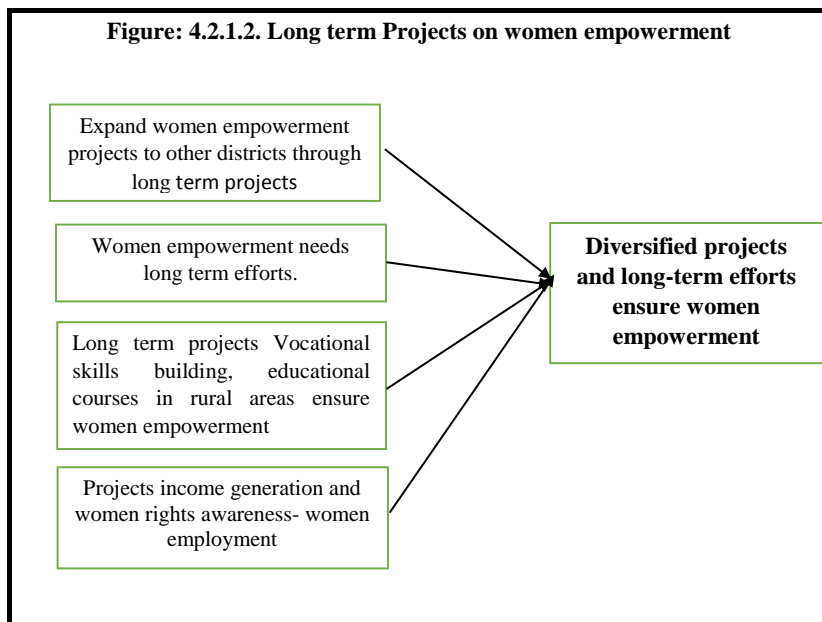
*“Most of projects are short terms as being donor driven and I would request AWARSA to consider long term projects and I believe tailoring, literacy, livestock and other projects around women empowerment are very useful”.*



In another interview which was conducted on Dec-22-2019, the respondent replied to the question as below plus recommending the organization to make long term efforts and implement long term project to ensure women economic empowerment:

*“Yes, short terms projects provided benefits to beneficiaries, but I believe if AWARSA consider projects for longer period in order to empower women economically in real means. In long*

term project AWARSA may reach out to wider number of beneficiaries and expand to areas which are deprived from development interventions specially women”.



#### 4.3. Finding of the Interview Question (IQ.1.3)

The interview question number 1.3 was also asked from the AWARSA employees who had worked in various projects implemented by the organizations. The findings from the interviewees responses shows that most of the implemented projects by AWARSA organization have been short term and most of the interviewees believed that short term projects are not effective for women empowerment and they recommended that AWARSA organization should design and implement long term diversified projects around vocational skills building, educational, women rights awareness and income generation projects which can ensure economic empowerment of women in rural areas.

#### 4.4 Finding of the Research Question One (RQ.1)

Following exploring the research question one which was aimed to find out whether AWARSA LNGO is contributing to women empowerment and to find out more clarity the question was extended to 3 sub-interview questions aimed for discovering the type of implemented projects, whether AWARSA mandate and policies are including approaches for women empowerment



and finally to find out whether the projects were short or long term. The findings of the 3 Interview questions asked from the employees of AWARSA organization reveals that most of the implemented projects by the organization were solely women focused such as (Handcraft, Tailoring, Literacy, Educational interventions-English and Computer Courses, Food For Work, Vocational and Skills building, Income Generation, Graph weaving, and Community Led Total Sanitation).

The purpose of IQ-2 was to find out whether the mandate and policies of AWARSA organization are representing approaches and plans for women empowerment which the findings from the most of the respondents reveal and affirm the existence of Gender policy, 5 years strategic plan within AWARSA organization which obviously represents approaches and plans for women empowerment.

Likewise; the main purpose of the IQ-1.3 was to specify the timeline or duration of projects implemented by AWARSA organization. The outcome of the conducted interviews from the respondents reveal that majority of the implemented projects were for short term as AWARSA playing as a local organization did not have any control over the duration of the projects as most of the organizations are donor driven and they must implement project in compliance with donor requirements and regulations irrespective of considering the organization suggestion or community needs.

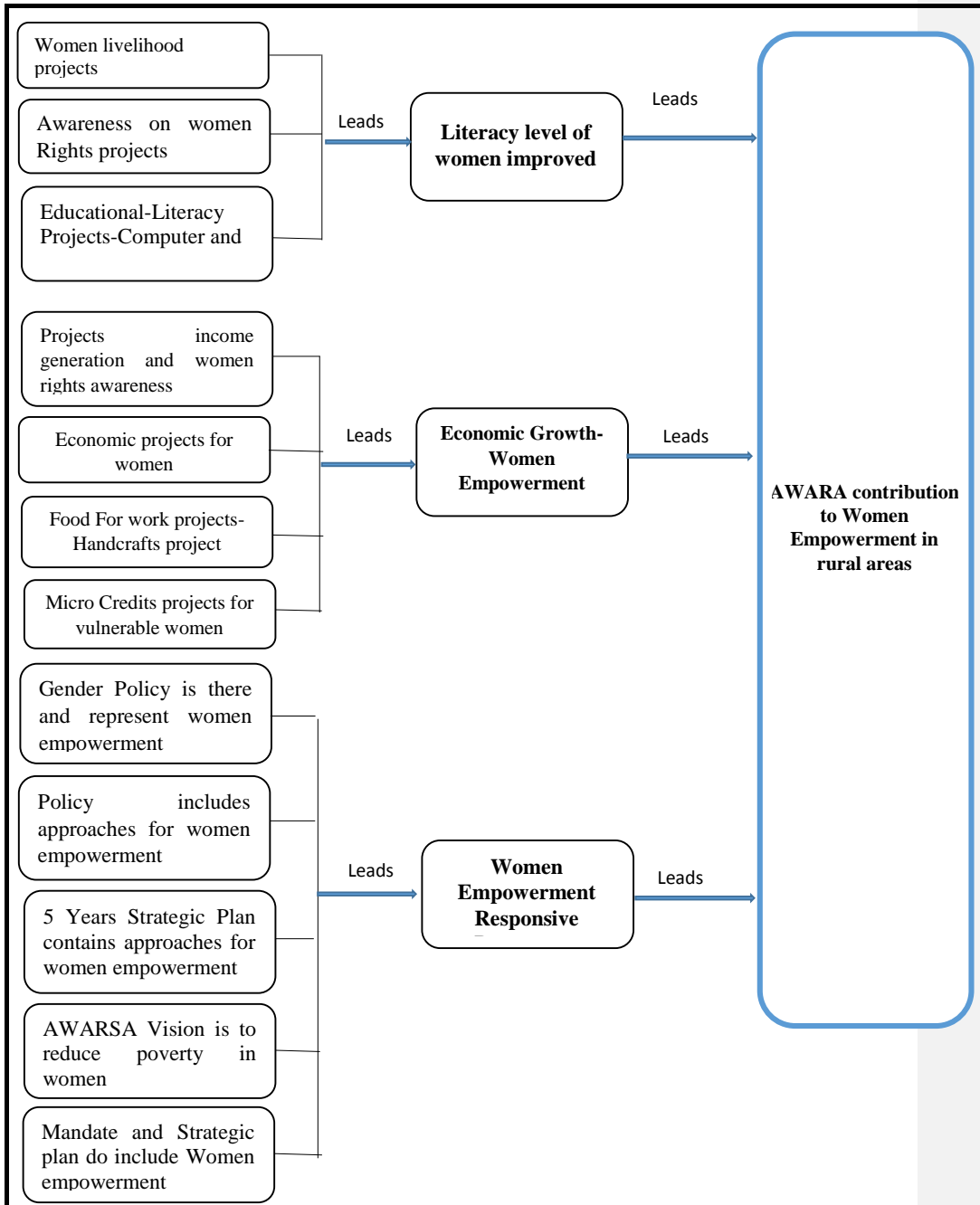
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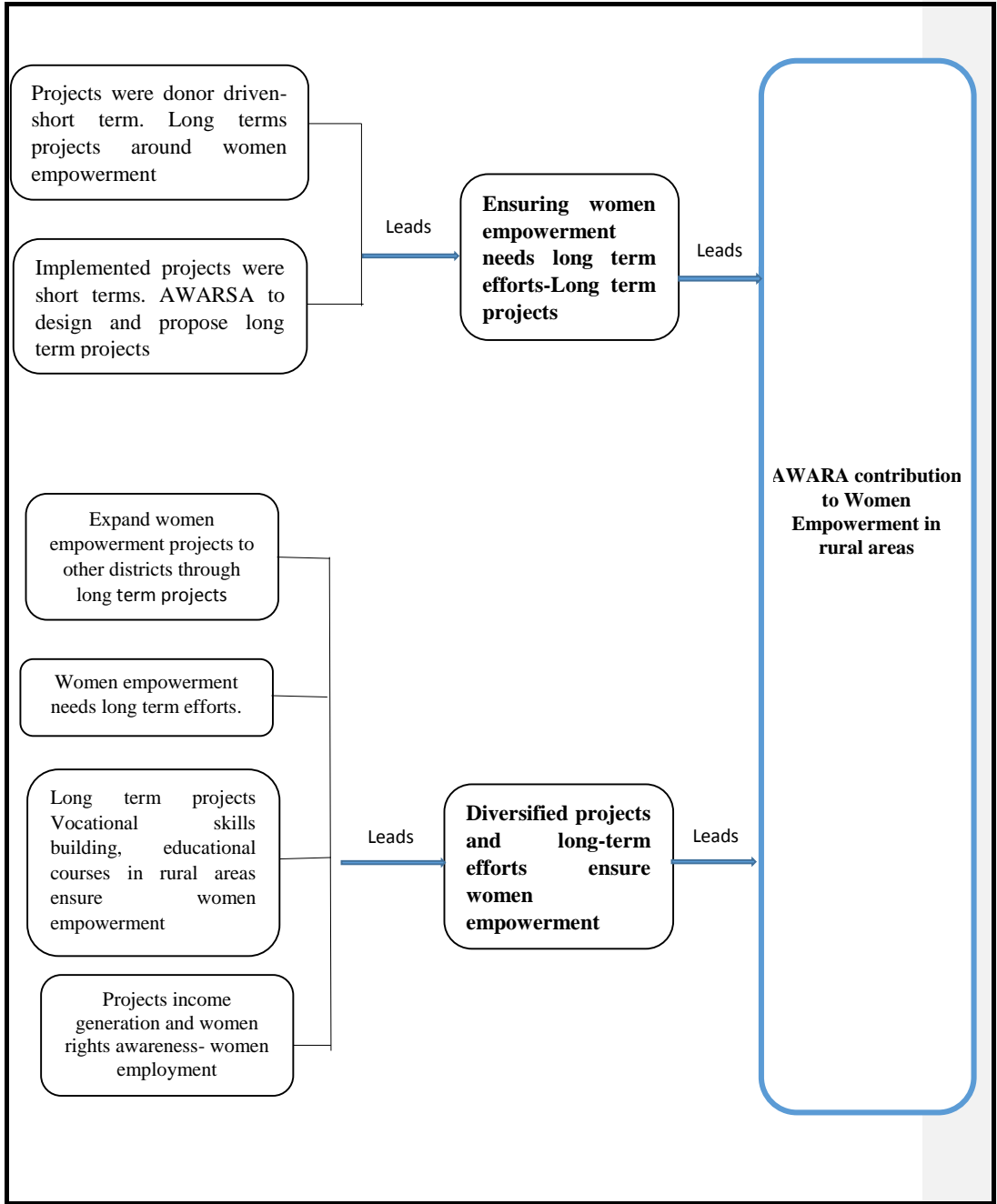
**Commented [JA23R22]:** Considered as below.

#### Figure 4.4.1 Results of RQ1

##### 4.5. Analysis of Research Question Two (RQ.2)

The main objective of the research question has been to seek the ideas of respondents around factors which should be considered for women empowerment in rural areas from beneficiaries' perspective by AWARSA. The question was divided into 3 interview sub-questions to get more specific details and ideas. The first question which is asked in interview questionnaire as "IQ.2.1" *What specific benefits did the beneficiaries receive from AWARSA projects?*". This question has been asked from 10 beneficiaries of two projects as respondents in different interview session separately on the pre-scheduled date and time.





#### 4.5.1. Analysis of Interview Question (IQ-2.1)

IQ.2.1. What specific benefits did the beneficiaries receive from AWARSA projects? This question is mainly discussing the perception of interviewees as the direct beneficiaries of AWARSA projects. The question was asked direct beneficiaries took place on Dec-23-2019 in Takhar province and the responses from different interviewee about (IQ.2.1) were as below:

*“During the 4 months of project, I have learnt about two MS office programs, Windows, and Word, also studied 2 books of English language. I have learnt about computer and its usage and I can use properly the two programs now. Similarly, I learnt the basics of English language”*

Through another interview conducted on Dec-3=23-2019 from a beneficiary the response is as below:

*“This is an educational project and I have learnt so far about computer, the programs and the basics of English language. I have learnt about computer and its programs and improved my knowledge and skills in two computer programs such MS Office, Windows, and Word, also studied 2 books of English language”.*

One of the beneficiaries as the interviewee responded to the question (IQ-2.1) interviewed on Dec-23-2019 as below:

*“As the beneficiary of the project I have learned about Tailoring, weaving, handcraft. I was also being paid some cash amount at the end of month. My economy improved due to this project”.*

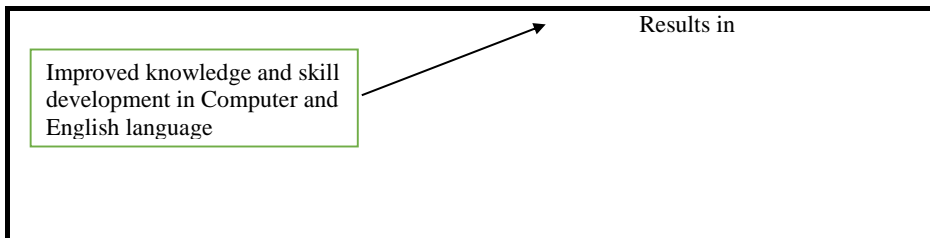
Similarly, another interviewee expressed her response toward the subject question interviewed on Dec-23-2019 as below:

*“As the beneficiary of the project I have learned about Tailoring, weaving, handcraft. I was recently assigned as the trainer for handcraft project since I have long term experience now”.*

**Figure 4.5.1.1. Improved Knowledge and Skill in English Language and Computer Programs**

Learnt computer programs  
MS office and basic English  
language

Improved knowledge  
contributes to women  
empowerment

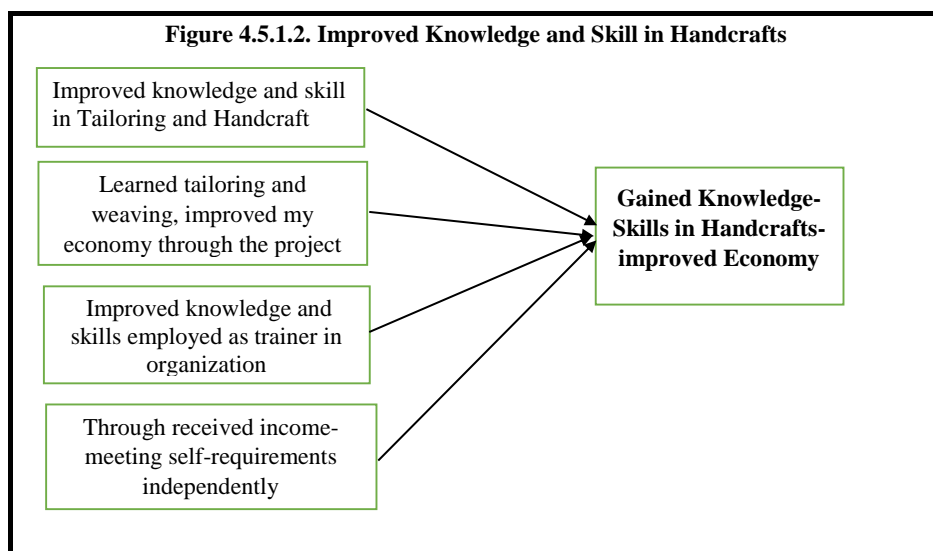


Another interviewee as the beneficiary of AWARSA handcraft project expressed her response toward the subject question interviewed on Dec-23-2019 as below:

*“As the beneficiary of the project I have learned about Tailoring, weaving, handcraft. I am able to get income and meet my requirements independently”.*

Another interviewee as the beneficiary of AWARSA handcraft project expressed her response toward the subject question interviewed on Dec-23-2019 as below:

*“I am one of the beneficiaries of Handcraft project, I did not know anything about tailoring and handcrafting in the past. But now I have got the skill in this field”.*



#### **4.5.2. Finding of the Interview Question (IQ.2.1)**

The interview question (IQ.2.1) was asked the AWARSA 2 projects beneficiaries where the findings of the response reveals that beneficiaries directly benefited from two projects implemented by AWARSA organization. One of the projects was the 6 months English and Computer Course where the findings of the responses specifies that the interviewees gained knowledge and skill which will ultimately affect in their economic growth and empowerment. Similarly, the findings from the responses of those interviewees as the beneficiaries who benefited from the Handcraft and Tailoring interventions shows the enhanced knowledge and developed skills with the improved economy specifically increase in purchasing power and self-sufficiency.

#### **4.5.3. Analysis of Interview Question (IQ. 2.2)**

**IQ.2.2:** What specific factors were helpful in improvements or changes the beneficiaries experienced in life so far because of AWARSA interventions?

This question is mainly exploring the if the beneficiaries have experienced any specific change and improvements in their living condition due to benefiting from AWARSA interventions. The question was asked from direct beneficiaries took place on Dec-23-2019 in Takhar province and the responses from different interviewee about (IQ.2.2) were as below:

*“In the past I did not know much about computer, I could not even start or shut down computer as we did not the subject or computer at school. Now I have better knowledge and skills in computer”.*

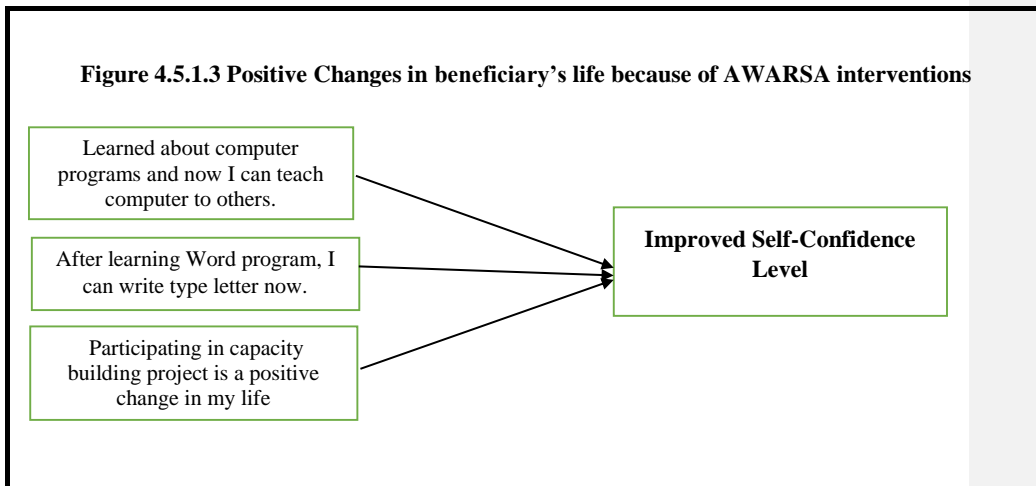
In another interview which organized on Dec-23-2019, the findings from the response of interviewee shows the positive change as improved knowledge and skills in computer programs as below:

*“Improved knowledge and skills about computer programs, I am able to type letters in Word now and I can teach studied program to others”.*

In another interview which took place on Dec-24-2019, the finding of the responses is mentioned below:

*“Through the course I have gained knowledge and skills about computer programs, I am able to use computer now by typing letters, articles, in Word program. I am also able to teach the computer programs If I get job at schools”.*

Upon conducting another interview on Dec-24-2019, the respondent revealed the increased in



purchasing power and improved knowledge and skills in Handcraft as below:

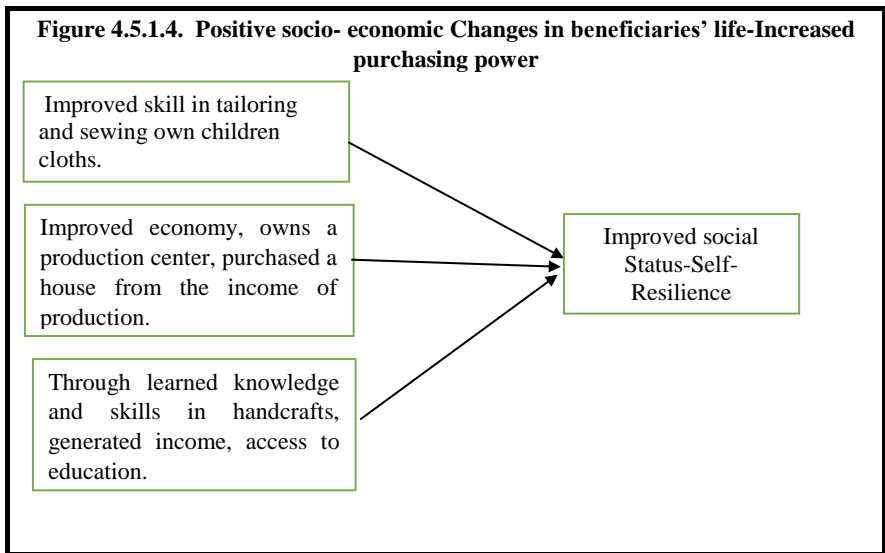
*“I had poor economy in the past, and I did not have my own house, after participating in the project as my skills improved in handcraft, I have my own production and selling them to market. Through the income I have constructed my house”.*

Similarly based on the findings of another AWARSA beneficiary as interviewee response conducted on Dec-24-2019, it shows the self-reliance and improved economy as narrated below:

*“I am a widow and had lots of economic problems in the past, fortunately I learnt the skills of handcraft, now my economy has improved though selling my products in the market. I contributed to the wedding of my son and sending my children to school now”.*

In another interview which was conducted on Dec-24-2019, the inputs of the beneficiary as the interviewee when asked about the question (IQ.2.2) was as below:

*“Participating in the project improvement in my livelihood occurred, my economy also improved due to selling my products and spend the income on stuff I need”.*



**4.5.4. Finding of Interview Question (IQ. 2.2)**

The interview question (IQ.2.2) was also asked the AWARSA 2 projects beneficiaries where the findings of the response identifies some specific positive change in life the beneficiaries directly experienced as the result of AWARSA intervention. The finding from the interviewee responses revealed Improved Self-Confidence Level, Improved social Status-Self-Resilience in their life. The responses further explores that despite of improving knowledge and skills in computer respondents explored other positive changes in individual life as gaining ability to teach to others, also benefiting from Handcraft and Tailoring project which improved in social status by increase in purchasing power that enabled a respondent to send her children to school and contribute financially to her son wedding expenses. So therefore, it can be concluded that even implementation of short terms economic and educational interventions can empower women and bring positive change in women life in rural areas.

**4.5.5. Analysis of Interview Question (IQ. 2.3)**

IQ.2.3: Which factors do you think AWARSA should consider for women empowerment?  
 This question was asked from AWARSA beneficiaries through various interviews which took place in Takhar. The purpose was to respondents' ideas and perception about sort of



interventions should AWRSA consider for women empowerment. The findings of the responses which asked through the interviews happened on Dec-24-2019 are narrated as below:

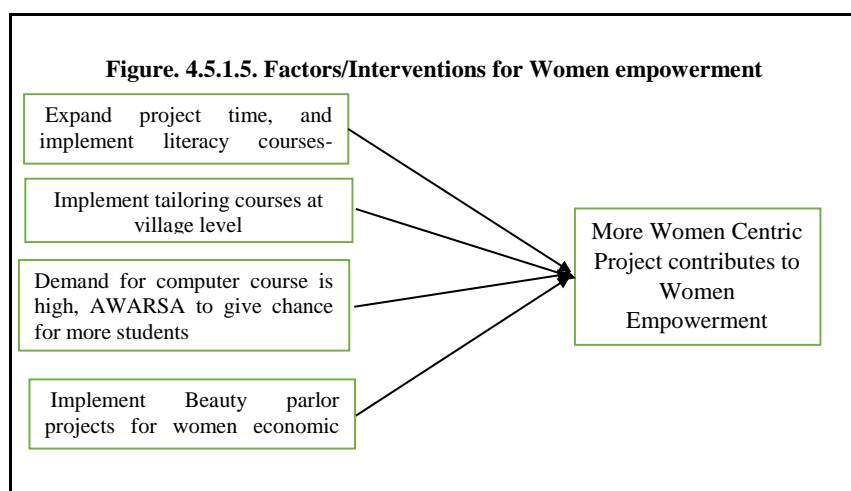
*“AWRASA should implement literacy course, Handcraft, Tailoring project in future”.*

Through another interview happened on Dec-24-2019, the finding of the response toward the asked question is as below:

*“AWRASA should implement literacy course, Handcraft, tailoring project in future and provide the opportunity to wider number of women”*

Through another interview conducted on Dec-24-2019, the finding of the response toward the asked question is as below:

*“AWARSA should expand same course for longer time. In addition; AWARSA should provide literacy courses, handcraft, and Tailoring projects for illiterate women in villages which will empower those women”.*



In another interview conducted on Dec-24-2019 with AWARSA beneficiary and the response relevant to the question was as below:

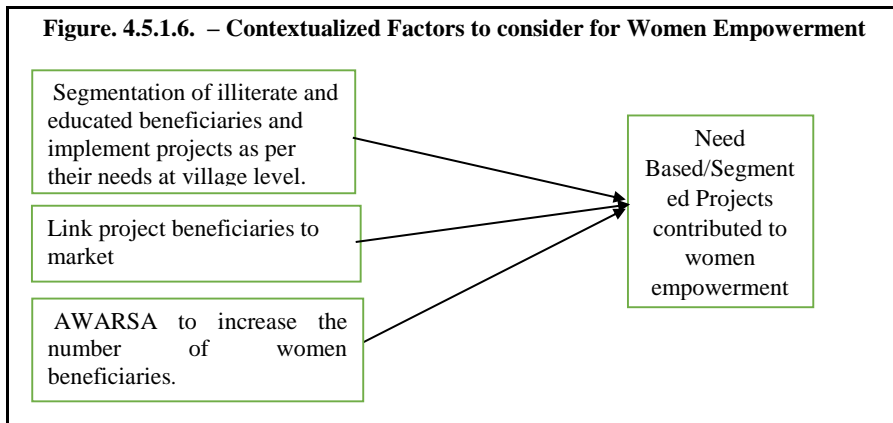
*“Well AWARSA should categorize beneficiaries like educated women and girls and illiterate women. For educated girls AWARSA should continue and expand same learning projects, and for illiterate women AWARSA should implement carpet waving, and other handcraft projects in villages which will empower those women as well”.*

In another interview conducted on Dec-24-2019 with AWARSA another beneficiary and the response relevant to the question is presented below:

“AWARSA should expand same course for longer time. In addition; AWARSA should provide literacy courses, handcraft, and Tailoring projects for illiterate women in villages which will empower those women”.

While the response of another beneficiary when interviewed on Dec-24-2019 regarding the question the response was as below:

“I think AWARSA should have similar projects, expand and continue it. Also implement Handcraft projects for women empowerment and link them to market”.



**4.5.6. Finding of Interview Question (IQ. 2.3)**

The interview question (IQ.2.3) was also asked the AWARSA beneficiaries as the interviewees where the findings of the responses reveals that the women empowerment requires long term efforts and diversified interventions to ensure productive outcome. Most of the respondents proposed to AWARSA to diversify its interventions by considering primarily the local needs of women and then incorporate them in the project implementation. Similarly, the respondents pointed out in responses that AWARSA should implement more educational projects such as Awareness on Human and Women rights, English and Computer program and Literacy courses and economic projects which support to economic empowerment of women in rural areas. The economic projects proposed are Tailoring, Handcraft, Beauty Parlor.

In addition; some of the respondents through the responses to the asked questions recommended that AWARSA should categorize its beneficiaries such as illiterate women and educated women and then design and implement projects based on their specific needs and issues where such an approach will significantly contribute to women empowerment both socially and economically. In addition; the finding of responses recommends that AWARSA

should reach out and cover more beneficiaries at village level and link the handcraft beneficiaries to market for selling of their products.

#### 4.6. Finding of the Research Question One (RQ.2)

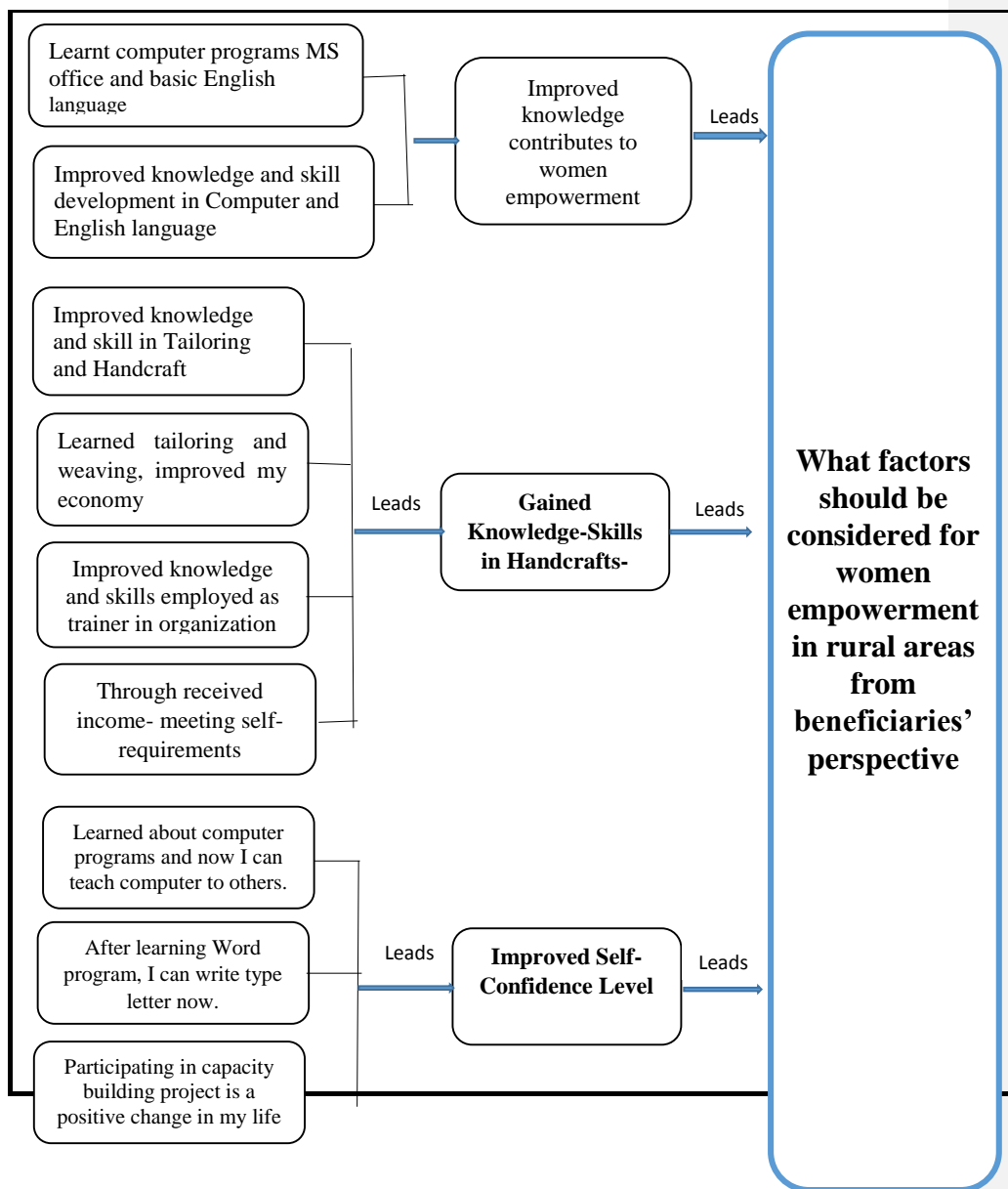
The main purpose of the (RQ.2) has been to seek the perceptives of respondents regarding a: what specific benefit did they receive from the AWARSA projects as beneficiaries, what actual change did the beneficiaries experienced as the result of AWARSA projects, and c: what sort of factor or interventions aimed for women empowerment which AWARSA should consider. The question was further eliminated in three interview sub-questions to ensure more detailed and comprehensive inputs are collected from the respondents.

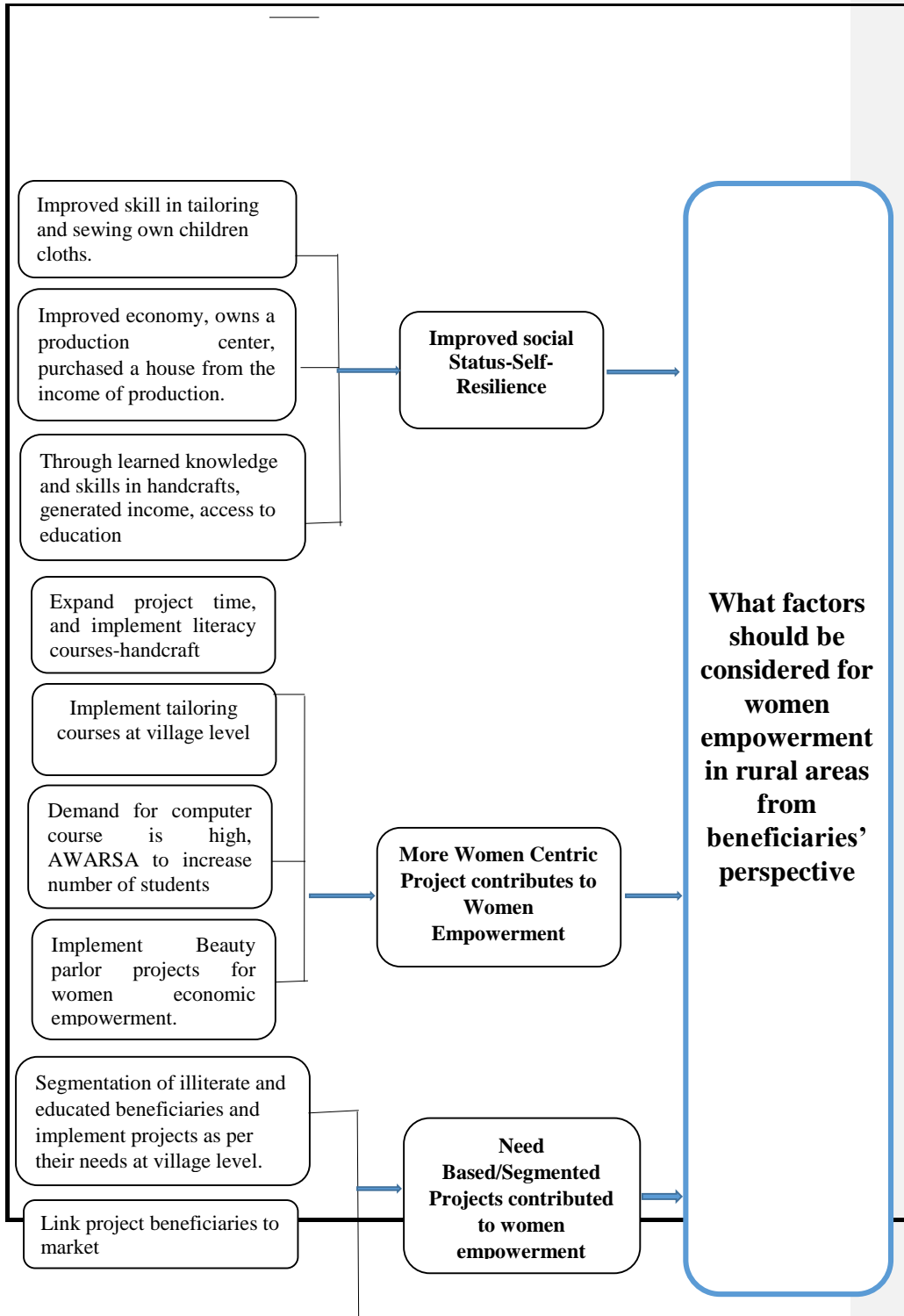
The findings of (RQ.2) reveals that respondents had directly benefited from the AWARSA intervention by gaining knowledge and skills in Computer and English Language Courses and Handcraft and Tailoring interventions, plus improve in economy in terms of increased purchasing power. Similarly, the findings further disclose the positive effects and changes in life of beneficiaries as the result of the projects implemented by AWARSA which Improved Self-Confidence Level, Improved social Status-Self-Resilience. The finding of from the respondents' responses further demonstrates recommending to AWARSA to consider the local context and the actual needs of women while designing any proposal and it should propose long terms projects to donors as they believed that women empowerment needs long term efforts to attain positive results. The findings further propose to AWARSA it should give priority to those projects such as tailoring, literacy, livestock, income generation and awareness projects, vocational-skill building, which are much effective for the economic empowerment of those illiterate women in rural areas. Additionally, the findings from the interviewees' responses suggests that AWARSA may expand its interventions to district and village level and organize Computer and English courses, Awareness on Women rights for educated girls at communities in order to improve their knowledge and skill level plus develop their confidence level.

**Commented [kk24]:** Dear Jawid, final diagram of research questions are missing. You should combine all interview question diagram and make it one under research question 1 and also research question 2. That diagram will be final diagram and answer of research questions in diagram form.

**Commented [JA25R24]:** Considered and adopted.

Figure 4.6.1 Results of RQ2





AWARSA to increase the number of women beneficiaries.

## CHAPTER NUMBER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the finding of the research study, the result of the analysis and recommending the appropriate interventions and approaches which can play significant role in empowering women in rural areas. The conclusion is drawn based on the findings of the research interviews and eventually the recommendations are further provided helpful for any women focused interventions.

#### 5.1 Conclusion of Research Question One (RQ 1)

The main purpose research question 1 was to assess whether AWARSA the LNGO is contributing to women empowerment in rural areas of Takhar province. In order to have a clear picture and have clarity the question RQ-1 was extended to 3 sub-interview questions aimed for discovering the type of implemented projects, whether AWARSA mandate and policies are including approaches for women empowerment and finally to find out whether the projects were short or long term.

Overall the findings of the 3 Interview questions asked from the employees of AWARSA organization as respondents reveals that most of the implemented projects by the organization were solely women focused around various themes (Handcraft, Tailoring, Literacy, Educational interventions-English and Computer Courses, Food For Work, Vocational and Skills building, Income Generation, Graph weaving, and Community Led Total Sanitation).

Additionally through the (IQ-1-2) aimed to find out whether the mandate and policies of AWARSA organization are representing approaches and plans for women empowerment which the findings from the most of the respondents reveal and affirm the existence of Gender policy, 5 years strategic plan within AWARSA organization which obviously represents approaches and plans for women empowerment.

Likewise; the (IQ-1.3) aimed to specify the duration of projects implemented by AWARSA organization. The outcome of the conducted interviews from the respondents reveals that majority of the implemented projects were for short term as AWARSA play as a local organization did not have any control over the duration of the projects as most of the organizations are donor driven and they must implement project in compliance with donor requirements and regulations irrespective of considering the organization suggestion or community needs.

### **5.2. Conclusion of Research Question One (RQ 2)**

The main objective of research question 2 was to evaluate the role of AWARSA as local organization delivering woman focused interventions and finding out the effectiveness of AWARSA projects around empowering women in rural areas. The RQ-2 was divided in 3 sub-interview questions in order to seek the perception of respondents regarding the benefits they gained from the AWARSA projects, finding out the actual change occurred in beneficiaries life and eventually seeking the recommendations from beneficiaries on the future approaches and factors contributing to women empowerment that AWARSA should consider them.

Based on the findings received from respondents who were the beneficiaries of AWARSA through various interviews revealed that beneficiaries obtained both tangible and intangible benefits from the implemented projects as enhancing capacity and gaining both knowledge and skills in Computer and English Language, which also increased their self-confidence level of beneficiaries with the new ability to transfer knowledge to others and occupy relevant job.

Building upon further the findings from the responses it is revealed that AWARSA Handcraft and Tailoring projects had significantly contributed to socio-economic improvement of the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries confirmed that their economy in terms of increase in purchasing power. The Handcraft and Tailoring projects contributed to the positive change. Based on the findings of the study the local NGO AWARSA interventions had significant impact on women empowerment in rural areas of Takhar and those women beneficiaries experienced drastic economic changes in the quality of life by earning money, sense of independency and self-motivation.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations are generated based on the grounds of findings from literature review, the data analysis and evaluation in chapter number four concludes some findings, as a result

the following recommendations are presented for the attention of interested actors intending to know more about the effectiveness of local NGO in delivering development interventions and the role it plays around women empowerment in rural areas. The findings will also present a picture to actors those factors which are significant whenever planning, designing and implementing women empowerment intervention in rural areas.

### **5.3.1. Significant Role and efficiency of Local NGOs as leaders for development**

Most of the studied literature reviews indicates that local NGOs in Pakistan, Iran, India have played very significant role around delivering development interventions and played actively in empowering women in rural areas. Local NGOs can better identify the actual needs and requirements of beneficiaries and significantly contribute in addressing those local issue with low cost interventions. Local NGOs can be helpful in ensuring the women's participation in their empowerment through educating, mobilizing, rural women, providing training around women rights. Since due to the existence of limited of research or study about Local NGO in Afghanistan context thus the findings of this study can be referred as the base and supporting evidence for justifying the significant role of Local NGOs.

Based on the findings of this study local NGO AWARSA as one of the women focused organization has been able to bring positive change in life standards of women in rural areas of Takhar and importantly contributed to economic empowerment of women who benefited from AWARSA projects. Local NGOs have high level of acceptance in communities and easy access that it is highly recommended to Donors, INGOs and other development actors to support the local NGOs further and promote partnership with such grassroot level organizations which are committed to serve their communities.

### **5.3.2. Diversified and contextual Approaches for rural Women Economic empowerment**

Based on the discussed literature reviews and the findings of this study reveals that most of the development projects have been implemented in major cities and development actors have less considered reaching out to rural and hard to reach areas due factors like security and geographical difficulties of remote areas. Simultaneously the implemented projects usually ignore the local actual needs of those rural women and dominated interventions which have not been sustainable and productive for beneficiaries.

Therefore; in order to ensure the effectiveness of development interventions considered for rural women empowerment should reflect local context through diversified or multi-approach



mechanism. For instance; for economic empowerment of women only Handcraft or Tailoring project may not be much helpful, it should be supplemented with improving the awareness and literacy level, self-confidence level of the target women beneficiaries, and linkage to market is significantly contributing to sustainability and positive result of interventions. Some of the interventions proposed by studies literature reviews such as promoting Self Help Groups, among women communities in rural areas are highly recommended which is replicable in Afghanistan context as well. Where on the other hand the findings of respondents response emphasizes on local interventions initially prioritizing increasing paramount level literacy courses specifically for illiterate women for advancing self-confidence level and then Carpet weaving, poultry, Handcraft, Tailoring, livestock, income generation and Beauty Parlor projects are equally productive and valuable for economic empowerment of women in rural areas highly recommended by respondents.

### **5.3.3. Long Term Projects and Segmentation of Beneficiaries**

Based on the findings of the study it was revealed that most of the implemented projects by AWARSA organization were short term and the respondents highly recommended to AWARSA to consider long term interventions if the organization is expecting tangible outcomes. Similarly, the respondents pointed out to a simple point but literally it seems to be very important to consider during designing any project around women empowerment in rural areas. Considering the dynamic context, cultural and traditional barriers the literacy level of women in villages and districts is low, and few women are educated. The respondents suggested to AWARSA that upon designing any intervention and project it should segment the beneficiaries in terms of educated vs uneducated and implemented the projects based on their actual needs. For instance; the educated respondents proposed educational capacity building projects such as English and Computer leaning course, trainings and awareness around women rights, whereas the illtreated respondents proposed vocational Skill development interventions, Handcraft and Tailoring, Carpet weaving projects as drivers for women socio-economic empowerment.

Basically women empowerment is a long term process and focusing on short term projects might not lead to optimum results therefore development actors such as Donors, INGOs, Government of Afghanistan, and other interested actors must offer first an enabling environment for women and concentrate more on long terms efforts approach and implement

long term projects to ensure fundamental resolution of women socio- economic challenges in rural areas.

**A woman cannot work, unless there is support from her family, community, or country. ... A woman cannot generate income unless there is a market for her goods, skills, or services. NAPWA**

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## 5.5 Appendixes

### 5.5.1 Questionnaire:



**KARDAN UNIVERSITY**

### **Research Interview Questionnaire**

Respected respondent, I am Ahmad Jawid Nawzad, student of MBA at Kardan University and working on my thesis report to fulfill partial degree requirement. The thesis title is to find out the “Role Of Local NGO AWARSA As An Organization In Terms Of Women Empowerment In Takhar Province.

The main objective of collecting this information is to get primary data for fulfilling my research work. This is to assure that the information provided in this questionnaire will be kept confidential and will be solely used for academic purpose. I would thank you for giving your valuable time to respond to this questionnaire.

**Personal Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

The Research Questions	The Interview Questions
<p>RQ1:</p> <p><b>Whether AWARA is contributing to Women Empowerment in rural areas of Takhar?</b></p>	<p>IQ 1.1:</p> <p>What specific women centric projects have been implemented by AWARSA?</p>
	<p>IQ 1.2:</p> <p>Is the mandate and policies of AWARSA are representing approaches/plans for women empowerment?</p>
	<p>IQ.1.3:</p> <p>Did the projects length contributed beneficiaries to benefit from the projects for longer?</p>
<p>RQ2:</p> <p><b>What factors should be considered for women empowerment in rural areas from beneficiaries' perspective?</b></p>	<p>IQ 2.1:</p> <p>What specific benefits did the beneficiaries receive from AWARSA projects?</p>
	<p>IQ 2.2:</p> <p>What specific factors were helpful in improvements or changes the beneficiaries experienced in life so far because of AWARSA interventions?</p>
	<p>IQ 2.3:</p> <p>Which factors do you think AWARSA should consider for women empowerment?</p>

