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**The Role of Elders and Trustees in settlement of Collective
Disputes**

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The Role of Elders and Trustees in settlement of Collective Disputes

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Abstract

Background: To determining the people's view towards the role of Elders and trustees in resolving Collective disputes throughout Gachsaran city.

Method: *383 individuals chosen by simple random method throughout the urban and rural areas of Gachsaran. The instrument used to collect data was a researcher-made questionnaire.* To analyze data at descriptive level, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation have been used, and t-test, One way variance analysis and Pearson correlation test have been used at inferential level.

Results: There was a significant difference between elder men's view and great mature women's view in settlement of collective disputes. Elder men's view was more important than great mature women's view. There was a significant difference on people's reaction in respect to elder men in their tribe and opposite tribe in disputation.

Conclusion: people's reaction in both states (either being a member of killer or victim's family), in order to settle collective dispute, indicating that if respondent is a member of killer's family, the most trend would be assigned to the elders and trustees, and if the respondent be a member of victim's family, a priority is given to the legal solution to settle the problem.

Keywords: Collective disputes, Elders, Trustees, Gachsaran city

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Introduction

Iran is among the countries that have ethnic diversity and consequently the challenges and opportunities posed by this phenomenon, mentioned that such challenges are continuously changing in a range of economy which goes beyond politics. Statistics by police show that the government spent large amount for crisis management coming from collective disputes every year [1]. Collective dispute is a conflict that occurs for social, cultural, economic, and political motives within or between tribal, rural or urban communities in limited or extensive and armed or unarmed states among a number of individuals, that generally leads to different damages, and can be a starting point for other conflicts, which might continue in different forms so long [2].

Collective disputes generally happen at the areas which are provided with traditional, ethnic and tribal structures [3]. Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad tribes who have migrated from Siberia through the Caucasus Mountains to the Zagros Mountains, and take residence in surrounding Zagros Mountains (the current location of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad), were in the fight or flight with tyrants, looters and the rulers. Since entering this region, and as the results they scattered as far as possible [4]. In these societies, due to Lack of population, people know each other in complete, and informed of their life situations. Power-based Values especially in Tribal and rural communities are of importance, and the individuals in this area have been living in absolute patriarchal system in a few generations ago. Hence, power plays a major role in their decision making [5].

Most of the disputes caused many people killed or injured and as the result the feelings of revenge which might be followed by disputes would be increased. Whenever firearms are used in collective disputes, *casualties* including death and injury will take more [1]. According to the statistics by Command and Control Center, Police Headquarters in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province since 2008 to 2010 has observed 576 cases of collective disputes, and this province has been categorized as the provinces with the highest dispute rate. The important problem lies in fact that most of the mass of armed conflicts with the rate about 62% assigned to this city. Hoseini Sogh [6] has divided a collective dispute to several stages: Pre-struggle, Individual struggle, spread the problem from the family to the rest of relatives, legitimate complaints, Formation of a collective dispute in attack and defense, casualties from the dispute in killing and arresting as well as wounded forms, involvement of police to resolve a collective dispute, Declared readiness at night and day to defend themselves and their property, elders' involvement to resolve dispute and let peace set up in the end.

The range of dispute includes a range of families, relatives and kins, fans, tribes, elders, etc.[3,6]. Hence, collective disputes as a social problem, which may result in different consequences, causing parties beaten, injured and disabled and even brings great damage, and leads to actions such as burning

and destroying crops and wealth, and in most of the cases one or several persons are killed with cold weapons [3].

This study investigated the role of elders and trustees in collective disputes to prevent and cope with collective disputes. Elders and trustees are people who have been influential in their tribe or clan, and are in a close interaction with the people and governmental agencies, especially the police stations. These people generally in different affairs act as a mediator between people and/or between people and governmental agencies

Method

This study is an applied type of study which is descriptive in nature and survey method has been used in order to complete the research process. Statistical population consists of total population living in Gachsaran city In the year 2011, mentioned 115000 individuals constitute the statistical population where 98000 of them assigned to the urban population. Formula of sample size determination has been used to determine the sample size, and Cluster random sampling method has been used to specify the samples that 383 individuals constitute the sample group in this study, after the calculation. After the number of clusters determined, a number of clusters was chosen in random and then sample was provided based on simple random method. Gachsaran city was divided into two regions Dogonbadan and its villages. The villages were placed in four clusters, and some villages regarding the population in each cluster were chosen. The instruments used to collect data mentioned questionnaire that its validity was confirmed by experts and author with the reliability equal to 0.92, and then data was analyzed using t-test and statistical descriptive methods through SPSS software.

Findings

Demographic characteristics: 63% of respondents were in the range from 20 to 35 years old, and 33.8% of them had the bachelor degree and 26.5% of them had diploma. (Table1).

According to the information shown in table 2, the most important instruments to settle collective disputes in Gachsaran people's view include: law (60.3%), custom (16.6%), elders and trustees (14.2%) respectively.

According to the information shown in table3, weaknesses seen in tribal elders in collective disputes in people's view include Low literacy (14.5%), Traditional practice (13.9%), Decisions against law (13.7%), Poor religious beliefs (12.3%), tendency to one of the dispute parties (8.3%) and physical weakness (7.2%). Given the table above, Tendency to one of the dispute parties and Physical weakness more than other items reported as the least weaknesses of tribal elders in collective disputes.

The results from assessing the difference on elder men’s view and great mature women’s view in settling the collective disputes in Gachsaran people’s view using t-test have been indicated in table 4.

Given the significance level($0/05p<$) with 99% confidence level, it can say that there exists a significant difference between elder men’s view and great mature women’s view in settling the collective disputes in Gachsaran people’s view. In other words, the respondents know more important role of elder men in settling collective disputes compared to great mature women

The results from assessing people’s reaction in respect to elder men in their tribe and opposite tribe in collective disputes using t-test have been shown in table 5.

Table5. The result of t-test for the fourth question given the significance level ($0/05p<$) with 99% confidence level, it can say that there exists a significant difference between people’s reaction in respect to elder men in their tribe and opposite tribe in collective disputes. The results from findings indicate that respondents attempt to sustain on respect to elders in opposite party, but they pay more attention to their tribal elders rather than the elders in opposite tribe.

The results from assessing people’s reaction in both states of being a member of Killer or victim's family, in order to settle collective dispute using t-test have been shown in table 6.

Given the significance level($0/05p<$) with 99% confidence level, it can say that there exists a significant difference between people’s reaction in both states of being a member of Killer or victim's family, in order to settle collective dispute in Gachsaran people’s view. In other words, the respondents know the role of elder men in settling collective disputes compared to great mature women more important. This difference originates a bit from the fact that that if respondent be a member of killer’s family, the most trend then would be assigned to the elders and trustees to settle the problem, and if the respondent be a member of victim’s family, a priority is given to the legal solution to settle the problem.

Table1. *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Younger than 20 years old	235	63
20-35 years old	68	18/2
35-50 years old	22	5/9
50-60 years old	7	1/9
Elder than 60 years old	6	1/6
Without response	373	100
Total	35	9/4

Table2. *Priority of the Most Important Instruments to Settle Collective Disputes*

Education status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	21	5/6
Elementary Reading and Writing	22	5/9
Secondary school	23	6/2
High school	99	26/5
Diploma	54	14/5
Associate Degree	126	33/8
Bachelor degree	10	2/7
Master degree	1	0/3
PhD	8	2/1
Without response	373	100
Total	9	2/4

Table3. *Priority of Weaknesses of Tribal Elders in Collective Disputes*

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Law	225	60/3	1
Custom	62	16/6	2
Elders and trustees	53	14/2	3
Total respondents	340	91	

Table4. *Result of t-test for the Third Question*

Type of weakness	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Low literacy	54	14/5	1
Traditional practice	52	13/9	2
Decisions against law	51	13/7	3
Poor religious beliefs	46	12/3	4
Tendency to one of the dispute parties	31	8/3	5
Physical weakness	27	7/2	6
Total respondents	261	69/9	

Table 5. *Result of t-test for the Fourth Question*

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Error of standard mean	Freedom degree	t-value	Significance level
elder men in their tribe	373	2/7587	0/90144	0/04667	372	59/105	0/000
elder men in opposite tribe	373	1/6488	0/74954	0/03881	372	42/484	0/000

Table 6. *The Result of t-test for the Fifth Question*

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Error of standard mean	Freedom degree	t-value	Significance level
Victim	373	4/1180	1/3206	0/06838	372	60/221	0/000
Killer	373	4/0670	1/1184	0/05791	372	70/230	0/000

Conclusion

Although few studies about the problem of collective disputes have been carried out in the country, this study focused on investigating the role of trustees and elders in collective disputes, provided an new insight into investigating this social problem. The most important instruments to settle collective disputes in respondents' view include law, custom, elders and trustees, respectively. According to the priority given to these instruments, the index of law with a large difference with two other indices and as the first priority indicates that respondents have a high tendency towards law and rule of law in their view is the most important method in settling collective disputes. Hence, respondents have fewer tendencies towards elders and trustees in settling collective disputes compared to the law. The main weaknesses of tribal elders in Collective disputes as prioritized are as follows: low literacy, traditional practice, decisions against law and poor Religious beliefs. There exists a significant difference between elder men's view and great mature women's view in settlement of collective disputes given the people's view across Gachsaran city, indicating that elder men's view compared to great mature women's view is of more importance. This can be derived from different factors that the most tangible one is men's involvement in the society, because men in most cases constitute the main parties of disputes. The results based on the priority given to elder men's view rather than great mature women's view are more practical. There exists a significant difference on people's reaction in respect to elder men in their tribe and opposite tribe in disputation. The results indicate, however, respondents during dispute attempt to sustain on respect to elders in opposite party, in case of disrespect to one of elders in their tribe need to draw more attention to their tribal elders rather than the elders in opposite tribe. This can be derived from the fact that the individuals in statistical population, however, attempt to reduce family bias in the case of collective dispute, but family circle rooted in a society in a way that decrease or remove bias in the form needed to be, has not come to realize. There is a significant difference between people's reaction in both states of being a member of Killer or victim's family, in order to settle collective dispute. If respondent be a member of killer's family, the most trend then would be assigned to the elders and trustees to settle the problem, and if the respondent be a member of victim's family, a priority is given to the legal solution to settle the problem. This shows that family and relative bias in support of their family in the population in the case of the problem of Murder would occur.

Research Suggestions

- 1- Train the rule of law for children, youth and Adolescents at schools and universities, Train methods of legal education in the city when exposed to collective disputes, Identifying a trustee in tribes that have necessary and sufficient education, Organizing and training the trustee identified for academic performance so as to prevent collective disputes.
- 2- Promote a culture of respect for elders and elders and also trust them to help resolve social conflicts with the law.
- 3- Training to resolve the issue of murder and compassionate with victim's family by trustees along with the Police Force so as to reduce the consequences such as revenge taking, displacing the family of the murderer, escaped murderers, and so forth
- 4- Identify great mature women in tribes and large families to train them to enter to a problem and conduct them in legal procedures.

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