

Assessing the Role of Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) in Conflict Settlement (A study of district Swabi)

Abdul Majid Khan¹

Abstract

Conflicts are endemic to human society. Conflicts lead to crime and violence; and are detrimental to peace and order. Some conflicts may last years and cause a heavy loss of resources and even human life. Formal and informal procedures are operational to resolve conflict before manifestation of its adverse impacts. Formal agencies including state-run court and police stations have remained a prominent venue for litigating public but with the passage of time, the state-run courts became over-burdened with high volume of cases. Today, the formal litigation system is faced with serious anomalies. Lengthy, expensive and cumbersome procedures of courts have resulted in dissatisfaction of the litigating public. In the current scenario, it is crucially important to introduce more effective and efficient alternatives to the existing litigation. Realizing this dire need for more efficient and effective alternatives to existing litigation, KP Police department established Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) across the province. This research endeavour explores the multi-dimensional role of DRC in conflict settlement.

Keywords: Dispute Resolution Council, Alternate Dispute Resolution, Conflicts and Disputes

Introduction

Conflict is a ubiquitous phenomenon that exists in almost all societies worldwide. Scarcity of resources including money, power, land; and disparities in beliefs and ideology have always caused conflicts among individuals & groups. Dispute results in a situation wherein individuals or group assume that their resources or benefits are at stake. To secure the scanty resources or to protect one's interest, disputes mostly conclude in subjugation and sometimes even in elimination of the opponents. Disputes are endemic to human society. It results in crimes and violence; and thus jeopardizes the stability of the society. Dispute is unavoidable part of social life and there should be mechanisms for controlling and minimizing their adverse impacts. Using strategies and mechanisms to settle

¹The author is a lecturer of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Swabi, KP-Pakistan. He can be reached at majid7475@gmail.com

disputes have always been part of human heritage. Historically a wide range of tactics have been practiced to resolve conflict and to maintain law and order situation in different societies.

The traditional techniques of conflict resolution are based on socio-cultural attributes such as *Jirga* system in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Elphinstone, 1992), *Panchayat* in some areas of Punjab Pakistan and India (Moore, 1985), and Mediation boards in the China (Clarks, 1989). Informal mechanisms of the conflict resolutions differ from formal techniques employed to settle disputes in the Western world (Riechel, 1998). Though *Jirga* and *Panchayat* have been playing a crucial role in dispute settlement and peace maintenance, but the practice of socially-condemnable impositions and lack of consistency in decisions in these informal setups resulted in their notoriety.

In addition to these informal agencies, formal setups are also operational for dispute settlement which constitute the major venue for the people seeking justice. Today, these modern formal setups are too overburdened to function effectively. The formal structures of justice provision are faced with serious anomalies such as time and cost ineffectiveness of conflict resolution. Olson (1991) pointed out the following gray areas in the formal system of litigation:

- It involves lengthy procedures which vitiate people's money, time and energy.
- Privacy ethics are rarely considered while processing a case.
- It also motivates masses to confront each other and to harass one another; who otherwise may also tend to reconcile.
- It creates a battleground wherein the voice of affluent and power is mostly considered with no heed to righteousness of the one having no power or affluence.
- It subjects people to a wretched experience, which cannot be avoided or condemned even when it is not productive.

This situation resulted a dire need for alternatives to available litigation techniques. A new terminology 'the Alternate Disputes Resolution' (ADR) emerged. The concept 'Alternate Disputes Resolution' encompasses multiple of dispute resolution techniques as alternatives to the available formal judicial mechanisms. These techniques include negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and consensus building. As the modern justice system is faced with serious anomalies, these alternative techniques are viewed crucial in the current scenario and are gaining wide spread popularity (Pearlstein, 2007).

The ADR techniques embed the attributes of traditional mechanisms of amicable resolution of conflict based on equity among the disputants, and therefore ADR techniques are preferred over latest formal procedures for litigation. Compromising by moderation, in conflicting interests, signifies human's natural inclination to conciliation rather than confrontation.

To introduce an alternate mechanism for conflict resolution, and to revive the revered institution of Pakhtuns, the *Jirga*, in a refined form to settle dispute through community elders, the Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) was established by Police department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP Police, 2014).

Disputes Resolution Councils (DRCs)

The Disputes Resolution Council (DRC) is a setup established by Police department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which act as alternative to the available formal setups. Initially established at Peshawar in 2014, a number of DRCs are now operational in various districts of the province. The DRC functions to resolve disputes, mostly of civil nature, between individuals and groups. It acts as an informal setup that engages community members to resolve people's conflicts and disputes according to the socio-cultural values of peace and solidarity (KP Police, 2014). It employs techniques such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration to resolve disputes in a non-confrontational manner. The disputants do not need to hire a lawyer. They speak for themselves. The disputants are given opportunity for expressing their views and producing evidence to support their stance. The DRC resolves conflicts in the light of customary laws of *Pakhtuns*, and promises a speedy and inexpensive conflict resolution.

KP Police department (2014) has delineated the following salient features of DRC:

Structure of DRC

The DRC has twenty-one (21) members including revered elders of the community, religious preachers, professionals, journalists, and retired personnel. There are also a Police-officer and two female lawyers serving as member of DRC. All members of DRC are categorized into various groups, each consisting of three (3) members. Work and decisions done by DRCs are recorded by a Police Officer who serves as the member of DRC. The Disputes Resolution Council (DRC) operates within the Police Station where a room is designated for the procedures of DRC.

Accessing DRCs for conflict resolution

The DRC can be accessed in two ways, either by submitting a complaint to the Police station which is forwarded to DRC or directly by contacting the members of DRCs. The Police-stations mostly refers disputes having civil nature to DRCs, however some other disputes are also referred to DRCs depending on the suitability of resolution of these disputes by DRCs.

Convening the meetings

Meetings, to resolve a conflict, are scheduled on the dates convenient to the disputing parties. The DRC ensures to collect information and evidence about the case before holding the scheduled meeting. The DRC's meetings are mostly held within the Police-station in the room designated for DRC's operations. Meeting in some cases are also organized in other places, such as Hujra or mosque, depending upon its suitability in a particular case. The meeting is commenced with recitation from the Holy *Quran*. The disputants are given opportunity for expressing their views and producing evidence to support their stance.

Decision making and its implementation

The DRC's members serve an arbitrating or mediating role. They hear all the disputants with heed to arrive at a mutually consented decision. Considering the importance of fairness and impartiality, the members ensure to remain neutral and free from any external influences during making the decision. To ensure speedy justice, attempts are made to resolve cases in as minimum time as possible.

In contrast to the formal-courts, which primarily focus on penalizing the offenders, the DRCs primarily focus on the wellbeing of the victims. The process of decision making is based majorly on compensating the loss of aggrieved party rather than punishing the offenders

Alternate Disputes Resolution (ADR)

The concept ADR encompasses many dispute resolution techniques as alternatives to the available formal judicial mechanisms (Jerome and Joseph, 2004). These techniques include negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, consensus building and so on. **Negotiation** refers to a dialogue initiated by the disputants to arrive at a mutual agreement (Rogers, 1992). It is a process where the disputing parties enter into a discussion with the intention to resolve their conflict. It involves communicating some conditions and demand to be accepted by the parties for reconciliation (Ury et al., 1993). **Mediation** refers to a procedure where an impartial individual or individuals intervene to facilitate negotiation between the conflicting parties so that they can reach a mutually-consented decision. A third-party acts as a mediator who helps in creating an environment conducive for

negotiations between the disputants to resolve their dispute (Goldberg et al., 1992). The mediator is not directly related to the conflict or its outcomes. The mediator facilitates the settlement but cannot impose the decision on the disputants. The power of making a decision lies with the disputants. On the other hand, **arbitration** is the procedure wherein the disputants empower the third party to settle their conflict as well as to make a decision that is binding on all the disputants (Goldberg et al., 1992).

A movement, to establish ADR mechanisms, was launched in the United States in 1970s which demanded for initiation of effective mechanisms of dispute settlement as alternatives to the existing litigation system. Community Relation Service (CRS) was launched in the US to help litigating public and to aid the existing formal setups of justice provision.

The ‘Advisory, Conciliation & Arbitration Services ACAS was launched at United Kingdom in the year 1974 in order to facilitate conflict resolution with the help of mediation and arbitration procedures (Acland, 1990). As the time progressed, ADR mechanism gained a wide-spread popularity due to its indispensably crucial role in conflict settlement in modern world, where the ADR mechanisms work side by side with the existing formal litigation system. Today, ADR techniques have been adequately institutionalized to supplement the agencies of formal litigation in many countries.

The salient characteristics of ADR are as follows:

- It is relatively an informal mechanism of dispute settlement.
- It mostly involves direct participation and communication of disputing parties rather than hiring a lawyer.
- It offers time-effective and cost-effective resolution of disputes.
- It believes in equity and socio-cultural values.

Objectives of the study:

1. To understand working-mechanism and structure of DRC;
2. To evaluate the roles of DRCs in dispute settlement and peace building;
3. To explore the roles of DRCs in the revival & promotion of Jirga-system;
4. To examine community's response towards DRC in context of conflict resolution and decision implementation.

Materials and Methods

Locality of the Study

The locality of this study was the district Swabi. Swabi is among the highly populated districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is located between Kabul & Indus rivers. Spreading over an area of 1545 km², Swabi shares its Noshehra & Mardan to its west, Haripur to its east, Buner to its north and Attock to its south.

Sampling procedures and Size

This study employed cluster sampling technique. The study-area was divided into four clusters. District Swabi has four *Tehsils*. Each *Tehsil* has a functional Dispute Resolution Council. Each of these four *Tehsils* of district Swabi was treated as a cluster. Forty-five participants were recruited from each cluster. The total size of the sample of the study was 180 participants. The sample consisted of sixty (60) members of the DRCs, sixty (60) beneficiaries (who availed DRCs for resolution of their disputes) & sixty (60) Police-officers from varying cadre at the concerned Police stations of the DRCs, as outlined below:

The sample consisted of sixty (60) members of the DRCs, sixty (60) beneficiaries (members of the locality) whose case were tried at the DRCs, and sixty (60) Police Officers of varying cadre from the concerned Police stations of the DRCs, as outlined below:

Table. Four Tehsils of District Swabi - Clusters

S. No.	Clusters / Tehsils	Members of DRC	Beneficiaries (whose disputes have been resolved through DRC)	Police Officers (of concerned Police Station)	Total
1.	Swabi	15	15	15	45
2.	Topi	15	15	15	45
3.	Lahor	15	15	15	45
4.	Razzar	15	15	15	45
Total Respondents		60	60	60	180

Methodology and Tools of Data Collection

The study was quantitative in nature. Close-ended questionnaires / interview-schedules were employed as the tools of data collection. Three different questionnaires were devised to collect data from three different groups of participants, i.e. the members of DRC, the beneficiaries of DRC, and the Police

officers. The questionnaire was designed to include all aspects of the objectives of this research endeavour, and was also pretested to make necessary modifications prior to the actual process of data collection.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fairness and impartiality in decisions of DRC ▪ Inexpensive and speedy justice ▪ Sustainable resolution of disputes ▪ Informal functioning of DRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflict Settlement

Findings (Results and Discussions)

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of responses - types of cases and decision implementation

S. No	Questions / Statements	Responses		
1.	Which nature of disputes are resolved at DRC?	Civil nature	Criminal nature	Both civil and criminal nature
		44 (73.33%)	4 (06.67%)	12 (20.00%)
2.	How is DRC's decision implemented?	Directly by DRC's members	By involving community members to create social pressure	By Police of the concerned Police Station
		53 (83.33%)	5 (8.33%)	2 (3.34%)

The participants believed that most cases (73.33%) resolved at DRCs were of civil nature. A few cases (6.67%) resolved at DRCs were viewed as criminal cases; and 20% of the cases were also viewed as both of civil and criminal nature. Most of the DRC's decision (83.33%) were believed to have been implemented directly by the DRC's members without any external help; and 8.33% of the decisions' implementation involved general members of the locality to produce a social

pressure; while 3.34% of the DRC's decisions also required the help of police for its implementation.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of responses

S. No	Questions / Statements	Yes	No
<i>Beneficiaries of the Dispute Resolution Council</i>			
1.	Is it easy to access DRC?	47 (78.33%)	13 (21.67%)
3.	Does DRC offer an inexpensive settlement of disputes?	46 (76.66%)	14 (23.34%)
4.	Does DRC maintain confidentiality in its processes?	51 (85.00%)	9 (15.00%)
5.	Does DRC give a fair opportunity to the parties to express their views democratically?	45 (75.00%)	15 (25.00%)
6.	Does DRC offer a speedy resolution of conflicts?	45 (75.00%)	15 (25.00%)
7.	Are the beneficiaries satisfied with the processes and decisions of the DRC?	49 (81.66%)	11 (18.34%)
8.	Is DRC influenced by political power?	18 (30.00%)	42 (70.00%)
9.	Is DRC influenced by a powerful-party involved?	14 (23.33%)	46 (76.66%)
10.	Do DRC's decisions involve socially-condemnable penalties and impositions?	11 (18.34%)	49 (81.66%)
11.	Does DRC observe fairness, transparency and impartiality in its processes?	43 (71.66%)	17 (28.34%)
12.	Is DRC's decision generally viewed as legally valid?	37 (61.66%)	23 (38.34%)
13.	Is DRC's decision (in a resolved case) re-challenged on any other forum?	46 (76.66%)	14 (23.34%)
14.	Has DRC an effective mechanism for implementation of its decisions?	39 (65.00%)	11 (35.00%)
15.	Is DRC's decision happily accepted by all the parties?	47 (78.33%)	13 (21.67%)
16.	Is positive attitude of community towards DRCs growing overtime?	48 (80.00%)	12 (20.00%)

17.	Is the number of people, availing service of DRCs, growing overtime?	43 (71.66%)	17 (28.34%)
18.	Has DRC an effective mechanism for the follow-up of the resolved/decided cases?	38 (63.33%)	22 (22.67%)
19.	Does DRC play a role in promoting and reviving the <i>Jirga</i> system?	43 (71.66%)	17 (28.34%)
20.	Was your case/dispute successfully resolved at the DRC?	49 (81.66%)	11 (18.34%)
Members of Dispute Resolution Council		Yes	No
21.	Do you get any salary or remuneration for your services at the DRC?	0 (00.00%)	60 (100%)
22.	Is any specific educational qualification is required for joining (as a member) DRC?	19 (31.67%)	41 (68.33%)
23.	Are the DRC's processes and decisions recorded officially?	37 (61.66%)	23 (38.34%)
24.	Are women given representation in (membership of) DRC?	38 (63.33%)	22 (22.67%)
25.	Is DRC governed by prescribed rules & regulations?	21 (35.00%)	39 (65.00%)
26.	Has DRC a set of (pre-written) codes for making a decision according to the nature of a case or an offence?	14 (23.33%)	46 (76.66%)
27.	Are some of the members of the DRC are well-versed in formal and legal laws?	44 (73.33%)	16 (26.67%)
28.	Do DRCs and traditional <i>Jirgas</i> , in the area, cooperate with each other in the time of need?	46 (76.66%)	14 (23.34%)
Police Officers of concerned Police Stations		Yes	No
29.	Does DRC require any help from Police to access the disputants, investigate a case or implement its decision?	21 (35.00%)	39 (65.00%)
30.	Does DRC play a role in peace-building in the area?	47 (78.33%)	13 (21.67%)
31.	Does DRC help in lessening the workload of police stations?	44 (73.33%)	16 (26.67%)
32.	Does DRC help in reducing the workload of formal courts?	49 (81.66%)	11 (18.33%)

33.	Are the structural and functional aspects of DRC similar to those of traditional <i>Jirgas</i> ?	38 (63.33%)	22 (36.67%)
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The beneficiaries of DRC were inquired to explore multidimensional role of DRC in conflict resolution; and community's response towards DRC's mechanism. More than three-quarters of the beneficiaries (78.33%) found it very easy to access DRC for availing their services. Majority of the beneficiaries (76.66%) reported that DRC offers inexpensive resolution of conflicts. Similarly, majority of the beneficiaries (85%) believed that DRC maintains confidentiality during its processes. DRC gives a fair opportunity to the disputing parties to express their views in a democratic way, as reported by three-quarters of the participants. Most beneficiaries (75%) reported that DRC is effective in speedy resolution of disputes. Majority of the beneficiaries (81.66%) were their satisfied with the DRC's decision. About three-quarter of the beneficiaries reported that processes and decisions of DRC are free from political influence. Similarly, most of the participants (76.67%) believed that DRC's processes and decision are free from influence of any powerful (in terms of socio-economic status) party involved. Majority participants (81.67%) reported that the decisions of DRC do not involve any socially-condemnable penalties or impositions. 71.66% of the participants remarked that fairness and impartiality are observed in the processes of DRC. About three-quarter participants reported that DRC's decisions, of their (resolved) cases, were not re-challenged by the other party on any other forum. Most beneficiaries (65%) were convinced of the effectiveness of DRC's mechanism of decision implementation. 78.33% participants believed that decisions of DRC are happily accepted by all parties. A significant number of the beneficiaries (80%) found a surge in positive attitude of people towards DRC overtime. Most beneficiaries (71.66%) reported that number of people, availing DRC's services, is increasing overtime. 63.33% beneficiaries reported to have been contacted by DRC as a follow-up of their resolved disputes. The DRC is playing a pivotal role for reviving and promoting the traditional *Jirga* system, as remarked by 71.66% of the beneficiaries. Most of the beneficiaries (81.66%) expressed that DRC resolved their disputes successfully.

DRC's members were inquired to explore the structural and functional aspects of the DRC. It was observed that none of the DRC's members was receiving any salary or remuneration for their work at the DRC. Most of the DRC's members (68.33%) reported that no particular educational qualification is required for joining (as a member) DRC. More than a half of the DRC's members (61.67%) reported that official record, of the DRC's operations and decision, is maintained. Majority of the DCR's members (63.33%) remarked that DRC has

women's representation in its members. Though in practical, a very few women were found as working members of the DRC. It means that though DRC allows women to be part of the DRC but due to the socio-cultural restrictions, a few women manage to participate in DRC. Most DRC's members (65%) viewed DRC as an informal setup which is not governed by any documented rules for its operations. Similarly, 76.67% of the members also expressed that DRC has no set of (written) codes for deciding penalties depending upon the nature of a case or an offence. It signifies that being an informal setup, decisions are based on the conventional wisdom of the community elders and socio-cultural values of the peace and solidarity. Most of the members (73.33%) reported that DRC do have some members who are well-versed in formal and legal laws. Three quarters of the DRC's members believed that the DRCs and the local traditional *Jirgas* cooperate with each other if such a need arises in either setups.

The Police officers were inquired whether their help is required by DRC in some cases. About one-third of the Police Officers (35%) reported that DRCs require Police's help in some cases in terms of accessing the parties, investigating a case, or implementing the decision. More than three-quarter of the Police officers (78.33%) were convinced that DCRs are playing a significant role in peace-building in the area. Majority of the Police officers (73.33%) reported that DRCs help in reducing the workload of the Police stations. Similarly, majority of Police officers (81.66%) were also of the view that DRCs also help in lessening the workload of the existing courts. A significant number of the Police Officers (63.33%) believed the structural and functional aspects of the DRC are quite similar to those of traditional *Jirgas*.

Bi-variate Analysis**Table. 3. Association between Impartiality practiced in DRC and Conflict Settlement**

<i>Practice of impartiality in DRC's processes</i>		<i>Conflict Settlement</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi and P Values</i>
		No	Yes		
Is DRC influenced by political power?	No	11	31	42	Chi = 5.77 P = 0.01
	Yes	0	19	18	
Total		11	49	60	
Is the DRC decision influenced by the more powerful party (in terms of high socio-economic status)?	No	11	35	46	Chi = 4.09 P = 0.04
	Yes	0	14	14	
Total		11	49	60	
Does DRC make biased decision in some cases?	No	11	32	43	Chi = 5.14 P = 0.02
	Yes	0	17	17	
Total		11	49	60	
Is everyone given a fair opportunity to express their views in a democratic way during DRC proceedings?	No	0	15	15	Chi = 4.50 P = 0.03
	Yes	11	34	45	
Total		11	49	60	
Does DRC ensure impartiality in its processes and decision making?	No	0	17	17	Chi = 5.32 P = 0.02
	Yes	11	32	43	
Total		11	49	60	

To gauge the practice of impartiality in DRC's processes, four major indicators were used which were (1) being free from political influence, (2) free from being bribed, (3) making non-biased decisions, and (4) offering a fair opportunity to the parties for democratic expression. It was also intended to examine the association between these indicators of impartiality and successful resolution of conflict in DRC. Successful conflict resolution means effective, sustainable and satisfactory resolution of the conflict.

The P values associated with Pearson Chi-square values, reflected above, are less than 0.05 which signify a strong association between the practice of impartiality in DRC and successful conflict resolution.

The term 'powerful party' used in a question refers to a party having relatively a higher socio-economic status which is likely to influence the DRC by bribing it or by other means. The P value ($P=0.04<0.05$) for Pearson Chi-square value of 4.09 signifies that there is a deep relationship between successful conflict resolution and DRC's processes which are free from the influence of the powerful party involved. Similarly, the P value ($P=0.01<0.05$) for Pearson Chi-square value of 5.77 confirms that there is a strong relationship between successful resolution of a conflict and DRC's processes being free from political influence.

Most respondents believed that DRC gives a fair opportunity to disputing parties to express their views in democratic way. Fair opportunity is crucial for impartiality because it helps all the parties being heard equally in the DRC. If fair opportunity is not given, the weaker party may not be able to express their stance properly, especially when the opponent party is stronger. The Probability ($P=0.03<0.05$) associated with Chi-square value of 4.50 confirms a strong association between successful conflict settlement and provision of fair opportunity for expression in the DRC.

Table 4. Association between Informality in Function of DRC and Conflict Settlement

<i>Informality in structure and function of DRC</i>		<i>Conflict Settlement</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi and P Values</i>
		No	Yes		
Is any specific educational qualification required for membership of DRC?	No	11	30	41	Chi = 6.24 P = 0.01
	Yes	0	19	19	
Total		11	49	60	
Is DRC governed by written rules and regulations?	No	10	29	39	Chi = 3.97 P = 0.04
	Yes	1	20	21	
Total		11	49	60	
Has DRC a set of defined codes for making decision according to nature of the offence?	No	11	35	46	Chi = 4.09 P = 0.04
	Yes	0	14	14	
Total		11	49	60	
Are operations and decisions of DRC recorded officially?	No	10	27	37	Chi = 4.87 P = 0.02
	Yes	1	22	23	
Total		11	49	60	
Are the structural and functional aspects of DRC similar to those of traditional	No	1	21	22	Chi = 4.41
	Yes	10	28	38	
					P = 0.03

<i>Jirga?</i>				
	Total	11	49	60

As the literature reflects that court's formal procedure are lengthy and expensive which gives a miserable experience to the litigants. On the other hand, informal mechanisms involve comparatively less lengthy, expensive and cumbersome procedures. Five indicators, used to gauge the level of informality in the structure and function of the DRC, were (1) non-requirement of educational qualification for joining DRC, (2) having no written rules and regulation, (3) having no codes for making penalties according to the nature offence, (4) non-maintenance of work's record, and (5) resemblance to *Jirga* which is also an informal setup. It was intended to see whether these indicators of informal structure contribute to successful conflict resolution.

The P values associated with the Chi-values, as reflected above, are less than 0.05 which confirm that there is a significant relationship between informal structure of DRC and successful conflict resolution.

More than half of the participants believed that structural and functional aspects are quite similar to those of *Jirga* of *Pakhtuns*. The P value ($P=0.03 < 0.05$) for Chi-value of 4.41 confirms a significant association between successful conflict resolution, and structural and functional similarities in DRC and *Jirga*. It also confirms community's satisfaction, to some extent, with the *Jirgas* operating in the area.

The above table also reflects strong relationship of successful conflict resolution and the other indicators of informal structure, such as no written rules and regulation, having no codes for making penalties according the nature offence and non-maintenance of work's record. It can also be interpreted as that removing such formalities is like removing the unnecessary hurdles which result in lengthy, expensive and miserable experience of conflict resolutions in formal setups.

Table 5. Association between Sustainable Resolution of Conflict and Conflict Settlement:

<i>Sustainable resolution of conflicts</i>		<i>Conflict Settlement</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi and P Values</i>
		No	Yes		
Has DRC an effective mechanism for implementation of its decision?	No	1	20	21	Chi = 3.97 P = 0.04
	Yes	10	29	39	
Total		11	49	60	

Are DRC's decisions viewed as legally valid?	No	1	22	23	Chi = 4.87 P = 0.02
	Yes	10	27	37	
Total		11	49	60	
Was the decision, made by DRC in your case, challenged on any other forum by either of the parties?	No	11	35	46	Chi = 4.09 P = 0.04
	Yes	0	14	14	
Total		11	49	60	
Does DRC perform follow-up of the resolved-cases by contacting the parties?	No	0	19	18	Chi = 5.77 P = 0.01
	Yes	11	31	42	
Total		11	49	46	
Are transparency, fairness and impartiality observed in DRC?	No	0	17	17	Chi = 5.32 P = 0.02
	Yes	11	32	43	
Total		11	49	60	

Sustainable resolution of disputes is crucial for long-term peace and harmony between parties whose dispute is resolved. To gauge sustainability in the resolution of conflicts, four indicators were used which were (1) fairness and impartiality in decision-making, (2) effective implementation of decision, (3) legal status of decisions, (4) follow-up service for the resolved cases. It was also intended to see how these indicators relate to success of conflict settlement.

The P-values for all indicators along with their respect Chi-values verify that there is a strong relationship between sustainability in resolution of conflict and successful conflict settlement.

The P value ($P=0.04 < 0.05$), linked with Chi-square value of 3.97, verifies a strong relationship between effective mechanism of decision implementation in DRC and successful conflict settlement. Similarly, the P value ($P = 0.01 < 0.05$), associated with Chi-value of 5.77, authenticates that there is a strong relationship between successful conflict settlement and the follow-up services for cases resolved by DRC.

Among the indicators, transparency and fairness in decision-making are strongly related to successful conflict settlement. Similarly, the legal status of the decisions is also strongly related to successful conflict settlement.

Table 6. Association between Speedy & Inexpensive Resolution of Conflict and Successful Conflict Settlement

		<i>Conflict Settlement</i>		Total	Chi and P Values	
		No	Yes			
<i>Speedy and Inexpensive Resolution of conflicts</i>						
<i>Speedy Resolution of Conflict</i>	Is DRC effective in speedy settlement of disputes than legal courts?	No	0	15	Chi = 4.49 P = 0.03	
		Yes	11	34		45
	<i>Total</i>	11	49	60		
	In how many of its hearings, DRC usually resolve a case?	More than 4 hearings	0	17	17	Chi = 5.32 P = 0.02
		1 – 3 hearings	11	32	43	
<i>Total</i>		11	49	60		
<i>Inexpensive Resolution of Conflict</i>	Does DRC charge any fee from the parties to resolve their disputes?	No	11	35	Chi = 4.09 P = 0.04	
		Yes	0	14		14
	<i>Total</i>	11	49	60		
	Does DRC provide inexpensive dispute settlement as in comparison to legal courts?	No	0	16	16	Chi = 4.89 P = 0.02
		Yes	11	33	44	
<i>Total</i>		11	49	60		

As the literature reflects that time and cost effectiveness of litigation have become major concerns of litigating public. To gauge time effectiveness of DRC, two indicators were used, such as, number of hearings to resolve a case, and time-span of resolving cases. Similarly, cost effectiveness was also explored by indicators as shown in the table.

It can be seen in the table that P-values ($P < 0.5$) for all the indicators confirm that there is a strong association between successful conflict resolution and speedy and inexpensive resolution of conflict. Among the indicators, less number of hearings

to resolve the cases ($P=0.02<0.5$) and the process being inexpensive ($P=0.02<0.5$) is strongly related to successful resolution of conflict.

Conclusion and recommendations

The Dispute Resolution Council plays a crucially important role in resolving disputes and peace-building. The growing number cases resolved by DRC over time indicates that the community's response towards the DRC is quite positive. Inexpensive and speedy resolution of conflicts and observing privacy ethics in its processes, are the main factors of its beneficiaries' satisfaction. In contrast to the formal courts which primarily focus on punishing the offenders, the DRC primarily focuses on well-being of the victims. Decision-making is based majorly on compensating the loss of aggrieved party rather than punishing the offenders. As the structural and functional aspects of DRC are much similar to those of *Jirgas* of *Pakhtuns*, the DRC can also be called a refined version of *Jirga*. This way, it is also playing a role in developing a positive attitude among the community towards the existing *Jirga* system.

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

- DRC should have representations from all sections of the society, such as women, youth, religious and ethnic minorities etc.
- To ensure sustainability in settlement of disputes, follow-up of the resolved cases should be done periodically.
- The DRC should act as a sophisticated version of '*Jirga*' in order to influence the existing *Jirgas* positively. It should have no room for socially-condemnable impositions in its decisions.
- Government should focus on strengthening and supporting DRC because it offers speedy and inexpensive justice to people as well as it helps in reducing the workload of the police stations and courts.
- DRC's decision should be given a proper legal-cover by the Government.

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