

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

This study looks at women's education in Afghanistan from the views of activists, Taliban, and ordinary Afghan people and how gender affects male and female activists' views on women's education. While there has been progress in this area, there are still challenges that women in Afghanistan confront when attempting to enhance their education. The lack of resources, including schools, contributes to these issues, as do issues like poverty and cultural norms, as well as war and violence. Studies reveal that educated women have more opportunities and contribute more to non-farming activities, highlighting the value of education in empowering women and fostering gender equality (Anderson, Reynolds, Biscaye, Patwardhan, & Schmidt, 2021).

In exploring activists' perspectives on women's education and their support for gender equality, it is essential to recognize that activism encompasses a range of activities driven by social, political, and personal beliefs. Consumer educators aiming to redefine consumer education approaches can be seen as consumer activists, advocating for the intricate connections between consumers and the marketplace, encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions (McGregor, 2015).

For instance, Laura Lyytikäinen (2013) delves into the construction of activist identity within the Russian opposition movement *Oborona*. Lyytikäinen's study examines how gender, class, and the civic field influence the complex nature

of activist identity. Oborona, founded by young Russians opposing Vladimir Putin's government, has undertaken various actions such as protests, demonstrations, and hunger strikes (Lyytikäinen, 2013). According to Lyytikäinen, most activists within this movement espouse democratic ideas, with well-educated parents who hold professions such as teachers, doctors, and scientists, indicating a solid educational background among the activists. This action of activists shows that they not only stand with women's education but also stands againsts any inequality that causes harm to individuals. As Carla Luguetti and Kimberly L. Oliver (2020) say, the activist approach can help teacher educators, student teachers, and young people to become conscious of the power structures in society that lead to social inequities (Luguetti & Oliver, 2020).

Similarly, Lauri Johnson (2004) sheds light on women's education from the perspective of activists. African American women teachers in Harlem during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were not only dedicated to providing their students with a high-quality education but also actively engaged in social reform movements, teacher union organizing, and civil rights activities. These activist educators leveraged their influence to drive broader societal change, improve working conditions for teachers, and expand access to higher education. Their efforts had a transformative impact on the lives of African Americans and paved the way for subsequent generations of activists and educators in Harlem (Johnson, 2004).

Rebecca M. Klenk (2010) talks about how gender shapes activists' views on women's access to education. The activists at Lakshmi Ashram had quite different views on the importance of women's education, depending on their

gender. Male activists saw education as a means to advance women's economic standing, with an eye toward creating more and better employment options and greater economic autonomy. They expected that through gaining an education, women would become more self-reliant and make greater contributions to their families and communities.

However, the women activists at Lakshmi Ashram regarded education as a means to combat gender inequity and boost women's agency. They thought getting an education would empower women to break free from societal norms and actively shape their communities (Klenk, 2010). These perspectives shaped male and female campaigners' tactics. Female activists concentrated on changing social norms around women's education to remove impediments to women's education, while male activists focused on financial support. Female campaigners faced family and community opposition to women's education. Male activists, seen as better social change leaders, were more accepted by policymakers.

Lakshmi Ashram's male and female activists championed women's education despite obstacles. They thought it empowered women and developed communities. They persistently fought for decent education for women. Further, Barbara J. Bank (2007) "activists seeking sex equity and participants in the emerging discipline of women's studies (Bank B. J., 2007)".

To understand the views of the Taliban and ordinary people regarding women's access to education, we must recognize the influence of action resources like knowledge and skills, which empower individuals to shape their own lives. Modernization plays a crucial role in fostering political involvement through

economic growth, education, and personal independence. Societal values reflect the impact of industrialization and the ongoing conflict between survival-oriented and self-expression values. Self-expression societies prioritize personal fulfillment, active participation, gender equality, tolerance, trust, civil liberties, democracy, and responsive governance (Welzel & Inglehart, 2008).

To have glance on Afghanistan, it's place where women's rights oppressed for decades (1992-1996) (Fluri J. L., 2009, p. 260) thus, one must analyze Afghanistan's women's situation within the larger historical context of Afghanistan, not through the ideological formulation of "before and after" the Taliban. Only such a perspective can ensure that women are seen as essential to rebuilding Afghanistan. In this regarding Ruth Ren (2010) has launched a public survey to measure people's opinion regarding women's education, by asking "Women should have equal opportunities like men in education" over 87% responded agree with women's education and 50% "who strongly agree" (Rene, 2010) according to the report only around 11% disagree, report highlights, a higher proportion of women 93% than men 82% support for equal opportunities in education.

When looking to the views of the Taliban regarding women's education, from 1994 they have disagreed with women's education and work, as Pia Karlsson & Amir Mansory (2008) say "when the Taliban (students of Islam) entered the arena and installed law and order - at the cost of human rights abuse. In particular women and girls in the cities were denied work and education opportunities" (Karlsson & Mansory, 2008, p. 3).

Saira Inayatullah (2022) also launched a study regarding women's education in 2022 after the collapse of Afghanistan to the Taliban, people express their concern related to women's education as Inayatullah asks participants, and they said, "now after the Taliban, women education has reached nearly zero and it has turned into a dream we don't know if it's achievable or not" (Inayatullah, 2022, p. 28), while the second participant answered, "now the Taliban break every single foundation that was built for women's education", and the third participants say, "A pre-Taliban Afghanistan was good. We had a comfortable life. Education service was accessible to everyone. Now, the Taliban don't allow girls to go to school."

Considering all respective scholars' arguments, we believe activists have high support for women's education, and this is not concise on women's education only; their goals are to push for equality, both males and females. They support equality because they want to build a strong community and women self-sufficient. According to Ruth Ren (2010), over 87% of ordinary Afghan people support women's education as long as the Taliban is concerned. According to several studies (Yousaf & Jabarkhail, 2021; Inayatullah, 2022) they have no interest in women's education.

Hypothesis

H1: The Taliban's views regarding women's education will be significantly more restrictive and opposed than those of activists and ordinary Afghan people. This hypothesis can be explained theoretically by the Taliban's ideology and prior behaviour. The Taliban, an Islamic extremist party that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, imposed severe Islamic legislation, including limitations on women's education and work. Women were punished for attending school or working outside the home. Fundamentalist Islam and gender roles underpin the Taliban's attitude. Based on their philosophy and past actions, the Taliban's views on women's education are likely to be more restrictive and opposed than those of activists and ordinary Afghans. 1996 that violence against women and girls was a "daily reality throughout the world," and that the Taliban "drastically" curtailed women's rights (Skaine, 2002).

H2: Activists are more likely to demonstrate higher support for women's education compared to both the Taliban and ordinary Afghan people. Women's education holds huge significance and is a matter of ongoing contention. It serves as a vital solution to address numerous issues that affect women's lives. Although steps have been made to promote its expansion, women's education continues to face obstacles stemming from societal customs, entrenched power dynamics, and the failure of governments and nations to take effective measures (Nussbaum, 2004). To see women's education from the perspective of activists who campaign for women's rights and education will likely see education as a fundamental right

for all individuals, regardless of gender. They support the empowerment of women through education and equality.

On the other hand, the Taliban has a history of opposing women's education and viewing it as a threat to traditional gender roles (Telesetskyt, 1998). Ordinary Afghan people may hold varying views towards women's education, depending on factors such as their level of education, religious beliefs, and cultural background. Generally, those who prioritize gender equality and women's rights are more likely to support women's education than those who do not. Hence, it is expected that activists would show higher support for women's education as compared to both the Taliban and ordinary Afghan people.

H3: Female activists are more likely to hold higher sentiments for supporting women's education compared to male activists. Women's education is generally a top priority for female activists since they have a better understanding of the challenges women experience in gaining an education. On the other hand, male campaigners might not place the same value on women's education as their female counterparts do. The perspectives of men and women on education and women's rights may still be influenced by society standards and gender roles. Gender, according to feminism theory, is a social construction, and gender norms and expectations are internalized via upbringing in a patriarchal society (Lorber, 2001). Therefore, due to their gendered attitudes and ideas, female activists are more inclined to advocate for women's educational opportunities.

Argument

In the realm of women's education, a battleground of ideas and beliefs emerges, where activists, the Taliban, and ordinary Afghan people engage in a theoretical struggle over the significance and role of education in the lives of women. From the activist's view point, grounded in feminist theories, education becomes a powerful tool for emancipation and social change. Activists, driven by their social, political, and personal beliefs, perceive education as a fundamental right, essential for the empowerment of women. In their view, education opens doors to opportunities, enabling women to challenge societal norms, break free from oppressive systems, and actively shape their communities. Guided by feminist frameworks that recognize the intersectionality of gender (Lorber, 2001), class, and civic engagement, these activists strive to remove barriers and advocate for women's educational access.

Conversely, the Taliban's theoretical stance on women's education presents a stark contrast. Driven by an ideology rooted in religious fundamentalism and traditional gender roles, the Taliban perceives women's education as a threat to their established order. In their worldview, education for women undermines the status quo and challenges the patriarchal structures they seek to uphold. Thus, the Taliban imposes severe limitations on women's access to education, perpetuating oppressive systems and hindering progress towards gender equality (Franks, 2003).

Ordinary Afghan people, each with their own theoretical perspectives shaped by education, religious beliefs, and cultural backgrounds. These perspectives vary across the spectrum, reflecting the complex societal fabric of

Afghanistan. Some embrace the ideals put forth by activists, recognizing the transformative power of education and the imperative to ensure equal opportunities for women. Others, influenced by societal norms and traditional values, may hold reservations or even oppose women's education, subscribing to a theoretical framework that reinforces traditional gender roles and norms (Rene, 2010).