Women's Education in Afghanistan: Activist, Taliban, and Ordinary Afghan People Views

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Millions of women, especially without equal educational experiences, skills, or qualifications, women of specific classes and social groups have long been doomed to inferior lives in terms of their capacity to grow personally, their choice of employment, their standing as citizens, and their ability to influence leadership and decisions at the national level that have an impact on their local lives (Weiner, 1986).

Women practically prevent from receiving education around the globe, especially in countries with patriarchal and conservative government forms. Afghanistan is one of those countries where women suffered for decades. Today, women are prevented from educating themselves, or the government has imposed restrictions on their education system. This restriction has a substantial negative impact on women's daily activities. This limits their access to public gatherings, travel, study and other activities.

Studies show that educated women are more likely to have more opportunities, "better educated women that do work are more likely to work in non-farm activities (Anderson, Reynolds, Biscaye, Patwardhan, & Schmidt, 2021, p. 200)." Education for women has been cited as an important factor in the

development of feminism by a number of authors. Women's higher education institutions sprung up at the same time as the first waves of feminism in the United States, as noted by (Plutzer, 1993, p. 149).

The denial of education for women can have severe consequences for society and individuals (Orfan, 2021). Taliban restrictions on women's education in Afghanistan have led to high illiteracy rates among Afghan women, which has limited their participation in society (Mashwani, 2017). The Taliban's return has raised fears that women's rights, including access to education, will be further diminished (Women, 2022). Despite Taliban efforts to limit women's education, evidence shows that there is opposition among Afghans to this action.

A survey by Asia Foundation 2021 showed that 87% believed women should have equal access to education (Rieger, 2019). Hodes' 2019 study found that Afghan women who receive an education are more supportive of gender equality and human rights. This study is necessary because it sheds light on the different views of groups, such as activists, Taliban and ordinary people. And it gives insight into Afghan society's attitudes towards women's education. Further, the researcher examines the tones of the tweets posted by three different groups of people, activists both male and female, the Taliban and ordinary Afghan people. Noteworthy, in the remaining chapters they researcher would only denote all three groups as, (activists, Taliban, and people).

The goal is to analyze the tweets and gauge their level of support for women's education. In this analysis, the study looked at the sentiment distribution across several topics connected to women's education and compute the percentage

of positive tweets from women. Descriptive data are included, as well as a chi-square test of independence and a comparison of sentiment ratings across sexes and those between activists, Taliban officials, and ordinary people. The study wraps up with a review of the most popular phrases and terms that were found in the tweets.

The study uses quantitative content analysis to analyze the tweets and test the hypothesis as well as sentiment analysis to access to the tones of each tweet related to women's education (Evans & Clark, 2015; Kitzie & Ghosh, 2016). Twitter operates as a network in which individuals rapidly disseminate and exchange thoughts, it possible for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings openly via the use of various forms of media, including text, photographs, videos, etc. (Karamouzas, Mademlis, & Pitas, 2022, p. 1).

Thus, these mediums can be utilized to track public opinion on a selected topic. Public opinion "represents the views, desires, and wants of the majority of a population concerning a certain issue, whether political, commercial, social, or other (El Barachi, AlKhatib, Mathew, & Oroumchian, 2021, p. 1)" Further, the researcher uses the Python programming language to analyze the tweets. Python programming language is quickly becoming one of the most widely used for computational science.

It is attractive for algorithm creation and exploratory data analysis because of its high-level interactive character and growing ecosystem of scientific libraries (Pedregosa, 2011, p. 2826). Also, Python is one of the most efficient and compatible programming languages for analyzing data and has thousands of

libraries, also, the researcher uses several libraries, such as Pandas and NumPy, scikit-learn, these libraries allow us to understand our data and analyze them based on the study's requirements.

A comprehensive literature analysis addresses the restriction on Afghan women regarding education, cover the historical, cultural backdrop, and the conflict, that impact on women's lives, and the role that gender and ethnicity play in determining views regarding women's educational opportunities. In the following section of the study talks related to the research problem, objective, and significant of the study. The researcher is committed to analyze the ramifications of these results and provide suggestions for further study and policy changes to advance gender equality and women's rights in Afghanistan.

Research Problem

Despite some progress made in recent years, Afghan women still remain significantly away from education with barriers that hinders them from going to school and achieving educations. Understanding and addressing these barriers is crucial for advancing women's education in Afghanistan. One aspect that deserves attention is the differing perspectives among activists, Taliban, and ordinary people regarding women's education.

Activists, both male and female, play a pivotal role in advocating for equal educational opportunities for Afghan women. They recognize the transformative power of education in empowering women, improving their socio-economic prospects, and promoting gender equality. However, it is essential to acknowledge

that male and female activists may experience and perceive these challenges differently due to societal expectations and gender roles. Exploring these nuances can provide valuable insights into the specific obstacles faced by both male and female activists and the strategies they employ to overcome them.

The goal is to pay attention on difference in the views of activists, Taliban, and ordinary people, and how gender affect male and female activist views regarding women's education. We seek to understand the complexity of social, cultural, poverty, conflict and political factors that influences the views of people regarding women's access to education with a focus on the effect of gender norms.

Research Question

The aims to investigate on the difference in perspectives of activists, Taliban and the ordinary Afghan people, and how gender affect male and female activist regarding women's education. The research question to be answered is: "What are the differing views among Activists, Taliban, and Ordinary Afghan People Regarding women's education, and how gender affects activists' views about women's education?" The study uses Twitter data to discover if there are any gender-based trends or inequalities in how people feel about lifting the restriction on women's education. It stresses the necessity of destroying oppressive systems to realize gender equality.

Data was gathered from Twitter, a widely used social media platform, and analyzed using content analysis techniques to see how people feel about the topic.

The study attempts to illuminate the complexity of gender and its role in forming attitudes regarding women's education by investigating patterns and trends on three groups, activists, Taliban, and ordinary people. The findings will help educated people and those fighting for gender equality in the classroom better understand Afghan women's obstacles and inequities while trying to get an education.

Research Objective

In recent years, scholars have paid attention to issues that affect women, including access to education, equality, participation in politics, and other aspects of life that women usually face with difficulties. There are a number of reasons behind unequal education, one of the reasons that most of the scholars quote, is that "higher education research has traditionally been framed within a masculine paradigm, often with man participants (Parson, 2020, p. 515)". Other than masculinity, conflict effects women's education, especially countries like Afghanistan, which has experienced civil and international wars for decades.

This study aims to explore how gender shapes activists views of women access to education, and to find what are the perspectives of activists, Taliban and ordinary Afghan people. The researcher dives into the views and personal experiences of individual Afghan people. Paying attention to how gender shapes their vision or ideas and influences their views on women access to educational opportunities. The study focuses on recognizing various facts that contributing to attitudes toward women's education in Afghanistan, considering culture, economic, conflict, social aspects. We believe, by examining these factors reader

can gain a deeper understanding of complexity that prevent women from education in the country.

The study will help better understand Afghan women's difficulties when accessing education. It will also examine the relationship between gender and people's views. The study promotes gender equality, improves women's education access in Afghanistan, and helps promote human rights and social justice in Afghanistan.

Significant of study

The significance of this study lies in its focus on gender as a factor in how people see women's educational opportunities in Afghanistan. Understanding the cultural and societal elements that contribute to gender imbalance in schooling can be gained through the analysis of tweets from Afghan people, and this study aims to do just that. As a result, the study will benefit the academic community by providing new insights into this pressing topic and demonstrating the value of social media as a resource for scholars in Afghanistan and beyond.

Furthermore, this study will be one of the first to extensively investigate the difference on perspectives of activists, Taliban and Afghan people regarding women's access to education through social media. By giving them a stronger voice through social media, this study will help improve conditions for female students in Afghanistan. In doing so, it will shed light on the achievements and challenges faced by Afghan women and inspire future generations of women to pursue education and careers.

The study seeks to shed light on the power of social media to advance gender equality and elevate underrepresented communities' voices. The difficulties Afghan women encounter in gaining access to education can be better understood by studying tweets from Afghans both inside and outside of Afghanistan. These results will provide the foundation for future efforts to advance gender equality in the classroom and beyond. This research acknowledges the special challenges faced by Afghan women and sets out to shine a light on such obstacles in the hopes of inspiring change. By sharing our findings, we want to encourage further discussion about how social media may help advance gender and political equality.

This study holds significant importance as it brings attention to the critical issue of women's education in Afghanistan and the concerning public opinion that tends to hinder their access to education. By employing Twitter as a data collection tool, this research will contribute to the expanding literature on the gender imbalance in education. The resulting findings are expected to inspire further investigations into the intricate relationship between gender dynamics and social media in Afghanistan and other contexts worldwide. By deepening our understanding of these dynamics, we can effectively address the challenges that women face in pursuing education and work towards creating more inclusive educational environments.

Hypothesis

1. **H1:** The Taliban's views regarding women's education will be significantly more restrictive and opposed than those of activists and ordinary Afghan people.
2. **H2:** Activists are more likely to demonstrate higher support for women's education compared to both the Taliban and ordinary Afghan people.
3. **H3:** Female activists are more likely to hold higher sentiments for supporting women's education compared to male activists.