

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**CAUSES OF FRAGILITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS
BETWEEN 2001 AND 2021**

MASTER'S THESIS

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Political Science and International Relations Department

Political Science and International Relations Program

August, 2022

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August, 2022

ONAY FORMU

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Causes of fragility of Afghan women's achievements between 2001 and 2021.”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography. (29/08/2022)

Zorah Aminpoor

FOREWORD

First, I would like to thank God for granting me this success so that I can take a step towards science and knowledge and gather information related to this research.

I would also like to thank my family for portraying the word patience in the rough path of life and teaching me that a mother can follow her dreams too.

I would like to thank the honorable professor Assist. Prof. Mehmet Turan ÇAĞLAR and his guidance, that this thesis is the result of his patience, kindness, and all his efforts in fertility and updating my information.

Finally, I would like to thank and appreciate all my dear professors who cooperated with me in my master's course, and I thank Istanbul Aydin University for providing me with a suitable educational environment.

August 2022

Zorah Aminpoor

CAUSES OF FRAGILITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS BETWEEN 2001 AND 2021

ABSTRACT

In this study, an attempt has been made to address the reasons for the fragility of the achievements of Afghan women from 2001 to 2021, which is based on a descriptive-analytical method. Addressing the socio-political activity of women in Afghanistan has been a fresh and up-to-date debate since the new political system came to power in 2001 that had attracted the attention of most political experts, researchers, and countries and organizations supporting women. However, the issues of stability and the sustainability of women's achievements were forgotten, and no special attention was paid to them. As the fragility of these achievements is clearly felt at this point in time, the present study is based on the history of women's activities, the laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on women, and the barriers to women over the past two decades. Since the women's rights debate has been an urban and Western discourse for the past two decades and bears no resemblance to Afghanistan's traditional and misogynistic culture, it cannot be claimed that the achievements of women were the product of the social struggles of Afghan women. In view of the fact that the issue of government inefficiency, oppression, misogyny, insecurity, discriminatory laws, violence, gender inequality, and women's ignorance of their demands has always been an objective and ongoing issue in Afghanistan. On the contrary, struggles and activities under the name of 'support for women' have not been a tangible and pervasive phenomenon. Thus, a brief look at Afghanistan's history shows that while progress has been very slow and volatile for women, setbacks have always been rapid and continuous throughout the history of their activities. As a result, tougher struggles over a longer period of time, the design and implementation of real projects based on Afghanistan's social structure, the weakening of gendered views, the change of discriminatory laws, the stability of security and democracy, and increasing the scientific capacity of women can bring lasting achievements to Afghan women.

Keywords: Taliban, political participation, parliament, women, Peace

2001_2021 YILLARI ARASINDA AFGAN KADINLARININ BAŞARILARININ KIRILGANLIĞININ NEDENLERİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, betimsel-analitik bir yöntemle dayalı olarak, 2001-2021 yılları arasında Afgan kadınlarının başarılarının kırılmasının nedenleri ele alınmıştır. Afganistan'daki kadınların sosyo-politik faaliyetlerine değinmek, çoğu siyasi uzmanın, araştırmacının ve kadınları destekleyen ülke ve kuruluşların dikkatini çeken yeni siyasi sistemin 2001 yılında iktidara gelmesinden bu yana yeni ve güncel bir tartışma konusu olmuştur. Fakat bu süreçte kadınların başarılarının sürdürülebilirliği ve istikrarı konuları unutulmuş ve hatta göz ardı edilmiştir. Afganistan'daki kadınların adı belirtilen süreçte başarılarının kırılma olmaları sebebiyle, bu çalışma, kadın faaliyetlerinin tarihine, Afganistan İslam Cumhuriyeti'nin kadınlara ilişkin yasalarına ve son yirmi yılda kadınların önündeki fırsat ve engellere odaklanmaktadır. Afganistan'da son yirmi yıldır kadın hakları tartışmalarının kentli ve Batılı bir tartışma olduğu ve Afganistan'ın geleneksel ve kadın karşıtı kültürü göz önüne alındığında, kadınların başarılarının Afgan kadınlarının toplumsal mücadelelerinin ürünü olduğu söylenemez. Afganistan'da hükümetlerin verimsizliği, baskı, kadın düşmanlığı, güvensizlik, ayrımcı yasalar, şiddet, cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve kadınların taleplerinin görmezden gelinmesi gibi sorunlar nesnel sürekliliğini korumaktadır. Diğer taraftan 'kadına destek' adı altında yürütülen mücadele ve faaliyetler somut ve yaygın birer olgu haline dönüşmemiştir. Dolayısıyla Afganistan tarihine bakıldığında, kadınlar için ilerlemenin çok yavaş ve istikrarsız olduğu ama gerilemelerin her zaman hızlı ve sürekli olduğu görülmektedir. Sonuç olarak, daha uzun süreye yayılmış mücadeleler, Afganistan'ın sosyal yapısına uygun gerçekçi projelerin tasarlanıp hayata geçirilmesi, cinsiyetçi görüşlerin azaltılması, ayrımcı yasaların değiştirilmesi, güvenlik ve demokrasinin istikrara kavuşturulması ve kadınların bilimsel kapasitesinin artırılması kalıcı kazanımlar sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Taliban, Siyasal Katılım, Meclis, Kadın, Barış

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIHRC	:Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
APPRO	:Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization
CEDAW	:Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DAW	:Division for the Advancement of Women
DHRWIA	:Director of Human Rights and Women’s International Affairs
EVAW	:Elimination of Violence against Women
GIRoA	:Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IDP	:Internally Displaced Persons
INSTRAW	:International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
MoF	:Minister of Finance
MoFA	:Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHRA	:Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
NAP	:National Action Plan
OSAGI	:Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
UN	:United Nations
UNAMA	:United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNIFEM	:United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR	:United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNW	:United Nations Women
USA	:United States of America
WCRI	:Women and Children Rights Research Institute

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I. INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in the social, political, economic, and cultural spheres to realize the achievements that lead to their greater presence in society, is today considered one of the most important components of the legitimacy of any political system. Women in developing societies, in addition to struggling for their basic rights, have to endure many hardships to maintain their achievements.

While half of the population of each country are women and their presence in the society causes the development of that society in all fields, in misogynistic and patriarchal countries like Afghanistan, women has always been in the minority, and most of their energy has been spent just finding a way to enter society. According to Simon, "women's duties are not limited by their nature; rather, these positions are the result of a series of outdated preconceptions, customs, and laws to which women also made contributions" (Andre, 2792: 221).

While the women's movement was formed in Afghanistan a hundred years ago, changing regimes and laws have always not only barricaded women's progress also destroyed their achievements in all areas. The history of Afghanistan testifies to the fact that Afghan women have struggled for generations to defend their rights and have faced many obstacles and challenges in achieving their ideals.

Few times and periods can be mentioned in the history of Afghanistan where women's rights have been valued and women have had the support of the government with them on the path of change and evolution. When the Taliban were in power, Afghan women's living conditions were among the worst. Between 1996 and 2001, the Taliban were denied the right to vote, education, work, and, in general, all of their basic human rights.

The new regime's constitution acknowledged equal rights for men and women in a variety of disciplines after the collapse of the Taliban administration, and women were allowed to participate in some of these fields. Despite the fact that violence against them was high, women were liberated and persecuted in various ways and they

were still able to grow in various fields. They struggled and sacrificed to overcome the instrumental understanding of participation. The presence of women in various fields of pulsation, although symbolic, made it possible for women to understand women's problems and to develop and implement plans to solve those problems.

Although women knew that could not participate in major decision-making, they often tried to be active in all areas. The study of the last two decades shows that the presence and participation of women in the fields of political and social activities, civil society institutions, and the media, the presence of girls in schools and universities have been important achievements of Afghan women, while women and women's rights activists believe that not only these achievements have not been enough, they are also very fragile. They claim that serious and fundamental work has not been done for the future and participation of women.

The present study attempts to discuss the fragility factors of the achievements of Afghan women between 2001 to 2021. While women have the support of the international community, their path to progress faces various challenges. It can be clearly claimed that the issue of women has received little attention. Mistakes have been made in implementing projects related to women, which has made women's achievements fragile.

In this study, the author has investigated the Introduction in the first chapter. In the second chapter Conceptual Framework has been examined. The third chapter, in addition to investigating Afghan Women's Political and Social Participation, has discussed Afghan Law On Women's Rights. The fourth chapter has investigated the Achievements of Afghan Women & Barriers to The Participation of Afghan Women. The fifth chapter has discussed the Causes of the Fragility of the Afghan Women's Achievements Over the Last Twenty Years. The sixth chapter includes Conclusions and Proposals.

A. Research purposes

The rise to power of the new government in Afghanistan after 9/11 has led to a rethinking of the women issue in Afghanistan. Women are now more prevalent in the political and social spheres thanks to efforts to construct a democratic system and the focus of this system on creating the conditions for boosting women's political and

social activities. Afghan women who witnessed the decline of their achievements for the umpteenth time hoped for a new system and policies and laws that were being developed for women. Addressing the activities of women in various fields after the establishment of the new political system in Afghanistan was an up-to-date discussion that attracted the attention of most political experts and researchers, although the issue of the stability and sustainability of women's achievements was forgotten again, and no special attention was paid to it.

While Afghan women have struggled for two decades to achieve their current achievements, these achievements remain fragile and are in danger of being destroyed. The author of this study decided to examine the activities of women in these twenty years. What is important in the present study is the discussion of the causes of the fragility of the achievements of Afghan women after years of effort (2001-2021). In countries where the government changes every few years, the achievements of women are the victims of civil wars, which is very disappointing for women.

The overall purpose of this study is to find the reasons for the fragility of the achievements of Afghan women over the last twenty years. The author has also planned the following sub-objectives to achieve this general goal:

- Examining the history of Afghan women's participation in various fields
- Examining the situation of women's rights in Afghanistan since 2001
- Examining the situation of Afghan women before and after the government of the Islamic Republic
- Examining the barriers to women's progress during the last two decades
- Examining the government's performance to preserve women's achievements

B. Research Questions

- **Main research question**
- What are the causes of the fragility of Afghan women's achievements between 2001 and 2021?
- **Sub-questions**
- What are the reasons for the failure of the international community to support

Afghan women?

- What are the challenges facing women in post-Taliban Afghanistan?
- What is the role of women in consolidating their position in Afghanistan?
- What is the current situation of Afghan women after twenty years?
- What is the performance of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in improving the situation of Afghan women?

C. Thesis Argument

Theses Argument has mentioned these things:

- Problems caused by decades of war and internal factors such as gender inequality, wrong traditions and customs, lack of awareness of women about their rights, the government's indifference to women's issues, and the weak performance of the international community in preserving the achievements of women have undermined their achievements.
- In some cases, projects designed to empower women did not match the traditions and culture of Afghan society. Afghanistan's patriarchal society considered these projects as unsuitable ways of life and prevented their implementation. Thus, the international community failed to implement plans to support women in Afghanistan.
- The lack of unity among Afghan women prevented them from building a strong women's movement to defend their rights and achievements. Therefore, they could not properly defend their rights and have a proper social and political position in society.
- Widespread corruption in the government, lack of international community's monitoring of government performance, lack of meritocracy in the selection of officials and employees, and unworthy leaders and politicians prevented the Afghan government from acting effectively to improve the situation of Afghan women.

D. Method and type of research

Every research leads to the creation of new ideas and every new idea is the

source of new questions that motivate people to newer evaluations and paves the way for scientific, industrial, and social developments in any society. Since research is the basis of many scientific works, there are different methods that researchers use to test the hypothesis and inference. The present study will use a qualitative method to answer the raised questions, and hypotheses to achieve the objectives of the research. As research, the causes of the fragility of the achievements of Afghan women, obstacles and problems of the law against violence against women, the role of the United Nations (UN) and other national and international institutions and organizations in defending women's rights, the government's performance in preserving the achievements of women in Afghanistan over the past two decades will be examined. The study will also evaluate reports and warnings published by the Independent Human Rights Organization, the UN, and some media about the fragility of Afghan women's achievements. To avoid the impact of emotional theories or assumptions on research, the discussion topics will be explored by considering environmental and social actions.

In addition to the main questions, supplementary questions will be widely used to obtain more details, further explanation, clarification, and resolve ambiguities. Because this study uses an unstructured method, a large amount of data will be generated, which will be classified, processed, and refined from a predefined framework. Moreover, in the qualitative research method, the methods are mainly based on historical documents and libraries. Therefore, books and articles published on Afghan women in the last twenty years will be used to gather data.

E. Research significant

The situation of women in developing countries is rarely considered. Third-world women are in a worse position than their husbands in all areas, they have less power and authority, they work harder and earn less, and their responsibilities are more. Political and social participation in the modern world is necessary and inevitable. In such a way even the most closed systems of the world feel the need for the participation of their people, albeit symbolically, in various fields, especially political and social participation. One of the most important preconditions of achieving development is the use of all human resources, especially women (Nazari, 2014).

Afghanistan is a third-world country where women have been disadvantaged for years. Women, as a highly vulnerable, isolated, oppressed, disabled, and inactive

social group, have the least cultural, social, and political rights. For this reason, all movements, developments, the production of order and disorder, and all the channels of power, wealth, and dignity have been in the control and management of men. In the last twenty years, Afghanistan has been on the path of cultural modernization and political change, and in light of that, some cultural, social, political, and economic aspects have changed. Although Afghan women have received the least intellectual and structural benefits, they have continued their efforts for social participation.

Ibrahim Yousef mentioned in his article “The position of women in the course of history and a journey in its rights” that women's political engagement is critical to societal democratization and well-being. A government's stability suffers when women are denied any form of engagement in society.

Without women participating in politics, political engagement is pointless. One aspect of democracy and a society's ability to advance and flourish is the presence of women (Azad & Haidari, 2015).

Much research has been done on the abuses of Afghan women, violence against women, and their social, political, social, and economic contributions. Most of these studies mention the challenges facing women. It is rare to find articles and research that mention women's achievements and their importance. The neglect to preserve the achievements of women caused these achievements to become weak and fragile. Wrong customs and traditions, misogyny, widespread corruption, rising violence, and suicide rates among women indicate serious problems and dangers in Afghan society. Women's activities in the social and political spheres have been more backward than ever lately. All of this proves that women's achievements, in addition to being very fragile, are collapsing.

The results of this study, focusing on the fragility of the achievements of Afghan women, inform them not to be deceived by the false plans and promises of the government and they focus on key positions. This study helps countries and organizations advocating for women's rights to pay more attention to the activities of Afghan women, and in particular to the fragility of their achievements. So that women will not be deceived by the political games of Afghan politicians and leaders once again. Women in other developing countries can also use this research as a roadmap and pay serious attention to preserving their achievements.

F. Literature Review

It is true and appropriate that women play important roles in society and are increasingly participating in politics. Women's basic place in society and their right to free thinking are indicators of the development of societies and their reason. When it comes to women in conventional definitions, the function of predetermined jobs in relation to males is quickly contrasted, and an instantaneous clear and disciplined conclusion is formed. In this way, women are forced to absorb and normalize the fact that males are in charge of politics.

However, traditional societies must understand that it is impossible to ignore the presence of women in politics and policy-making in the present age. The actions of half of society cannot be confined to science and research, or even education and learning, given the increase of women's impact in all spheres of life, particularly in the economic and political spheres. The growth of democracy in a society is ensured by the fair allocation of power between men and women in all social and political sectors. Because it is the natural right of all sections of society to participate in government decisions

Although the history of women in politics in Afghanistan dates back to the time of Amanullah Khan, the modern king of Afghanistan, it is a country that has struggled with decades of war, and girls and women have suffered the most. Forcible staying at home during the Taliban rule and the lack of permission to study pushed women back for years and isolated them. On the other hand, after the fall of the Taliban government, the education situation was improving, and women were trying to rectify lost years.

The Afghan people, particularly the ladies of the nation, have had many amazing opportunities during the past 20 years. After the presence of the international community, the holding of numerous parliamentary and presidential elections, the formation of a new political system in this country, and the drafting of a new constitution, the position and rights of women in society changed, raising hopes for a society devoid of gendered viewpoints and violence against women. Women worked very hard to alter societal perceptions and made many sacrifices along the road to break down the obstacles preventing them from participating in social and political activities.

Sanepour, Zahra, in his article "Challenges of women's political participation in Afghanistan", has referred to the issue of removing women from the public area and

limiting them to the private area. She believes that removing women from the political arena will create major problems in developing societies. However, in her article, she makes no mention of the barriers that prevent Afghan women from their activities and struggles.

Massoud, Elaha in his research “Women in Afghanistan: passive victim of the Borga or active social participants?”, compared the situation of Afghan women with the Taliban regime a few years ago. He finds the situation of women very satisfactory over the last twenty years and he is very optimistic about the future of women in the government of the Islamic Republic. He did not pay attention to reports and statistics published by the Independent Human Rights Organization and women's rights organizations on the increase in violence against women. His research does not represent the situation of all Afghan women across Afghanistan because it focuses on urban women.

Sardoei Morad has considered the issue of the “Importance of democracy in developing countries”. He considers equality and freedom as characteristics of democracy and has discussed gender equality and its importance in his research. However, he did not mention the traditional atmosphere in Afghanistan. He also did not pay attention to the issue of shaky and unreal democracy in Afghanistan, which is one of the main reasons for the violation of women's rights.

“In order for people to wake up, it is women who must wake up, when a girl moves, a family moves and after that, the village, the city, the nation will also shake” (Mahboob, 2021). Roya Mahboub, in her research “History of the Afghan Women's Movement”, pointed to more women's activities. She believes that women themselves should work to free themselves from domestic violence. She says that achieving freedom and rights is very valuable, and women should make more sacrifices in this way. Mahboub did not pay attention to unplanned struggles and efforts in her research. She also did not mention the mental and physical damage of unplanned and aimless struggles.

In her research "Study of Barriers to Women's Political Participation", Sedigheh Jafari has tried to introduce three issues of security, education, and political culture as barriers to women's participation in politics. She also placed the preservation of women's achievements on these three indicators. In this study, Jafari makes no reference to Afghanistan's traditional and religious community, which is one of the

major barriers to women's participation in various fields and hinders the preservation of their achievements.

The UN has drafted numerous conventions and resolutions over the years to protect women's rights. Afghanistan is one of the countries that has tried to defend Afghan women and their rights by drafting laws and bills. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and organizations focused on women's rights are constantly trying to make positive changes in improving the living conditions of women by monitoring the legal status of women, proposing various solutions, and submitting reports. The following are some examples of these resolutions and reports that reflect the situation of Afghan women.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by the UN General Assembly on December 18, 1979, and opened for signature, ratification, and accession. This Convention entered into force in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 27 on September 3, 1981. This convention is the most important UN treaty on gender discrimination. Giving any differentiation, exclusion, or limitation based on gender in the political, economic, social, cultural, legal, or any other sphere is considered gender discrimination, according to this agreement. An organization that monitors the appropriate application of the Convention is the Committee on CEDAW. This committee's primary responsibility is to evaluate the reports submitted by the Convention's member nations and to provide broad recommendations based on that evaluation. Following approval or accession, the report shall be provided to the Committee every four years or as soon as the Committee demands it. CEDAW, pointing out that discrimination against women contradicts the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity and inhibits women from participating in society's political, social, economic, and cultural affairs on an equal footing with men (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979). Afghanistan is one of the 187 nations that ratified CEDAW in 1980 and is obligated to submit periodical reports on the Convention's implementation to the 23 independent experts of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Afghanistan provided the Committee with three reports on the condition of Afghan women by the year 2017 (Ministry of Forging Affairs, 2018).

The Women and Children Rights Research Institute (WCRRI) conducted a

study in 2015 on women's participation in the peace process in Afghanistan. The key obstacles to women's political engagement in the peace process as well as the causes preventing this have been identified and introduced in this study. This study has also presented solutions and suggestions to governments and international institutions to solve this problem and increase women's political participation in the peace process. In addition, WCRRI 2016 prepared a guideline on the role of women in the peace process and, based on the findings of this guideline, developed specific strategies for increasing the role of women in peace. In addition to these activities, WCRRI drafted the "Afghan Women's Political Statement" on peace, security, and women's political participation, which aimed to identify and address challenges and provide solutions to this problem. The statement said that after the fall of the Taliban government, although the political participation of women in the process of governing the country was one of the priorities of the formation of the political system of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and its international partners, the Women's political participation in Afghanistan is not yet stable. Women are in the cabinet, but their views on women's rights are not taken seriously by the government. The achievements of women in the process of their political participation in relation to peace, and security are very important for the political future of women and will have a great impact. Women face three multiple problems, including discrimination, violence, and sexual harassment, and work in an environment that minimizes the possibility of their participation. WCRRI has also submitted a list of key proposals to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and its relevant agents by formulating a policy statement for Afghan women on peace, security, and political participation (Women's and Children's Rights Research Institute, 2017).

AIHRC released a report on the general situation of women in Afghanistan in 2010. This report is the result of an overview of the general situation of women conducted by the AIHRC on the occasion of March 8. According to the report, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, CEDAW, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights all include provisions protecting women's rights. These include the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and CEDAW. Therefore, the government of Afghanistan is obliged to observe and implement women's rights, which are also

mentioned in the constitution. The report on the general situation of Afghan women refers to Article 22 of the Constitution. This law prohibits any discrimination and privileges between Afghan citizens. AIHRC has expressed concern about Afghan women in this report. According to the commission, despite the fact that in recent years we have witnessed the relative achievements of women's rights, there are still many problems for women in various political, social, and cultural fields. This report also provides strategies for advancing and enhancing women's skills. Some of these solutions are mentioned below:

- Legal implementation of and amendments to laws implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- The government should make more effective efforts to implement its obligations in the national development strategy
- Ensuring the best possible security through judicial justice, poverty alleviation, disarmament, employment
- Expand cultural and awareness work
- Addressing cases of violence against women through administrative, judicial, and legal measures. (AIHRC,2010).

To ensure gender equality and empowerment of women, in July 2010 United Nations Women (UNW) began working as a subset of the UN. The move comes as part of a UN effort to combat gender discrimination. Eliminate gender discrimination against women and girls, help to increase the power of women in society, and achieve equality between men and women as partners in the development of society, human rights, peace, and security are among the most important goals of UNW. UNW has done a lot of work for women since its inception such as:

- Supporting international groups, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, to develop global policies and standards
- Assist UN member states in implementing and institutionalizing these standards, prepare for technical and financial assistance to countries requesting assistance, and establish strong community-based cooperation.
- To remind the UN system of its duty to gender equality by monitoring the

progress of the organization

It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (UNW Site,2010).

G. Barriers and limitations of research

The present study examines and analyzes an important and new topic. "Causes of the fragility of Afghan women's achievements" is an issue that has received little attention in recent years. Therefore, a lack of resources and research background is one of the barriers to the progress of this research. The collapse of the Afghan government has forced politicians, political experts, civil society activists, and women's rights activists to flee to different countries, making it difficult to access their views.

The situation in Afghanistan and women in this country is changing every day, this increases the complexity of data collection. The dangerous consequences of neglecting women's achievements have multiplied the importance of the issue. Therefore, research on women and their activities and achievements should be done despite the limitations and obstacles. Findings from such research and the identification of gaps and shortcomings that have made women's achievements fragile can be used as a roadmap for future generations and future Afghan women. The results of this study make the Afghan community, especially women, aware of the importance of preserving their achievements. Therefore, the author has tried to overcome the obstacles from the reports on reputable sites, books written about women, her own experiences as a women's rights defender, and finding ways to communicate with Afghan women's rights defenders and political experts.

H. Thesis structure

This research is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that covers Research Questions, Thesis Argument, Research Purposes, Thesis Structure, Method and Type of Research, Research Significant, Literature Review, Barriers, and Limitations of Research.

The second chapter examines the Conceptual Framework, which includes Gender Discrimination, Types of Gender Discrimination, Direct Gender Discrimination, Indirect Gender Discrimination, The Concept of Gender, and Peace and its types.

Topics discussed in the third chapter include the history of the presence of Afghan women in the political and social arena, the legal status of Afghan women during the Taliban government, the legal status of Afghan women during the GIRoA, and women's rights in Afghan law. At the end of this chapter, the issue of women's rights in special legislative documents and National Action Plan 1325(NAP1325) are also considered.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the participation and achievements of Afghan women in education, leadership, election, and judiciary & The Efforts and Struggles of Women to Achieve Their Rights. This chapter also discusses barriers and restrictions on the participation of Afghan women, including traditional beliefs, lack of social security, economic factors, and sexual accusation & Women's Struggle and Resistance Strategies to Overcome Barriers and Restrictions.

The fifth chapter, focuses on the reasons for the fragility of Afghan women's achievements which covers the improper performance of the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), and organizations focused on women, poor government performance in supporting women's rights, insecurity in Afghanistan, ignoring women in the peace process, Lack of positive peace and negative peace, and Gender discrimination. Conclusions and proposals are also discussed in the sixth chapter.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: DISCRIMINATION, GENDER, GENDER DISCRIMINATION, AND PEACE

Women's participation in governance is considered as one of the major indicators of development. Women, as a part of the human resources of any society, can play the determining role in governing the country by participating in different fields. Women are always trying to have an equal share in political participation and the rule of law. In developing countries, which are usually traditional countries, women face many problems, including discrimination, bigotry, gender inequality, traditional society, insecurity, and religious extremism. Struggling with the mentioned challenges, in addition to taking a lot of time and energy from women, also pushes their activities backward, and their achievements remain fragile. In this chapter, basic concepts such as discrimination and its types, gender and sex, and peace and its types will be described. This study examines the causes of the fragility of Afghan women's achievements by concepts that are used throughout the research.

A. Discrimination

In the dictionary, the word discrimination is interpreted as dividing and separating some things from others or giving one-person superiority over another. In fact, exceptions occur when there are social facilities in society, but all members of the society cannot use those facilities and privileges equally. To better understand the concept of discrimination, different perspectives are examined

- Discrimination from a human rights perspective;

For examining the concept of discrimination from a human rights perspective, it is interpreted as defining the creation of any distinction, restriction, and preferential action that takes place directly or indirectly. For example, the distinction may be based on race, skin colour, family background, nationality or ethnicity, religion, gender, and place of residence which is done with the intention or purpose of depriving or

restricting the enjoyment of one's rights on an equal footing with others (Alem, 2007: 213).

- Discrimination from a sociological perspective;

In sociology, discrimination is defined as the fact that in the same situations and equal roles some people are given superiority over others without the right to be superior.

- Discrimination from the perspective of power and wealth;

If the attributes, values and standards of a society cause one class to gain power and superiority over another class, this is a concept of discrimination. In today's society, they find the logical and correct solutions to most problems. Discussion of discrimination and how to deal with it remains a concern. In this regard, a series of conditions and factors in society cause unfair growth, which will be investigated in the next section. In unfair conditions, there is no equal opportunity for social mobility for all members of society. These conditions can create inequality, especially for people in training or choosing a job in the workplace. Separating the working space of men and women, pitying one group of society over another, and considering one group superior to another group are among the things that cause the growth of discrimination in a society (Ashori, 1979: 89). Some types of discrimination are mentioned below:

- Industrialism
- Disability
- Recruitment
- Linguistic differences
- Citizenship and nationality
- Racism
- Area
- Religious discrimination
- Gender discrimination
- Elitism

In any type of discrimination, one group benefits more than the other, and it is

always a minority group that is treated unfairly. Some types of discrimination, such as gender discrimination, are more common than other types of discrimination in a society, which causes many problems and inequalities in a society (Hadrian, 2021: 41).

B. Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination means that there is no equality between men and women in having rights and using every opportunity in a society. Gender inequality deprives women as half of the population of opportunities and allocates undesirable resources (Houra, 2015:19). One of the dimensions of gender discrimination is discrimination in learning, so education is an important factor affecting employment, the well-being of individuals, and the health of society. Gender discrimination and sexism mean any kind of prejudice or discrimination based on a person's gender. The reflection of this issue is the negative discrimination against human beings based on their real or imaginary gender identity (Jafari, 2016: 27-32).

This concept also gives the meaning of hatred. The hatred of one section of society for another section of society. In gender discrimination, special importance is given to humiliating women. Any type of tool, whether tangible or non-touchable, is used to humiliate the female class in a society. A tool such as a stick or a whip is usually a tool used for beating and anti-feminist laws in a society are considered an intangible tool to humiliate women. Gender discrimination has a very old history and this type of discrimination cannot be attributed absolutely to traditional or modern society. This kind of discrimination is observed in every society (traditional and modern). Maybe in modern societies beating women is less, but behavioral discrimination can be easily seen in the environment outside the home and the workplace.

1. Direct gender discrimination

Direct sexism is usually visible. All types of physical violence can be called direct gender discrimination. In direct gender discrimination, one group has more rights and privileges. For example, in some countries girls are not allowed to go to school and this right is only for boys. Direct gender discrimination is more prevalent in developing countries. developing countries are usually traditional countries with old culture. In these countries, women are treated like goods and even women and girls

are bought and sold like goods. Examples of direct gender discrimination include:

- Women are not allowed to leave the house without the permission of male family members (husband, brother, father, father-in-law, and brother-in-law).
- The right to divorce is given only to men.
- A nightclub charges more for men because of their gender.
- Advertising a job for a "waitress". This makes this job accepted only for men (Jafari, 2016:42)

2. Indirect gender discrimination

Indirect gender discrimination is a law, policy, or practice that a person of a particular gender is less likely to achieve, and that puts the opposite sex at a disadvantage. For example, indirect discrimination occurs when there is no female employee on the board of directors of an organization where important and fundamental decisions are made. And keep female employees away from the organization's issues due to their inability to give input in major decisions. In indirect gender discrimination, violence, extremism and misogyny are not seen openly. In most cases, indirect gender discrimination can be seen in the laws of organizations, but this type of discrimination invisibly hinders women's progress. In all organizations and offices, the working hours of women and men are equal. While women always have the responsibility of taking care of children and housework, and they have to carry out other duties besides working outside the home. This causes women to avoid working outside the home by their own will and decision to avoid family violence. These types of loans are usually given to those who have full-time jobs, while women often have part-time jobs. In some countries, two female witnesses are equal to one male witness in court. This means that if two witnesses are needed to prove a case, the testimony of each woman is equal to half of the testimony of a man. Indirect discrimination exists even in courts that enforce the law. (Farhadi, 2001: 36)

C. The concept of gender

All human beings (both men and women) have lived on this earth for a long time and at the same time, they need to have a social life and live in a collective way. They also need to respect their self-esteem in the community and respect the self-

esteem of others and for this purpose, they have the right to develop their personality, play a role in appropriate cases related to themselves and the community, make better decisions, and contribute to the development of their community. Some of the gender concepts can be expressed as follows:

- Gender is nothing but the do's and don'ts of a society. Duties that each man and woman should perform in a society. The members of the society determine what principles a man should follow and what principles a woman should follow
- The rules are set for gender by society are the same limitations that society sets for women and men, and most of the time, everyone is dissatisfied with these imposed limitations.
- In fact, it is the society that determines the boundaries of gender. Based on the culture, tradition and religion prevailing among people, the society determines what rules each of them (men and women) should follow. Therefore, gender is not a specified thing. It has a different meaning in each society Gender relates to the way society and men value the social values of women and men through the way they act and think.
- Gender is a social issue and defines the responsibility of both of them (men and women) separately in society, that is, gender roles and relationships are not innate and therefore subject to change.
- Gender is rooted in our knowledge, which is based on the beliefs of our culture, customs, and traditions.
- Gender analysis shows that the daily lives of men and women are regulated in different ways (Jafari, 2016:45).

1. Recognize the word gender

According to the dictionary, the word gender is a metaphorical word that is metaphorically derived from the Arabic word (fetus) and is used in English as a common name. The fetus says that the baby is in the mother's womb. The science of the fetus is the science that discusses the quality of the baby in the mother's womb. This science has proven that it is such a stage that its male and female are not known. Therefore, the word gender is a word that refers to both males and females (Tareq

Kombal, 2000: 20).

2. Historical perspective of the word gender

According to the history of the word gender, this word was also used in the fifteenth century as a meaningful word that probably expressed a lexical meaning in the form of a metaphorical word meaning a common name. However, even in the eighteenth century, when English emerged as an advanced language, meaningful words probably suffered a lot at that time. At that time, linguists gave the word gender a broad meaning and borrowed many words from other languages. The most influential languages are English, German, French, Latin, and Arabic.

D. Peace

Peace is the compromise and agreement to do something such as the acquisition of an object or a benefit or the abolition of a religion or a right or a condition that has not already occurred in a conflict. The peace that is made in return is called exchange peace and peace without exchange is called irreplaceable peace (Tahrir al-Wasila, 2018: 561). Peace literally means reconciliation, compromise, and renunciation of war in terms of bringing peace to your environment and your people. This means that peace is the result of peace of mind based on stability and a positive response to the challenges of life, which will accompany us with the trends and challenges of the environment with the satisfaction of the people. Peace in the anti-war sense is such that war creates instances of resentment, enmity, conspiracy, revenge, frustration, and instability. However, the problem is that each of these cases alone can take peace from the children of man. If peace is only interpreted as anti-war, then in reality it is only focused on issues such as the absence of enmity, bloodshed, and insecurity. In fact, peace has a more comprehensive meaning. If a society is stained with issues such as gender inequality, poverty, lack of justice, illiteracy, religious and racial discrimination, and ethnocentrism, then that society is far from a peaceful atmosphere. In fact, the existence of any of these cases can endanger peace in a society (Islamic Society of Kabul Council, 2019). Peace is a concept of social friendship and empathy and kindness in the absence of hostility and savagery. In this sense, peace is calm, carefree, and free from anxiety, conflict, and strife. (The Peace Studies Program at Cornell, 2019).

According to Baruch Spinoza, peace does not mean the absence of war, but a virtue that draws from the force of life, and just as freedom is not just about not being imprisoned, peace is not about the lack of war, the concept of peace should not be confused with fire. A ceasefire is a situation in which the parties to a conflict cease to fight unilaterally or bilaterally under certain conditions. Peace means ending the conflict and ending the war. To return to the state of war, a declaration of war is required from one of the parties. Achieving peace in war is generally possible in two ways. Fighting and forcing the defeated side to accept its peace is one of the ways to achieve peace, which is known as Roman peace. In this situation, the victorious side or a set of neutral powers sets conditions as conditions of peace, which are usually in favour of the victorious side. Another way is to achieve peace with the help of political negotiators or peace activists. The universal ideal of peace lovers is to maintain peace in the world, but in reality, there have always been wars and conflicts, and what the peace lovers of the world are looking for is to leave the conflicts and make peace in these conflicts.

1. Negative peace

“Negative peace is a situation in which there is no direct violence. Positive peace is a situation in which, in addition to negative peace, we also see a lack of structural violence” said Johann Galtung (Mosavi, 2020: 22). Negative peace, according to Galtung, is a situation in which there is apparently neither war nor real peace. Negative peace is a kind of truce and violence is not evident in it. In positive peace, there is a permanent peace in the society, and this peace makes a society progress economically.

Although negative peace will not bring a country to stability and security like positive peace, but this type of peace is also very important. In negative peace, efforts are made to convince both parties to find the root of the problem, to stop fighting so that people do not become victims of war. In this type of peace, there is an attempt to control violence, religious extremism and any issue that destroys peace. (Mosavi, 2020: 22).

2. Positive peace

According to Johann Galtung, positive peace includes negative peace and emphasizes the provision of conditions such as solidarity, justice, equality, and

relationship formation. In a positive peace, the grounds and excuses for the emergence of violence and conflict have disappeared. In fact, positive peace is established in a society when there is no structural violence and no armed conflict in that society. This means that the position of positive peace is much higher than the position of negative peace, without wanting to diminish the value and importance of establishing a negative peace (Mosavi, 2020: 24).

Positive peace is a kind of lasting peace. In this type of peace, people trust the government. It means that there is actually a good relationship between the people and the government. In positive peace there is real rule of people over people. Positive peace in a country strengthens its border and political relations with other neighboring countries. First world countries seek to achieve positive peace indicators, but it cannot be claimed that developing countries can achieve positive peace. To solve the problems of developing countries, negative peace is a good solution. Because in countries where there is positive peace, the roots of war, bloodshed, all kinds of discrimination, and injustice have been completely resolved (Mosavi, 2020: 24).

3. Democratic peace

"A combination of physical, social, and institutional activities and measures that avoid conflict and resolve its causes via the modernization and reconstruction of post-conflict systems," as defined by Kant, is peacebuilding (Michael Doyle's work "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, 1983).

Democratic peace is described as the adoption of legal-institutional, economic-social, and local actions with the aim of eradicating the causes of conflict. Reconstruction is the process of rebuilding physical structures that were obliterated during a conflict. However, rather than being restored, political, legal, social, and cultural institutions that in the past served as tools of oppression, division, and prejudice must be entirely or partially reconstructed (Michael Doyle, 1983).

4. The purpose of the peace process

Maintaining the current situation is one of the goals of the peace process. In the sustainable peace process, the people of a society play a significant role. In order to achieve lasting peace, first of all, there must be internal peace in a country, peace between the people and the ruling government, peace between different religions in a

society, and peace between different ethnic groups in a society. The peace process is a very long process that begins with internal peace in a society and a country to reach border peace. Border peace is a peace in which a country lives in peace with its border neighbors. One of the goals of the peace process is border peace that brings a country to a high economic and political level.

The history of nations that have successfully survived civil wars, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Cambodia, and Bosnia, demonstrates that just achieving physical security and a ceasefire does not instantly put an end to murder, carnage, insecurity, and other types of violence. Civil wars can pose significant obstacles to returning to regular life since they have resulted in societal conflicts over property rights, such as those involving land and other types of property. Therefore, individuals tasked with rebuilding and modernizing their country must continually concentrate on resolving the physical, psychological, and emotional issues brought on by civil conflict.

The start of negotiations and the provision of a ceasefire between the parties involved constitute the technical issue of the peace operation. In other words, peacebuilding in war-torn societies begins when war is brought to a point where normal social activities are resumed, and community reconstruction is possible. Reducing war and violence increases political and social stability. Therefore, controlling war and violence at the neighbourhood level and between individuals and groups is the first condition for establishing constructive relationships in society. Changing the hostile relations of the former groups and creating an atmosphere of trust and belief between them will preserve the ceasefire agreement and other agreements since it creates a better and clearer atmosphere for constructive cooperation and the end of disputes.

Therefore, whenever developing peace in-depth, it should not limit the process to merely implementing the ceasefire, taking care of it, separating the opposing forces, which scientists call 'negative peace', and it should also implement practical reforms to change the unjust socio-economic relations that dominate society, which is fueled by war. In other words, peace is a long process that goes beyond the narrow range of turning off guns. Therefore, the elimination of those former social, political, economic, and ethnic injustices that were the cause of the war should be considered a long-term strategy in the peacebuilding process. Although it is difficult to bring the various

aspects of the conflict to the negotiating table and assist them in drafting a labor agreement, it is more difficult to make them adhere to respect the agreement.

5. Justice and Peace

If peace is separated from social justice, cannot be eliminated the structural factors of war. The existence of social inequalities that characterize all poor countries poses a fundamental challenge to post-war reconstruction and modernization . Disputed issues will remain unresolved when legal procedures do not lead to a balanced division of power between groups and social classes. It is only in this way that the capacities of the people are developed through participation in social structures and political processes together with marginalized social groups. Sustainable peace will be ensured if local, regional, governmental, and international justice systems are established. The existence of justice makes it possible for people to express their needs and concerns properly (Mosavi, 2020: 31-42).

III. AFGHAN WOMEN'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION & AFGHAN LAW ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

It is better to refer to history to understand the facts and realities of society. The history of a country's civilization and the facts and experiences hidden in it measure the observance of right in the past and present and determine the boundaries of right and wrong. This research will conclude that women's rights in the context of human history have an imbalanced stance and are full of discrimination and prejudice by studying history and deeply examining the topic of women. Women have suffered a lot in most societies over the centuries, which has been painful.

A. History of Political and Social Participation of Afghan Women

Studying the situation of Afghan women shows that the social and political life situation of Afghan women has always been changing. In some governments, their situation has been improving and with achievements, and in some other governments, Afghan women have been in a completely hopeless situation. In the past, in most countries and societies, especially in the legal system of developing countries such as Afghanistan, women did not enjoy good rights and social status, and society's view of women was like objects, they were considered lowly and weak creatures, and no one paid attention to their rights and freedoms. It should not be overlooked that in the face of years of struggle by Afghan women, they have not fully enjoyed their rights in any system or regime. However, Afghanistan has seen governments and rulers who, in addition to destroying women's achievements, have pushed them back for years.

The women's movement, which began in Afghanistan a hundred years ago, has gone through many ups and downs at various stages. One regime in Afghanistan has paved the way for women on this tortuous journey, and another has blocked the way for women to progress. Shah Amanullah's¹ travels to Europe with his wife, Queen

¹ Shah Amanullah Khan (Ghazi Amanullah Khan), (1 June 1892 - 25 April 1960) was the third son of Habibaullah Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan. Shah Amanullah Khan's social reforms in 1923 led to a

Soraya², made him more determined to advance and realize the rights and freedoms of women. The Queen who was influenced by the intellectual and justice-seeking ideas of her father, Mahmoud Tarzi, accompanied the Shah to form the women's movement in Afghanistan as acting Minister of Culture at the time. She opened the first women's school and the hospital called "Masturat" in 1921 and 1923 in Kabul. The queen attended the Loya Jirga³ in Paghman (A small city in Afghanistan), raising the age of marriage for girls to eighteen and banning multiple marriages and marriages between Afghan military and administrative agents and foreign women. She also sent some girls to study in Turkey. She created Ershad Al-Noswan, the first print publication, Awareness for Women, under the direction of her mother, Asma Rasmiyeh, in 1921. The original copies of the guidelines are kept in the National Archives of Afghanistan (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 67).

With the fall of Amanullah's monarchy and the rise to power of Habibaullah Khan Kalkani,⁴ these freedoms came to a standstill. Habibaullah Khan Kalkani, who ruled for nine months, issued a decree against the freedoms of men and women. There is a copy of this decree in the National Archives of Afghanistan in which men were ordered to wear turbans⁵, and local clothes and not to shave their beards. For women, it is written: "I revoked the decree of the previous king, forbade women and girls to leave their homes without the permission of their parents and husbands, and stopped the school of Masturat (Rasooli, Sima, 2015). Historians say that when Nader Shah⁶

backlash from traditional and conservative elements, and in 1929 he was ousted from the monarchy after a civil war.

² Suraya Tarzi or Queen Soraya (1899 - 1968) was the wife of Amanullah Shah, King of Afghanistan and Queen of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1929. She was for a time the Minister of Culture of Afghanistan. Amanullah was also active.

³ Loya Jirga or Grand Jirga or National Jirga means "Great Gathering of Afghan Tribal Leaders". The Loya Jirga is the largest assembly of elders and ethnic and social figures of Afghanistan and is formed in times of crisis in Afghanistan. In most cases, the members can be both elected and appointed by the king or the president.

⁴ Amir Habibullah Kalkani or Bacha Saqqa (1829-1929) was the king of Afghanistan and the leader of the Saqqawi movement. In 1929, he rebelled against Amanullah Khan's government and overthrew Amanullah Khan for nine months, taking power in Afghanistan and founding the Emirate of Afghanistan.

⁵ Turban is a type of headband with different styles among the people of West Asia and North Africa and South Asia. The people of Afghanistan consider wearing a turban as a sign of adulthood and being a Muslim.

⁶ Nader Shah Afshar (November 22, 1688 - died June 20, 1747), is the founder of the Afshar dynasty and one of the kings of post-Islamic Iran. The suppression of Afghan insurgents and the expulsion of the Ottomans and Russia from the country and the restoration of Iran's independence, as well as the conquest of Delhi and Turkestan and his victorious wars, made him very famous.

came to power in 1929, the situation of women did not improve. "Nader Shah was very conservative about women. He made the veil mandatory and did not do anything positive for women during the four years of his reign," said Abdul Hamid Mobarez (Afghan writer and journalist, 1919-1929), (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 64).

With the coming to power of Mohammad Zahir Shah in 1933, the women's movement was revived. "In my time, women regained the same status, and I confirmed their position in the constitution," he said. (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 71). The first girls' elementary school, 'Esmat', was located on Andarabi Road in Kabul in 1934 with the most foreign teachers, and students learned English, French, and German from the first grade, among other subjects. A few years later, this school was divided into two parts due to the improvement of the educational level and the increase of students, so 'Malalai' and 'Zarghoneh' high schools were established. A special women's hospital called 'Masturat' was established instead of the current Maiwand Hospital, where were established a midwifery training center and later a midwifery school and a dental training center. In the following years, more girls' schools were built and activated in Kabul and other provinces. Schools of science and literature were also built for graduates, separate from men, at the Malalai School (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 80).

"The Ministry of Education was trying to make us study better and become teachers after graduation until we replace the foreign teachers who received high salaries (dollar salaries) from the Afghan government," said Salehe Yousefi, a graduate of the faculty of Science at the time (Shams Press, 2017). A number of those who graduated from these colleges later achieved high government positions among them, Kobra Noorzai became the Minister of Health of Afghanistan in 1968. Shafiqia Ziaee was hired in 1971 as an education consultant. Women had the opportunity to show their talents Ms. Parvin (the first Afghan female singer on Radio Afghanistan) was one of the first women who sang on Radio Afghanistan. "I thought how long we should be in the corner like this. I told myself, I would do something. I came to the radio and sang and opened the way for other women singers. After me, Rakhshaneh, Jila, Mahvash, and Parasto (The first Afghan female singers) came, and women's singing became normal and accepted." Ms. Parvin said this a year before her death (Mousavi, Fakhreh, 2017). 'Mirman' magazine was also founded in 1952 under the

leadership of Nafiseh Shayek Mobarez with educational materials and women were hired as radio announcers. It was in 1943 that the Higher Women's Institute was established, where were build kindergartens, schools, cinemas, and other offices. In this institute, adult or married women studied and learned literacy, and in addition, they sold their handicrafts and earned money. Salehe Yousefi, who was the director of the institute's mystical department at the time, says that "educational films were shown in cinemas to raise women's awareness "(Mousavi, Fakhreh, 2017).

As more women graduated from schools and colleges, they found employment in other sectors, including the military, police, healthcare, and the judiciary. At that time, women worked and studied wearing veils (burqas⁷). Prime Minister Mohammad Daud⁸ in 1959 announced that women could remove their veils on the occasion of Independence Day. This time, it was the members of the Shah's family and the Prime Minister who became a pioneer. Abdul Hamid Mobarez, an Afghan journalist, said: "On the occasion of Afghanistan's Independence Day, a football match was held between teams from Asian countries at Ghazi Stadium in Kabul. I was also among the judges .When the match was over, we went to the Royal Lodge to introduce the team members to the King. We saw a woman without a veil come out of the lodge; There was no such thing. The woman was wearing only a small handkerchief, a coat, and socks. They said she was the wife of Prime Minister" (Rasooli, Sima, 2015). Their action was welcomed by the generals and some of the governors, and the number of women without veils and headscarves increased, and this was passed on to the lower classes of society. Women and girls of senior government officials worked in casual and ordinary clothes and appearances. Every year, Queen⁹ chooses the woman who gave the best children to the community as the mother of the year and rewarded her. The Voluntary Women Charity Association was established to assist sick and poor women. The Child and Mother Support Institute was established, and the Association

⁷ A burqa or burka, also known as a chadaree in Afghanistan or a paranja in Central Asia, is an enveloping outer garment which covers the body and the face that is worn by women in some Islamic traditions.

⁸ Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan (born 27 May 1288 in Kabul, known as Daud Khan) was the first president of the country from 1973 to 1978

⁹ Queen Homeira was born in 1918. She was the wife of Mohammad Zahir Shah. He accompanied Zahir Shah on many foreign trips, including to the United States. Ms. Homeira was active in the social and educational spheres in Afghanistan and was one of the leaders of the De Mirmano Tulne (Women) organization, a women's rights organization.

for Combating Illiteracy and Literacy Schools was established in all government offices as well as in most neighbourhoods. Political activities were made possible for women, and women entered the House of Representatives as representatives of the people, it should be noted that two women, Homeira Seljuki and Azizeh Gardizi, were appointed as senators at the same time. The Afghan Women's Democratic Organization was founded by a number of women in 1966 to advocate for women's rights, and thousands of women were attracted to this organization. "Although I am a doctor, I thought that medicine alone could not change people's lives, so I turned to politics and wanted to improve the lives of Afghan women and people," said Anahita Ratbzad (The first Afghan policewoman), the organization's founder (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012:110).

Extremist groups also took advantage of these freedoms, sometimes attacking women who wore more open clothes in universities and on the streets with acid, however, they were stopped and some of them were arrested and imprisoned. With the fall of the monarchy and the establishment of the first republic by Mohammad Daud in 1973, the women's movement continued as normal, instead political activity was halted and members of the Women's Democratic Organization were forced to operate secretly. In 1978, the country's system changed, and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was first led by Noor Mohammad Taraki (Chairman of the Revolutionary Council) and later by Hafizullah Amin¹⁰. The government declared the rights of men and women equal by decree number seven. Early in the party's rule, singing and sometimes dancing groups were formed in schools. At the same time as Babrak Karmal (President of Afghanistan in the 1980s) came to power, Russian forces entered Afghanistan, and this, in addition to provoking popular discontent, led to demonstrations in girls' and boys' schools and universities. Anahita Ratbozad, the then Minister of Social Affairs, fought against polygamy and expelled men who married second wives from the party and published news and reports about them in the newspaper column (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 125).

During Dr. Najibullah's Mohammad Najibullah Ahmadzai (1947 – 1996, fifth President of Afghanistan) rule, a military unit of women was formed within the

¹⁰ Hafizullah Amin (born: 10 August 1979 - died: 6 December 1979) was an Afghan politician, the third President of Afghanistan and the Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

Women's Institute, mostly to encourage soldiers to go to war. However, its formation was not even supported by supporters of the government and members of the ruling party. In order to attract more women to work, kindergartens were built in every office and every place, and women were employed in various fields, and some of them were even hired to drive city electric buses. Child and mother support institutions and family guidance were once again in focus, and all party leaders attended the festivities with their daughters and wives. A number of women became members of parliament, and a large number of women became heads of departments. Women were more present in the community at that time than ever before, and the issue of all attention at the time was the wives of senior government officials, who worked as heads of the orphanage, heads of kindergartens, and teachers and school principals. After 1992, when the Mojahedin¹¹ came to power, many of these developments were destroyed. At the time of Burhanuddin (Burhanauddin Rabbani (1940 - 2011) was 10th President of Afghanistan), a decree was issued imposing restrictions on women working and studying together with men. The demolition of a number of educational institutions caused a number of girls and women to be deprived of education and work. The jihadi leaders¹² did not have a goal or plan to save women and improve the situation of women, and they did not want to emerge in the political and national arenas. At that time, women were on the margin and could only work as teachers, doctors, nurses, and other jobs that were far from political and important issues (Ghobar, Mir Gholam Mahammad, 2012: 180).

B. The situation of Afghan women during the Taliban government

Taliban were known for misogyny and violence against women, during their rule in Afghanistan. Their stated motivation was to create a "safe environment in which the chastity and dignity of women are sacred." (Brown, L. Carl 1999) .In 1998, women were denied access to public hospitals. This not only negatively affected the health of women in this country, but also led to an increase in the infant mortality rate (US

¹¹ The Afghan Mujahideen, refers to various insurgent and Islamist groups that fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan war and later during Afghanistan's first civil war.

¹² Jihadi is an abbreviation of the word Mojahedin and the leader of this group was called the leader of Jihadi

department of state, 2001).

The Taliban, in all their strict and misogynistic laws, claimed that the previous laws were a violation of Islamic law. The living circumstances of Afghan women under the Taliban era were among the worst in the world, according to human rights organizations. The Taliban denied women the opportunity to study and work from 1996 until 2001. The Taliban made it illegal for women to enroll in public schools in 1997. Small educational institutions for girls were therefore covertly established by people in homes. After the age of nine, girls were no longer permitted to attend these schools, and the Taliban restricted the curriculum for children less than this age to the Quran. As a result, the literacy rate in Afghanistan decreased to 3–4% in rural regions and 13% in urban areas. 165 out of every 1,000 infants under one year old died at the period, according to data. (Report on the Taliban's War Against Women, 2001, US department of state).

The Taliban outlawed women working in public settings in 1997. Women's employment ban negatively affects the lives of Afghan women, especially those with education or heads of households. The firing of female teachers had detrimental effects on the nation's educational system as well, resulting in a staffing deficit. The Taliban encouraged families to marry their daughters early. Amnesty International estimates that during the Taliban regime, 80% of marriages were forced. Women had to wear a burqa and adhere to an extremely tight hijab requirement that the Taliban had established. Additionally, they were not able to cross the street without the consent of their spouse, father, husband, brother, or son (Women's Rights in the Taliban and Post-Taliban Eras, PBS, 2007).

C. The situation of women after the fall of the Taliban Government

After the fall of the Taliban government, schools reopened and the right to education for Afghan women and girls was recognized in the new constitution. "In order to balance and advance women's education, as well as to enhance tribal education and end illiteracy in the nation, the government is required to put into place effective initiatives" (Article 44 of the Constitution of Afghanistan). Women were also allowed to candidate for high political office.

The new constitution of Afghanistan, which upholds the idea of gender

equality, has played a significant role in enhancing women's work opportunities since 2001. In 2001, the transitional government allocated \$ 10 million to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to strengthen the status of women in society. The ministry's main effort was to create jobs for women. The situation of women has improved since the reign of the Taliban. 33% of instructors are women, and there are women in parliament. 240 women serve as judges. Ten female deputy ministers, two elected ambassadors, and two women make up the government (The living conditions of Afghan women after 2001, Pajhwok Afghan News Agency, 2017).

After the Taliban were overthrown, women were granted the ability to vote and run for office in line with the nation's constitution. Thus, the constitution and the election law stipulate that at least two women candidates from each province must run for parliament. Thus, at least 68 women from 34 provinces of Afghanistan can run for the House of Representatives (A brief look at the current situation of women in Afghanistan, MoWA, 2017).

In the sphere of health, Article 52 of the 2003 Afghan Constitution identifies health care for the general people as one of the new government's goals. According to this law, GIRoA must provide free facilities to prevent and treat diseases to all citizens. Thus, it can be seen that the gender perspective in the constitution on the issue of health care has been completely eliminated, and women can easily access hospitals and treatment centers (Human Rights Watch, 2017)

D. Women's rights in the Afghan Constitution, Legislative Documents and National Action Plan 1325 (NAP 1325)

In recent years, special attention has been paid by GIRoA to establishing order in society in various fields. During the last twenty years, GIRoA has taken fundamental steps in order to realize rights and justice. For example, in order to support the 'Family Foundation' in general and to ensure 'women's rights' in particular, good measures have been taken in the field of legislation. Women are given special attention in all laws and legislative protections. NAP 1325 is most focused on improving the situation of women in Afghanistan. The development and adoption of such laws and plans will increase the growth and advancement of women.

1. Women's Rights in the Constitution of Afghanistan

Afghanistan, after 2001, was a new stage in securing women's rights, especially in the legal field. The new Afghan Constitution¹³, which was drafted in the last two decades, fundamentally recognizes the rights of women and gives equal status to men in human dignity and human rights. Compared to the previous Afghan Constitutions, the current constitution considers the fields of women's civil rights to be equal to men.

Despite the rights of women; As a human being and a citizen, it is equally reflected in all articles of the constitution, but at the same time, women as a vulnerable group and in need of special support, have received more special attention. In general, about 24 articles of the 2003 constitution, relates to women and the family. In other words, women in these articles have been given special attention by the legislator and are protected by the constitution. Articles 6, 24, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 42, 48, 49, 50, 52, 62, 72, 85, 118 of the Constitution, in addition to men, also include women (Afghan Constitution,2003).

The most important issues and topics in the mentioned materials are:

- The obligation of the government to create a prosperous and progressive society based on social justice, preserving human dignity
- Human rights protection
- Realization of democracy
- Ensuring national unity
- Equality between all ethnicities and tribes and balanced development in all regions of the country
- Right to liberty
- Protection of human freedom and dignity from aggression
- Right to choose and be elected
- Immunity from freedom of expression

¹³ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was the highest legal document in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This law has 12 chapters and 162 articles.

- The right to freedom of thought and expression
- The right to assembly and demonstration
- The right to freedom of travel and accommodation

The study of the Constitution shows that the rights of women as human beings and citizens of Afghanistan are mentioned equally in all its articles. In other words, words that have a general meaning and include both genders have been used to ensure the human rights of Afghan citizens.

The following is a brief look at Equal rights in the constitution:

- **Equality and non-discrimination**

It is not permitted to grant Afghan citizens any sort of privileges or discrimination. Afghan citizens' rights and obligations are equal in front of the law for both genders (Afghan Constitution, Article 22).

- **The right to special protection**

The government takes the necessary measures to ensure the physical and mental health of the family, in particular children and mothers, to raise children and to eliminate customs contrary to the rules of the holy religion of Islam (Afghan Constitution, Article 54).

- **The right to education**

In order to balance and advance women's education, the government is required to create and administer successful initiatives (Afghan Constitution, Article 44).

- **Citizenship**

Every individual in Afghanistan is known as an Afghan. No citizen of the country may be denied Afghan citizenship (Afghan Constitution, Article 4).

- **The right to work and employment**

Every Afghan has a legal right to work, and laws are in place to govern other associated issues like as paid leave, labor, and labor rights (Afghan Constitution, Article 48).

- **Right to health**

Just like men, women have the right to take advantage of all the nation's

advantages and health services in an equitable way. According to the legislation, the government offers free medical services and facilities to all residents (Afghan Constitution, Article 52).

- **Political-administrative rights**

In accordance with the average population of each province, the election legislation shall include provisions to guarantee that the electoral system allows for general and equitable representation for all citizens, and at least two women legislators should serve in the House of Representatives (Afghan Constitution, Article 83). The president nominates 50% of the members of the Meshrano Jirga¹⁴ (Upper House) from among women (Afghan Constitution, Article 84).

2. Women's Rights in Special Legislative Documents

Due to their vulnerability and special status, in addition to the Afghan constitution, some other laws are specifically dedicated to women and their issues. In this regard, the following legislative documents can be named:

a. The Elimination of Violence against Women Law (EVAW)

In developing countries, efforts have always been made to support the poor and victims of violence in various ways so that they too can access their basic rights. In traditional countries such as Afghanistan, which has a very long history of violence against women, efforts have been made to defend women against violence by enacting a law called EVAW law.

EVAW law was approved in 4 Chapters and 44 Articles on 10/5/2009 .This law was developed in order to achieve the following goals :(EVAW law, First season).

- Protecting women's human dignity and their legal and religious freedoms
- Preserving the wellbeing of the family and combating practices that violate the laws of the revered faith of Islam and result in abuse against women
- Supporting a woman exposed to violence or a victimized woman

¹⁴ The Sena, or Meshrano Jirga, is the upper house of the Afghan National Assembly. Afghanistan's legislature consists of two chambers, the lower house and the upper house, equivalent to the Senate. The Meshrano Jirga is derived from the word meaning "council of elders."

- Protecting women from abuse
- Providing public awareness and education about violence against women
- Prosecution of the perpetrator of the crime of violence against women

EVAW is perhaps one of the glorious and prominent legislative events that has risen up against the violation of women's rights as the most important social group in the country, where rape and murder are considered an accepted historical and cultural phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the creation of a law prohibiting violence against women in the country, which has major distortions such as social inadequacies, lawlessness, low culture, ignorance and illiteracy, religious challenges, etc., is one of its main indicators, and is a great national achievement. The law has helped Afghan women go to the judiciary to defend their rights in the face of any violence. Figure 1 shows how many complaints of violence against women have been brought to courts and have been processed through the law in recent years.

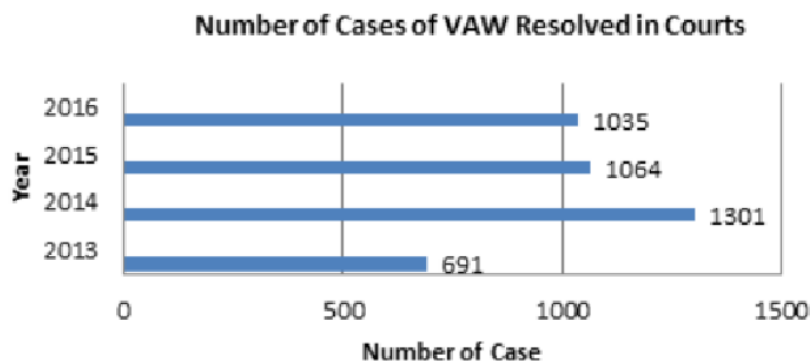


Figure 1 Number of court-resolved instances involving violence against women

Source: “The third periodic report of GIRoA to CEDAW”, United Nations, Kabul, 2018.

b. Law of Prohibiting Harassment of Women and Children

Adoption of the Law of Prohibiting Harassment of Women and Children is one of the major achievements of women, civil society, and the Afghan National Assembly. As sexual harassment has become a social's obscene custom and immoral norm, the passage of this law is effective in reducing harassment of women and children. According to statistics, about 93% of women and girls in neighborhoods and public places, 87% in the workplace, and 89% in the educational environment have been abused and sexually harassed. Sexual harassment includes asking for sexual

pleasure, using obscene words, or physical contact that is sexually motivated and causes fear and discomfort to women and children. Lustful gaze, shouting, chasing, online/telephone harassment, touching the body, threats, bribery, promising to be hired or promoted, gang assault, and rape are some of the most common examples of sexual harassment. In fact, women and children have experienced at least one of them in their daily lives. Research shows that women and children are not safe anywhere, even at home. They have been sexually harassed by relatives such as fathers, brothers, husbands, uncles, etc. PWH Law on the Prevention of Harassment of Women and Children was published on 9/29/2017, which has 29 articles and three chapters (Fakoor, Journal of Information of the Day, 2016).

c. Regulation of Women's Support Centers

The Regulation of Women's Support Centers was published on 6/20/2011. This regulation has been adjusted to achieve the following objectives: (Regulation of Women's Support Centers, Chapter One, 2011).

- Access of a woman victim of violence to a safe place,
- Provide physical and psychological support to women victims of violence,
- Provide physical and psychological support to the victim of violence,
- Ensuring the safety of women victims of violence,
- Providing access to justice for women victims of violence,
- Coherence of activities of governmental and non-governmental support centers,
- Livelihoods of supported women in support centers,
- Restoring the mental health of victims of violence,
- Providing livelihood self-sufficiency for women victims of violence,

This regulation has been regulated, approved, and signed in 33 articles and five chapters.

d. Family law

Undoubtedly, among all social organizations and institutions, the family is the main and most important institution and has a special role and importance. The Family

Law Draft consists of 270 articles and 13 chapters. The family is a fundamental part of society and is supported by GIROF. GIROF is taking the required steps to protect the family's physical and mental health, particularly that of women and children, and to do away with practices that are against the dictates of Islam's sacred faith. The most important goals of this law are:

- Arranging matters related to marriage, divorce, and their effects
- Strengthening family members' relationships
- Ensuring the rights and duties of family members against each other
- Support for the family system and children
- Ensuring the physical and mental health of family members
- Preventing customs contrary to the rules of the holy religion of Islam, the constitution, and other laws.

This law plays a fundamental and effective role in supporting and strengthening the family, in managing and regulating family members, and in maintaining the physical and mental health of children in the family (Daily Afghanistan News Magazine, Family Law, 2009).

3. National Action Plan 1325 (NAP 1325)

One of the oldest human beliefs, history is rife with wars, battles, and other forms of violence. Every year, surveys and reports show that wars, conflicts, violent behaviors, and terrorism have hurt women the most. According to the ISNA news agency, which was published in 2016, on the occasion of the International Day of Peacekeepers, in most wars, about 90% of the victims are civilians. One of the responsibilities of the UN is to maintain and promote peace in the world. Since its inception, the UN has focused on the situation of women during and after the war (ISNA News Agency 2020, International Day of Peacekeepers). The purpose of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was to consider the Variable Nature of War, in which civilians are increasingly being targeted, and it also responds to the general deprivation of women from participating in peace and security processes. UNSCR 1325 also emphasizes that peace and security processes can be more sustainable if women are involved equally in conflict prevention and relief and recovery efforts (Weingarten, E., & Hilal, L, 2015, A Step Forward for Afghan

Women).

UN member states were required to implement it. Afghanistan, as a member of the UN, is committed to observing all UN resolutions. Afghanistan has experienced decades of war and conflict, and women and children were always the victims during and after the conflict. Afghanistan developed the NAP 1325 to implement UNSCR 1325, which included four priorities and strategies (Participation, Production, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery).

Afghan women were very optimistic about the NAP 1325 and saw it as a way out of some discrimination and violent behavior. Reports released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in coordination with the UN Women in Afghanistan welcomed the progress of the NAP 1325.

a. Development and implementation of the NAP 1325

UNSCR 1325, in addition to considering the changing nature of war in which civilians are killed, also focused on the issue of women's general deprivation of participation in peace and security processes. Since Afghan women have always faced many challenges due to the war and conflict in Afghanistan, UNSCR 1325 was a tool to solve their problems and advance their activities. The NAP 1325 was developed and implemented by GIRoA with four strategies of participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. For a society like Afghanistan, the NAP 1325 was important, because, after the war, the redevelopment of society required a lot of effort. All members of society, men and women, should have equal access to resources and opportunities in order to work together to advance Afghan society.

The NAP1325 was developed under the four pillars of participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. (Director of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs (DHRWIA-MoFA 2014, NAP 1325).

- Participation: UNSCR 1325 seeks to increase women's political participation at all decision-making levels. GIRoA has prioritized women's political participation. Its purpose is to ensure the effective participation of women at decision-making and executive levels, active and effective participation of women in leadership positions of security agencies, ensuring the effective participation of women in the peace process, encourage the meaningful participation of women in drafting peace and security strategies and policies,

and strengthened women's active participation in elections.

- **Protection:** Because women are victims of all kinds of violence, threats, violent attacks, rape, trafficking, and forced marriages after the war, UNSCR 1325 emphasized the protection of women from any violence against women. The NAP 1325 made protection its second priority and supported women against all forms of violence and discrimination through the implementation, monitoring, and reform of laws, as well as the development of new laws and policies. In this priority, women's human rights were emphasized and focused on providing a secure environment for women to access justice.
- **Prevention:** UNSCR 1325 considers the prevention of sexual violence against women as one of the important issues. To guarantee women's rights and political participation, the NAP1325 made prevention its third priority. Issues such as the prevention of sexual violence against women, involvement of men in women's rights advocacy programs, and raising women's awareness of their rights was included in this priority.
- **Relief and Recovery:** Establishing financing mechanisms and providing relief and recovery services for women was of particular importance in UNSCR 1325. The NAP 1325 made the provision of economic development opportunities and relief and welfare services for women living in war-torn communities, internally displaced persons, and survivors of violence its priorities.

b. Implementation mechanism NAP1325

A mechanism was needed for implementing the NAP 1325. To implement the NAP 1325, GIROA considered the mechanisms such as implementation plan, implementing agencies, reporting & accountability, monitoring & evaluation, and cooperation & partnerships.

- **Implementation plan:** The implementation plan was created to clearly define the responsibilities and duties of leadership and support organizations. Each organization could strive to advance NAP 1325's strategy and goals with a clear awareness of its responsibilities. The NAP 1325 had a four-year period that covered the first phase from 2015 to 2018 and the second phase from 2019 to 2021.

- **Implementing Agencies:** In order for the implementing agencies to be able to perform their duties properly and to prevent functional interference, the NAP 1325 added implementing agencies to the implementation mechanism. Implementing agencies were divided into two categories. Lead Implementing Agencies was the first group which included the government departments, ministries, structures, and institutions. The second group was supporting agencies, which included civil society, the media, and the private sector.
- **Reporting & Accountability:** GIRoA set up a reporting and accountability mechanism to find out how the NAP 1325 is being implemented and how far it has progressed. All implementing and supporting agencies must submit their activities, improvements, challenges, and plans to DHRWIA-MoFA annually. After collecting reports from all implemented provinces and districts, the report was submitted to the Steering Committee. After reviewing and approving the final report, it was sent to the President's office, the National Assembly, and the international community.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** A monitoring and evaluation mechanism was established to evaluate how the NAP 1325 was implemented and to ensure the effectiveness of the plan. The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee consisted of multi-stage monitoring, which was annual, mid-term (after two years), and a final evaluation in the fourth year.
- **Cooperation & partnerships:** Implementing projects and development plans requires the cooperation of all organizations, departments, and sections of society. Effective implementation of the NAP 1325 also required the cooperation of all international organizations, GIRoA, civil society, the international community, and the media. The cooperation and participation of women in the implementation of the NAP 1325 which was its main goal was very important. (DHRWIA-MoFA 2014, NAP 1325)

Much attention has been paid to compiling the NAP 1325. The items mentioned in the NAP 1325 (Participation, Protection, Prevention, Relief and Recovery) guarantee the advancement of women in the political, social, cultural, and economic fields.

NAP 1325 cooperates with women to ensure their presence at all levels of

national, regional, and international decision-making and devises ways to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. NAP 1325 is a great achievement for Afghan women, which has made their presence in the political arena significant. The principle of participation is one of the most important principles in this plan, which has attracted a lot of attention from Afghan women. The principle of participation, in addition to helping the presence of women in politics, causes the government to comply with this principle in various fields and make it one of its main priorities. Since women's participation is the most important part of UNSCR 1325, GIRoA seeks to encourage women to join the security establishment by launching facilities. To strengthen the role of women in decision-making, governance, and peace, GIRoA has held meetings in different parts of the country, in all of the meetings the emphasis has been on increasing the role of women in various fields.

Considering that less attention has been paid to women than men in the field of peace building, and also those fewer women than men have been used in the field of strategic analysis and implementation of important decisions and plans, the principle of participation in NAP 1325 gives women the chance to have a greater share in the implementation mechanisms of this plan.

The history of Afghanistan shows that Afghan women, like women in other countries, have been active and interested in progress. Since Afghanistan is a country that has been involved in war and insecurity for several years, women have not been able to progress. The study of history shows that Afghanistan has had many history-making women whose names are recorded in the history of Afghanistan. All the governments that have ruled in Afghanistan have not defended women's rights. Some of the governments that have supported women and their protection, have proposed many laws and policies to support women. The government of Afghanistan has also made many laws to protect women in the last twenty years, if these laws are implemented correctly, they will lead to the advancement of women and they will achieve the desired results.

IV. ACHIEVEMENTS OF AFGHAN WOMEN & BARRIERS TO THE PARTICIPATION OF THE AFGHAN WOMEN

Afghan women have a significant presence in the government structure at the provincial, and local levels, as in previous years. Job opportunities for Afghan women in various fields have increased. According to a 2015 survey of Afghans by the Asian Foundation, two-thirds of Afghanistan's population believes that women have the right to work outside their homes. Women are increasingly involved in the security and police forces, the health sector, the education sector, music, sports, journalism, and politics. With the great efforts of women's rights defenders and women who fought for their rights, a series of cases changed in favor of women, and in some cases, it prevented a change in the negative direction.

A. Participation and Achievements of Afghan Women Over the Last Twenty Years

Afghan women have made significant achievements in the last 20 years. On the one hand, the presence of the international community provided women with the opportunity to make changes at the level of laws, policies, bills, and regulations. On the other hand, Afghan women were ready for any sacrifice and struggle to defend their rights. Human rights activists and women's rights defenders claim that although the international community and women's rights organizations have worked with women over the years to achieve their rights and achievements, in reality, the changes and developments in the lives of Afghan women are the results of women's own efforts. "We have used the presence of the international community to put pressure on the government and fundamentalist groups where necessary, but most of the achievements are the result of our own efforts" (Houriha Mosadiq, 2019).

1. Women's participation in Education

People's levels of political engagement are inversely correlated with their educational attainment. Because of their expertise, highly educated individuals may or

may not vote. A society's progress was closely correlated to its inhabitants' level of sociopolitical awareness. The education of girls and women in the gender equality discourse was considered as the most important indicator of the growth of women's political and social participation. The US invasion of Afghanistan led to a large presence of women in government and society. Their presence violated the traditional norms of society and the struggle against the patriarchal and male-centered system of Afghanistan. The establishment of Afghanistan's new system and the significant presence of the international community provided a prominent role in the presence of educated Afghan women.

Through education, women were able to create a successful and good position in society and improve their living conditions. However, they faced serious challenges in achieving their goal. In fact, education and having high university degrees helped to establish their position in society. The international community has also made significant contributions to providing women and girls with access to education. Numerous international assistance and serious programs were provided for access to education for girls throughout Afghanistan, but large numbers of women and girls were barred from education, especially in remote areas controlled by insurgent groups. In addition, social, cultural, and structural challenges have created serious barriers to girls' education.

According to the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE), there were 3,400 active schools across Afghanistan in 2001, with 20,000 teachers teaching one million students and the presence of girls in this million was close to zero. In 2011, about 14,000 schools were opened throughout Afghanistan, with 8,100,000 students, 38% of whom were girls. The level of school enrollment reached one million in 2011.

The MoE has developed the third Strategic Plan for Education (2017-2021) to improve the educational status of women and girls, which included the following (CEDAW, 2018):

- Offering pre-school instruction percent of which is for females;
- providing local educational programs and accelerated instruction for kids who dropped out of school (of whom 50% are girls);
- increasing the percentage of girls admitted to technical and vocational schools

- Conducting job training for newly recruited female teachers as well as provision of literacy courses for women, raising the number from 60% to 100% in 2021;
- Increasing the number of female literacy students from 53% in 2015 to 60% in 2021 and provision of emergency educational programs for children of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Repatriates. (50% of which, is for girls);
- Launching awareness-raising programs on the importance of education for girls and provision of financial incentives and stipends for female teachers during the on-the-job training;
- Providing pre-work courses for female students and provision of master's degree education for the instructors of teacher training institutions that include women;
- In order to increase the percentage of female students admitted to literacy courses from 53 to 60% in 2021, literacy programs are being offered nationwide as well as health services in schools for both male and female students.

While the ratio of people between the ages of 15 and 24 is 66.3% males and 36.7% women, men over the age of 15 have a literacy rate of 49.1% and women over the age of 15 have a literacy rate of 19% (CEDAW, 2018).

With the implementation of this strategic educational plan, many changes will occur in the academic progress of females, and this was one of the great achievements of women's rights defenders and the Afghan government in increasing women's political and social participation. Figure 2 shows that over a five-year period, the number of girls attending school has been increasing. This is a great achievement for Afghan women and girls because increasing their literacy and awareness will enable them to find work and become economically independent.

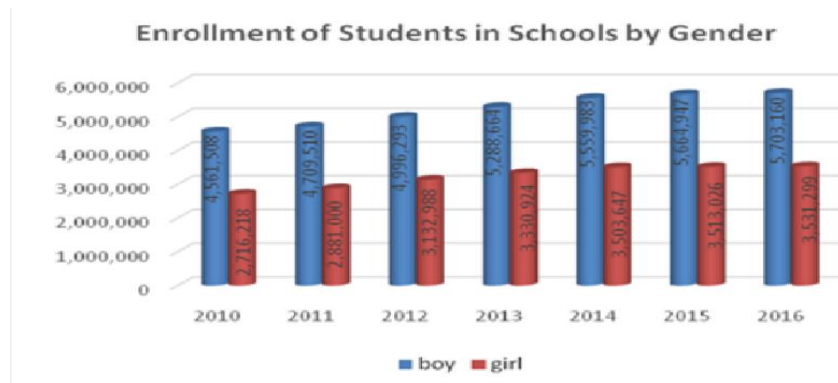


Figure 2 The proportion of male to female pupils in each school between 2010 and 2016

Source: “The third periodic report of GIRoA to the CEDAW”, United Nations & National Information and Statistic Administration (NISA), Kabul, 2018

In 2018, the MoE of Afghanistan stated that 2018 will be considered a turning point in the history of education in Afghanistan, and more focus has been on the quality of education and improving the living conditions of teachers, which has also played a significant role in improving the status and quality of education. According to official statistics, in 2018, out of 229,000 teachers across the country, more than 80,000 were women. In Kabul, the number of female teachers was exceptionally three times that of male teachers. There were more than 17,800 schools throughout Afghanistan. Among them, there were more than 2700 girls’ schools, more than 6300 boys' schools, and more than 8700 girls’ and boys' schools. There were many changes in the education sector after the Taliban rule, and many women and girls continued to pursue higher education (Soltani, 2018).

The figure below shows the increase in women's access to education in most provinces of Afghanistan in 2018. Education is one of the areas in which Afghan women have made great strides. A survey conducted by the Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) with women in nine provinces of Afghanistan shows an increase in women's access and participation in the education sector. A small number of women believed that there was no change in women's educational status.

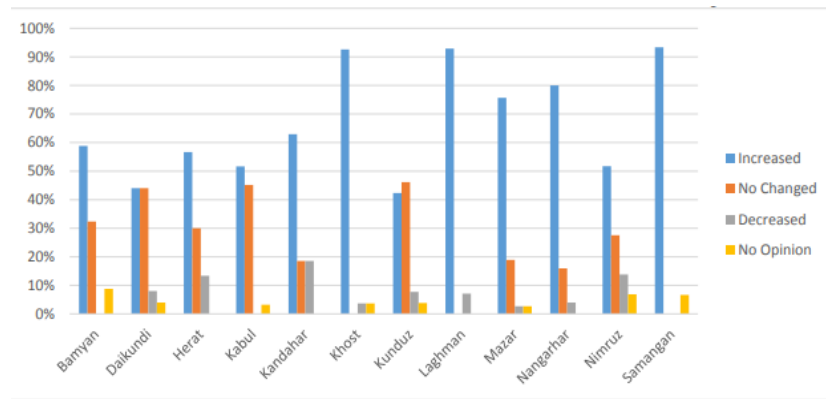


Figure 3 Women's access to education

Source: Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO), The fourth monitoring report of the 1325 National Action Plan, 2018.

2. Women's participation at the leadership level

Afghan women were eliminated from public life under the Taliban from 1996 to 2001. They had not advanced in any field, professional, educational, or upbringing opportunities. Both the Afghan government and the international community have made significant investments to better the status of women in the nation. Among the investments they made were initiatives to help women who are leaders in business, politics, and civil society. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in London in 2016 published a report on the role and participation of women at various levels of government institutions. The report highlights the prominent role of Afghan women at leadership levels from 2001 to 2016. According to the report, women make up 28% of the members of the Afghan parliament. More than 20% of civil servants are women, and women hold 10% of leadership positions in government. It consists of four cabinet members, 240 judges, eight deputies, two ambassadors, and the deputy head of the High Peace Council and the Attorney General. The presence of Afghan women in the government structure at the central, provincial, and local levels has increased compared to previous years. Three thousand seven hundred women make up 20% of the doctors in this country. More than 2,000 members of the armed forces are women. More than 2,000 women start working in the private media, and women lead more than 30 media outlets and 800 businesses (MoIRoA-L, 2016).

According to a 2018 survey of women and men at the decision-making level, women accounted for 10.7% and men for 89.3%. The share of women in government institutions was 10.3%, in the private sector 9.6% and in non-governmental

organizations 20.3% (Soltani, 2018).

According to statistics published in 2019, out of 28 ministries, 3 ministries were led by women. Although there were no women governors in 34 provinces, five women were deputy governors. Out of 358 members of the provincial council, 60 were women, and out of 154 government legal advisers, 12 were women (Amin, 2019). Although women's participation in leadership levels is not satisfactory for women, compared to previous years, women participation in leadership levels has increased. Figure 4 shows the participation of Afghan women in different sections, published by Hasht Sobh news magazine.

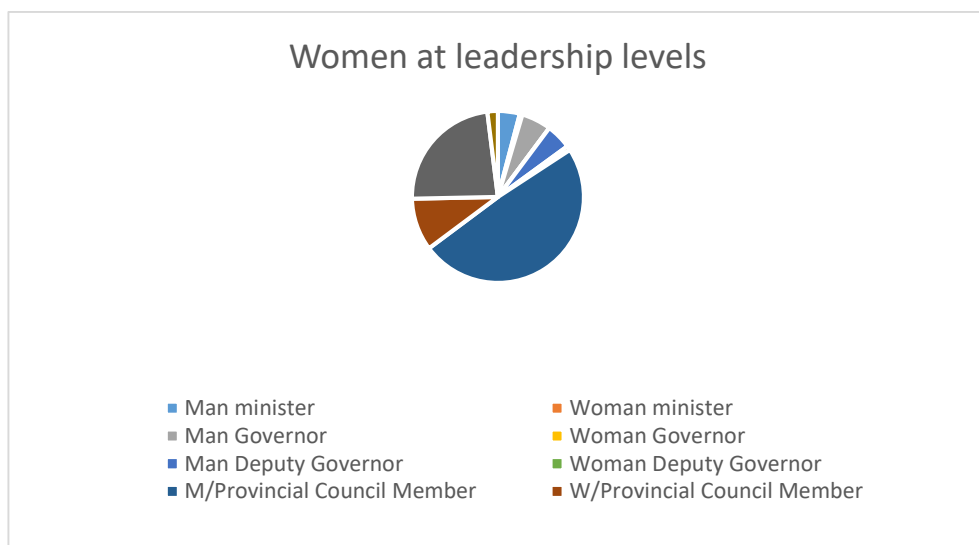


Figure 4 Women at leadership levels

Source: “Women in the Mirror of Statistics”, Hasht Sobh News Agency, 2019, <https://8am.af/women-in-the-mirror-statistics-make-up-27-of-government-employees/>

3. Women’s participation in elections

After the GIRoA came to power, women, with the support of the international community and organizations focused on women's rights, tried to participate in the elections as much as possible. Afghan women, who had been deprived for years, saw this as a great opportunity to vote. Tadamichi Yamamoto, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, emphasized that the organization fully supports the participation of women in the electoral process. Yamamoto believes that every effort should be made to ensure the presence of women in the elections and the necessary measures should be taken because the political empowerment of women is

essential for the development of Afghanistan. "Women's participation in elections as voters and candidates is vital," Yamato said (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

In August 2013, the MoF, the Women's Commission on Human Rights, Civil Society, and the Wolesi Jirga formulated a gender policy to facilitate women's registration and participation in elections. The Independent Election Commission used this policy to increase women's participation in the voter registration process and the 2014 elections. The policy emphasized that door-to-door campaigns should be conducted to make women more aware of the importance of voting and obtaining ballot papers. The voter registration process began in provincial and district centers. The Minister of Finance (MoF) and the Parliamentary Committee on Women's Affairs proposed that polling stations be set up near women's quarters in the upcoming elections so that women could vote more easily. For the first time in the voter registration process, separate areas were created for women. Although the IEC claimed that in some provinces, there were no literate women to advance the electoral process, this did not have a significant effect on women's participation in the election campaign. According to the commission, in the most remote parts of Afghanistan, facilities were provided for women to participate in the electoral process. UNSCR 1325 places great emphasis on increasing women's political participation in important areas of decision-making and leadership, and also considers women's participation in elections as one of the work priorities of any country. NAP 1325 designed a mechanism to increase women's participation, with a special focus on the participation of Afghan women in elections. Women's participation in the elections has been one of the most important achievements of GIROA, women's rights defenders, the organization focused on women's rights and the efforts of women themselves (Deutsche Welle, 2013).

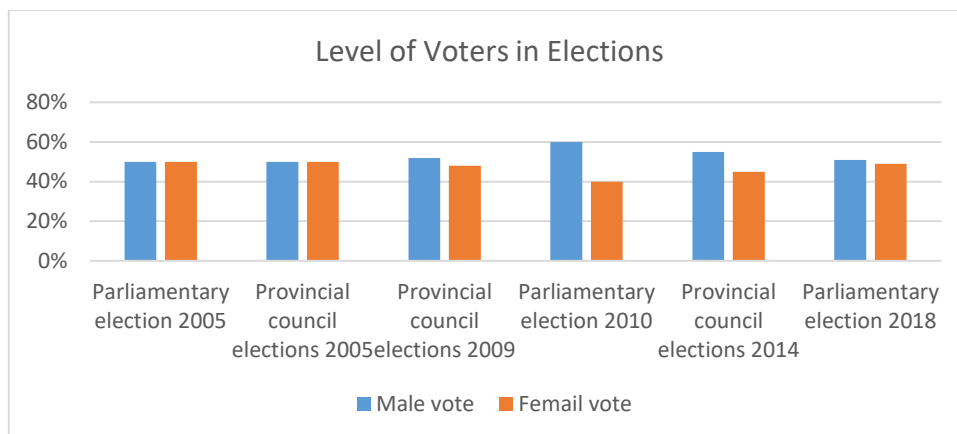


Figure 5 Level of Voters in Elections

Source: "Level of Voters in Elections", National Democracy Institute (NDI), 2019.

According to the table, there were substantially fewer female voters in 2010. Security concerns and threats to several polling places are to blame for this decline. Numerous female voters used false ballots, which were subsequently nullified as a result of their discovery, claims National Democracy Institute research (NDI, 2010: 56).

4. Women's participation in the judiciary

Women's participation in the judiciary is one of the greatest achievements of Afghan women since the fall of the Taliban government. Women work as judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. Although in a traditional society, women judges, prosecutors, and lawyers were less trusted, they tried to gain people's trust by doing their job properly.

In 2018, the Afghan Attorney General announced that the presence of women in the prosecution has increased from 3% to 21.7% in the last two years. The Attorney General said that in the past, there were only two women heads of the Afghan Prosecutor General's Office, but now the number of female directors in the department has reached 13. In previous years, the Attorney General's Office had 6 female prosecutors in 6 Afghan provinces but now has 32 female prosecutors in 32 provinces. By 2016, there were more than 1,800 judges in Afghanistan, 213 of whom were women. In fact, 11.5% of the judges were women. There were also more than 190 prosecutors, 8.2% of whom were women. The total number of defense lawyers was more than 1,300, of which 18.2% were women. According to statistics released by the

Supreme Court in 2017, more than 11% of the total membership of this institution were women. Moreover, according to official statistics, out of a total of more than 2,000 judges, more than 200 were women (Soltani, 2018). A report published by Ettilat Rooz News Magazine in 2018 shows that women in Afghanistan have made good progress in participating in the judiciary.

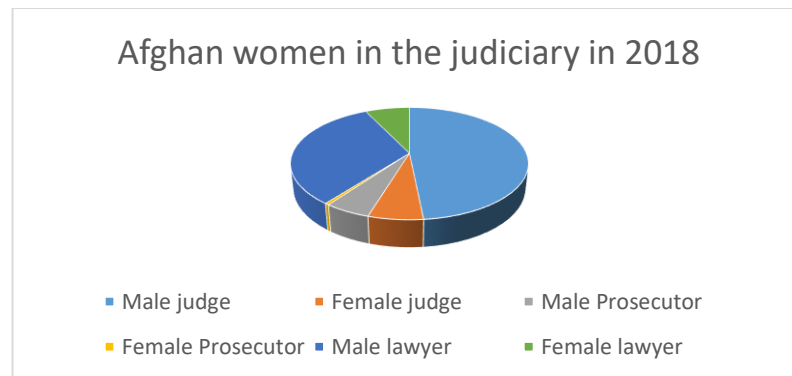


Figure 6 Afghan women in the judiciary in 2018

Source: “how women’s participation in government sectors”, Ettilat Rooz Journal, 2018.

The participation of Afghan women in the judiciary may be very small compared to other countries, but in a traditional Afghan society where women face many barriers to continuing their education and working, this statistic was excellent and promising, and women were very pleased with their achievement.

B. The Efforts and Struggles of Women to Achieve Their Rights

Although Afghan women still face many problems, the efforts of the government and the international community in the past decade to improve the status of women cannot be ignored. After the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan came to power, girls entered schools and were able to continue their education. Afghan women knew that staying home for years had made them isolated, unskilled, and weak. Therefore, all women tried to go to school and increase their knowledge. Afghan women tried to send their daughters to school despite the obstacles created in the family by family members, especially the father of the family.

Going women and girls to school, university, and other educational centers were one of the best and biggest actions that women took to achieve their goals. Although this action was tough and required a lot of effort so that girls could be equal

to boys in terms of science, their efforts were able to achieve the desired result and a large number of women and girls were able to join schools and universities.

Another effort that women have made in order to achieve their great achievements is to raise the level of their skills and profession. Women knew that they should be in a good position economically in order to make a place for themselves in big businesses in Afghanistan in addition to achieving economic independence. Women started home productions at home with very small funds. Some of them produced jam, pickles, yogurt, and cheese and sold them to the market, and others engaged in manual skills such as sewing, weaving, and other manual work. In the past twenty years, many women have been able to develop their small businesses and become big businessmen. The representative office of Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry was opened on 11 August 2016 with the participation of more than 80 women businessmen and entrepreneurs in order to develop domestic and rural trade in Herat province. The establishment of the Women's Chamber of Commerce allowed women to enter the business field with more confidence. According to government figures; In Afghanistan, women make up 29% of the 8.5 million workforces, of which 66% work in agriculture and 24% work in industry (Hasht Sobh newspaper, 2016).

One of the biggest goals of women after the collapse of the Taliban government was to enter politics and obtain political and government positions. Women knew that they needed a lot of training and knowledge to achieve this goal. Many women tried to join the police force to learn specific military training. Joining the police was one of the measures that women and girls faced many challenges because, in addition to the fact that the families were against their daughters joining the military and the army, military men considered the presence of women in this sector useless and ineffective. The women who joined the police and army tried hard to prove their abilities. In 2005, only 180 women were registered among the 53,400 employees of this department. In July 2013, this figure was recorded as 1,551 female police officers among 157,000 employees of this department (BBC News, 2013). This figure shows that despite the opposition of men, women have been successful in participating in the police and army systems.

Afghan women knew that in order to be able to play a role in important decisions, they should have a position in the parliament, the judiciary, ministries, and

major directorates. Many women went to other countries to get higher education degrees and there they were able to study in the field of leadership, good governance, and management. By increasing their political knowledge, they were able to reach high positions and play an effective role in important decisions.

As a result, today's achievements of women are the result of their many years of efforts, who tried to improve their skills and stabilize their position in every sector. Holding mass protests by women shows their struggle to achieve their rights. During these few years, they held large protests and gatherings to show their opposition to some discriminatory policies of the Afghan government. Holding their meeting on the increase of violence against women has caused the government to pay more attention to this issue and pass the law prohibiting violence against women. During these twenty years, many educational seminars have been held to raise women's awareness about their rights, the rights of their children, and the upbringing of their children. Increasing the level of awareness of women in different fields helps them not only to play a role in domestic decisions, but also helps them to raise children with great capacity and ability.

C. Barriers and restrictions on the Participation of the Afghan women

In Afghanistan, in addition to suicide and explosive incidents, such as self-immolation of women, throwing into wells, and cutting off their ears and noses by men are on the rise. The first set of events is quite clear that Afghanistan is a country at war, and the enemy uses every opportunity to weaken the government. Most of the victims in this type of incident are civilians. The second category is events that have variable enemies but specific victims. A class that sacrifices every day in every corner of the country. Women and girls whose ears and nose were cut off in Herat, someone who was stoned to death in Kabul and later burned someone who was raped by his father in Baghlan, and someone whose body was found inside a bag. Likewise, the thousands of other events that remain hidden from the eyes of the mass media and even the eyes of families are all events in which the victims are women.

Without a question, women gained a lot of independence in the 20 years after the Taliban. However, at the same time, the number of female victims in Afghanistan has increased. One of the important issues in various fields of social and political sciences is the growth and increase of the social and political role of women. In a

society like Afghanistan, the growth and advancement of women are very difficult because the issue of gender equality in countries like Afghanistan is still a problem.

There have been many challenges and problems facing Afghan women over the years that have hampered women's participation, activities, and advancement.

1. Traditional beliefs

The habits, practices, values, and cultural and religious beliefs that are encouraged in Afghan culture have been demonstrated to directly affect Afghan women's work and social participation, according to studies and research. Afghanistan and other patriarchal countries forbid their wives from working outside the home because they feel that women should only be allowed to interfere in family life. In fact, all these irrational beliefs against women and the disregard for the status of women as human beings are in the thoughts and minds of the men of Afghan society, which have alienated women from society.

Afghanistan, as a traditional country with extremist Islamic beliefs, has often had an unsuitable atmosphere for women. Afghanistan, as a traditional country with extremist Islamic beliefs, has often had an unsuitable atmosphere for women. Women in Afghanistan have historically had many deprivations. Patriarchal ideas, historical customs, and indigenous and tribal culture still have a tangible impact on the social and cultural values of Afghan society. One of the prevailing extremist beliefs in this country is the hated view of the second sex towards women.

Women in Afghan families have little value or prestige. In most parts of Afghanistan, women are treated as a commodity. Many Afghan women today are seen by patriarchal society as a means of resolving conflicts and disputes between families and tribes. Young women and girls under the age of ten or twelve are forced into marriage. In a report published in 2016, the Afghan Human Rights Commission showed that the number of forced marriages has been increasing in the last three years. In 1992, 226 cases of forced marriage were registered in AIHRC, which increased to 235 cases in 1994 (Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), 2016). At the same time, rape, torture, and captivity of women begin from the very beginning of their marriage. The right to choose, the right to study, and the right to liberty are taken away from them, work like slaves, with all the differences and tensions in family relationships, they are severely punished, and their human dignity is violated.

Patriarchal laws, lack of communication with other women, far from teaching and science, and humiliation and torture turn them into isolated beings. They cannot show their talents or take steps to empower themselves. Therefore, their participation in social activities becomes impossible or very difficult. The old, misogynistic, and traditional thoughts of Afghan men and even women need more time to change. Programs focused on women's rights can change the discriminatory behavior of Afghan society, but in most cases, due to insecurity, this program is only for urban people and villagers do not benefit from a program focused on women's rights.

2. Lack of social security

Considering women's security and social security issues is one of the most important issues which has received less attention in Afghanistan. Lack of social security weakens women's social relations, strengthens conservatism in them, and ultimately makes women isolated. Lack of a sense of security and social insecurity outside the home is a well-known phenomenon for women in Afghan society. With the rise of anti-extremist ideas and traditional structures, the social status of women is also at greater risk, and it limits the economic, social, and intellectual independence of women. While Afghan women have struggled extensively for social security over the past two decades, they still suffer from gender discrimination, mistrust, and gender-based harassment in universities, workplaces, and on the streets. In most cases, women refuse to enter the community outside the home due to a lack of social security.

Social anomalies are formed in the environments of big cities and serve as a major obstacle to the process of development of women's thought. The last two decades have been a good opportunity to receive social status and active presence of women in various fields in society, but most women focused on working to achieve financial independence and working with their families. They had very little intellectual motivation to fight for justice and gain social status. The GIRoA has adopted the Strategy for Economic Rights and Occupational Safety of Women and claims that the implementation of any kind of economic policy, plan, and program is incomplete without observing the principle of gender equality. The lack of rule of law, lack of balanced development, and the large gender gap in Afghanistan make it difficult to implement any policies or plans. Another factor that increases the fear of women working outside the home is the lack of amenities in the workplace such as kindergarten, toilets, and so on. Ignoring the growth of women's capacities and not

observing the principle of equality in economic situations can be called a kind of social insecurity, which reduces the motivation of women to work and strive (Hasht Sobh News Agency, 1398, Social Insecurity of Afghan Women). Workplace insecurity and lack of safety and security have prevented many families from allowing their wives and daughters to go out and work in the community. This issue has also added to the problems of women. Statistics published by Hasht Sobh News Magazine in 2018 show the extent of security, economic and social problems.

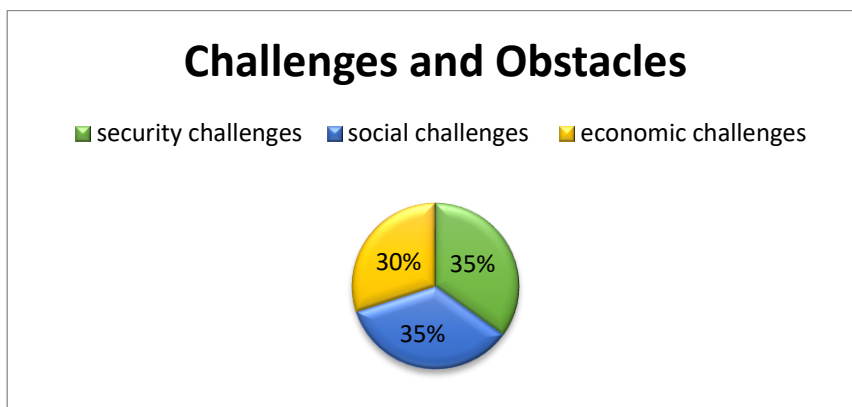


Figure 7 Challenges and Obstacles

Source: “Social Insecurity of Afghan Women”, Hasht Sobh News Agency, 2018.

3. Economic Factors and Ignorance of Women's Economic Rights

Women's participation is one of the most important factors in maintaining the economic sustainability of human societies, especially rural ones. Afghan women, like women in other communities, do the housework, educate children, cooperate with family members, and cultivate agriculture, and livestock, making great efforts to meet the needs of the community. While Afghan women have the greatest impact on the level of production and economic growth of Afghan society, they are less influential and have less motivation for economic growth and independence (Vafaie, 1393).

Illiteracy, ignorance of women's rights, lack of understanding and facilities for economic independence, and traditional beliefs in Afghan society have made women less motivated to get a job. The International Labor Organization claims that economic violence is one of the types of abuse Afghan women, particularly illiterate women, experience. Economic violence refers to the lack of economic independence of women and their financial dependence on men. 78% of women are unpaid domestic workers.

They are willing to endure poverty, extreme dependence on men, and economic violence due to traditional beliefs and lack of education, and excessive responsibilities in the household (Women and Children Rights Research Institute, 2013). These dependencies make a woman a consuming being and second sex. Another issue that has created many problems for women is household responsibilities. A working woman has to take care of the children, prepare food, wash clothes, entertain guests, and do many other things that make her very tired when she returns home from work. Persistent fatigue and constant work do not allow women to grow their capacity. Therefore, the quality of women's work is much lower than men's work. Low working capacities prevent women from holding key positions.

4. Sexual Accusation

Although the Afghan constitution defines the principle of equality of citizens before the law and the same enjoyment of civil rights, cultural and social barriers and extremist interpretations of religion have prevented women from ever moving alongside men in politics and governing. After the GIRoA came to power after the Bonn Conference, the participation of women was more seasonal and electoral. In such a view, women's participation was less based on empowerment and more on ethnicity. GIRoA added a series of constitutional obligations for women's participation, and Afghanistan signed important international instruments on women's rights and freedoms. Global advocacy for women's rights led to the establishment of institutions for women's empowerment, and the government, albeit symbolically, considered women's rights, but women's participation in government structure has faced serious challenges from the beginning, and women's achievements are still seen as sexual rather than the result of women's struggles. Considering women's achievements sexual is a serious challenge, and it can be dangerous for women to reflect on their sexual identity. The issue of sexual harassment of women in offices was one of the undeniable challenges. As a result of lawsuits filed by women's rights organizations, the government was forced to enact a law prohibiting the harassment of women and children. The High Commission for the Elimination of Violence against Women was set up within the Ministry of Women's Affairs and specific committees were set up at all levels to implement the law (Arefa Peykar, 2019).

High-ranking government officials have repeatedly raised the issue of accusations of sex against women. The charge of sex in exchange for a position does

not only target a few women, but the publication of these accusations in the media, especially on social networks, has targeted the reputation and dignity of all working women. From every point of view, these women are the victims of these accusations. These accusations, even if proven to be untrue, cause serious harm to women's presence in society. Women who fought in traditional families for their rights should redouble their efforts to dispel these accusations, or they have to retreat and have to stay home. These charges define all government men as rapists and all government women as prostitutes. Men are not harmed by such accusations in a misogynistic country like Afghanistan, but the personal and professional life and work of Afghan women face many problems. Families prevent women from studying and working, and sometimes women themselves prefer to stay at home to keep their lives and families comfortable.

D. Women's Struggle and Resistance Strategies to Overcome Barriers and Restrictions

Since 2001, women in Afghanistan have achieved real progress in the fields of political participation, rule of law and education. Undoubtedly, policies, laws and strategies have been made in order to achieve these developments, in addition to the efforts and struggles of Afghan women. These plans and strategies reduce the obstacles faced by women in reaching their goals and make the path of their struggles smoother.

1. Developing a Strategy for the Economic Rights and Job Security of Afghan women

The Gender Committee of the Afghan Government Cabinet approved the "Strategy of Women's Economic Rights and Job Security " in May 2016. Preparing a strategy for the economic rights and job security of Afghan women from the perspective of gender is an important necessity in order to work for the economic empowerment of women. This policy can play a good role for the economic, social, cultural and political growth and development of the society with active and wide participation of women. Therefore, the implementation of any kind of policy, plan and economic programs without considering and respecting the principle of gender equality will be incomplete and will not have positive and significant consequences. In this regard, the necessary coordination between the related bodies was done to

investigate and eliminate the existing shortcomings regarding gender equality and obstacles to creating opportunities and capacity for women in government offices.

The strategy for the economic rights and job security of Afghan women was considered for five years due to the professional training and employment of women, the promotion of the recognition of women as economic activists, the promotion of women's leadership in the economic sector, the design and adoption of policies based on the specific needs of women active in the private sector. Securing the educational and working environment for women is one of the important demands of Afghan women who have always demanded serious attention from the government in this sector. (Shahir, 2017)

This strategy has been very useful for the economic progress and self-sufficiency of women, and women are working in a relatively safe environment in different sectors and departments. Women have become owners of small and large businesses using the advantages of this strategy.

2. National Development Strategy of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's national development strategy to address gender inequalities in government departments was approved in June 2018. As a result of the efforts made so far, the situation of women today has improved a lot compared to ten years ago and Afghanistan has made great achievements in this field. Some of the most important achievements are:

- Wide participation of women in the country's presidential and parliamentary elections
- Presence and participation of women in government offices
- Active participation of women in cultural activities
- Prominent presence in civil institutions and social activities
- Attending the parliament, provincial councils and local councils
- Finding a way for a large number of girls in schools, universities and higher education institutions of the country
- Adoption and implementation of the new constitution and the law prohibiting violence against women

- The participation of a large number of women in the private sector and the creation of companies and institutions

Afghanistan's national development strategy made the path of women's activities smoother than in the past and was one of the strategies that helped women achieve achievements in order to achieve their rights.

3. National Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women

Violence against women in Afghanistan has a long history, which is mainly caused by the rule of customs and bad traditions that are contrary to religious and legal values. Ignorance and illiteracy and lack of awareness of mutual rights have been seen in the majority of families in the Afghan society, violence against women not only steals the peace of the family but is also a big obstacle in the development of the society. GIRA, in order to improve the situation of women and reduce the level of violence against women, approved the national strategy to fight against violence against women. The National Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women emphasized the adoption of the law prohibiting violence against women, and this law was approved by the president. In this law, 22 types of violence such as underage marriage, forced marriage, forced suicide, rape and beating are considered crimes. This law emphasizes the role and responsibilities of the government in supporting women and prosecuting perpetrators of violence. Also, this law obliges the police to register cases of violence against women and asks the prosecutor's office and courts to prioritize the handling of causes related to violence against women (Abdullah Atai, 2016).

Undoubtedly, women achieved many freedoms in the twenty years after the Taliban. On the other hand, the number of female victims in Afghanistan has been growing at the same time. Published reports indicate that have shown a growing graph of violence against women. Some men believe that in recent years the existence and presence of the mass media have caused Afghan people to become more and more involved in violence against women. However, women are now in a better position than in previous years. The reality is that the relative and basic freedoms of women in recent years have somehow intensified the spirit of violence against women in society.

The identity of women is still defined in the continuation of men. The woman does not yet have an independent legal personality. The woman in the best definition

there is still a sister and a mother and a wife. If women are respected or given a right, it is for them to be sisters and mothers and cohabitants before they are human beings. Educated and seemingly light-thinking Afghan men are still proudly chanting that they give women in our families the right to work and study. This means that even the very low percentage of Afghan society is still educated and light thinking. They consider themselves the owners of the rights of the women of their families and they do not look at women as independent legal entities who own their rights, let alone uneducated and illiterate non-intellectual men. In this regard, women have gained a number of basic rights in recent years due to the climate. However, the situation is such that in the end, they do not own the same basic rights. These rights and freedoms for women sometimes lead to misunderstandings and illusions.

V. CAUSES OF FRAGILITY OF THE AFGHAN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS

The GIRoF and the international community have supported Afghan women, yet they still confront difficulties and crises. In contemporary culture, there are still many forms of prejudice and violence towards women. The most significant issues women face is domestic and societal abuse, forced marriage, problems obtaining health care, education, and the legal system.

66% of Afghan girls between the ages of 12 and 15 are believed by UNICEF to be unable to attend school, according to statistics made public by the Afghan government in 2010-2011. In Afghanistan, just 37% of young females are literate, compared to 66% of boys. Only 19% of adult women are literate, this is while the figure for men is 49% (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In this nation, one-third of females still get married before turning 18. According to Afghan law, females can marry as young as 16 or 15 with their father's consent in the appropriate courts. However, this legislation is typically rarely taken seriously, and weddings are registered before these years. As a result of early marriage, many girls are denied an education. They are also exposed to domestic violence and early maternal deaths. Even when contrasted to the pre-Taliban era, when women made up 70% of the country's teachers, Afghan women still have a lower employment rate than other Asian nations, and males are now in the majority while women are in the minority. According to Global Wright, 90% of Afghan women have either been subjected to forced marriage or sexual or physical abuse ('Afghanistan: No Country for Women', Aljazeera, 2015).

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recently reported that there has been a law to prevent violence against women since 2009. Instead of enforcing the law, however, the judiciary allows local mediators and unofficial judges to settle cases of violence against women. The report, entitled 'Injustice and Impunity', documents the experiences of women who have tried in 237 cases from August 2015

to December 2017 to prosecute violence perpetrated by male perpetrators. According to the report, 145 cases have been resolved through mediation. It shows that women are being pressured by both the authorities and their families to withdraw their legal grievances. UNAMA also examines 280 cases of female homicide, most of which are victims of 'honor killings' (UNAMA, 2018).

The above shows that Afghan women have had some achievements in the last twenty years, but they are fragile for some reason. In developing and traditional societies, the need for continuous efforts to continue the dialogue on women, and gender equality, is of particular importance. Because of the colorful role of culture and tradition in the lives of the Afghan people and the many barriers to women's participation, there has always been a fear of losing women's achievements. In the Afghan society, the conscious and capable presence of women in creating national components has been less considered and the issue of women has always been raised in a symbolic and propaganda way. The presence of women and their functions in today's Afghan society is an important issue these days and achieving it without pathology of the status of women and women's rights has failed in GIROA. Many reasons have contributed to the fragility of women's achievements over the past twenty years, and some of them have been examined in this study.

A. Improper Performance of MoWA, Institutions and Organizations Focused on Women

Since the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, large sums of money have been disbursed by the international community to GIROA, in particular to protect women's rights. Afghanistan has depended on foreign help for more than 60 years, but since 2002, it has become one of the countries that receives the most aid. Afghanistan received \$90 billion in promises to reconstruct at ten international summits, of which \$57 billion has already been paid (Afghanistan Information Network, 2011).

Women-supporting countries have given special importance to the issue of women, because women were greatly affected during the Taliban government and were deprived of their basic rights for many years, including the right to study and work outside the home. MoWA in 2001, based on the decisions of the Bonn Conference in Germany, acts as a link between women and the GIROA in order to raise awareness and capacity, mobilization and organization and participation of women in

national development. Since its establishment, MoWA has been working as a policy-making, monitoring, and coordinating ministry to improve the health, social, economic, political, and legal status of women. MoWA has a direct role in implementing and monitoring most of the projects and programs funded by the international community to support women's rights (Rezaii, 2016). The least that is expected of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, as part of the executive body of the government, is to find a fundamental solution to increase the effectiveness of projects and programs specific to women. Since Afghan society strongly believes in religious teachings, MoWA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Hajj and Religion, was able to positively change public opinion about women. MoWA could also coordinate with the Ministry of Interior, the police, and other security agencies to implement women's advocacy programs in rural and remote areas. The symbolic activities of the ministry, such as holding several press conferences, and holding large gatherings to celebrate the Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, cannot solve the problem of rural women who have no awareness of their rights.

Simultaneously, with the formation of MoWA, various organizations have been established in Afghanistan to defend women's rights, which claim equal rights for men and women. Organizations focused on women's rights claim that they will bring gender rights and equality to women inside Afghanistan. This is despite the fact that some Afghan men and women do not have a culture of accepting gender equality and many problems will arise in families. Women's rights defenders have violated many of Afghanistan's traditions and customs because they take their ideas from other countries based on the international community.

MoWA and organizations focused on women's rights have allowed women to recognize and defend their defined rights. However, some of these rights are incompatible with the Islamic traditions and culture of Afghanistan and have made women's lives more dangerous and increased violence in the country, especially in some remote areas (Karimi, 2020). The cross-sectional and symbolic nature of the projects and the performance of their implementing organizations have taken stability away from women's achievements. AIHRC works separately to prevent violence against women. Lack of coordination and unity between these organizations, institutions, and ministries implementing projects raises concerns about the loss of women's achievements because in one village or region a duplicate project or plan may

be implemented several times and, in another region, no awareness or training program will ever be carried out. Moreover, the lack of coordination and unity between these organizations and ministries has prevented the formation of a united women's movement in Afghanistan to preserve women's achievements.

Activities and struggles of ministries and organizations have been to some extent symbolic and dramatic, and efforts have been made to reflect those programs on important, effective, and influential social media. This has led to women benefiting less from the programs, and the lack of awareness of society, especially women, about the living conditions of women and their rights has increased the fragility of these achievements.

B. Widespread Corruption in the GIROA

Due to the weakness of the rule of law and the lack of a transparent oversight mechanism, in most developing countries, corruption has increased as foreign aid has increased. This is also true in the case of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, and if the growth of corruption is studied, one of the most important factors that has increased corruption in the country is the increase in aid from the international community. According to the World Bank, indicators of good governance (fight against corruption, rule of law, political stability, quality legal framework, effectiveness, and accountability in government) show a worse situation in Afghanistan after 2004 (CFC, 2011).

In 2009, about 52% of Afghans paid bribes. According to statistics, the total bribe paid is more than \$ 2.5 billion, which is close to 23% of the total GDP. Corruption doubled between 2007 and 2009 when the average corruption consumption was estimated at \$ 156 per year (Carter, 2013). Part of the foreign aid has been embezzled by corrupt Afghan government officials, and much of it has been looted by foreign NGOs. Corruption is also a serious challenge to good governance, stability, democracy, and human rights. According to Transparency International's 2021 report, Afghanistan is the seventh most corrupt country in the world in terms of corruption. The report shows that Afghanistan is ranked 174th out of 180 countries in the world with only 16 points in the fight against corruption. In 2020, Afghanistan was ranked 165th on the list with 19 points, and in 2019, it was ranked 173rd (Hasht Sobh News Magazine, 2014).

Widespread corruption in the GIRoA system has hampered the implementation of laws and other development plans over the years. The issue of women and the projects dedicated to capacity building is no exception. Some projects and programs are incomplete because the budget has run out before the deadline for implementation. Women have also fallen victim to widespread corruption in GIRoA. Promote Project and NAP1325 are important examples. The \$ 216 million Promote Project from 2015 to 2024 was dedicated to the empowerment of Afghan women by the US. The aim of the program was to increase the capacity of women in the field of education, and employment opportunities for women in government and private organizations, as well as improve the living conditions of more than 75,000 women in various sectors of society. According to the 2018 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report, more than \$ 89 million has been spent, and the only achievement of this program is the appointment of only 55 women at the leadership level. SIGAR blames the corruption of GIRoA and implementing agencies for the failure of the Promote project in Afghanistan (SIGAR, 2018).

Another example is the NAP 1325. The NAP 1325 was designed to respond to the urgent needs of Afghan society based on the four pillars of participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. The direct effects of this plan on women's political participation, reduce all forms of violence against women, raising women's awareness of their rights, men's awareness of women's rights, supporting women's trade and activities, and creating a safe and secure work environment for women have brought positive changes to Afghan society. The general budget required to implement NAP 1325 was \$ 47.33 million. GIRoA has stated that it will receive 20 million of the required funds from other programs, and the remaining 27.33 will be provided by the international community. This plan, like many other programs, failed due to widespread corruption in GIRoA and its implementing and monitoring agencies, despite spending a lot of money (APPRO,2019). The Trading Economics Organization estimates the corruption in GIRoA by 2022 as follows.

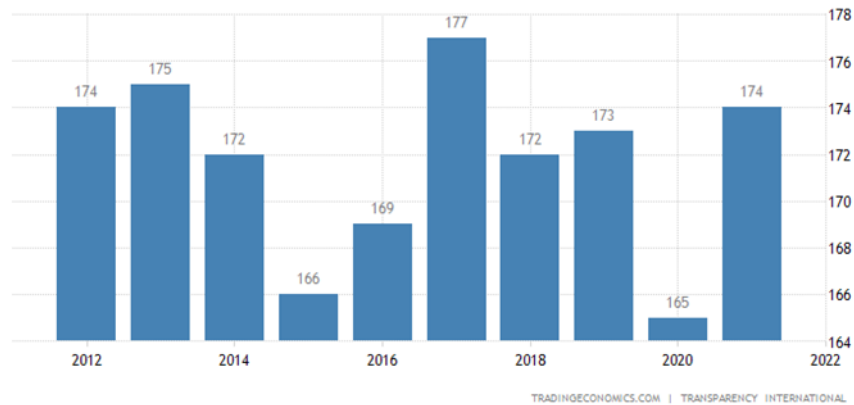


Figure 8 Afghanistan - Corruption Ranking

Source: “Afghanistan - Financial Corruption Rating”, Trading Economics Organization, 2021

The failure to implement projects and plans focused on women’s rights, which is due to GIROA corruption, in addition to wasting financial resources, also causes the achievements of women to fail.

C. Poor and Conservative Government Performance in Supporting Women's Rights

The issue of women and their rights has been one of the most important issues in the country since 2001 when GIROA took power. The Afghan constitution provides special rights and status for women. However, the unfavorable situation of women and increasing violence and suicides indicate that the law is still on paper, and GIROA does not make significant efforts to implement laws focused on women.

In 2019, AIHRC released a report examining the situation of Afghan women. According to this report, 85% of Afghan women and girls are still illiterate (Statistical Yearbook 2004, Central Statistics Office: 39). Maternal and child mortality rates in Afghanistan are among the highest in the world. So that every 30 minutes, one woman dies due to pregnancy problems, and the number of these deaths is 16 out of every 1000 women, which is 60 times more than in industrialized countries (Afghanistan National Human Development Report, 2004). More than 50% of women are beaten in addition to other forms of violence (Violence Against Women Research, AIHRC, 2004). Afghanistan's constitution guarantees women's participation in elections, but in different areas of Afghanistan, men vote on behalf of women.

The mentioned problems and disorders indicate the poor and incorrect performance of GIRoA towards the realization of women's rights, which has caused the achievements of women to fail. During the last two decades, many laws, legislative documents, and plans have been made to protect women's rights and increase their capacity. The lack of proper implementation of most of those laws and plans indicates the weakness of the government, which has not been able to change the country's laws in favor of improving women's lives. The government is powerless to reform the nation's laws in a way that will better the lives of women. Even if new laws are passed, the government is unable to ensure that they will be followed. The laws are flawed or in some cases, the laws do not provide the details that women need. For example, family matters, require the enactment of separate laws for the family. Civil society assemblies are still in the process of enforcing the law. Laws are also less enforced in cases such as the EVAW law. As mentioned above, in many cases there are rules, but it takes a long time to implement.

Many of the problems and violence against individuals, especially women, are not pursued various reasons, such as considerations, communication, connections, common interests, or the inability of government officials. GIRoA has always tried to show its support for women's participation in the political and social spheres in order to receive projects and money from the international community in the name of supporting women (Sedigheh Norouzian, 2011).

D. Insecurity in Afghanistan

During the twenty years of GIRoA, the people of this country have always faced security problems. Poor security conditions prevent the progress of development programs and projects, especially those designed for women.

In 2019, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) published a report on the increase in civilian victims in Afghanistan. According to the report, civilian victims increased by 42% in the first nine months of 2019 compared to 2018. The UNAMA report has recorded 8,239 civilian casualties in 2019. 2,563 people died and 5,676 others were wounded. Women and children make up 41% of the total victims. The number of civilian casualties has been increasing every year. Reports from 2018 show that civilian casualties have increased this year compared to the previous year (UNAMA, 2018). A cursory look at the number of civilian casualties in the country

shows that with each passing year, violence and war are becoming more widespread, and takes victims from the defenseless and vulnerable people.

Programs and projects focused on women's rights are targeted at cities and urban women due to insecurity. There have been many changes in the lives of urban women and girls in recent years. They go to school and university, they have easier access to hospitals than rural women, most urban women are aware of their rights, and they turn to the police and the judiciary if they encounter violence. Women in the cities are employed in government positions or in private organizations, and to some extent solve their own and their families' problems economically. However, rural women and women living in remote areas do not have any of these benefits.

Insecurity and war in Afghanistan prevent the implementation of women's capacity building projects and programs, fully and correctly across the country. In addition to the security problems perpetrated by the opposition, in areas outside the city, women's rights opponents, such as mosque imams, local elders, and village lords, make the project implementation process difficult. Those who consider the teachings of human rights to be contrary to the precepts of Islam and their traditions do not allow the implementation of projects, and by creating insecurity, they make the conditions for implementing projects more difficult. Therefore, women have not been able to achieve tangible achievements in implementing projects. The projects and plans of the government and the international community have not been implemented as planned and anticipated, and they have been implemented incompletely. Lack of proper implementation of projects is another factor in the fragility of women's achievements due to insecurity in Afghanistan.

The 2019 APPRO survey shows that changes in security conditions have varied in the 12 provinces concerned. In all cities, there has been a general increase in criminal activity, Taliban attacks, kidnappings, suicides, and targeted killings.

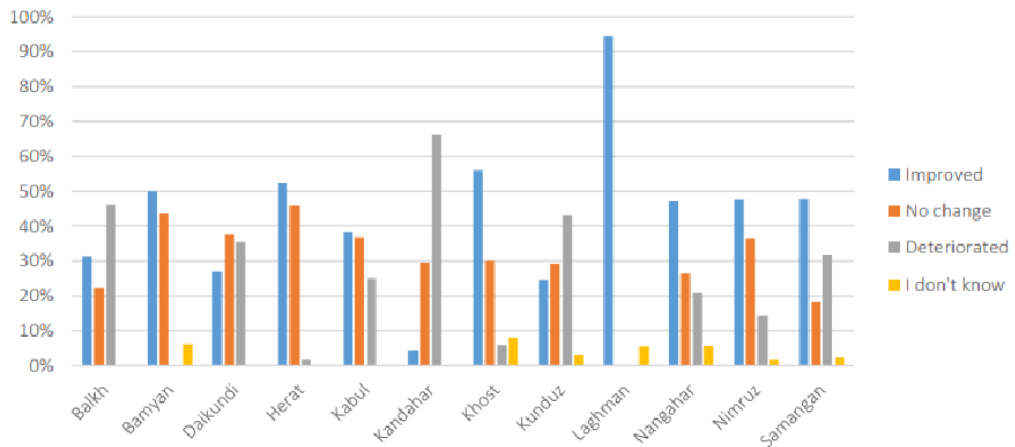


Figure 9: Security change survey

Source: “Report of the seventh period of monitoring from the plan of 1325”, APPRO, 2019.

E. Ignoring Women in the Peace Process

Studies have shown that acts of aggression, military conflict, colonial policies, and any foreign intervention, as well as terrorism and violent behavior, have further harmed women. Violations of the human rights of women and children during wars and military conflicts have clearly threatened the foundations of the health and security of human society. For the economic, political, and social development of a society, it is necessary to make reasonable and comprehensive use of the talents and facilities of all human resources, namely men and women. Appropriate conditions for education, work, and activity of women in the affairs of the country guarantee the establishment of lasting peace and the balanced progress of a society.

The UNSC adopted the famous Resolution 1325 in 2000. UNSCR 1325 considers the fundamental role of women in consolidating their position in matters of international peace and security. GIRoA was committed to observing with all the principles of UNSCR 1325 and therefore developed NAP 1325 for its implementation it. With the implementation of the 1325 plan, the political participation of Afghan women by the relevant agencies was increased and they were given the opportunity to participate in important decisions about peace and security (NAP 1325, 2015).

To end the war in Afghanistan, and to prevent the killing of civilians, peace talks between the US delegation and the Taliban were held on October 12, 2018, in

Doha, Qatar. The US and the Taliban signed an agreement in February 2020 to end the war in Afghanistan. In a 2020 report, Oxfam assessed the small share of women in the peace process. Women have attended only 15 of the 67 formal and informal peace meetings (Oxfom, 2020). Keeping women away from peace talks with the Taliban has raised many concerns. Something that Afghan women believe could have dire consequences. Afghan women are concerned that their achievements and freedoms in the US-Taliban peace game will be traded and destroyed. There was no representative from Kabul in the Abu Dhabi-Qatar talks, and neither were the women. Women were present in the Moscow talks but played a much smaller role than men. Out of 40 Afghan political participants, only two women attended the Moscow summit (Tolo News Network, 2020).

Afghanistan's war has been going on for 41 years. Afghanistan's protracted conflict and its ensuing history have made Afghan women even less represented in society's social, political, and economic spheres. Afghan women are still not allowed to participate in decision-making processes or hold leadership positions. Sustainable peace will not be possible in Afghanistan if women are not included in peace discussions and other peace initiatives (Sima Samar, 2019). Women have not been included in the national and international meetings that have been formally and informally held on the Afghan peace process. Using the symbolic presence of women in the High Peace Council (HPC) and their non-involvement in important political and national debates on peace has jeopardized women's achievements and future. Ignoring women in the peace process means destroying their achievements, because no domestic or foreign group can decide for women and defend their achievements on behalf of women. The presence of women in HPC can be a positive and effective step for their future role in the peace process. However, the absence of women in Taliban negotiating delegations indicates that the defense of the status and role of women in the Afghan peace process has been one-sided, and the other side of the conflict seeks to limit the women's participation and position in the post-conflict period.

F. Lack of positive peace and negative peace

The international community still faces serious challenges to achieving international peace and security. Numerous human rights violations have led governments around the world to think of ways to prevent such incidents from happening. Promoting and spreading the culture of human rights among communities seems to be a good option, because of the impact that human rights education has on the information and skills of different segments of society, it has the potential to change society, be receptive, and ultimately strengthen peace.

The UN's members enshrined respect for basic freedoms and human rights as the cornerstone of international peace and security in the preamble and Article 55 of the Charter. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that the recognition of the inherent dignity of all members of the human family and their equal and inalienable rights form the basis of freedom, justice, and peace in the world (Javanshah Behkoosh, 2021).

The word peace is used in different societies with different meanings. In general, there are two interpretations of the concept of peace: the concept of negative peace or peacekeeping and the concept of positive peace or consolidation of peace. Negative peace reduces peace to a state of absence of war. This peace is unstable and is maintained by negative means, such as threats, obstacles, or a lack of will or ability to engage in violence, and it is still possible to resort to war in reality. Thus, the original and root causes of conflict remain unresolved. Positive peace is the expression of a situation that, in addition to the absence of war, has factors and guarantees that make it constructive, just, and democratic. In the process of a positive peace process, not only do countries' military forces stop fighting each other, but they also return the economic and political situation to favorable conditions. In this situation, peace is a dynamic goal of national and international communities (Kabul Sobh News Magazine, 2021).

Since the global wars of the twentieth century, there has been a concentration on the idea that such massive violence will never again occur. In order to achieve this, organizations like the UN and its successor, the UN, were founded as the "House of Peace Negotiations." Nations approved and signed international agreements after making official pledges. Nowadays, more nations—especially those in the First

World—place a greater priority on ensuring peace since it offers a fresh perspective on how societies should evolve in order to preserve peace.

Understanding positive peace does not just prevent violence. Strong investments in good peace are linked to many desirable aspects of society, such as a successful economy and low levels of corruption. Eight factors that contribute to peace, according to the World Institute for Economics and Peace, include effective governance, equitable resource allocation, the free flow of information, good neighborly relations, high levels of human capital, acceptance of others' rights, low levels of corruption, and robust trade. Today, First World countries seek to provide positive peace indicators so that they can be at the forefront of positive peace, while in second world countries this situation is slower. But most developing countries are far from positive peace because they are still in a state of war and violence. Third-world countries need negative peace in the first place to bring about a ceasefire between the warring factions.

Although the lack of positive peace in Afghanistan increases the fragility of women's achievements, it cannot achieve positive peace because Afghanistan is a third-world country and does not have positive peace indicators. Therefore, a negative peace could be a good solution for Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, positive peace and negative peace are institutionalized when there is no gap between the government and the nation, there should be no violence or conflict between races and religions, and peaceful life while accepting pluralism as a principle in society and minimizing gender discrimination. Afghanistan's 2020 peace talks and the confirmation of the release of 400 high-profile Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan showed that Afghanistan was facing a 'negative peace'. The people of Afghanistan were interested in stopping the war and bloodshed and welcomed the decision. Knowing that the Taliban who have been released are the ones who have killed many innocent people in attacks and suicides, they knew that with this decision, justice would be sacrificed to peace (Nevin News Magazine, 2020).

The US has signed an agreement with the Taliban to end the longest US war in Afghanistan. As Afghan women were deprived of all their basic rights several years ago under Taliban rule, the agreement between the Taliban and the US was seen as a sign of the destruction of their achievements. Expressing these concerns was certainly not in the sense of opposing peace but objecting to how these negotiations and the

process were conducted. Given the prominent role of women in society, it is very important to ensure that women play a key role in the composition of the negotiating team. Women need to make sure that the negotiating team considers the protection of women's rights as one of the priorities of this negotiation.

How to integrate the Taliban into these structures is one of the things that require women to have their views and opinions taken into account. Afghan women have been working for years to stand united in defending their values, and regardless of ethnic, religious, or political interests, they have spoken out in defense of their rights. Negative peace, while not lasting, can enable women to continue their political and social activities, and in addition, to increase their achievements, they are able to maintain the achievements they have achieved over the years of struggle.

Negative peace stops war and creates peace and security in society. Women have the opportunity to work harder and improve their skills. Women can fight for their rights and many girls will go to school. Achieving gender equality and eliminating any discrimination requires a lot of effort and will take a lot of time. If there was a negative peace in Afghanistan, the people hoped that a negative peace would turn into a positive peace over the years. But there is still no peace in Afghanistan and women are still worried about progress and maintaining their achievements.

G. Gender discrimination

Discrimination is a measure of social and situational inequality between individuals in society, as a result of which individuals in society do not have equal rights and there is no equal social mobility for individuals in society. There are different types of discrimination in the world. In any society, a type of discrimination is more common according to the tradition and laws of that society. For example, religious discrimination is a common type of discrimination in religious countries that attach great importance to their religion. Each type of discrimination harms a section of society. Gender discrimination that accompanies members of society from the beginning of human history to the present; the conditions of culture have changed at different times and these discriminations have been transferred from one to another in society (Bitoteh Psychology Website, 2021). Albert believes that discrimination is caused by social factors in a society. He believes that society creates all kinds of

discrimination by making laws. Because sometimes the rules give more privileges and opportunities to one group than another (Alpert, 1954).

Gender discrimination has deep roots in Afghanistan and the foundation of this inequality is certainly growing more and more every day. In Afghan society, the continuation of life is imbued with tradition and modernity, and the struggle against gender discrimination is very difficult. In Afghanistan, schools for girls and boys are separate, girls are sold as children, the right to divorce belongs to the man, and most jobs are regulated in a way that is difficult for women, or there are strict rules on the performance of a job that women cannot afford. In Afghanistan, the political sphere and the economic sphere have been introduced as two factors as sources of power. According to the idea of gender perception in Afghan society, most of these two areas belong to men and the share of women in these two areas is weak (The publishing organ of the National Progress Party of Afghanistan,2018).

Usually, two types of gender discrimination, which include direct gender discrimination and indirect gender discrimination, are more common. In direct gender discrimination, women are not treated well because of their gender. In direct gender discrimination, women are beaten by family members, and they cannot leave the house without the permission of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and other men, women are victims of any kind of violence, especially family violence. Indirect gender discrimination is also very common in Afghanistan. Working hours are regulated in such a way that it is difficult for women, who are also responsible for taking care of their children, to follow labor laws.

Women are often not elected to political and important positions because they do not have the necessary skills and experience because they have been away from education and work for years. Gender discrimination prevents women from being empowered enough to do anything to preserve their achievements. Despite discrimination, women can hardly progress and reach high positions. Women's movements are needed to maintain the gains, and it is very difficult to form strong women's movements despite widespread discrimination in Afghanistan.

Discrimination can be seen in all areas of Afghan women's lives. The enrollment of girls in school and university compared to boys, the employment of female employees compared to men, and the degree of freedom and access to basic rights for women compared to men, and many other areas. Afghan women must fight

all forms of discrimination in order to maintain their achievements, and determine their share in the economy, politics, society and strive to achieve them. According to statistics from the Afghanistan Free Media Support Agency, 1,000 women journalists have left the country since 2014 for a variety of reasons. These statistics show that in 2014, the number of female journalists reached 2,400, while in 2020, only 1,500 female journalists are employed. According to these officials, the two main factors reducing female journalists are insecurity, especially targeted killings, and gender discrimination (Afghanistan Monitor News Agency, 2020). In 2015, the Afghanistan Statistics Center announced the statistics on women's participation in decision-making and management level, and in these statistics, the contribution of women is very low.

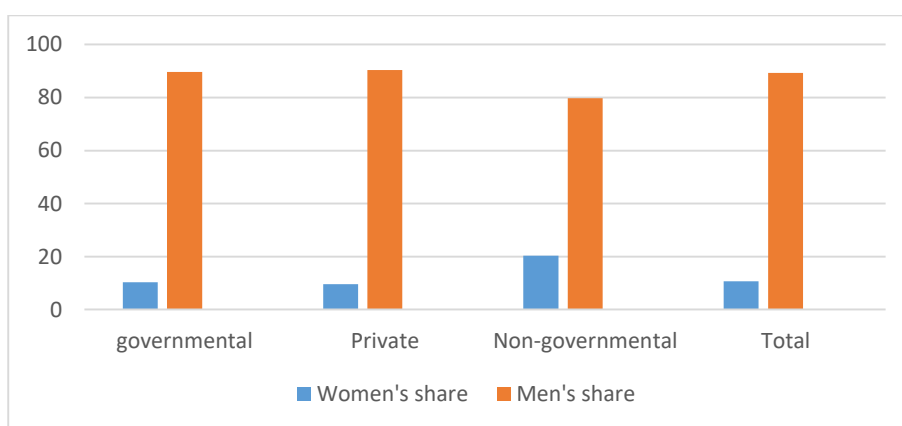


Figure10 Share of women and men in the decision-making level according to the sectors in 2015

Source: Jafari, Siddiqa, "Obstacles to women's political participation", Kabul, 2015

The 2018 statistical yearbook of Afghanistan's National Statistics and Information Department shows a huge difference in women's participation in various government departments, which has raised concerns among women.

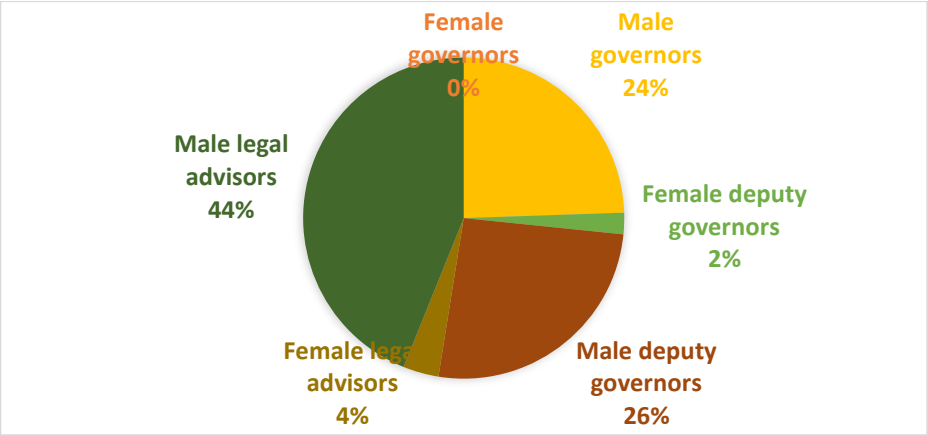


Figure 11: Number of governors, deputy governors, and legal advisers by gender

Source: “The statistical yearbook”, Afghanistan's National Statistics and Information Department, 20.

VI. CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS

A. Conclusion

A quick look at the history of Afghanistan shows that in addition to the fact that the progress for women has been very slow and unstable, setbacks have always been rapid and continuous. If at one point in time and in one government, women and their progress were valued, several other regimes and governments would deprive them of even their basic rights, which were education and employment. The achievements of women have been completely destroyed with the change of each government and regime.

Many reasons can be attributed to the failure of the struggles, activities, and projects supporting women in Afghanistan. If the issue of women and violence against them is addressed more broadly and farsightedly, insecurity and peace in Afghanistan can be considered as one of the main causes of violence. Ignorance of women's rights, rape during and after the war, running away from home, harassment of women at home and abroad, field courts, lack of social status and many other issues can be attributed to the lack of security and peace in Afghanistan for several years.

In fact, women can never be expected to achieve and maintain their human status and value in an environment far from peace and security. Peace and security in a society is the only factor in the progress of that society. The neglect of the role of women in peace talks indicates the failure of the activities and struggles of 20 years of Afghan women. The achievements of women, like other erroneous plans and programs and inefficient money of the UN and countries and organizations supporting women, were implemented with the sinister plans and political games of US power and its money in Afghanistan. The women's rights discourse was a foreign project and never an Afghan project. Girls and women in the cities were able to study, work, have the opportunity to express their views, and eventually enter the public sphere and take advantage of the opportunities used by men. This means that they benefited a lot from these programs. The problem with women's rights discourses and projects was that it

was an urban and Western discourse and a closer look at these discourses proves that even in the cities of Afghanistan, the position of women in families is unequal and the issue of women's rights and equality of women has not been the main issue of Afghan society for these twenty years. Due to the fact that, culturally, this has been new and distasteful to Afghans.

In Afghanistan, the debate over women's rights had been intertwined over the years and soon became a political and financial project, and everyone raised the banner of this discourse in the name of protecting women's rights, just to get the project and gain political position, and the result was that the women's discourse project soon rotted from within. Inasmuch those programs had nothing to do with ordinary people. As a result, it did not become an indigenous and autonomous movement and became a source of great economic and political privilege, and the people and even women themselves became pessimistic about this discourse in Afghanistan, since they saw that the forces were supporting the women's rights discourse only for the purpose of gaining a seat and a privilege. At the political level, the result was that this discourse lost its credibility due to abuse and privilege, and no one supported it. The experience of the past twenty years shows that if social change is not the product of the social struggles of the Afghan people themselves, it will not be sustainable.

In these twenty years, Afghan people had realized the incompetence of the government, politicians, members of parliament and civil society, and so everyone was trying to think in the name of protecting women in a profit-seeking manner. As a result, no political or social forces were formed to defend some of the achievements and ideals. For instance, Islam has its own very powerful social forces. In fact, the Taliban are the social forces defending Islam. They are the social forces of backward, social, and religious relations in Afghan society. It means, there is a consensus in part of Afghan society and the Taliban. In the case of women's achievements, too, there had to be a social force to defend the destruction of women's achievements, even with regime change.

As a result, it can be clearly said that women's rights and their achievements were not the product of women's social struggles themselves, while the issue of oppression and discrimination is an objective and material issue, but the struggle for women has not been an objective and pervasive phenomenon in Afghanistan during these twenty years. It was a purely organizational phenomenon and limited to social

networks. Unlike in other countries, women's rights activists did not have an organized struggle, did not know their demands, their knowledge of the struggle was very limited for women, and they had no connection with other social movements because they had no understanding of them.

The results of this study indicate that, GIRoA is to blame for these failures and the waste of human and material resources. Widespread corruption in all government ministries and departments and poor government performance marginalized women. Widespread corruption in all government ministries and departments prevented the implementation of projects. The poor performance of GIRoA in supporting women and preserving their achievements also left women marginalized and deprived of their rights. GIRoA's lack of importance to women's political participation in security and peace, and their lack of participation in decision-making, has created many problems for women and their achievements. The lack of strong and real movements for the defense of women's rights has slowed down their activities and has prevented the plans from being properly implemented.

The present study shows that the symbolic performance of the MoWA and organizations focused on women's rights is another reason for the fragility of women's achievements. In addition to not being a major achievement for Afghan women, their performance has left many women victims of the implementation of projects.

B. Proposals

By conducting this research and identifying the challenges and problems in order to preserve the achievements of women, I offer the following suggestions.

- The Afghan government must take women seriously as half of society and continue to support them publicly, as the development and protection of women's rights is an integral part of the government's top priorities and accelerate the implementation of education and work plans for Afghan women. It is very clear that if the government declares its strong support for women and their rights, the people will surely accept this and care about women and their activities and will not violate their rights.
- Religious scholars and religious leaders must have a clear and unbiased

definition of women's rights that not only does not preclude the presence and activity of women, but also helps them to progress in their education and work outside the home. Religious scholars and religious leaders in Afghanistan must also speak openly about the inconsistencies of bad customs and traditions in religious teachings and Islamic principles. To prevent the abuse of some, Islamic experts, university professors, religious scholars, and religious leaders must work together to identify women and their activities.

- The police and the prosecutor's office, in accordance with the law, should investigate the complaints they receive in connection with customs and traditions, and the Attorney General's Office should immediately prosecute the mentioned complaints. Laws that prohibit violence against women impartially and for the benefit of women must be made known to all Afghans so that ignorance of these laws does not lead to women becoming victims again. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with institutions working for women and supporting women, should establish new laws on women's rights and freedoms by developing and conducting training and capacity building programs for all law enforcement officials. Until employees are aware of these women's protection laws and do not violate women's rights in the workplace.
- While Afghanistan is a country with a strange cultural diversity, the most primitive and medieval values and traditions rule in some parts of the country although, at the same time, in another part of this land, there are people with a completely different climate and modern way of life, as if they live on a separate continent. The high dependence of the people on old customs and traditions, especially in the villages, has made the life of women in Afghanistan face serious challenges over the years. Since Afghanistan is a country with a traditional and customary historical background, it can be clearly said that women have been the main victims of false values and beliefs in this country. International donors and women's advocacy organizations should design and implement plans and projects to support Afghan women, considering

these issues and the sensitivities of Afghan society until the bitter experiences of the past and the failure of women's activities and efforts are not repeated in the history of Afghanistan. They must continue to support women, regardless of any regime or government change, and not leave Afghan women alone.

- Afghan women must accept and believe that the work done is not enough for women. It is very clear that in this country, the efforts were mostly in the city centres, and the people of the villages and remote villages did not benefit at all from the programs related to the defense of women's rights. It should not be forgotten that the old, misogynistic, and traditional thoughts of Afghan men and even women need more time to change. Afghan women must continue their struggle, given the circumstances and the sensitivities of society. Therefore, in the current situation, Afghan women must continue their militant movements more slowly but steadily. They have to believe that the projects and programs that foreign countries and foreign sponsors have planned for them, it has always been temporary, and women must fight for their rights and achievements with pre-planned plans and with unity and solidarity among themselves by forming women's movements.

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RESUME

Zorah Aminpoor

Personal Profile

Zorah Aminpoor has over 13 years of diverse experience in the areas of humanitarian aid, human rights, legal representation, consolidation of democracy, gender equality, project management, peacebuilding, anti-corruption and strategy and policy development. Zorah has some abilities such as familiarity with research techniques and skills (research methodology, documentation and reporting), research management (organizing work and activities, information management, use of information resources), communication skills (scientific writing, non-scientific and scientific presentation, promotion of general understanding and coaching), teamwork skills (building relationships and networking), personal productivity (creative and innovation, flexibility and open mindedness, self-reliance and self-sufficiency).

Education Background

- Master of Political Science and International Relations (Thesis is under process) Istanbul, Turkey.
- Bachelor of Science from Law and Political Science Faculty 2016 – Herat, Afghanistan.

Thesis Title:

- Master's degree: Causes of fragility of the Afghan women's achievements between 2001 and 2021
- Bachelor's degree: Iraq crisis and the rising factors of appearance of ISIS in Iraq

Publications:

- "Causes of Fragility of the Afghan Women's Achievements between 2001 and 2021" (<https://uijir.com/current-issue/>)

- Causes of failure of the implementation of National Action Plan 1325 in Afghanistan (Under Published)

Professional Experiences:

- July 2021 - December 2021: Business Development Officer, with the Roots of Peace, Herat Afghanistan (ROP)
- Nov 2020 - July 2021: Gender and Youth Empowerment Officer, with the Roots of Peace (ROP) Herat Afghanistan
- Jan 2018 - Sept 2019, Provincial Coordinator, with the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA), Herat Afghanistan
- October 2015 -December 2017, Program Assistant, with the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA), Herat Afghanistan
- March 2014 -June 2015, Anti-Corruption Manager, with the Supporting Organizations of Afghanistan civil society (SOACS), Herat Afghanistan
- May 2013 - February 2014, Admin and Finance Manager, with the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), Herat Afghanistan
- February 2010 - April 2013, Manager of the Department of Labor Women and Children, with the National Union of Afghanistan Workers Employs (AMKA), Herat Afghanistan
- May 2008 - September 2009, Manager, with the Payam Cultural and Art Center, Herat Afghanistan

Language Skills:

Languages	Writing	Reading	Speaking
English	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent
Dari	Native	Native	Native
Pashtu	Good	Good	Good