



Educational Equality Deferred: Women's Access to Education in Post-2021 Afghanistan

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Abstract: Afghanistan's history of female education has been marked by many obstacles and disappointments. The most disadvantaged group in terms of educational chances is Afghan women, who have had to overcome major barriers to obtain an education. This paper delves into historical context of female education in Afghanistan, shedding light on hurdles and impediments women have had to overcome. It explores how different historical periods, such as Taliban's era and the post-2001, have impacted female education in Afghanistan. With the resurgence of the Taliban in 2021, the study also assesses the current state of women's education in the country. Moreover, the paper examines the legal and cultural factors that have shaped women access to education in Afghanistan. It identifies persistent obstacles that continue to hinder women from receiving an education, despite efforts to improve access and opportunities.

Key Words: Afghanistan, female education, Taliban, historical context, challenges, educational opportunities.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Education is not just a fundamental right; it is a critical component of societal progress, offering pathways to empowerment and equality (Mashwani, 2017). It has such a large impact on both individual and societal empowerment therefor equal access to education for women is an extremely important issue. Providing equal opportunities for women in education promotes social cohesion, economic growth, and sustainable development in addition to upholding the values of justice and human rights (Inayatullah, 2022.) Schultz W. Theodore (1961) was one of the early proponents who identified education as a vital investment essential for fostering economic development. Moreover, women can gain the knowledge, skills, and competences necessary to fully engage in the social, economic, and political arenas when they have equal access to education. Consequently, improved productivity, increased creativity, and a workforce that is more inclusive and diverse all benefit society (Omari, 2023).

However, there are serious repercussions when women are denied or have restricted access to education. Women who do not have access to education are more likely to experience poverty, marginalization, and discrimination, which feeds the cycle of inequality and exclusion. They might be more vulnerable to early marriages, inadequate healthcare, and abuse based on gender (Equinet European Network of Equality Bodies, 2020). Furthermore, communities that impose barriers on women's access to education miss the enormous potential and contributions that educated women may make across the board. Because of this, promoting women's equal access to education is not only a question of justice and equity but also a wise investment in the growth of societies as a whole (Mings, 2017).

In the context of fragile states, the role of education becomes even more pronounced, as it can serve as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change. Afghanistan, a nation with a rich history and a resilient spirit, stands at the crossroads of these dynamics, particularly in relation to women's access to education (Shir Mohammad, 2021). Over the past few decades, Afghanistan has experienced significant shifts in its education policies, reflecting both historical legacies and contemporary challenges. The country's social, economic, and cultural landscapes are deeply intertwined with Islamic principles and ethnic traditions, shaping the lives of its citizens, especially women (Radic, 2010). Patriarchal family structures and tribal customs have long dictated women's roles and autonomy, creating barriers to their education and social engagement (Mashwani, 2017). In addition to cultural and societal hurdles, women's circumstances were further compounded by insecurity. Nearly forty years of fragility and instability have led to various changes in women's status in Afghanistan (Mings, 2017). In Afghanistan, women are often not required by law to pursue higher education (Shir Mohammad, 2021), While Article 44 of the new Afghan Constitution concentrates on women's education, Article 21 of the document states that men and women should be treated equally and that every citizen has the right to education (Easar et al., 2023). According to Article 35, it is illegal to prevent women from obtaining an education and doing so carries a six-month prison sentence. Unfortunately, there exists a disparity between the legally recognized right to education and the actual ability to obtain it (Kissane, 2012). In an investigation of the potential



causes of gender inequality in education, Cooray & and Potrafke (2011) looked at the influence of political institutions, culture, and religion. In the years 1991–2006, they encompassed as many as 157 nations. The findings indicate that, rather than political institutions, culture and religion are the main causes of gender inequality in education. Neither autocratic regimes nor democratic democracies discriminate against girls by denying them access to school. In Afghanistan's male-dominated society, women have historically been and still are in a precarious position with regard to education and social-political engagement. The low rate of female education involvement may be viewed as a major obstacle to the nation's progress. Actually, all societal obstacles that prevent women from pursuing education are closely related to Afghan cultural traditions that prioritize the education of boys above that of girls (Mashwani, 2017)

This paper will delve into the current situation of women in Afghanistan, comparing access to education before and after 2021, particularly examining the impact of the Taliban's resurgence. The study aims to shed light on the changes and challenges faced by women in accessing education in Afghanistan, highlighting the consequences of the Taliban's return to power.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Afghanistan's history of women's education has been marked by several attempts and disappointments, particularly during the 20th century (Mashwani, 2017). There have long been conflicts in Afghanistan regarding women's access to education, reflecting a broader struggle between modernity and tradition. Afghan women have endured various forms of violence, including forced isolation, mandatory head coverings, and educational deprivation (Kissane, 2012). In 1996, the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, overthrowing the Coalition government led by the Mujahedeen. The Taliban banned women from attending schools outside their homes, permitting only Islamic education at home. They prioritized madrasas and Islamic study centers over traditional schools, transforming every educational facility into some form of madrasa. This policy significantly impacted women's lives and freedoms, leading to severe restrictions on their participation in society (Kayen, 2022). Emadi (2010) reported that on September 28, 1996, the Taliban issued a directive through Radio Sharia, prohibiting women from working outside and girls from attending schools. Approximately 250 women in Herat province disobeyed this directive and were brutally assaulted by Taliban forces for violating Islamic law. During the Taliban administration, schools primarily accepted male students and outright forbade or restricted female students, denying the bulk of Afghan women an education (Adkins, 2016). In 2001, formal schools enrolled only one million boys, with no girls attending at all (BBC News, 2014).

However, despite these challenges, there have been efforts to improve women's access to education in Afghanistan. Organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO have worked to provide educational opportunities for girls, and there has been a gradual increase in the enrollment of girls in schools. Despite that, significant challenges still remain which includes security concerns, cultural barriers, and limited resources (Mashwani 2017).

3. Access to Education for Women in Afghanistan under the Islamic Republic: 2001-2021

After the Taliban regime fell in late 2001, the US-led coalition and the new government faced two major challenges in their efforts to rebuild education in Afghanistan: first, how could they establish an educational system in an extremely impoverished nation, and second, how could they reintegrate women and girls who had been denied education under the Taliban (Kayen 2022).

Following the establishment of the interim administration in 2001, women and girls felt inspired to seek education (Abdulbaqi, 2009). The Karzai-led government made it abundantly evident from the outset that education was their top priority, and international groups were instrumental in helping Afghan women throughout the nation regain access to education (Kissane, 2012). Article 43 of the 2004 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan states that free education up to the undergraduate level is a right for all citizens (Omari, 2023). According to Samady (2013), the latter half of the 20th century had left many schoolchildren without an education. To address this, the government launched a "back to school" campaign, which elicited a passionate response from millions of men and women who expressed a desire to learn. After 2001, the newly elected Afghan government got to work rebuilding the country's educational system. They built schools, hired, and trained teachers, provided for the needs of the kids, and urged families to let their daughters attend school (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In 2006, the Afghan government created the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) with the goal of increasing school enrollment rates overall and for girls in particular (Afghanistan Ministry of Education, 2006). The strategy set a goal to raise the proportion of girls enrolled in elementary schools from 35% in 2006 to 60% by 2010. The NESP also included initiatives to improve education quality, like training programs for teachers and the creation of educational materials. The NESP II (2010-2014) set goals to attain a 72% gross enrolment rate for females by 2014 and to provide an environment that is appropriate for female students to learn in. Furthermore, it was anticipated that 60% of the 3.6 million people in the target population would be female participants in literacy training. The plan also



prioritized the development and improvement of the nation's educational infrastructure while concurrently placing a strong emphasis on meeting the educational needs of people with disabilities (Afghanistan Ministry of Education, 2010). Also the NESP III (2017–2021) adopted a comprehensive strategy that included increasing infrastructure, decreasing gender inequities, improving student enrollment from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds, and boosting both the quality and accessibility of education. In order to close the access gap between urban and rural areas (Afghanistan Ministry of Education, 2017). International bodies including the United Nations have endorsed the government's efforts to improve women's access to education. Additionally, financial support has been given by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to educational programs in Afghanistan, such as those aimed at increasing the number of girls enrolled in school (USAID, 2023).

Historically, in terms of higher education, Afghan women had access to it during the 1950s, and many of them attended universities and other educational establishments. But by the early 1990s, about 40% of women were enrolled in college (Giustozzi, 2010). The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government has been given more duty to develop and fund elementary, middle, and high schools as well as postsecondary education. By founding a few public institutions around the nation, the government was able to somehow ensure that both men and women had access to high-quality education (Kayen, 2022). In higher education institutions, 52,200 students studied from 2002 onward (Roof, 2015). Women's access to higher education has advanced significantly during the last 20 years. Zirack (2021) reports that, with 31% of female candidates sitting the university entrance exam, the proportion of female candidates in the national university entrance exam (Kankor) has climbed significantly over the past 20 years.

Despite the fact that the new phase of women's education in Afghanistan significantly aided in the return of women to higher education, it was beset by serious problems, including inadequate funding and security concerns, in addition to more minor problems like a shortage of teachers and a shortage of schools (Samady, 2013). The government worked very hard to get women into educational institutions during the last 20 years. The Ministry of Education ran a program from 2002 to 2005 wherein girls who had received non-formal education and were between the ages of 16 and 17 were enrolled in governmental schools' seventh grade (Omari, 2023). Girls with lower exam results than boys were admitted to universities by the Ministry of Higher Education. In cities and safe areas, the efforts of both ministries were successful; but, because of insecurity and cultural constraints, the majority of eligible females in insecure provinces were dismissed from school. Those who completed their education were dismissed from the institution, and their relatives were prohibited from attending as well (UNESCO, 2023). Enrollment at all educational levels increased tenfold in the nation between 2001 and 2018, rising from about one million students in 2001 to almost ten million in 2018. Between 2001 and 2018, the number of girls enrolled in primary school rose from nearly zero to 2.5 million. As of August 2021, four out of ten primary school pupils were female. From 5,000 female students in 2001 to over 100,000 in 2021, the proportion of women enrolled in higher education in Afghanistan climbed by about twenty times. Throughout that time, the percentage of women who can read and write doubled, from 17% for all age groups in 2001 to approximately 30% for all women (Powell, 2014).

4. Women's right in Afghanistan During the Taliban's Second Rule: 2021-Present

With the rapid advance of the Taliban armed forces and the easy and effortless capture of Kabul in August 2021 and the revival of the Islamic Emirate after nearly 20 years, the shaky foundation of democracy and civil rights suddenly collapsed on the Afghan citizens (Easar et al., 2023). In this way, the dream that was the result of two decades of continuous efforts of the civil society and especially the women of Afghanistan to achieve freedom and equal rights, in the struggle of overt and hidden political interactions and the settlement of accounts of major world powers and the region turned into a terrible nightmare (Kayen, 2022). Following their takeover of Afghanistan, the Taliban quickly implemented a series of directives and proposals that severely restricted women's rights and freedoms. Despite promising a more lenient governance approach than during their previous term, the Taliban issued more than twenty directives without prior commands or instructions (BBC Farsi News, 2023). On September 7, 2021, the Taliban announced an all-male interim cabinet, sparking protests (Rauf, 2021). The same day, three women were killed, and seven others injured in Herat due to Taliban shooting at protesting women (Hasht Subh Daily Media, 2024). The Ministry of Interior issued a statement the next day, September 8, 2021, imposing restrictions on protests and requiring prior notification to security agencies (BBC Farsi News, 2023). In September 2021, the Taliban dissolved the Ministry of Women's Affairs, barring women employees from entering the ministry (Amnesty International, 2022). In November 2021, female presenters were banned from appearing on television without full face coverings, and the dubbing of foreign TV shows into local languages was prohibited (Kayen, 2022). In December 2021, the Taliban imposed restrictions on women's travel, requiring them to have a male guardian for travel over 72 kilometers and banning solo travel abroad without a male relative. Safe houses for victims of domestic violence, known as "Aman" or "safe houses," were closed (BBC Farsi News, 2023). In May 2022, the Taliban began enforcing a strict dress code for women, requiring



them to cover their faces in public and only allowing them to leave their homes with a male relative (Easar et al., 2023). These actions significantly curtailed women's rights in Afghanistan, with four primary categories of oppression emerging: deprivation of political rights, limitations on public appearances and activities, prohibition of further education, and restrictions on the ability to seek employment (BBC Farsi News, 2023). According to Hasht Subh Daily Media (2024) Afghanistan is the only country on earth that does not allow women and girls to study. Every day that passes by the Taliban government, the restrictions on women increase and the Taliban show that they have not changed their approach and performance compared to the previous period of their government from 1996 to 2001 (BBC Farsi News, 2023).

5. Gradual Denial: Taliban's Systematic Suppression of Women's Education

Taliban's Unofficial Ban on Girls' Education: Closing Schools

On August 23, 2021, after the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the Education Commission of this group announced the closure of all schools in the country. Although the Taliban announced that primary schools would reopen on August 28, they said that a decision on high schools would be postponed to another time (Grant Farr, 2022). In fact, this unofficial ban of the Taliban was not implemented equally in all parts of the country. Many girls' high schools were allowed to operate due to the support of local Taliban leaders or strong pressure from parents and teachers. Even in areas where public high schools for girls were closed, a large number of private educational institutions and universities were operating (Khademirad, 2022). In December 2021, Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Motaghi said in an interview with Associated Press that public girls' high schools are open in 10 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and universities and private schools are also open to female students (Butt, 2023). On September 17, the Minister of Education announced that "all male teachers and male students must attend schools" (Kazemi & Clark, 2022) a statement that implied, rather than overtly, that female teachers and female students must stay at home. The Taliban said that more time was needed to design a curriculum specifically for girls as well as school uniforms for them, and to update the curriculum to better represent Islamic principles (Abdulbaqi, 2009). In practice, this was a kind of informal ban on girls' high schools. But the international community immediately reacted to this action and many Afghans, various UN bodies and foreign governments condemned this action and asked the Taliban to allow high school girls to study (Kazemi & Clark, 2022). In the event that the Taliban closed girls' schools, Tom West, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan, declared that the US would cover every teacher's salary in Afghanistan (West Thomas, 2022). Similarly, the World Bank promised to provide Afghanistan with help of over a million US dollars in early March 2022, including support for education (Khademirad, 2022). Other donors promised to fund public education in Afghanistan if schools for women were created. These donors included the Educational Cluster, a coordinating entity that consists of UN agencies as well as Afghan and international NGOs (Grant Farr, 2022).

Enforcing Gender Segregation in Higher Education

The universities resumed classes in their second month of domination, but only if they followed the gender segregation policy (Abdulbaqi, 2009). On Sunday, September 12, 2021, Abdul Baqi Haqqani, Acting Minister of Higher Education of the interim Taliban Cabinet, stated in a press conference in Kabul during the first days of his activity. The plan for mixed-gender education has been approved by the university scientific councils and has reached the Ministry of Higher Education for implementation. He continued that mixed-gender education is against the Islamic and national values of Afghanistan and will be ended as soon as possible (Butt, 2023). The Taliban considered the education of boys and girls under the same roof against the Islamic and national values of Afghanistan and decided three plans to separate the classrooms of the students (Ahmadi & Sultan, 2023). Initially, the Taliban demanded that male and female students be educated in separate buildings, if there are not enough facilities, the classroom shifts for girls and boys should be separated and each of them should attend the classrooms in separate shifts. Due to a shortage of facilities, both public and private institutions had to divide their courses into sections for male and female students using curtains. There were terrible limitations placed on female university students when they went to class. Not only were they required to hide their faces in university public spaces, but they were also made to do so in class (BBC Farsi News, 2023). Additionally, male educators were not permitted to instruct female pupils (Abdulbaqi, 2009).

Girls' School Closure: International Reaction to Taliban Decision

Following all the restrictions that Taliban imposed on women and girls the Taliban leadership said on March 23, 2002, that girls' schools would not open, despite pressure from around the world and the resources that the international community had given (BBC Farsi News, 2023). On the day that girl schools were supposed to resume, this decision was made at the last minute. Across the nation, a large number of girls who had been anticipating the reopening of schools that day instead discovered that their school was closed. Many teachers who had gone to work believing that their



schools would reopen were likewise taken aback by this statement. The decision to prevent many young ladies from attending school startled and upset them greatly (Grant Farr, 2022). It was not widely understood how the Taliban decided what to do. Undoubtedly, a number of their choices had been perplexing and, it seemed, counterproductive in some instances. According to Hasht Subh Daily Media (2024) at a three-day leadership session that started on March 20 in the Taliban headquarters in Kandahar, it was reportedly decided not to open schools for older girls beyond the sixth grade. Enrollment rates have been severely hampered by Afghanistan's restriction on girls attending school, particularly in areas like the Capital (primarily the province of Kabul), the Northeastern, Northern, Western (mostly the province of Herat), and Central provinces. Because of the welcoming attitude and encouragement of women's education, these areas have historically had high enrollment rates (Abdulbaqi, 2009). According to Co-authors' analysis from Ministry of Education Provincial Report with over 500,000 out-of-school female students, Kabul province—which includes both the city of Kabul, and its rural areas has the largest percentage of out-of-school female pupils. With 415,652 girls unable to attend school, the Northeastern region is the second most affected after the Capital region. This comprises the following provinces: 86,517 in Baghlan, 95,831 in Kunduz, 112,843 in Badakhshan, and 120,461 in Takhar. 400,888 pupils in the Northern region are unable to attend classes, making it the third most affected region. With 170,636 female pupils, Balkh province has the largest percentage of girls in this region prohibited from attending school. There are also a sizable number of impacted female pupils in Jowzjan and Faryab. In comparison, the provinces of Sar-e-pul and Samangan, with 49,065 and 34,657 impacted female pupils, respectively, have the lowest numbers. The whole class of 2023 secondary school girls and over 600,000 12th graders from 2022 are unable to attend schools in the Capital region (Abdulbaqi, 2009).

Closing Higher Education

On December 21, 2022, the Ministry of Higher Education issued an order closing female university, ending Afghan women's ephemeral hopes of pursuing higher education. Senior Taliban commanders had conversations that resulted in this decision because they believed that the university setting was incompatible with Sharia law and Afghan culture (Abdulbaqi, 2009). The Taliban's actions were met with widespread condemnation, with some calling it a "crime against humanity and international crimes" and even there were calls for a global campaign against this decision by the Taliban. According to BBC Farsi News (2023) the US State Department's spokeswoman, Ned Price, responded by denouncing the Taliban's decision on Twitter. He said that the acts of the Taliban are unjustified and violate the fundamental rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, and that the United States strongly disapproves of them. The continuous obstacles faced by Afghani women pursuing higher education are exemplified by the closing of universities and the maintenance of bans on female education. At the same time that the announcement appeared in the media, several of the women and girls participating in the protests called this Taliban command cruel and demonstrated against it. By posting films and writing on social media, these women and girls declared that the Taliban fully supported the ideology of darkness and ignorance and aimed to impose a medieval kind of government on Afghanistan (Ahmadi & Sultan, 2023).

In reaction to this Taliban action, some of the women and girls protesting said that the issuance of passports was put on hold until further notice, as were the operations of girls' schools, women's universities, and the right of girls to work. They also said that marriage contracts, currency withdrawals from banks, and the distribution of passports were all put on hold until further notice. They said they were citizens of a country where all activity were put on hold until further notice, with the exception of breathing (Ahmadi & Sultan, 2023).

Timeline of Taliban's Actions Against Women's Education in Afghanistan



- Source: work of author



The Effects of the Taliban's Return to Power on the Education Sector

Education and society have suffered greatly since the Taliban's comeback to power. According to the data and analysis, the limitations have hurt education, particularly for women. In this context, they have also negatively impacted girls from a variety of perspectives (Abdulbaqi, 2009). The worst impacts of the Taliban's comeback to power on society and education seem to be as follows.

First of all, the educational system in Afghanistan has suffered since the Taliban took over, especially for female students enrolled in private universities. The number of students has significantly decreased to zero as a result of the Taliban's severe limitations on women's and girls' access to education (Ahmadi, 2022). As a result, more than half of Afghanistan's private educational institutions have closed due to insufficient enrollment. Furthermore, in the event that there is no ban, female students who would have otherwise paid to study science or social science subjects are being forced to change their curricula to include a greater emphasis on religious themes, which goes against their educational objectives (Easar et al., 2023).

Secondly, the ban on female students' attendance at school and higher education after sixth grade has resulted in significant psychological damage, such as increased anxiety, sadness, and sorrow (Neyazi et al., 2022). According to BBC Farsi News (2023), girls were so touched by the Taliban's first attempts to close schools for female students who wanted to finish grade six that they publicly cried for the schools to be reopened. Numerous research has provided evidence supporting the idea that the prohibition on girls' education in Afghanistan has seriously harmed women's mental health in addition to impeding their ability to develop cognitively. Living in Afghanistan is undoubtedly a difficult and depressing reality, since it is the only country globally where girls are prohibited from obtaining any kind of offline education after the sixth grade (Ahmadi, 2022). When schools and universities close to that age group, girls lose out on an important source of support as well as opportunities for social and personal development. At this crucial age, they should be learning about problem-solving and life management through classroom discussions and debates, textbook examples, and trips home with friends. Lack of access to social services and education would make young females feel alone and forlorn. Closure of education institutions is one factor contributing to the rise in suicides, particularly among women. Given that girls attempt suicide at a rate of 80% and account for 95% of self-immolation deaths among those between the ages of 14 and 19, this issue needs to be addressed (Abdulbaqi, 2009). These circumstances may lead to a higher suicide risk, particularly in nations like Afghanistan where women confront additional barriers and limitations. The government's efforts to address the issue of rising female suicide rates are weakened by the shutdown of schools and colleges, which it imposed as a ban on education. A community-based mental health program and online psychosocial therapy are two essential resources and services that could assist prevent suicide but are now inaccessible due to this restriction. The prohibition on education makes it much more difficult for women to get the help they require in rural areas, where they already have limited access to formal education. The problem is made worse by the Taliban's strict regulations, which make it more difficult to accomplish the goals of combating suicide and offering online education services (Tharwani et al., 2023).

Third, Afghanistan's cultural, musical, and artistic manifestations are being hampered by the recent revision of university subjects and curricula to embrace a purportedly "Islamic" focus, as well as the abolition of the fine arts faculty, which included music classes and teachings, and cultural events. This stands in sharp contrast to the policies of former rulers like President Daud Khan, Monarch Zahir Shah, and the Communist administrations in general, who supported and encouraged the development of the nation's radio, film, and cultural industries. The Afghan cultural legacy is suffering from these recent developments (Ahmadi, 2022).

Fourth, women are unable to participate to the workforce as educators, administrators, researchers, managers, coaches, and female dormitory supervisors since they are not allowed to continue their education past primary school (Neyazi et al., 2022). Due to this ban, half of Afghanistan's population has their potential unfairly limited, and gender imbalance in the workforce and society at large is maintained (Abdulbaqi, 2009).

Fifth, The Taliban's prohibition on girls attending school in Afghanistan could have a major negative impact on the economy of the nation in the years to come. According to a recent UNICEF research, this ban will cost 5.4 billion US dollars, which is a significant loss of the potential economic contribution made by Afghan women if they had been allowed to pursue higher education (Neyazi et al., 2022). The restriction limits girls' economic potential and their capacity to contribute to the stability and progress of their nation by denying them the chance to learn new skills and expand their knowledge base. This emphasizes how crucial it is to support universal access to education, particularly for girls, in order to support Afghanistan's continued economic growth and ensure a more prosperous and sustainable future (Abdulbaqi, 2009).

Lastly, a prohibition on women attending school contradicts the core tenets of human rights. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), education is acknowledged by international law as



a fundamental human right. The UDHR also acknowledges that education is essential to promoting peace, well-being, and sustainable development as well as to the full enjoyment of other human rights (Neyazi et al., 2022).

6. CONCLUSION:

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has had a major impact on women's educational opportunities. The Taliban's concerted efforts to restrict women's access to education have resulted in a progressive denial of educational possibilities for women. The policies of the Taliban have undone many of the accomplishments made in women's education under the Islamic Republic between 2001 and 2021, creating more obstacles and difficulties for women who aspire to further their education. It is obvious that immediate action is needed to ensure that women in Afghanistan have equal access to education and to encourage women's education. This means that the cultural hurdles and discriminatory laws that prevent women from pursuing higher education must be addressed. Women's education should be prioritized in order to empower them, advance gender equality, and create a more just and inclusive society in Afghanistan.

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