

Women's Social and Political Rights in Afghanistan: A Historical Review from 2002 to 2020

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Abstract:- This paper addresses the women prospect in Afghanistan from 2002-20120: Social and political rights and understanding the recent states of women in Afghanistan. The main aim of this present paper is to look at how changed the women states in term of social and political rights, and access to political rights, access to health, education, economic and opportunities for employment. The study shows that women in Afghanistan since from long time were deprived from their political and social rights in both urban and rural area, but Afghan women didn't act or no women movement have been seen against of these much injustice. The data collected through the primary and secondary data sources especially through the main journal, text books and academic articles which is credible such as the history of doing an illustrated account of women prospect in Afghanistan for women's rights and feminism in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2016. The finding of this study shows the women achievement for the rights supported by the international communities at the different aspects such as increasing of presence of women in social, political activities. Finally, the study recommends the supporting of international communities ought not to stop and making strategies for effective participation of women in political, social, and education.

Keywords:- Women, Afghanistan, Social, Political, Communities, Feminism, Rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

After three decades war the new government of Afghanistan was established in 2001. Since the Bonn agreement in 2001, several conferences about women rights organized inside and outside of Afghanistan. The status of women gradually changed in various aspects of social and political in society. After 2001, the Afghanistan government has taking various setups at the highest level to encourage the rights of women in Afghan society. In the new government of Afghanistan has taking some reform such as: constructional reform, the formation of ministry, which is deal with women issues, tried to prevailed women into the country's growth strategies are the Karzai's government's most high-profile efforts. So, the formation of women ministry in Afghanistan was one of the main setups an admitting for that gender issues in Afghanistan, required attention and disregard at the highest level (1). As I

mentioned above, the contribution of international countries and organizing of conferences for achievement and promoting women's rights in Afghanistan was very tangible. Furthermore, after decades of war and insecurity, there have been some deal devolvement in terms of access to education, enhance health outcome and participation in public life. The international and national supporter for promoting women's rights in terms social and political rights such as: UN women Organization, Oxfam, World Bank, and Asia foundation... such as example from Asia foundation activities for promoting of opportunities of Afghan women and girl through the cooperation with a high level of as national partner, consisting government delegations and including government and important non-state actors including civil society, and tribal and religion leaders.

Asia foundation papered growing support of women for achievement to education and program that increase women participation in economic activities and access to social justice. And also, the foundation has supported the women ministry to make the capacity of women ministry of women affairs to be an efficiency sponsor for policy reform and preparation of services (2). In this trying to address the women's social and political rights in Afghanistan: A desk review from 2002 to 2016. Additionally, in this paper trying to prepare the relevant issues using the most authoritative and scholarly resources.

II. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

1. To identify the traditional obstacle and the level of women participation in political activities.
2. To identify and examine the role of NGOs and international communities for promote of women rights in Afghanistan.
3. Achievement of related and credible data from historical review.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the existing situation of women in Afghanistan?
What are the existing skills and capacity of Afghan women?
What level in political aspect have women participated during this period?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Considering its applicability; the descriptive method is employed in this study to explore the Women's social and political rights in Afghanistan: a historical review from 2002 to 2020. A questionnaire was distributed across such categories: women organizations women affair, NGO's, Master of art (University professors, social and political elites. In Afghanistan. This method provided an overview of women's political right, their participation and experiences across the Afghanistan from the questionnaires.

The data gathered, analyzed and interpreted through quantitative methods, makes this research more and more scientific and reliable. Because, quantitative methods and techniques, are used to tend going deep into the issues and search them in a quite inclusive way.

V. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The situation of women in Afghanistan has traditionally been lowly than men. This situation was various according to social-cultural norms, age and ethnicity. Indeed, the situation of women in Afghanistan, even up to the start of 20th century was the slave of their husband, their father, their elder brother and their father in low and so on (3).

VI. THE FIRST PHASE OF PROMOTING OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

In modern period "took place during the reign of Amanullah in 1923" and included fast reforms to progress women's lives and women situation in the household. The reform of this period faced several challenges and extensive protest, which is eventually led to the collapse of Amanullah Khan's regime (4). With the despite of several challenges and protest against women rights, that period was the main important point for the beginning of women activities for achieving their right in terms of social, political, and education. Women usually did not achieve to an education before this period, no formal education for studding of child girl. Only some few member of the upper class, informal education was pursuing at home not in school or some other place for the education.

Amanullah Khan handled serious measures for the change of women. Against multiple diminutions such as: battled against the veil, against polygamy and promote education for girls not only in Kabul, but around Kabul and outside (4).

Amanullah Khan and his colleagues started wider reform, including the women's movement in this period. Amanullah Khan has encouraged and provided platform for women education, according to the 1928 Constitution, the education of girl, like boys, were forced to a primary level. Despite of the limited number of schools, several and more than hundred students were sent for high level of education in such countries: Russia, Germany, France, and number of girl student sent to study in Turkey, those girls performed

farewell ceremony with senior government officials. These girls were the first student girls of the Afghan country who did not have a burqa (hijab).

The opinion of Amanullah Khan was that women should not be sold in exchange for money, and the women should tolerate their husbands. Thus, in 1920 founded the association for the protection of supervisor of his sister KUBRA and gave her the duty to protect women form injustice and the protest of their husbands. She wished and wanted the Afghan women must work with men and like men in all political, social, and commercial spheres, and women could work in all office that they want work and they could work in factories and they could work to anywhere they want and also the women could work in all political parties (5).

VII. THE SECOND PHASE FOR PROMOTING OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Here also, I want to examine the most important changes, which has been seen in the statue of women in terms of social, political and other capacity building of women in Afghanistan. The second period of great women's reform happened in the late 1970. At the same year look a rise in women's education, the universities, faculties and representative in the Parliament (Dupree, 1986). In that period, by the year of 1978 a decree was issued with the detailed intention of ensuring equality rights for women. This decree was including marriage constitution, the decree was described to the age of marriage for boys and girls (4). In this phase also significantly has been effort to bring change in women statue in different aspect. Even the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan used of force in bringing the changes to fulfillment, combined with a barbaric disregard for societal and religious sensitive, resulted in massive reaction from the rural population, as the below I will indicate a short note:

Engagingly during, this disturbance time "Soviet Union" Women issues moved core stage and implementation of carrying out of reform was enforced, up to a point. In this phase also considerable numbers of women were occupied in universities, Private Corporation and they could work such as doctors, nurses. Unfortunately, this step of social change for women statue also like the previous faced with some challenges. Caused concern among religious leaders and tribal (4).

VIII. THE THIRD PHASE OF WOMEN'S STATUE REVIEW IN AFGHANISTAN

In this phase, I want discuss about women's statue in under the Taliban rule. Women in this period deprived from their different rights, and oppressed through under the rule of Taliban and customary law. Detail will discuss as the following: During this period the Afghan women has been lack of attention in different activities, such as political, social and some other relative activities. Therefore, under the Taliban rule women were extensively demoted to the

indoor household sphere without economic physical and intellectual.

This regime (the Taliban) eliminated girls from education and forbade women employment outside of the house, only women could work in the house; they had issued decree that women can't work outside of the home. Afghan women in this period were unable to request medical attention from the male doctors and had restricted access to female doctor freedom. This regime also forbade Afghan women from showing face or walking without a close male relation in public place (5) Therefore, women situation under the Taliban regime was not desirable, Afghan women deprived from their essential rights, the women were lack of access from education, employment, health services, entrepreneurship, political, and social activities.

IX. THE FOURTH OR THE MAIN PHASE OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

A: Political aspect

In more than three decades civil war in Afghanistan women and girls damaged and faced many of violence. They have had very limited access to authority and resources historically. This limitation has differed between cities and villages during the different political regimes, but after September 11, 2001, Women's rights have become a landmark of the destiny of Afghanistan. A tendency of the global community to liberate Afghanistan's women from their economic, social and political destiny was the key to mobilizing by supporting western countries to overturn the Taliban regime. Governments of Afghanistan and international community have funded many policies running to improve the situation of women. Civil society, women leaders in politics, governmental administrations and business were significant to these programs. After toppled Taliban regime, government made a new Constitution which clearly recognized discriminations and injustices against women under customary law. It prohibited discrimination among the citizens of Afghanistan, and proclaimed that both men and women have equal rights and responsibilities in front of the law. The new Constitution introduced 25 percent contribution for women in parliament in 2004 but it decreased to 20 percent in 2013 (6). However, it generated many active women which participated to the national elections. Parliament was re-established in 2005 after 30 years the parliamentary elections. Despite existent many warlords in the parliament, 25 per cent of MPs were women in this year. Their votes in the parliament bear equal effect in legislation. However, from 2001, International community and international's organization have been strong voice of civil society and political activism for women of Afghanistan. They have supported women how they should struggle against religious fundamentalists and they have played main role supporting and attempt to promote women's leadership. Despite significant enterprise, they more attempt to urban areas and the rural societies don't have any significant change. However, promoting women's leadership need to work both men and women together and leadership should be exercised, studied,

understood and develop as a social activity and without any formal governmental position.

During this period or the main phase, the government efforts for promoting of women rights in Afghanistan. It was started with the major delivering by supporting of the international communities. As I have already mentioned in the introduction, the organizing of international conferences such as Bon conference, Shanghai conference, Geneva's conference, Landon conference, Rome conference on justice and the formation of many women organizations for women rights defendant, was more significant for promoting of social and political rights of women in Afghanistan. More details as the below:

After 2001 efforts has been for women rights and the elimination any discrimination, much of women's activism both within the country and outside of the country, Afghan women supported by both national and international. Considerable attention has been attracted, the activities has been focused on the wide range of question how to ensure women's rights commonly are defend against the possibility of injustice through the informal system of customary laws (5).

Now I would like to bring the result of this much effort for promoting of women rights. Subsequently the effort has given positive affect. The {Number of Women in National Parliament: 68/249 seats 27.3%, number of women in cabinet 23/102 seats 22.5%} but the local government the number is unknown (5). But the presence of women local government also considerable changed. The presence and activities Afghan women not limited only in these areas but the women activities increasing in other offices such as peace council, both the high peace council center comity and local or provincial comity and presence of women in political parties as members and event and key member of political parties. The new constitution of Afghanistan, that women and men have equal situation for realizing their full human rights and for supply to and promoting from, social, cultural, economic and political progress. The national supporter including foundations, imitations religious leader, or the government of Afghanistan has obligated to promote gender equality, promoting Afghan women rights in terms of social, cultural and political rights, and removing any kinds of violence against women through the new constitution country, various laws and signing global human rights treaties.

The international supporter work encourages women's participation at all levels of public decision making and political life, they have been supported Afghan women that on women as voters, as candidates and as viewer 2). At the main phase of promoting of women rights in Afghanistan have been taken to ensure Afghan women's delegates in key political process after the 2001. The women statue has gradually changed, for examples in the Loya Jirga (Supper Council) in 2002, 12 % of representatives were women. In 2004 in the Constitutional Loya Jirga the number of represents has been increased 20 %. An allocation system was put in place, ensuring women 25 percent of the seats in

the Wolesi Jirga (Lawyer House) and 33 % of delegates in Upper House or Meshrano Jirga (7).

B: Social aspect

Afghanistan may be the only country in the world where during the last century kings and politicians have been made and undone by struggles relating to women status. Recently, the situation of women under the Taliban rule has been center stage. The situation of women came to symbolize to Western military powers a justification of war in the name of freedom of women. But the situation of Women in Afghanistan today is not only the result of the Taliban policies. There is a history over the Centuries of women’s subjugation. Even in more recent times the Mujahideen (1992-1996) record is worse than the Taliban. Thus, one must approach the analysis of women’s situation in Afghanistan, not through the ideological formulation of before and after the Taliban, but within the larger historical context of Afghanistan. Only such a perspective can ensure that women will be seen as integral to the rebuilding of the Afghan nation (8).

Recently, the women situation is changed in society, in terms of social aspect, the tradition sensitive gradually decreased, there social restriction against of women decreased. Recently their voices were heard through the full kind of decisions that affect their social, cultural, civil, and political rights (9).

The analysis of the responses from the respondents of the study, as discussed in the methodology, has been analyzed and presented in this chapter. To make it easy for understanding, the analysis has been presented according to the study objectives as outlined in chapter one. Below are the presentations.

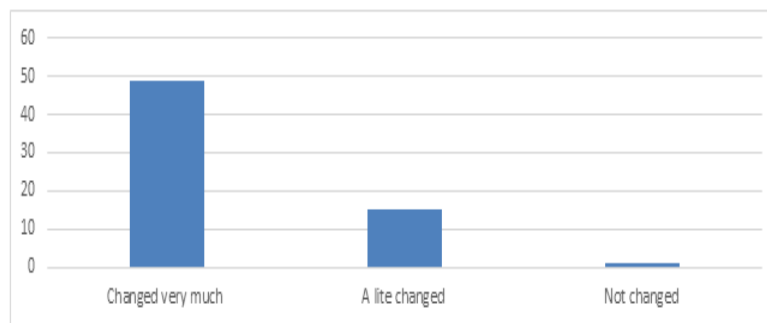


Figure 3.1: Changes of women situation after 2001
Source: field survey,2020

A. Proportion of women presence in political participation

After 2001 the new government of Afghanistan, in corporation with the international community, has invested vast resources seeking to ensure the emergence of women’s rights in social, political, business, and civil society. President Ghani has a reputation, however, for talking about increasing women’s participation in politics and promoting women’s rights more generally, and his wife, Rula Ghani (who has her own office inside the Presidential Palace), has been outspoken in her support of women’s groups. Although

X. ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND FINDING

Changes of women situation after 2001

As a result of assurance by the international community and Afghan government, women in Afghanistan had significant achievements, according to a survey conducted in deferent provinces of Afghanistan by the Asia Foundation in 2011. The survey, which included provinces such as Helmand and Nangarhar, found that Afghan women from different social classes believe that they are experiencing a slow but steady improvement in their live (10).

Data shows recently the opportunities of women involvement in social- political life of Afghanistan is changed there are ever more opportunities for women but historically Afghan women were ignored to take in political aspects. As an example, there 25 percent parliament seats reserved for women during the Hamid Karzi, and now political parties are recognized women take membership of their parties but still there is long way forward for women to access to the equal opportunities.

Data represents that even there are number of respondents highlighting equal opportunities for women but again there is need for some further discussions. Actually, there are the reason of less participation which provides better opportunities for men to be involved in political processes. Women due to illiteracy, traditional culture, gender discrimination and absence to the political bodies are enabling of having equal opportunities. More detail of less access to their right will discuss in the same chapter. The study shows 76 % of respondents highlighted the women statues are changed, 23 % of respondents indicate a little changed, a low percent of respondents indicates women’s statues not changed. Detail on the below table.

the formal space for women’s participation has changed significantly since 2001, a range of restrictions on women’s autonomy and capabilities remain. For example, most women do not drive or work in many public professions (such as shop-keeping) – and this is true in urban and rural settings and across different social classes (11).

Data shows, women presence increased in both private and public organizations such as: police8%, Parliamentarian 27%, School Teachers 28%, civil servants 18%, instructor

universities 15.2% and national army 1%. According to the Oxfam report discussed earlier, 28% of the seats in the Afghan parliament – 69 in all – were occupied by women in 2011. Afghanistan has committed itself to improving women’s representation in the legislature to 30% by 2020. The government has also pledged to ensure that 30% of all civil servants are female by 2013. Women are seeking access to jobs as engineer, teachers, doctors and civil servants etc.

Center for women empowerment was established with aim of supporting and providing resources to Afghan women and girls to help them to become empowered, economically independent, socially and political. The center for women empowerment idea is to empower Afghan women, with a mission to strongly support the development of assets and capabilities of Afghan women to participate in negotiate with, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their live.

Table 3.2: Proportion of women presence in political participation

Factors	Scale	F	%
Police	Male		92%
	Female		8%
Security sector	Male		94%
	Female		6%
Parliament	Male		72.7%
	Female		27%
Instructor of University	Male		84.8%
	Female		15.2%
Civil servants	Male		82%
	Female		18%
High peace council	Male		79%
	Female		21%
NGO’s	Male		79
	Female		
Teacher school	Male		71.5%
	Female		28%
Agriculture worker	Male		56%
	Female		44%

B. Role of media on women’s political participation

Media plays a major role in the current human communities, especially, in democratic societies allegorizing democracy and making relationship among communities and government. It is clear that media, as an inaugural key in the process of democratization of the community, has special and exceptional role. Women participating in the political activities, I tried to indicate the identifying role of media in the improving the women political participation.

We can say the media can play important an effective role in strengthening women political participation.

When asked the question: has the media been influenced to reduce the social isolation of women in Afghanistan? Data shows the media played important role in the present of women’s in political participation. 84% of respondents highlighted role of media very much important into account for motivating women participating and political activities. Detail on the below figure:

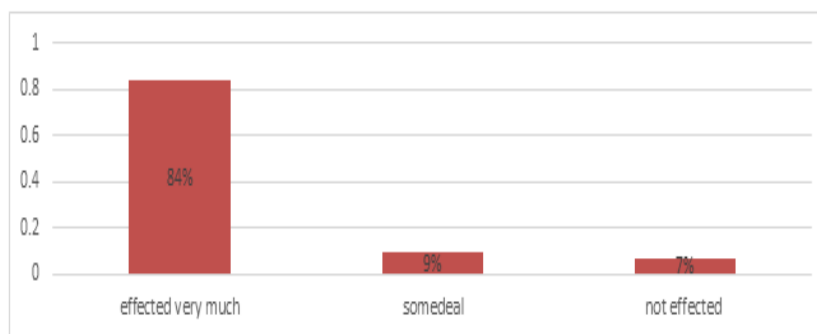


Figure 3.2: Role of media on women’s political participation
Source: field survey, 2020

C. Administrative challenges by women’s participation in political area

The data shows that nearly 49.3% of the women’s participation in political area still feel of being disrespected by government. Being a working woman and having work in political area is not overall an accepted phenomenon in Afghan society. Considering the type of the job it might varies because in cases such as being a police officer or working with army is still a men determinant occupation in Afghanistan. Traditionally women have not been present in the occupations such as police or military and that is clearly

showed on the below table where majority of respondents selected traditional norms as the reason of accused in the society. 59.4 percent of the respondents highlighted Role of security is most important in Women Political Participation. The social class, social status and social relationship of the women marked determinant in employment opportunities in this study. Over 72 percent of the respondents believed the impact of family structure on women’s political participation, these factors are strongly important for women in the work in political area.

Table 3.3: Experience of administrative barriers by women’s participation in political area

Factors	Scale	F	%
Public view about women’s participation in political area	Agree	34	49.3
	Neutral	5	9.8
	Disagree	30	40.9
Role of Education in Women Political Participation	Agree	66	84.7
	Neutral	5	7.2
	Disagree	5	7.2
Society disrespect and accuse politic women because of	Traditional norms	30	45.8
	Gender discrimination	15	21.7
	Religious believes	8	11.6
	Social problems	15	20.8
Role of security in Women Political Participation	Agree	41	59.4
	Disagree	28	40.6
Role of Economy on women’s political participation	Agree	56	81.2
	Neutral	4	4.2
	Disagree	9	14.6
The social status of women affects their employment opportunities	Agree	50	72.8
	Neutral	8	11.2
	Disagree	11	15.9
The impact of family structure on women’s political participation	Agree	45	65.5
	Neutral	10	14.4
	Disagree	14	20.3

D. Obstacles for Women’s Political Participation

Data shows there are a series of causes which restricts women in taking part at political aspect. Low number of the women in key positions, absence of women in the structure of political parties, low presence of women in governmental bodies and absence of women judgment are among the most causes of low participation of women in political area. Traditional political system of Afghanistan does not allow the women to take part in political parties’ particularly high levels of authorities. Illiteracy and lower capacity and capabilities of women in general is also another major cause deprived woman from their political rights. Detail in the below figure.

Generally, women still believe that educated families would more willingly allow their female members to study and work. As one provincial council member stated:

As a result, many communities and families sincerely believe that women should stay at home. A popular Afghan saying encapsulates this: “women are made for homes or graves”. The tradition of segregation of the sexes reinforces this belief.

In many cases, women have indicated suffering from immense strain; rather than facing constant pressure mainly from male relatives, colleagues and community members many women have opted for a low-profile approach, even if this meant resigning from their position (12).

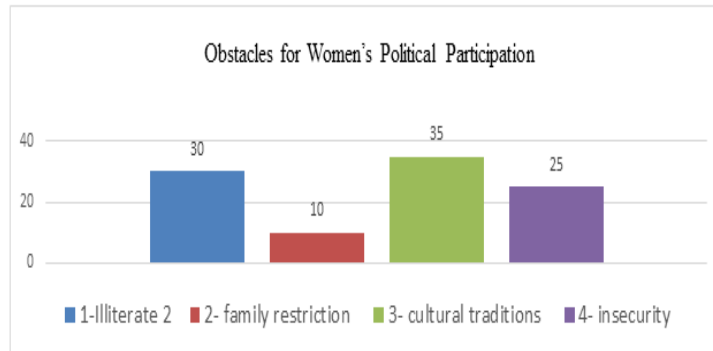


Figure 3.3: Obstacles for Women's Political Participation
Source: field survey,2020

E. The level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of women from the current situation

Improvements over the past decade, including a quota for women in the Afghan parliament that has reserved a quarter of its 249 seats for them. According to Global Bank report, in 2001 there was no girls attended formal school and there were only around one million boys enrolled. After 2005 up to 2014 around 7.8 million students attending school- including about 2.9 million girls. Women are now also employed in the different jobs such as national police national army and they are working some other positions.

The position of women in Afghanistan has changed and improved. Despite these improvements, there's still discrimination and violence against women in Afghanistan, especially rural areas. A numerous social factor continues to prevent women from fully engaging in society, and ongoing international support for Afghan women is still needed (more than ever). From the below table shows that 20% of the respondents are satisfy, 14 % of the respondents are neutral, 66% of respondents not satisfy on women's representation in politics.

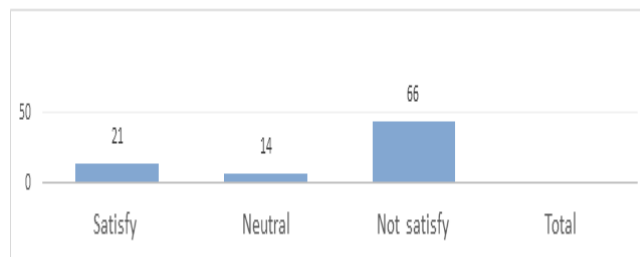


Figure 3.4: The level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of women from the current situation
Source: field survey,2020

F. Level of discrimination against women

Data show the high number 42% of respondents indicate there is very much discrimination against women empowerment, 33 % of respondents indicate much discrimination against women, 20% of respondents says there still discrimination against women development in Afghanistan, just the low number 4% of respondents recorded small scale and seldom discrimination against women in Afghanistan, detail in the figure 3.5. According Afghan women's Network convention on the elimination of

all forms of discrimination against women in Afghansitan. Unequal access to different types of capital (human, physical, social, financial) between women and men leads men to dominate the value chain with high value-added work such as processing, which requires more sophisticated equipment and skill. Men take management and leadership roles in value chain activities whereas women, if employed, tend to work mostly as unskilled employees or in subaltern positions.

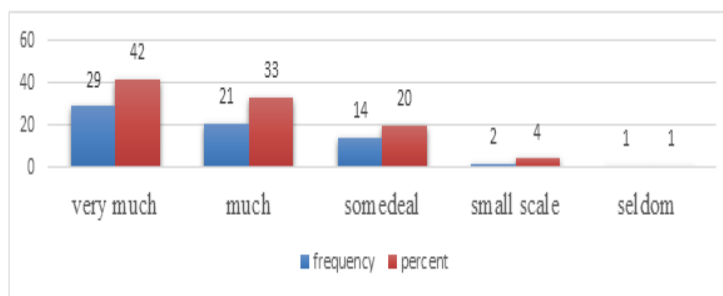


Figure 3.5 Level of discrimination against women
Source: field survey,2020

J. The role of international community for strengthening Afghan women abilities

Support the ability of Afghan women to ensure agreements made at the conference and beyond are understand, with new, devoted, long-term funding and strategic support for women’s organizations covering both core and programme costs, particularly for organizations operating in rural areas and for women human rights defender.

Work with the new Government of Afghanistan to finalize and proceed Afghanistan’s National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, accompanied by a clear implementation strategy, allocated resources and timeframe.

Fulfil their obligations under the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders by supporting the establishment, resourcing and implementation of an effective protection mechanism for Women Human Rights Defenders in Afghanistan.

International commitments and aid ensued to support sweeping governance reforms, alongside a major NATO combat mission. In the years after the invasion, NATO

coalition members celebrated the progress made on women’s rights as evidence of the success of their engagement As such, the London Development Conference on Afghanistan offers a vital opportunity for the international community to strengthen and renew long-term commitments to support Afghan women’s rights. This will be the first ministerial meeting to welcome the new Government of Afghanistan (GoA), renew commitments and identify immediate development priorities for the country’s future – setting the parameters for further talks and decisions at a meeting in Kabul in spring 2015.

https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/.../afghanista_n_briefing-final.pdf

Data shows, the role of international community and international aid was very crucial for strengthening women abilities. 63% of respondents indicate role of international communities was important, 27% of respondents believed the role of international communities is important, 7% of respondents indicate the role of international countries is some deal, and finally a low percent of respondents believed the role of international countries is not important. Detail on the below table.

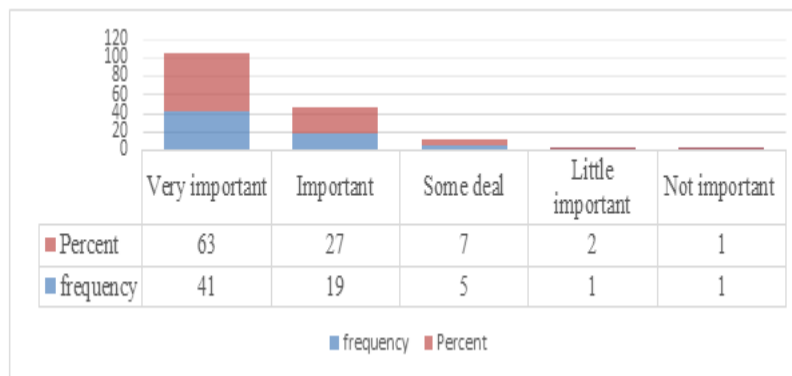


Figure 3. 6: The role of international community for strengthening Afghan women abilities
Source: field survey,2020

XI. CONCLUSIONS

The comparative of the different periods for promoting of women’s right in Afghanistan. In fact, the situations of women in Afghanistan, even up to the start of 20th century were the slave of their husband, their father, their elder brother and their father in low. The first period the formation of women movement was like reforms to progress women’s lives and women situation in the society, and the main purpose for women rights promote was to grow up women in social aspect.

The second phase for promoting of women rights was looked a rise in women’s education, and more less on political aspect, such as education for girls at the universities, faculties and representative in the Parliament. By the time ensuring equal rights for women, Afghanistan used many forces for fulfillment to bring change.

The third phase was very the women situation was not desirable, the Afghan women has been lack of attention in different activities, such as political, social and some other relative activities. At that time women were demoted to the indoor household sphere without economic physical and intellectual.

Finally, or the last phase, the promoting for women rights in terms of social, political, empowerment and any other activities for promoting of women rights begging with vast range of supporting of internal and international communities. The main purpose of this period was the practices gender equality, comprehensively, accountability and non-discrimination behavior in their daily life, promoting positive change at the common level.

The study showed Afghan attitudes changed in women roles and recently there were many conferences and programs to strengthen women participation in social,

political and economic activities. As well as the fundamental change required to achieve gender equity will take time and will require long-term commitment from the Afghan government, international community, civil society, and Afghan people themselves. Most of the respondents believe its most require to Afghan women participate shoulder to shoulder with men in rebuilding their country, also highlighted women need access to the health, education, economic, civic and security resources that are their rights as humans.

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