History of Formal Education and Influence of Politics in Afghanistan

Hafiza Yazdani

National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Otago University, New Zealand hyazdany@gmail.com

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This article presents detailed information on Afghanistan formal education system from 1868 to 2014. It provides information on Afghanistan's development of the modern education system from 1919 to 1929, a setback and the revival of formal education from 1929 to 1973. It elaborates on the progress of formal education in the country from 1973 to 1978 and education losses from 1978 to 2001. In addition, it discusses the history of women's formal education in the country and structural discrimination of girls' and boys' education in the history of Afghanistan. A timeline of the different regimes or governments and educational changes in Afghanistan can be seen at the end of this manuscript.

Education in Afghanistan

From the tenth to the nineteenth century, Afghanistan had a rich culture and advanced education (Kamgar 2002; Husham 2015). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Islamic tradition influenced every aspect of Afghan society

including education at all levels. Education was provided at home, in the mosques and madrasas (informal schools) and the tutors were the religious scholars (Samadi 2001). These education programs were supported by private sources, parents, communities, religious and tribal leaders (Samadi 2001; Husham 2015). Within these education programs young men prepared to be religious and community guides and teachers; there were opportunities for creative writing (poetry and literature); history, science and traditional medicine were available through private tutoring in small informal circles (Samadi 2001). Although informal education has continued in Afghanistan from the tenth century until the present, formal education was only established between 1868 and 1878 (Kamgar 2002). Formal education comprising the official educational institutes and well-structured school programs, with a grading system, different forms, specific timetables, separate modules, annual examinations and uniforms, was launched in Afghanistan by Amir Sher Ali Khan in 1868 (Baiza 2015; Samadi 2001; Husham 2015; Kamgar 2002).

Formal education received its formal shape and structure in Afghanistan during Amir Sher Ali Khan's reign from 1868 to 1878 (Kamgar 2002). Amir Sher Ali Khan established a formal education classroom-based school system for boys which is noted as a major accomplishment in his leadership. Amir Sher Ali Khan, who ruled the country twice, established two schools, one military and one civilian, during the second part of his rule (Baiza 2015; Husham 2015; Kamgar 2002). He initiated significant developments in education and humanitarian services for the Afghan nation, aimed at a new civilization (Kamgar 2002). The Military School located in Kabul had three hundred students who lived in a dormitory financed by the government. In this school, students were taught practical and theory lessons, writing, history, religion, and military knowledge and skills (Kamgar 2002). The Civil School, also located in Kabul, did not have live-in facilities, and most of the students came from high-ranking government families (Kamgar 2002; Husham 2015). The main courses of this school were law, diplomacy and literature, and classes were taught by foreign teachers. Notably, Amir Sher Ali Khan himself oversaw the schools' administration and even controlled the examination process (Kamgar 2002; Husham 2015). In addition to the two initial schools, the first publication, Shamsonahar, in Afghanistan was published during Amir Sher Ali Khan's reign. This publication included news, articles, poetry, and advertisements of that period. This publication represented a major step, initiating the advancement of Afghan culture and signalling the availability of opportunities for intellectual and academic progress (Kamgar 2002; Tanwir 2000).

After Amir Sher Ali Khan, his son Mohammad Yaqub Khan and grandson Amir Abdul Rahman Khan ruled as kings for over twenty years from 1879 to1901 but paid no attention to the formal education system (Javid 2002).

Abdul Rahman Khan ruled with a ruthless hand, for which he acquired the name, the 'Iron' Amir Abdul Rahman, as he focused on military forces and the suppression of tribal leaders (Javid 2002; Kamgar 2002).

After the death of Abdul Rahman Khan and what was considered a gloomy era, his son Habibullah Khan took over for eighteen years, from 1901 to 1919 (Kazim 2005). Habibullah Khan, who was a liberal man compared to his father, made a fundamental effort to revive the formal education system in Afghanistan, reconstructing the two schools and also establishing the first college, Habibia High School (Kazim 2005). Saif Rahman Samadi, who was the first Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Education from 1967 to 1971, stated in his article on education in Afghanistan that modern[1] education in Afghanistan corresponded with the establishment of the Habibia High School in 1903 (Samadi 2001, 2). Establishing the first college to train government personnel for a better civil service, Habibullah Khan made an attempt to build capacity towards development. Habibia College (or High School) was inaugurated in 1903 and had ten Indian and Afghan teachers with four hundred students (Kamgar 2002). Since then, this high school has been one of the leading schools in Afghanistan, and the early central political movements were led by this school. Later, six branches of this high school and three branches of the military school were established in different parts of Kabul (Kamgar 2002). Soon after, many primary schools and teacher training institutions were established. In 1909, a Board of Education was organized to supervise education activities in the country and to work on school curricula and textbooks (Samadi 2001; Husham 2015). Habibullah Khan's personal commitment to the development of the education system played an important role, and his educational policies were influenced by educational reforms in India around that period and Tarzi's[2] modernist ideas (Baiza 2015). Mahmud Tarzi, journalist, politician, intellectual and Afghan liberal who was educated in Turkey, was Minister of Foreign Affairs during Habibullah Khan's leadership. The political and educational reforms in Turkey and India became sources of inspiration for modern education in Afghanistan (Baiza 2015). It is important to point out that these schools were for boys only, and girls were not able to enrol. With the establishment of formal education in Afghanistan and for over fifty years, schooling was only for boys from the families of high-ranking government officials. In fact, formal

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[1] 'Modern education' means Western-style education.

[2] Suraya Tarzi, daughter of Mahmud Tarzi married Amanullah Khan. Having influence and a vital role within government authority under Habibullah Khan and Amanullah Khan, Mahmud Tarzi contributed to establishing modern education in Afghanistan (Baiza 2015).

schooling was for the sons of high-ranking government officials only (Kazim 2005; Baiza 2015).

Development of Modern Education in Afghanistan, 1919 – 1929

Habibullah Khan was assassinated, and his son Amanullah Khan took control of the country from 1919 to 1929. Educational development was a high priority for Amanullah Khan's government (Baiza 2015). He believed in Afghanistan's development and attempted to implement significant changes in the country (Baiza 2015; Samadi 2001). He succeeded in establishing Afghanistan's independence from the United Kingdom in 1919 and introduced momentous reforms in the country pertaining to development. Enhancing the education system and establishing the first girls' schools in Afghanistan were significant achievements of Amanullah Khan's government (Samadi 2001; Husham 2015; Baiza 2015). During Amanullah Khan's leadership, the Ministry of Education was established, and the first Minister of Education was appointed in 1921. A number of schools, including girls' schools, were founded in Kabul and more than a hundred schools for boys in the provinces (Kazim 2005; Javid 2002). Vocational institutes were established for the purpose of improving economic resources and increasing the supply of skilled labour (Husham 2015). Students of both sexes were sent abroad for higher education to study medicine, engineering, agriculture, economics, law and political science, as well as military studies (Tanin 2005). Two libraries were established in Kabul. Foreign teachers from different countries were invited to work in Kabul. Elementary education became free and compulsory for all Afghan citizens (Baiza 2015). Amnaullah Khan himself taught literacy courses and encouraged people to undertake education (Kamgar 2002). He expanded diplomatic and cultural relations with foreign countries, including Turkey, France, Germany and Egypt, which also contributed to the improvement of the education system (Samadi 2001; Husham 2015; Baiza 2015; Kamgar 2002; Kazim 2005; Tanin 2005). The budget for the Ministry of Education was increased and was the third largest budget in the government after the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice. The development of modern education was set in place in this era (Baiza 2015).

Generally, Shah Amanullah Khan was an ambitious leader, keen to modernize Afghanistan so it would be the equal of developed countries (Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005). However, there was opposition from conservative groups to Amanullah Khan's modernist ideas for social change (Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005; Barfield 2010). Conservative groups eventually influenced the situation against the modernization program. These groups of conservatives viewed the modernization programs as a coordinated attempt to change the established social order (Baiza 2015). They generally disagreed with all the changes and reform agenda which included educational development and girls' education (Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005). A letter was sent to Amanullah Khan,

expressing their disagreement with the implementation of the changes and particularly with the modernization of education and girls' schooling in Afghanistan and abroad. The conservative groups claimed that girls' schooling was against Islamic religious principles and Afghan cultural norms (Baiza 2015; Barfield 2010). Girls' outfits at school were western style and that was a strong point for conservatives to criticize and argue on the basis of cultural norms and reputation (Javid 2012). In Afghanistan, an Islamic state, women were required to wear Islamic outfits covering their head and hair, particularly outside the home in public, but female school students during Amanullah Khan's rule did not follow this norm, and this was an issue for the Mullahs (Baiza 2015).

Although the king defended his position with a rationale that supported education for both boys and girls, unity between the modernists and the conservatives collapsed and Amanullah Khan was forced to give up the throne and leave the country in 1929 (Baiza 2015; Kazim 2015; Barfield 2010). He did not want civil war and bloodshed within the nation, and so left the country for Italy (Kazim 2005; Husham 2015; Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005; Javid 2002).

According to Baiza, the following four main factors contributed to the development and destruction of modern education in Afghanistan during and following Amanullah Khan's government:

First, the achievement of independence created a crucial momentum for the country to move forward independently and modernize its political and public institutions. Second, Amanullah's personal support and, third, economic growth were major factors that influenced the development of modern education. Fourth, modernists and conservative elements at times affected key developments in education (Baiza 2015, 89).

Amanullah Khan's personal enthusiasm for the development of modern education caused problems for both modernist and conservatives in the country. He did not secure support from either faction, which eventually led to his downfall (Kazim 2005; Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005; Javid 2002; Barfield 2010).

Setback to Education in Afghanistan 1929

Habibullah Kalakani from the conservative group took control of the country for over nine months in 1929 by means of a coup. This was a period of internal war between the conservative tribal leaders and the modernists in Afghanistan (Kazim 2005; Baiza 2015). Habibullah Kalakani was illiterate and totally disagreed with modernization and social changes in Afghanistan (Baiza 2015). During his rule schools were closed, and women were absolutely prohibited from access to schooling (Kamgar 2002; Kazim 2005; Samadi 2001). This period was a setback for the development of education in Afghanistan (Samadi

2001).   After this period of conflict, Nader Shah became king of Afghanistan from 1929 to 1933 (Baiza 2015; Kamgar 2002; Barfield 2010). Nader Shah, who was Defense Minister during Amanullah Khan's government, had Habibullah Kalakani executed and ruled for four years (Baiza 2015; Barfield 2010). The first priority for Nader Shah's government was to manage the tribal leaders' expectations and control the conflict between the conservative tribal leaders and the modernists. He was cautious to keep peace in the country (Baiza 2015). He had begun to develop good foreign relations, particularly with Britain, which supported his strong authority in the country (Husham 2015; Kamgar 2002; Baiza 2015).

Revival of Formal Education in Afghanistan 1930 – 1973

Although Nadir Shah was subject to ethnic and political pressures, he managed to gradually improve the educational environment (Baiza 2015). He made efforts for educational development cautiously, considering the influence of conservative groups in the country, who disagreed with modern education, but education was initially politicized in this era (Baiza 2015; Husham 2015). Primary and secondary schools were reopened for students and attention was given to higher education: the first medical college was established in Kabul (Husham 2015; Baiza 2015). Afghanistan's education system once again revived, and primary education became mandatory for all citizens under the constitution including all Afghanistan ethnic groups (Baiza 2015). In the third year of his leadership, Nadir Shah sent a number of male students to the United States and European countries for higher education (Husham2015; Kamgar 2002). On the other hand, Nader Shah was very cautious about reopening schools, as he feared political opposition from old students of schools who supported Amanullah Khan's reform. He was afraid that the students' movement might support Amanullah Khan's bid for leadership of the country. Therefore, he was selective about which schools were reopened; he categorized school students and expelled some students from school under various allegations that linked education with politics (Baiza 2015). This was first obvious and direct politics influence by the Afghanistan government on education.

Girls' education also remained restricted from 1931 to 1946. According to Baiza, "girls' education was ignored until 1948. The former girls' school from Amanullah Khan's period was converted into a midwifery school in 1941" (Baiza 2015, 104). With Afghanistan's admission to the United Nations in 1946 the country was obligated to improve the education system and focus on girls' schooling, respecting international conventions (Baiza 2015).

Nadir Shah, who ruled for four years, led a clan dynasty rule for almost half a century. He was murdered in 1933 and his young son Mohammad Zahir Shah became the king of Afghanistan (Baiza 2015; Barfield 2010). Zahir Shah was only nineteen, not having adequate political knowledge and experience when he inherited the country's leadership, and his government from 1933 to 1973 was influenced by his two uncles, Mohammad Hashim and Shah Mahmud and his cousin Mohammad Daoud (Baiza 2015). Zahir Shah remained in power for forty years and his government worked for education development gradually and systematically (Husham2015; Kamgar 2002; Baiza 2015). Many schools were built in Kabul and in the provinces, the number of students increased remarkably, schooling became accessible for students at the provincial level, teacher training institutes were built in Kabul and Afghanistan's first university was established in Kabul comprising many faculties: Science, Law and Political Science, Medicine, and Literature (Samadi 2001). Many students were sent abroad for higher education. Girls were encouraged to attend school and were offered educational opportunities, but with a difference, as they were required to wear the veil at school (Husham 2015; Kamgar 2002; Samadi 2001). Over a period of years, a considerable budget was earmarked by the Ministry of Education to focus on the quality of education, the improvement of textbooks, and the launch of a development plan for the expansion of primary and secondary schools all over the country (Samadi 2001). The main reason behind this effort was Afghanistan's admission to the United Nations in 1946 (Samadi 2001).

The critics of Zahir Shah's government and educational developments highlight two points. The first criticism was that Zahir Shah had a 40-year peaceful period of leadership when more could have been achieved with the country's development, particularly education development (Baiza 2015). In other words, Zahir Shah's government worked on education development, but the achievement was not significant over this long period of 40 years. Zahir Shah's reign was a peaceful era compared to prior and subsequent regimes —it was a golden opportunity for the country's development (Baiza 2015).

The second criticism concerned the resources and time allocated by Zahir Shah's government to changing the school instruction language from Dari to Pashto, which was seen as a big mistake (Durani 2014; Baiza 2015). During Zahir Shah's administration, and generally throughout the monarchy leadership period, preference was given to Pashtun ethnic students to study at university, and higher education was limited for other Afghan ethnic groups (Baiza 2015). It was the intention of Nadir Shah's administration to improve the Pashto language and make it the official language of the country, but the implementation of this policy had begun during Zahir Shah's Government between 1937 and 1943 (Baiza 2015). Mohammad Naiem, Zahir Shah's cousin,

who was Minster of Education, operationalized this concept as government policy. Mohamad Naiem began the efforts to change the language of school instruction, based on a royal decree that it be changed from Dari to Pashto (Durani 2014). All school textbooks were rewritten in Pashto and even teachers who did not know Pashto were obligated to teach students in Pashto. This led to chaos in the education system and threatened national unity. The school textbooks became a political device used to promote Pashto traditions and suppress non-Pashto cultural identities (Baiza 2015). The Ministry of Education allocated resources and budgets for the development of textbooks over a three to ten-year period of implementation, but the efforts failed, apparently for the following reasons: besides the political influence, there was a shortage of teachers who spoke Pashto, an unwillingness on the part of teachers to learn Pashto and teach in it, as well as the use of the Pashto language as the academic language (Durani 2014; Baiza 2015). In fact, removing the Farsi (Dari) Language as the country's official language did not prove possible. In addition to Farsi being the first language for most of the country's population, this language has a rich history over many centuries and strong academic use in the region, and additionally a great deal of research has been carried out on the Farsi language and literature throughout history (Durani 2014, Baiza 2015). This was political domain and put pressure on the education system in Afghanistan which threatened national unity.

Afghanistan, Civil War and Education Loses 1978 - 2001

After the assassination of President Daoud Khan in 1978, Noor Muhammad Taraki, leader of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), who was supported by the Soviet Union, became the new president, and this period marked the beginning of another downturn for education in the country, as it became a field of conflict during the war (Samadi 2001; Baiza 2015). The Communist-supported Government (PDPA) used education as the political platform for continuation of the Communist political tradition and a mechanism for achieving its political goals. The Afghan Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, with support from Soviet Union experts, integrated Communist ideology into the education curriculum, and school textbooks and teacher education program. Afghanistan universities' curricula and structure were changed as part of the government reform. They believed that a fundamental change in the field of education was important in the process of democratic revolution in the country (Matsumoto 2008; Giustozzi 2010; Baiza 2015; Amiri 2016). Similarly, the resistance groups used the school and education institutions as propaganda centres encouraging people, particularly students, to join Islamic Jihadi Groups. This opposition groups, with support from the United States of America (USA) and other international experts, also developed school textbooks disseminating violent messages against the Soviet Union and government (PDPA) (Baiza 2015; Jones 2009; Amiri 2016). The

school textbooks were all about being Mujahed[3] and the use of weapons, firearms and killing. For instance, "Math textbooks included questions such as: if three mujahedeen need 3000 bullets, two need 2000 bullets, how many bullets do nine mujahedeen need?" (Interim Curriculum 1987, grade 8. cited in Jones 2009, 115).

From 1978 to 1992, Afghanistan experienced two contradictory education streams. The Government conducted an education program disseminating preferred political information to students in areas under their control, and at the same time, the Jihadi Groups implemented education programs that were anti-Soviet and anti-PDPA in areas they controlled inside Afghanistan as well as in Afghan refugee schools in Pakistan (Jones 2009; Samadi 2001; Baiza 2015; Tanin 2005; Matsumoto 2008; Amiri 2016). Besides the indoctrination of students through the educational curriculum and school textbooks, the government began recruiting teenage students into military service. As armed resistance continued and there were insufficient soldiers to fight, the government started recruiting graduates of secondary schools for military service (Baiza 2015). Interest in higher education declined among students, and many students chose PDPA military service or joined the Jihadi groups. The third option for students was to leave the country and immigrate to Pakistan or Iran. Very few students had the opportunity to study at universities in Afghanistan during the PDPA government. Students graduating from secondary school had to do service in the government fighting resistance Jihadi groups (Husham 2015; Kamgar 2002; Baiza 2005).

The Mujahedeen overthrew the PDPA government in Afghanistan and took control of the country from 1992 to 1996 (Kamgar 2002) and announced their government as the Islamic State of Afghanistan. But civil war between the Jihadi groups ensued, and educational institutes and schools were utilized for armed conflict, particularly in Kabul and other major cities (Tanin 2005 Baiza 2015). Following the Mujahedeen, the Taliban took over Kabul and were in control of Afghanistan from 1997 to 2001. It was at this point that the education sector almost completely collapsed, and schools were closed for girls. The education curriculum continued with the language of resistance, reinforcing the political purpose of Jihad (Jones 2009).

Discussion

According to scholar Kelly "education and politics are inextricably interwoven with each other" (Kelly 2004, 161), and definitely in any country political power has influence on a country's education system and particularly countries that are in conflict situation. Of course, Afghanistan is no exception (UNESCO 2016).

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[3] Mujahed is singular and mujahedeen is the plural form of the name.

Afghanistan's different governments influenced the education system in different ways. King Amanullah Khan wanted to reform the education system and establish a modern education system based on the western style in Afghanistan. Nadir Shah's government supported a conservative education style. Nadir Shah was afraid of the opposition groups from the older school students who supported Amanullah Khan's reform, and this was the reason that he expelled some students from school under various allegations. Zahir Shah's government reformed schooling teaching language and make efforts to change instruction language from Dari to Pashto in support of Pashto traditions (Durani 2014; Baiza 2015). The political interference and influence during these governments was relatively mild in the political environment when Afghanistan was in relatively peaceful time with no physical war. Conversely, when Afghanistan was in physical war during the PDPA and Mujahedeen governments, the war situation and the country's political atmosphere impacted negatively on the education system, as both opposition groups, PDPA and Mujahedeen, used education material directly for their own political platforms (Jones 2009; Baiza 2005; Amiri 2016;). Both PDPA and the Mujahedeen/Taliban governments from year 1978 to 2001 used the school environment particularly via textbooks as a tool to provide political propaganda to students. These political ideologies directly impacted the school, students, teachers and generally the whole education system and environment. Taking peace education theory in consideration, during the PDPA and Mujahedeen governments, students were provided information in school which was in support of conflict, disunity and war (Baiza 2015; David 2005). School textbooks are a powerful means through which students learn social and cultural information (Kumar Shah 2016; UNESCO 2018; UNESCO 2016). Teaching information in support of a culture of violence guided students in Afghanistan toward violent behaviour which effected students throughout their lives. This method of teaching aimed at training people to be warlike in Afghanistan which impacted on generations (David 2010; UNESCO 2018).

It is important to mention that during the Mujahedeen time the Islam religion related lessons were central for education programs. The school textbook contained lessons related to religious information (Baiza 2015), and this may include relevant information somehow allied with peace education, because Islamic principles insist on peace. However, even in the religious lessons more attention was given to information about Jihad (Baiza 2015).

Post-Conflict Era and Education Status in Afghanistan, 2002-2014

After the Taliban was defeated in 2001, education in Afghanistan as a post-conflict country became the centre of attention for the new government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community that had promised its full support for the country's reconstruction. The education system was highlighted as one of the key areas needing support (Samadi 2013; Jones

2009; Husham 2015; Baiza 2015; Amiri 2016; Robiolle-Moul 2016). The government and the international community resumed working on the development of education and made significant efforts to retrieve schooling after the period of wars (Husham 2015; Amiri 2016).

The constitution stipulates that basic education from classes one to nine will be compulsory for all the country's children, higher education will be expanded, education from school level to bachelor degree level will be free of charge, special reference is made to the elimination of illiteracy and the promotion of education for women, and the initiation of private education was approved for the first time (Samadi 2013; Husham 2015; Afghanistan Constitution Law; Robiolle-Moul 2016). The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education both separately developed new education laws in support of Afghanistan's constitutional law (Husham 2015; Jeaniene 2005).

Besides the development of education laws, there was enhancement of the education system; the establishment of new faculties within government universities; the establishment of many private schools and institutes in Kabul and other cities; the improvement of vocational institutions; and the building of new schools all over the country (Baiza 2015, Husham 2015, Samadi 2013; Robiolle-Moul 2016).

The Afghanistan Ministry of Education with support from international organizations completely changed the direction of education and developed a new school curriculum and textbooks committed to peace, national unity, human rights and democracy. New school textbooks incorporate peace messages and are cleared of references to war (Jones 2009; Jeaniene 2005; Amiri 2016). The new Afghanistan Education laws and new school curricula comprised peace education in general, respecting the Islamic religion, promoting human rights, commitment to national unity, conveying knowledge towards being peaceful individuals for an ideal social life, training to be responsible citizens, strengthening student creativity, and promoting a culture of peace, all of which support the purposes of peace education (Husham 2015; Robiolle-Moul 2016; Amiri 2016).

Discussion

The revival of Afghanistan's education system since 2001 is essential work. The Afghanistan government with support of the international community undertook a significant re-establishment of the education system and development of education material for schools. The revival of the education system which had almost completely collapsed during the internal war from

1978 – 2001 in Afghanistan involved immense effort. Both government and the international community made substantial efforts to ensure that new school textbooks were developed with new ideas and texts to convince students that peace is necessary and possible for Afghanistan. Although, there are many challenges and constraints that affect the education system in Afghanistan in the attempt to meeting education standards, the new changes and progress in education sector is notable, especially given that Afghanistan is still suffering from insecurity and an economic crisis (Baiza 2015: Husham 2015; Robiolle-Moul 2016; Jones 2009). More details are mentioned in the following section on education challenges in Afghanistan.

EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is still in a transitional period from conflict towards peace and development, and educational development has been affected by many continuing challenges and constraints in the country such as insecurity, political instability, the existence of high levels of corruption in the government system, high illiteracy rates among the population, poverty, and challenges within the education sector such as insufficient educational facilities to respond to demand, insufficient technical or professional human resources in the education sector, inadequate budgets for the Ministry of Education, and dependency of the Ministry of Education on donor support for technical and financial assistance (Baiza 2015; Samadi 2013; UNESCO 2011; Robiolle-Moul 2016). There are also many constraints on educational development in Afghanistan as a fragile state (UNESCO 2011; Holland 2010). Insecurity is always a strong threat to education in the country: there are attacks on schools in rural areas, murders of teachers and staff of education institutes, banning women and girls' access to school and education in remote areas by the Taliban, and ISIS forces have recently challenged educational progress (Adkins 2016). Educational facilities are not sufficient to meet educational demands in the country, and this is a most significant challenge at present for the Afghanistan Ministry of Education. "Many of the existing schools do not have suitable buildings, safe drinking water, or sanitation of facilities. The key factor inhibiting the growth of educational infrastructure is funding" (Adkins 2016, 106). There are not sufficient numbers of schools in rural areas, particularly for girls, and girls are more disenfranchised from education in this situation (The World Bank 2008).

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 1919 – 2014

There is no doubt that education is a remarkable sign of civilization and human development, even at the primary level. History is the witness of human progress and great personalities throughout education. Nonetheless, brave and brilliant Afghan women like Rabia Balkhi, the first female poet who lived in the

seventeenth century in Balkh, Afghanistan, and others made great contributions towards the enhancement of knowledge and Afghan civilization. They did not have an opportunity to participate in formal education institutes. Their examples show the interest of Afghan women in education, and their willingness to contribute to civilization and the improvement and development of their environment, even before formal education began in Afghanistan (Javid 2002; Kazim 2005). Formal education was established in the country between 1868 and 1878, but Afghan girls could only access formal schooling in 1921, almost fifty years later. When formal education started in Afghanistan, schooling was only for boys. The first girls' school was opened in Afghanistan in 1921 (Kamgar 2002; Baiza 2015).

In addition, Afghan women have experienced both progress and setbacks with regard to education, due to political instability as well as cultural issues during the history of formal education (Kazim 2005). Structural discrimination between men and women has existed in this country for over a century: during the period of monarchy from 1747 to 1973, the only king who supported women's education was Amanullah Khan (1919-1929). Afghanistan's liberal King Amanullah Khan and his wife established the first school for girls, and supported female students' higher education in Afghanistan and abroad, but Amanullah Khan faced conservative resistance that halted women's education for years (Javid 2002; Samadi 2001; Baiza 2015). After Amanullah Khan, the next Afghan ruler who supported women's education was Daoud Khan. Daoud Khan changed women's social status during his leadership, ensuring that women's opportunities in education and employment were improved, girls' schools were established in Kabul, and the numbers of female students in schools and at university increased (Kazim 2005; Javid 2002).

The Taliban, the extremist group that ruled in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 banned women's education absolutely. For five years women were not allowed to leave their houses, unless they were accompanied by a male family member (Ghosh 2003). This was a period of severe violation of human and women's rights in Afghanistan (Kazim 2005; Human Rights Watch 2006).

Post-Taliban, the poor situation for Afghan women became more obvious internationally. International donor agencies supported projects to improve the situation of Afghan women. Afghan women and girls once again gradually gained access of education and employment. Women participated in culture, social and political life. Millions of girls enrolled in schools and universities, women started to run businesses, they became Parliamentarians, were appointed as ministers, and found positions in which they could contribute to development programs (Intili et al. 2006). The important achievement

regarding women's progress in Afghan society is the National Constitution that was passed in January 2004. It states that "any kind of discrimination and privilege among the citizens of Afghanistan is forbidden. Citizens of Afghanistan, men and women, have equal rights and responsibilities before the law" (Afghanistan Constitution Law. Article Forty-Three).

INFORMAL EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Beside the formal education system in Afghanistan, there is an informal education program that takes place mostly in mosques and madrasas (religious centres). In informal education programs students learn about the Quran, jurisprudence and Islamic principles as well as the Arabic language and literature. This type of education is more about Islamic education that began with the arrival of Islam in the seventh century and is still common and important in both urban and provincial areas, although in the cities, people access formal rather than informal education. Today, each village and every town has at least one to three mosques, often many, and virtually all children, particularly boys, of pre-school age who live in the neighbourhoods go to the mosque school and get a basic Islamic education. Pre-school aged students start learning alphabets and reading the holy book (Quran), and continue to read many books related to Islam. Formal education also includes an Islamic education program up to degree level in Afghanistan universities (Samadi 2013; Karlsson and Mansory 2002; Majroh 1987).

CONCLUSION

This study provides an overview of the history of Afghanistan's formal education and its establishment and progress. It presents important information on Afghanistan's formal educational system and influence of politics in this country's schooling structure. This historical detailed information is significant for the literature and educational development contribution and reflection and involvement in the education sector in Afghanistan.

Educational development in Afghanistan has experienced a circuitous path of progress. A lack of historical continuity in state policies and national plans from one era to another has been a characteristic feature of state-building which affected educational development in the country from 1878 to 2014. Regardless of the efforts of Sher Ali Khan, Habibullah Khan and King Amanullah Khan, and president Daoud Khan, educational development was not important for some governments, or education was used as a key tool for political purposes of the particular regime. In addition, women's education has not been taken into consideration during the history of the formal education system in Afghanistan. Afghan women have experienced structural discrimination regarding education. Conversely, in the post-Taliban era from

2002 to 2014, the Afghanistan Ministry of Education and the international community have made many efforts in the education sector, with a commitment to provide a standard education system and to meet peace education objectives, but there are still many challenges to meet this objective of meeting standard education system in Afghanistan.

Continued commitment at different level of institutions including government of Afghanistan, donor agencies in Afghanistan and individual potential efforts are required to further improve the education system in Afghanistan.

TIMELINE OF DIFFERENT REGIMES/GOVERNMENTS AND EDUCATION CHANGES IN AFGHANISTAN

Date	Government	A Summary of Government Changes	Summary of Educational Changes	Summary of Women's Education
1747-1973	Afghanistan Monarchy	Durani clan, Barakzai clan and Mohmammadzai sub-clan of Durani who were of Pashto ethnicity ruled in Afghanistan from 1747-1973. They were mainly involved with clan power sharing conflicts, but Sher Ali Khan, Habibullah Khan and Amanullah Khan initiated development in Afghanistan.	Sher Ali Khan and Habibullah Khan established formal education in Afghanistan 1868-1878 and Amanullah Khan worked hard on educational development in Afghanistan 1919-1929.	First school for girls established during leadership of Amanullah Khan in 1921. When formal education started in Afghanistan, schooling was only for boys. The first girls' school was opened in Afghanistan in 1921, 50 years later. Formal education established between years 1868-1878 in Afghanistan.

1973-1978	Republic of Afghanistan	Daoud Khan who was from Mohmammadzai sub-clan of Durani and Pashto ethnic ruled for 7 years. He changed the monarchy to a republic.	Daoud Khan believed in Afghanistan's development and expanded education accessibility all over the country.	Daoud Khan supported women's education and changed women's social status. Women's educational opportunities and employment were improved, girls' schools were built in Kabul, and the number of female students increased at schools and at university level (1973-1978).
1978-1992	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) had two separate groups of Khalq and Parcham, was in favor of Communist ideology and was supported by Soviet Union. It was an era of Communist Regime in Afghanistan. This party was involved in conflict and war with Islamic Jihadi Groups. This party was a mix of different ethnic groups.	Education was in favor of the regime ideology in this era.	No progress on women's education.
1992-1996	Islamic State of Afghanistan (Islamic	Islamic Jihadi groups/Mujahedden parties fought with People's Democratic	This period was a setback for educational	Education was restricted for women.

	Jihadi groups)	Party (Khalq and Parcham follower of communist ideology) for purpose of protecting Islam in Afghanistan. Islamic Jihadi groups were a mix of different ethnic groups.	development in Afghanistan.	
1996-2001	Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban)	Taliban, the fundamentalist political and extremist belief movement in Afghanistan has been involved in war with Afghanistan's Government. This group is mostly of Pashtun ethnicity and ruled four years.	Educational development collapsed in Afghanistan during this time.	Education was banned for girls and limited for boys in this period of time.
2001-2015	The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was formed through election process and the presidents were of Pashto ethnicity. This government has been involved in reconstruction as well as fighting with the Taliban group.	Education in this era became central for the government and the international community that had promised its full support for reconstruction of Afghanistan after downfall of the Taliban.	Women's education has been supported by the Afghan government and international community in Afghanistan.

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