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An Exploratory Study of the Political Abuse of Women in Afghanistan

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
History: Accepted 28 April 2021 Available Online June 2021	<p><i>Women, the 48.45% of total Afghan population usually termed and referred as the most victimized clan of Afghanistan. It is engendered notion and perceived as reality around the world. Undoubtedly, Mujahidin and later the Taliban have made the situation miserable for women. But, comparatively, women in Afghanistan did not face as many cruelties earlier during Taliban regime as they suffering today. They were secured, honored and allowed to participate equally in all spheres of life ranging from socio-economic to religio-political during the reign of Taliban. Majority of the religious elite among the Muslims interprets the religious teachings according to its own requirements to assure legitimacy particularly in the context of women. Same is the case with Afghanistan, which, being the buffer state, had been remained epicenter for political interests of world powers and who used its soil to expand or legitimize their authority, violate human rights specifically women as wartime strategy to achieve the goals. This intricate study with reference to the manipulated status of women is based on qualitative method and will explore the political dimensions where women have been used as wartime strategy to legitimize the power. It is based on explanatory and exploratory goals of the study. The thematic and observational approach will be used to analyze the available qualitative data by using secondary sources.</i></p>
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1. Introduction

Rights of the Women are difficult to obtain in a country which faces nearly 30 years of hostility and instability. The turbulent history of Afghanistan had witnessed the violation of human rights massively. The question of liberation and empowerment is specifically raised about the women of Afghanistan, particularly after the withdrawal of USSR. They are considered as passive victims and western media along human rights champions generally judged about their

empowerment from their attire. But before talking about Afghan women rights, let us forward the case of western women, their empowerment and the struggle for their rights. Why the western media poses like amnesia while talking about women movements in Europe and North America where the women were exiled and imprisoned by patriarchal parties. Specifically, the Anglo-American and Switzerland women movements about their right to vote. Interestingly, the women of Afghanistan enjoyed their legal right of vote since 1919, a year ahead to US and a year after UK. The study revolves around to find out that if the women of East and West both strive for their rights then why the Afghan women are highlighted the most and how it become a cause and an excuse of US post 9/11 operation in Afghanistan. The study has significance with respect to critically analysis the misuse of Afghan Women for political purposes in Afghanistan.

2. State of the Afghan Woman under Monarchy

The early 20th Century witnessed the positive women's liberation wave where women played a significant and vibrant role in nation-building. These liberal movements stood firmly against colonial disorder in Afghanistan and supported the socialists' revolutions. The issues related to women always remained on the top of Afghan Government agenda either it is the reformist monarchies or the Democratic Party of Afghanistan to bring prosperity and advancement in "Human Rights" and to advance the Afghan status towards modern democratic state as well. Contemporary history reveals that the recent ongoing wave for securing empowerment and rights for the Afghan woman is not a novel but at least a century old practice. The status of Afghan women gradually got upgraded with the passage of time.

In the historical perspective, the status of the women can be analyzed from 3 perspectives

- (1) Women were not oppressed earlier as was in *Taliban* regime.
- (2) Women related issues were dealt under the National Reconstruction Agenda in early 20th Century.
- (3) Domination of tribal leaders to resist against modernization. They defined the women's role to legitimate the patriarchal authority.

The women as an institution either cannot function isolated or parallel in Afghanistan but are entwined with particular domains such as social, political, economic or religious. Besides these circumstances, the political forces outside from Afghanistan also had their respective impact.

As far as the period of the monarchs is concerned, two epochs had significant contribution with regard to controversial status of women in Afghanistan. First is Amanullah's rule (1919-1929) and second is communists backed Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). In spite of aggressive attitude, Amanullah brought significant changes in women laws particularly related to the family institution whereas PDPA's women empowerment program was based on social change. The traces of modern Afghanistan can be seen from Abdur Rehman Khan's regime (1880-1901) renowned as "Iron Amir". He was one who changed the traditional customary laws related to women and abolished several socially prevailed customs like "woman to marry her deceased husband's next of kin, raised the age of marriage, and gave women rights to divorce under specific circumstances" and preserved women rights regarding property. Dupree pointed that Amir had been influenced his liberal wife. In fact, she was an active politician and was "the first Afghan queen to appear publically in European dress without a veil. She rode horses and trained her maidservants in military exercises"(Dupree 1986).

Amir Habibullah took over the throne after the death of his father Abdur Rehman Khan. He extended his father's vision and put limit on the marriage expenses. Like his mother, his wives also wore western cloths. Continuing his father's progressive vision, he opened first college and employed foreign teachers, established first hospital, hydroelectric plant, improved infrastructural development along trade with India and Russian Central Asia (Gregorian, 2013). Habibullah also established schools for the girls that annoyed the traditionalists and clergy. The situation became worsened for his progressive approaches that even "the liberalization of the nation through education and modernization of even the 'tiny elite' spawned an opposition movement" (Magnus & Naby, 2002). His moderate approach to bring social reforms challenged the authority of tribal leaders which was not cost free and resulted in Habibullah's assassination in 1919.

Amanullah, the son of Habibullah, is marked with the most modern and liberal ruler in the history of Afghanistan. In 1919, he earned independence for Afghanistan from Britain in final Anglo-Afghan War (1919). One aspect of his liberal approach included the liberation of Afghan women from traditional, orthodox cultural norms. Simultaneously Turkey was modernizing herself which influenced Amanullah's policies with reference to social law greatly. His family publically criticized the concept of veil. Later his sister Kobra, established "*Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Niswan*" in 1928. His wife Soraya published of first women magazine "*Ershad-i-Niswan*" on her credit. The government also sent 5 female students for higher education to Turkey in 1928. Amanullah was pro-active and maintained good relations with other countries. After having a tour to Europe, Amanullah and his wife Soraya got inspired by the European style that encouraged them to apply back such system in Afghanistan. Upon their arrival, some pictures were distributed in Afghanistan which showed Soraya without veil and having meal in mixed gathering. Such pictures ignite the tribal leaders, clergy, and traditionalists. Resultantly, both faced criticism which forced them to leave the office. Amanullah was ahead to his time because his liberal views were not digestible where; it was difficult to develop a sense of nationalism and nationhood.

3. Post-Monarchy Situation

Laws related to gender equality were totally abrogated by Amir Habibullah-II which was later ousted by Nadir Shah. Where as in subsequent years, the question related to women's status remained passive. In 1931, the second constitution of Afghanistan was announced in which Nadir Shah was trying to seek "modern" approach and opened girls' schools but simultaneously was cautious from tribal leaders. For that, he met with the same fate as Habibullah-II and was assassinated in 1933. Afghanistan received technical and financial assistance from Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) which bolster its modernizing journey. The post monarchy Afghan government perceived and considered gender based laws as detrimental but M. Daud (1953-63 as Prime Minister) was cautious and declared veil as "voluntarily option." Women were again encouraged to be the productive part of Afghan economy. These years saw the Afghan women as nurses, teachers and doctors. The third constitution (1964) of Afghanistan guaranteed the participation of women in electoral politics and extended the right of vote in 1964. Four women were elected for the Parliament and one of them was appointed as minister of health. People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was established in 1965 along with first group of women named as "Democratic Organization of Afghan Women." The group aimed at eliminating the social evils like forced marriages, illiteracy and bride prices.

The period of 1970's witnessed the rise of women socially, politically and economically because PDPA sought to bring the revolutionary reforms with regard to the status of women as it

was brought earlier by monarch in the earlier quarter of twentieth century. In 1978, President M. Daud was replaced by Noor Muhammad as President and Hafizullah Amin became the Prime Minister. Hafizullah Amin refused to stand for Soviet's dictation to westernize the society; he wanted moderate policies thus resulted in Soviet invasion in December 1979. In 1980's, Afghanistan was in a war and faced anarchy which totally resulted in destruction but interestingly, the Soviet backed democratic government supported women and remained the focal point regarding reformation of Afghan society. Significantly a considerable number of women were enrolled and employed in universities, as doctors and nurses. On the other hand, US along with her allies, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, massively funded and provided financial and military assistance to non-state actors against Soviets, who later emerged as Mujahidin and Taliban, were actually fighting on the behalf of US against Soviet Union.

Mujahidin become the freedom fighters and organized their army, backed and supported by US and her allies, and used Islam for the popular support and tried to influence the socialist policies; as such policies were intolerable for the locals. They emphasized on the reversal of social liberty of woman in such a turbulent decade, when the women's rights were being observed and 50% females were employed as government workers and teachers along out of total 40% doctors were females. Soviet Union withdrew in 1989 and US emerged as the sole super power but left Afghanistan in total destruction and political chaos. Rashid views about the situation that "the pipeline of US military aid to Mujahidin was never replaced by a pipeline of international humanitarian aid that could have been an inducement for the warlords to make peace and re-build the country"(Rashid 2001). The exit of Soviet Union and the irresponsible attitude of US provided ground for the non-state actors to play and exploit Afghans for their better interests which resulted in the manipulation of the Mujahidin. The decade-long war left Afghanistan with destroyed infrastructure and unguided power lust local militants.

4. Mujahidin and Status of Women

Afghanistan's land never remained unattended by the invaders, with respect to its Anglo-Afghan wars, Soviet invasion or US interest in the region. But Afghanistan faced severe consequences under Mujahidin Government after Soviet withdrawal and US exit from the soil. That was the most barbarized regime for Afghan women. Women suffered a lot because of ultra-rigid compulsions by Mujahidin as reaction of policies made by Soviet backed government. During Soviet invasion, the age of marriage for girl was set 16 years but in contrast, Mujahidin, further, decreased it to puberty. Women in 1980s used to work in government departments, talking and dealing with divorce related issues, rendering the services as doctors, scientists and civil servants. According to Women Rights Watch "women worked and comprised of 75% teachers, 40% medical doctors and 50% civil servants"(Human Rights Watch Report, 2001). Female students were forced to get enrolled in schools, colleges and public veiling of women become the conditional (Newell & Newell 1982). Women were allowed to enter in public sphere and provide their services parallel to men. The verdict regarding women's education outburst the traditionalists and was perceived as "unbearable interference in domestic life" (Christensen, 1990) of the Afghans. Such coercion resulted in degradation of woman's status which they achieved hardly in earlier periods. Such coercions were legitimized without taking the mullahs and tribal leaders on board and witnessed a top to bottom approach. As Moghadam said that these "incidents of shooting of women in western clothes, assassination of PDPA reformers in the rural areas and general harassment of women social workers increased"(Moghadam, 1997).

Marsden figured out that “the PDPA’s use of force in bringing the changes to fruition, combined with a brutal disregard for social and religious sensitivities, resulted in massive backlash from the rural population”(Marsden, 2002). Such drastic change in Afghan social system was inappropriate and against the traditions which brought hard-line reaction not only by men but also by traditionalist women. Besides such emancipated moves, women were used as raw material and wartime strategy by the Soviets where women were raped in front of male family members to suppress the local forces and insurgency against Soviets. As women were highly honored in the Afghan society and their prestige has no match. Wartime rapes were used as a tool and a military strategy to terrorize the opposite fractions. Such humiliated strategy by the human rights champions generated chaos; gave birth to militancy, extremism and intolerance. Women were actually not the combatants but were used deliberately to achieve required targets. Carol Anne Douglas while reviewing the edited book of Sunita Mehta named “Women for Afghan women: Shattering Myths and claiming the Future” wrote that “Afghan women were used as sex slaves by Soviet officials and soldiers” (Douglas, 2003).

In total, it was the destructive period for Afghanistan which ruined almost half of the agricultural land, destroyed 70% of road infrastructure and damaged 5000 out of 15,000 villages, its economy and oil wells (Afghanistan: 25 Years Later, Soviet Invasion Remembered as Cold War's Last Gasp). War caused near one million killings of Afghans, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), orphans and widows. Besides the destruction of social fabric, the economic devastation and Mujahidin’s policy to restrict the women’s role within the house caused severe financial situation. Massive use of weapons on Afghan soil destroyed the agrarian land and particularly disturbed the 85% rural population’s economic circle that led towards the cultivation of opium which is now one of the most criticized aspects by the international community on Afghanistan. The country was in economic disarray with the withdrawal of Soviet Union. The withdrawal was not seen as removal of external forces but as conquest of Kabul from evils by “holy warriors” i. e. Mujahidin.

As the question of women has always been raised, manipulated and treated according to the wishes of serving government. Caldwell, the demographer depicts the social structure of the Afghanistan as “Patriarchal belt” (Caldwell, 1982) where rigid social structure with reference to women has been endorsed and observed for seeking power. Such actions have been taken under the shelter of traditional customary laws in Mujahidin Government. Mujahidin restrict the women to move out from the home without male family member particularly the *Mehram*. They restricted female education, health facilities specifically treatment from male doctors. Their roles were strictly minimized and confined within the boundaries of home. Female schools, universities and libraries were burnt and were restricted to not to show their appearance in public except “*burqa*”. The book “Zoya’s Story” further elaborated the misery of Afghan women. The author wrote that people particularly the women were confused either to enjoy the Soviet withdrawal or wipe on the arrival of worst devil. The popular notion with the assumption of Mujahidin emerged that:

“Rid us from these seven donkeys and give us back our cow. The donkeys were the seven factions of the Mujahideen, and the cow was the puppet regime [Najibullah who was installed by the Russians before they left]” (Follain & Rita, 2002).

Mujahidin pleaded that these laws were according to *Shariah* and such interpretations were endorsed mainly by the rural side and authenticated the legitimacy of their writ. Like Soviets, they also used women as tool. Soviets used rape as wartime strategy while Mujahidin used it as

punishment for those women whom they thought were not spending their lives according to their settled customary laws. The targets were the girls who wished to pursue their education and whose conduct did not match with the Mujahidin's settled code of conduct (Amnesty International Report, 1999). Women reported in Kandhar about "forced marriages, militia rape and bride abduction" by Mujahidin to counter their rival Taliban. Militia rape in the forced presence of nuclear family leads towards the suicide or self-immolation of not only the victim but also by the male members of the nuclear family as well. In Afghan tradition, women hold the high position in terms of respect and their sexual integrity always remain supreme. Such dishonoring of women caused extremism and makes the locals of southern Afghanistan revengeful and militarized which along with other factors contributed and helped in the rise of Taliban.

5. Arrival of Taliban

Taliban, backed by US, emerged in 1996 to counter Mujahidin although US did not endorse it openly. Pakistan instantaneously recognized the Taliban government to get relief from the barbaric regime of Mujahidin (Northern Alliance) which was supported by Tajiks, Uzbiks, Iran and India. Taliban got support to counter or end the social, political mismanagement and brutalities done by Mujahidin government. People got relief to some extent but its time span was very short. Except the Northern Alliance, the rest 80% Afghanistan was under the control of Taliban. Initially, the position of women was relatively satisfied and safe. Taliban worked out against rape militia and arrested the culprits that reduced the violence and terror. Basically, Taliban were only "interested in Muslim or non-Muslim issue, not ethnicity" (Ahmed, 2006). Security situation was comparatively improved, removed security barriers and economy was moving towards uplift. Even the World Bank acknowledged that the economy was rescued in areas where Taliban had taken the control relatively earlier (Barkat & Wardell, 2002). Besides these, the agricultural yield, farming, livestock along horticulture increased. Particularly the women in rural areas enjoyed the leverages in traditional ways and contributed in local economy (of respective rural areas). In contrary, urban women considered Taliban's step as hallmark to their empowerment.

The initial Taliban were Pashtuns and were following their local culture which necessarily didn't mean the explanation and representation of Islamic teachings or correspondence with the local customs. They were ignorant and less to do with education. Although Taliban bring their women to urban areas in order to ensure their morality and legitimacy of their authority against Mujahidin reference to their behavior with women. Taliban somehow put an end to the sexual abuse and move ahead to eliminate the moral degeneration and introduced a new legal system of "*amar bil maruf wa nahi an al munkar* (department for the promotion of virtue and prevention of Vice)" which particularly delimited the role of women which made the women the most victimized clan of Afghanistan during their regime. They liked Mujahidin who restricted the women under the Ministry of "Department for the promotion of virtue and prevention of Vice" from school, medical treatment from the male doctor, women employment which adversely affected numerous families where women were the sole bread winner. Women were not allowed to do job in any foreign agencies, women mobility and widow's assistance was conditioned with the presence of male relative. They were not allowed to move in vehicle with foreigners. Adding to the situation, the punishments of stoning and lashing from the ministry for "Department for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice" at the spot without hearing the plea from concerned persons created hate and fear simultaneously.

Due to this situation, women themselves restricted their mobility and those who have liberty

to do job in health sector also feel reluctant to leave the home even women in general refused to get health facilities. For the expansion of territory, the northern region of Afghanistan became the battle ground for the militia factions of civil war (which later functioned as northern alliance) and the Taliban. The Taliban also faced major setback to their women honoring reputes when the militia of northern alliance (mainly *Mujahidin*) joined Taliban and started rendering their services for the “Holy Cause”. For the new arrivals in Taliban, it was just the change of master for them as they have to perform the similar functions as they earlier served in civil war period. But the new addition in Taliban did not have any ideology nor accompanied with the religious teachings. They were just the militia men or the warlords and they changed their loyalties towards the next power.

The Taliban gave them the responsibility to enforce and implement the “*Shariah*” prescribed by the top Taliban. These “low- level Taliban” enforced the directed *Shariah* in such non-humanitarian manner which stigmatized the Afghan society internationally on humanitarian grounds. Such brutal practices of stoning, lashing, publically punishing of female, compulsion of *Burqa*, prohibition from makeup and fancy shoes, restriction from education and taking health facilities from male doctors, on spot “justice”, banning T.V, usage of radio only for the general announcement for the roles and responsibilities of citizens, the rape of women as war strategy and in addition to atrocities, “Taliban regularly sold women as sex slaves to fund their regime” (Douglass, 2003). Such brutal practices were strictly observed in Taliban controlled regions mainly Jalalabad, Kandhar, Heerat and latterly till Mazar-e-Shariff but have immense impact on northern part of Afghanistan. The international community and media was blind particularly US who was happy on the performance of Taliban as such situation was favorable for US for the proposed pipeline of natural gas from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and then Pakistan (Rashid, 2001).

So because of geo strategic and geo political importance, US remain mute till 1997. [when] They criticized Taliban actions regarding human rights particularly in context of women and start supporting the cause of women liberation and empowerment via international organizations and agencies. Simultaneously the Security Council also realized to forward the resolution no. 1214 which contextualize to stop the discrimination and violation against women. Besides strict policies by Taliban, international assistance community extends employment to 5874 women by the mid-2000. Because of brutal policies of Taliban, millions of people migrated from Afghanistan mainly to neighboring states. Reportedly 180,000 people left Afghanistan as “men were boiled or asphyxiated to death, wells were poisoned, land was mined and traditional irrigation canals and dams were bombed” (Rashid, 2001). The barbaric regime ended with the liberation of Kabul after 9/11. The new inducted government of Northern Alliance after Bonn Agreement was not welcomed. As Zoya stated that “no one was sorry to see Taliban defeated, but neither did they rejoice when the Northern Alliance (mainly *Mujahidin*) took over. They, too, had blood on their hands” (Follain and Rita, 2002).

6. Role of US and Post 9/11 Scenario

Afghanistan has paid a heavy price being the main player to make US sole super power. Soviet withdrawal was not cost free; Afghanistan lost its national integrity, faced refugee crises and aligned problems which culminated in the displacement of 7 million Afghans, destruction of social fabric, emergence of military fractions, humanitarian violence, anarchy, extremism, domestic conflicts, economic downfall, ignition to ethno-religious based social fragmentation, misuse and misinterpretation of religion Islam. US left Afghanistan without ensuring peace and stability that furthered fuel to the fire.

There were three notions revolved about Afghanistan in last decade of 20th century

- (1) Afghanistan then generally known and called as “rogue state” which besides numerous domestic and international issues never achieve international concerns.
- (2) Secondly, it shows that the international community specifically US was passively monitoring the activities in Afghanistan particularly of Taliban.
- (3) Women related issues highlighted only when required.

As US government was planning for the construction of oil and gas pipeline project which would be attaching Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and would provide US “leverage control of the world’s oil supply” (Khador, 2018). So to secure the stable ground in order to facilitate pipeline deal, US remained passive upon Taliban. The Taliban being the little concern to US became the top priority of US government and policy makers. Till the end of 1990s Taliban were attributed as “the players most capable of achieving peace in Afghanistan at this moment in history” (Alikuzai, 2013). So the US concerns in Afghanistan for the cause of human rights were considerably neglected over potential economic interests.

The pro-Taliban narrative was altered after embassy bombings and non-cooperative attitude of Taliban for pipeline project. Now US ‘felt’ that Taliban were violating the human rights. Unbearable attitude was extended by US against human rights violation, abuse, miserable condition of women and US sponsored “Islamic dictatorship”. Post 9/11, US started Operation Enduring, unleashed massive airstrikes and called “war on terrorism” and shook hands with Mujahidin (actually the Northern Alliance) to fight against common enemy i. e. Taliban. US were good at the principle of Foreign Policy that “Enemy’s enemy is our friend”. US endorsed Mujahidin to form Government after Bonn Agreement (2001) while leaving all the mischievous policies of Mujahidin behind during civil war-particularly regarding women. The new Government was most barbaric in civil war period when they orchestrated the sever campaigns of war rape. Like Rashid Dostume, who remained a US ally against war on terror, actually was one among others who nourished the physical terrorism particularly the rape campaigns. Dostume along with the US army slaughtered around more than 3000 opponents (pro-Taliban) in 2001 at Mazar e Sharif but it was not highlighted by international media and interestingly, he was entitled by US as chief of Armed Forces of Afghanistan.

It would not be exaggeration that US entitled a person who was indulged in atrocities particularly regarding women for their better interests. Such appointment was like nightmare for the victims. Women were practicing a fearful life because for them it was the change of masters only-from Mujahidin to Taliban and Taliban to again Mujahidin-. It was the first time that a superpower attacked the third world country to rescue the women from their nourished warlords [Taliban] and impose the war militia men [Mujahidin] who were more committed towards the organized and structured form of atrocities on women. Firstly, it shows that violence against women is a “subject” which can be manipulated and interpreted according to the situation. Such subject ensured political gains and offers political position to commit the crime (use and misuse) legally. Secondly, US concerns, efforts and policy regarding human rights specifically women were not sincere.

As US paved the ground and portrayed the situation in their best interest which provided an excuse or legitimized their action to outset the war on Afghanistan. Post 9/11, BCC aired documentary entitled “Beneath the veil” in which enveloped [burqa] women were being beaten up on 22 September 2001. The documentary was later aired on other numerous channels and millions

of audience across the globe discussed about the miserable situation of women in Afghanistan. The systematic and the structured mode to mould the consent of international community in the favour of US to outset the war proved productive and Laura Bush addressed on radio on 17 November 2001 and said that “the plight of women and children in Afghanistan ... is a matter of deliberate human cruelty carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control”. As the new inducted government was extracted from northern alliance so they follow their legacy of power struggle based on ethnic lines. Human Rights Watch (HRW) report revealed that women insecurities were raised to that extent that they minimize or even curtailed their participation in social life. In northern Afghanistan, even after Bonn agreement, Pashtuns suffered a lot particularly the women in the form of rape to show their ethnic dominance by the warlords. HRW also asserted that

“Women in Mazar-e-Sharif reported that that they live under constant fear of physical assault and feel compelled to limit their movement, expression, and dress to avoid becoming targets of such violence by armed civilians or armed men aligned with the three main ethnically based parties (A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, 2002)”.

It was the time when the women of Afghanistan was still suffering tremendously and was used as war strategy by US. Interestingly Laura Bush again delivered speech in US support and endorsed her government and international community's support in combating the issues and atrocities related to the women.

“Today the world is helping Afghan women return to the lives they once knew . . . Today on international women's day, we affirm our mission to protect human rights for women in Afghanistan and around the world. And we affirm all support for all Afghans as they recover from war and injustice.”

However, U. S and international community's sincere efforts regarding human rights could be gauged from the bombings during the war which caused drought, water shortage, famine and malnutrition. The collateral damage was so intense that not only endanger the well-being but also the infrastructural damage which includes the schools, hospitals and road structure which was also worked as aid routes to extend aid where US bombed to *rescue women*. The schools were damaged where they want to educate women and hospitals were demolished from where they can avail medical facility. US even did not halt bombing in those areas where food items should be delivered immediately as the routes will be cut off in extreme weather due to snow falling. US put the lives of Afghan civilians of that particular region in danger-most probably mainly the women as men shifted to moderate temperature zone for earning purposes and many of them were in field for and against US. The claim of Laura Bush in November 2001 that we are “fighting for the rights and dignity of women” posed an awkward situation as liberating the Taliban controlled limited urban area or defeating Taliban does not characterized US and her allies role fighting for the cause of human rights particularly the women. The US led war make Afghanistan on top regarding the highest widow ratio in the world and the US sponsored or supported Karzai Government signed two opposite documents on the same day. One for the protection of women and other Shi'atte law which had similar oppressing clauses as Mujahidin and Taliban were observing.

7. Conclusion

Afghanistan remained the center of interest for world powers because of its strategic position and status of buffer state. The channels which the foreign powers used to cater their requirements in

the region was to disturb the social fabric, traditional norms, practices and moreover the patriarchal structure/setup of Afghanistan and for such purpose women remained the prime victim. Unfortunately, the women are always treated in a designed framework and their functions were practiced according to the requirements of the ruling elite. Women were politically abused by the liberals, Moderates, Orthodox and foreign powers to achieve their pre settled goals. Within different ethnic groups, women has been *used* as sign of pride and such pride of opposite ethnic group was exploited as a raw material and wartime strategy to degrade their status via rape to establish ethnic supremacy and prominence. Even the massive use of AK47 in Afghanistan was in result of wartime rape. As rape was used as strategy to suppress the locals which bring the societal change, generates the sentiments of retaliation and turns the young men into militants. U.S. and her allies used these young men turned militants, nourish them and build the force to complement their generated Mujahidin for their best interest in the region. The rights of the women were always overruled and their dignity was compromised.

The Governments in Afghanistan even changed or thrown on the issues related to women. Amanullah's liberal views regarding women can be seen in this context. Again Soviet backed government showed utmost concern for women empowerment which resulted in the emergence of orthodox policies of Mujahidin. The ultra-modernization in 80's paved the way for ultra-conservatism which not only stigmatized the status of Afghan women but also provides space to opportunistic forces to interfere in domestic societal affairs and facilitate them to nourish the black lash against women. These opportunistic powers also make their grounds in Afghanistan on miserable condition of women and make it a reason of war. They used women as tool to seduce the international community to justify their move in order to rescue the "Human Rights" which they guaranteed in the form of two decade old war. Whenever an alien government tries to reform or formulate the laws related to women they always neglect the locals to take them in confidence. Moreover the dilemma Afghan society faced that these alien governments formulate the laws for only 15% urban population on the western footings. Such fragmented and unbalanced thoughts, ideas were crucial in nature and it was hard to develop comprehensive policies regarding women rights. The covert support of US in the rise of Taliban could be attributed as a war game that US planned and designed for 9/11. Such humiliation of Taliban in society particularly regarding women can be seen in larger context of US war strategy. US were passively heralding the Taliban's non humanitarian activities and latterly when they did not remain instrumental for them they figure out their role in the destruction of Afghan society particularly regarding women. It was a planned strategy and framework to invade in Afghanistan and setting ground for war against terrorism. Again women were used and exploited as war strategy to justify US move.

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