

Political Participation of Women in Afghanistan During the Last Decade (Opportunities & Challenges)

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Abstract:- working of women out of home as a problem in every society especially in Afghan society are almost exist. Every society has its own specification which makes defer from other societies. Afghan society in arias of culture, economy, politics, etc is deferring from other societies. the purpose of this paper is to describe a conceptual framework that explains what is the most significant opportunities' and challenge to women political participation in Afghanistan. The paper introduces a new and key aspect of the challenge as well as opportunities, for women which caused to them still Afghan society cannot succeed or what opportunities have created specially in the last decade to women's political participation. While this study in terms of purpose is practical and in terms of methods is considerably applied and descriptive-analytical research with quantities & qualitative approach, the data have conducted from the library. The finding showed which in Afghanistan are many challenges on women's political participation despite good overcoming of the last decade. So, the present result has the suggestion of practical of good legislation law of women political participation along with recognition of women equal as men both in practice in Afghan society.

Keywords: *Women's political Participation, Opportunities, Challenge, The New Structure Of Power.*

I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Inequality has a long history among human beings, especially between men and women almost exist. This inequality which explores in many areas one of them is occupation. Every society has its own trait that makes defer one society from others. In some societies, this inequality is less but in some are more, we are looking at how is the women's occupation situation especially opportunity as well as challenges in Afghan society. Afghanistan despite having a long and ancient history, but not have long political freedom.

➤ *Women's political participation*

in modern society women participation is undeniable, even for closed and totality system countries in the world do not fill free from women participation in deferent areas especially in political participation. So, there is no doubt about women's participation and it's important; this participation exists at deferent levels like the Nohlen says democracy as a method of governance find the global

dimension, which makes it clear in democracy women participation is necessary (Nohlen, 2002:12). This was accepted by all elites, especially after the change of governance methods in twenty centuries. Despite all description over this, there are no seam ideas. Allawi Tabar on general description over participation as mental and emotion of that stimulate to help each other on reaching to group aims. in his viewpoint, participation is in three parts: 1. Involvement 2. Helping and 3. Acceptance of responsibility (Allawi Tabar, 1382:16). Mack Klosky had mentioned a description of participation: political participation is a volunteer activity of a member of society in the selection of governor and direct as well as indirect in political activities (Nursery, 1383:99). Political participation is one of the disputable sections of participation. Political participation is the kind of participation which affect the outcome of governments decision (Ardistani, 1383: 56). Sarukhani defines political participation: participating in a political affair is the selection of political leaders by people. From his viewpoint in some cases political participation happening from voting, but mostly that is not acceptable to someone and plays a role in political parties (Sarukhani, 1370: 522). In Vanier's viewpoint, political participation contains every volunteer action which is a successful or unsuccessful, organized or disorganized, part-time or continuum for affecting selecting of general policy or selection of political leaders in deferent levels of government that take legal as well as illegal methods is political participation (Vainer, 1380:247). Only from participation. the political power in saves methods goes hand to hand, and levels of political development of a county are directly dependent on this component (Kazimi, 1376: 101). Finally, political participation is the opportunity to pay for political affairs by large numbers of people (Abramson, 1383:1241).

➤ *Widespread and levels of political participation*

When we speak about political participation that has deferent types and levels; we most defer them one from others. From this research aim and subject, political participation is not broad so we pay in limited areas. As Bakhshayshy Ardistry viewpoint political participation has divided into two parts: 1. Self-political participation 2. Mobilized political participation. He believes overcoming everyone to this participation depends on the temperament of the political system which is rolling in those societies. The developed political system wants the self-political participation of people; it means naturally people participate in political participation, but mobilized participation is the type of participation that mobilizes people by governments

in deferent time and deferent situation (Bakhshayshy Ardistry, 1379: 64-65). Samuel Huntington has divided political participation into five types: 1. Self-participation 2. Foreign motivated participation 3. Innate educational participation 4. rooting traditional participation of livelihood, population, economical 5. Voluntary and aware participation in types of association, public, councils, parties... come out. He believes without the establishment of participation especially political participation is impossible (Huntington, 1370:92). Off course there is an ambiguity to diagnose these two types of participation. In Andrew's viewpoint common political participation contain the action of participatory that exist in tradition and norm accepted in every country, in apposed of his viewpoint the action of anomaly political participation contains those action which is out of accepted norms and tradition of public (Andrew, 2010:199). Robert Dal in his new analysis of giving a picture from political parties that contain these levels: 1. Participation in presidential election 2. Participation in local election 3. Activities in an organization which is involved in social problems 4. Trying to make agreements with others in a way in which he acts 5. Activities for a party duration an election 6. Being in contact with local as well as national government 7. Participation in political meeting 8. Making an organization for solving social problems 9. Membership of political party 10. Pay money to an association, party, or election Candidate (Dal, 1364: 44). As a result, we can find the political participation is a complicated concept that cannot be consisted of one type and one level. Political participation despite quantities is also a qualitative concept that gives a profound mind from society and its political specialty. Afghanistan also is no exemption from this, especially with women's political participation make it clear in Afghan society.

➤ *Women political participation in passing societies to democracy*

Afghanistan is one of the countries which passing from tradition to democracy. From renovation theoretician viewpoint passing from tradition to modernization is a liner pattern that all county must pass it. But today this idea has some serious critic among western researchers. Passing to democracy is an independent process for developing counties that have no relation to liner passing from tradition to modernization. Democracy as a good governance pattern is acceptable to all in this era and showed its privilege. Passing to democracy no need to change governance methods also need to values and cultural change. In Bashirya's viewpoint, passing to democracy is a gradual and long process that expands during the time, without treating the benefit of rolling elites suddenly, promoted mass participation in democratic association (Bashirya, 1381: 2). The need for democracy and democratic of good governance is the realization of civilian participation in social and political areas. But political participation in developing countries to democracy is facing with different restrictions, event democracy itself is in danger. In many developing countries like Afghanistan's powerful system of a man rolling exist, that value gusto is undeniable and accepted by women also. In those societies with this thinking, women's participation is less than men in political

areas. Even so recently many women trying to occupy the high-level position of political as well as management. In a glance at the political participation of women in world areas and reaching a high level of political position, still, women in politics are in retreat, in-country like Afghanistan this situation is so serious. In some thinker's viewpoint, the inactive of women and their success is the result of men's mastery in political areas (Bashirya, 1378: 296). In the past century, men dominated societies, and women were under the men's ascendancy. This twice condition in education is caused to these types of psychological reactions (Razaqi, 1371:173). Despite men dominance, recently women with increasing political as well as social knowledge in a country like Afghanistan are trying to reach their lost rights.

➤ *Women political participation before September 11 (in Taliban period)*

With optimism, we can say Afghanistan has less experience in democracy and democratic associations. Dalton mentions that in 2001 and before the Taliban the eligibility of every country in democracy was more than Afghanistan. Because this country has been managed by the totalitarian government more than three-decade. Zaher Shah kingdom, Dawood Khan governance, the communist government under the control of the Soviet Union, and finally the Mujahidin Regime. After that when the Taliban received the government the situation got worse than the past. Taliban under the name of religious government came and justified their totalitarians which were out of any moral and religious values (Dalton, 2007:13). Jodi Benjamin's specialist in Afghanistan affairs at the international committee in New York says even Taliban is dangerous which reached serious harm to women but some persons understand their action. It is useless to know the Taliban is the cause of all problems that means we do not study history. In his belief, before the Taliban government, women in cities weren't normal. The Poverty and hygienic problem of women in Afghanistan is historic (Dazban, 1379: 42). Based on the human rights report in 1999 in three years of the Mujahidin government period in Kabul, before the Taliban rolling, the human right had been contravened widely. During the civil war in Afghanistan which continued from 1992-1995 many bad actions like sexual abuse, persecution and other bad action had happened to women (annual report of human rights, 1999:73). From the above mentioned, we can result, women's situation not only in the Taliban governance period wasn't good, but also in the history of Afghanistan women weren't good, as the reality which is in democratic countries. Despite, women's lives were restricted in rural areas but some of them had jobs out of the home like in the Zaher Shah period; three women were ministers, 40% of the doctors were women, and a large number of women also was teachers. Clearly, we can say women's situation especially personal live were poor (Kashani, 1377: 33). Marzan says after 1950 women gradually accepted as work power in service areas like clerk, nurse, receptionist, and flight attendant employed. Those who had high-level education could do a job as doctors, engineers, and newspaper writers. Despite this gradual change the religious leader had disagreed with it. They believed that from educated women their children

would affect (Marzan, 1379: 105). With reaching the Taliban to power, all social and political activities of women had stopped. Taliban in their first notice have wanted women not to go to public view. Women have deprived of work and education. deprivation from driving, shopping, going to a public bath... all actions have been done to women by the Taliban. Taliban had done many restrictions on all people especially women in their control areas. Women had been deprived of all social, political, and economic activities, just they have allowed to visiting patients, necessity shopping to go out. Mullah Omar the leader of the Taliban believed that the social participation of women caused to moral criminal, so they do not pay attention to women's rights because that was against Islam orders (Kashani, 1377:58). With Taliban ascendancy and its expansion of radical's ideas from religious and their darkness, returning to the golden age of the past, the situation of this country passing to democracy got very worse, and that was a historical backward. In that vertigo people of Afghanistan have had a kind of government in which people do not have anyway just submission. The Concept of participation especially women's political participation in Taliban rolling is useless, which depends on Taliban viewpoint toward women. They believed women just keep children, (Bashiry 1378:127). the Taliban thought women is as a symbol of honor and reputation for men, so men should protect them. It is clear with this idea's women must be at home and keep herself and be away from socio-political activities. In this case, the Taliban stop their young Maliciah (troops) from heresy education; they thought their duty is just keeping their sisters against immoral people. Taliban thought women's duties is the upbringing of children and working at home, so they must be away from sociopolitical activities (Morshedy Zad 1380:44).

II. ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

➤ *Women political participation after September 11 in (new structure of power)*

Demolishing symbol of materials power, the center of the world trade center, and military power (pentagon) in the early morning time of September; 2011 were a big challenge against the superpower of the world (United State). moreover, that was a large voice against modernists in the west (Behishyar, 1381:145). Along with occurring of September 11 catastrophe, the world paid attention to Islamic radicalism and its center in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This destroying and sudden attack of Al-Qaida on September 11; west world under the leadership of the united states leads to attack on Tora Bora Mountain and Khaybar valley until terrorism destroying (Karbalyee, 1388:60). September eleven is a reference to the establishment of a new government in Afghanistan. Along with the NATO and American attacks, the Taliban Islamic government had demolished. then the plan for making a new government in Boon conference had been made. The result of international and internal coalition forces attack leads to the new social and political conditions of Afghanistan. Due to Boon agreement the constitutional law, presidential election, and parliamentary election... have forecasted (Manouchehr and Karbalyee, 1388:308). In Boon's

conference, some important elements had been paid attention to it like the human rights, freedom of voice, free press, and women's right which was new to the future government of Afghanistan. From 24 official representatives in Boon conference two of them were women; moreover among 37 unofficial representatives in Boon conference 3 of them also were women (Doopry, 1377:211). In Boon conference concordat which is a starting way to a new Afghanistan; some roles regarding the future of women had been mentioned to it like: 1. In clauses 8 of introduction which contain the objectives of concordats mentioned as the first step of comprehensive, female acceptance, multitude ethnic and government of all peoples of Afghanistan. 2. In clauses 3 of concordat mentioned the chief, two deputies of the chief, and other members of the provisional government will choose by participated in meeting members of the united nation in Afghanistan affairs. In this choice, despite individual eligibility, the ethnic, locality, and religious relations also paid to attend. Moreover, the women's participation in government is attending to because of these two women inclusive in the cabinet. In participation of women in parliament also emphasized (Kazim, 2005: 507-508). In this case, the new power structure in Afghanistan had been established which women right from early time attention to, and in constitutional law got more serious about it.

III. METHODOLOGY

Current research has been applied to a qualitative approach. By collecting the data from various librarian resources like books, research articles, and magazines, etc which had scientific values in areas of women's political activities. These resources contain from the past period of the Taliban, the September 11 attack, and the new power structure. Meanly the report and research have come from the last two decades in a different era in the propriety time of women in Afghanistan history.

➤ *Position and participation of women in law*

Principally political participation of women in Afghanistan or other countries before the political formation of democratic systems even semi-democratic have no fear. Due to past totalitarians, the nature of government in Afghanistan political participation for both men and women weren't. the Taliban governing period cannot be compared with its before. Because the Taliban rolling was so worse. It was a nightmare for all men and women in Afghanistan. In the history of Afghanistan democracy are absent. In the totalitarian structure of power from the top, the people are away from politics and governance, just accept the elites' rolling and decisions. This situation had changed by demolishing of the Taliban, and Afghanistan steps into the new democratizing path. One of these was the codification of new legislation law. The new legislation law is one of the modern laws that can solve many women's problems like political participation. These women right had mentioned as it were in Boon conference and emergency Loy Jirga and legislation law Loy Jirga. In this Jirga women, themselves also have participated (Kazimi, 2005: 516-517). The new government has had emphasized on development of women

right based on Boon concordatto important reformative action, that had passed the legislation law in January 2004. this legislation had allocated some positive points on women's rights. That is important the new legislation had formed based on respect to democracy, human values, and equality for women.the introduction of legislation has mentioned for the creation of a civil society without evil, devil, discrimination,and brutalities based on social justice, the role of law, human right, and the securement of basic freedom of people (introduction of Afghanistan legislation law 1382). In continuation of 4 clauses of law that the national role depends on all people of Afghanistan which is the nation contain both men and women because all are the residents in Afghanistan. In 7 clauses of law show, the government of Afghanistan accepts all convention of the united nation (UN) and the worldwide statement of human rights. in this case, all people both men and women as humans have to recognize,the gender is not the prejudice caused.in 22 clauses also emphasized that every kind of discrimination and prominence is banned, Afghan residence men and women are equal to the law. In 33 clauses mentioned all afghan residence have the right of selecting and to be selected.In 7,22,33, clauses have mentioned the women right clearly. moreover in 67 clauses depend on the presidential Candidate which mentioned the candidate should be from Afghanistan, Muslim, and Afghan parents, have not the residence of other countries; so, in this case, there is no restriction for the woman if be the candidate. In 72 clauses is about the membership of women in the cabinet; so, there is no restriction for the woman.In 83 clauses is about membership of women in Wolisi jirga; here, in this case, positive prejudice accepted for the woman. In 84 clauses is about Meshrano Jirga; one-third of the members will choose by the president;so,in the president selection, half of them are women.in 118 clauses of legislation all right which is need for women came as equal to men. Along with mentioned clauses of the new legislation in the above,shown the political participation of women is no restricted.Despite this, the presence of women in parliament is so low in Kumar's viewpoint (Ray& Kumar, 2007: 87). Based on afghan legislation 25% percent of parliament must be women. Of course, this number is more than in other Asian countries.thereasons for women's numbers are low in parliament is: must women in parliament direct by men, no with women direction.Finally, it is clear the number of women in parliament is acceptable but the quality of their work does not suit with defiance of women right. This case so serious because the existence of women in all acting position is not effective that need to improve. Recently the number of women in governmental positions is increasing but their flounce and affection are still so low. This case is questionable what is the restriction on women way?

➤ *Barrier on political participation of women in new power structure*

We can divide the Afghan women problem which makes defer theme from other women in the world:

1-Psychological reason:Qazi believes there are two reasons which are barrier to the active political participation of women.Powerlessness and motivation for political activities, because they understand

the politic as complicate like violence, they know this area out of their abilities (Qazi,1386:151). The psychological barrier of women's political participation mostly depends on mentality reason. Afghan women have no emotion for active political participation. Due to a long-time passive of women in politics, finally, the situation had changed to the usual issues.

2- Socio-economic reason:the socio-economic barrier is another reason for active political participation. Being a wife, or mother is an important and continuation role in which women paid more attention to it, there is no time for study and political information to them. Due to the kind of job in society many men have more experience than women in politics, so women also lose the job opportunity and deprive them of economic resources. activities in political areas without any economical resource is impossible. The economical dependency of women on men itself is a barrier to them in political participation.

3-Cultural and social tradition reasons:cultural and social tradition reasons are the important barriers for the political participation of women especially affect the top level of political participation. As Fared Man mentioned patriarchal culture along with the division of work and doing home duty by women caused them to lose the opportunities of political participation from women. Gradually this job division has changed the mental emotion (Fared Man,1381: 26).differentiation between man and woman continuously for a long time made so resistant situations. mostly politics were the male identity; like men, they do the job on the top level of political structure (Ardistani, 1383:24).People of Afghanistan mostly believes women do not suit in political activities and even have no abilities. This idea was also accepted by women due to the historical ascendancy of men, and the lack of women's awareness. Recently in the last decade, some governmental and non-governmental institutions have to try, to improve the women's situation.

➤ *Governmental and semi-governmental institution of women situation protector in Afghanistan*

1-women network: Afghan women network contain institution which women are on its top and all worker are women. This network as an institution representative of women right now is actively busy in various parts of Afghanistan, and paying attention to the improvement of women's cultural learning, and defence from women's rights also (Hekmat,1388: 118).

2-ministry of women affair:According to Boon understanding the government had established the ministry of women's affair to develop the women right in Afghanistan at the provisional period in 1380. This ministry on its essential plan working on achieving the fundamental right of women in areas research, convening seminar, conference... (National work plan for Afghan women,1388: 31).

3-Afghanistan's independent commission of human right:the independent commission of Afghanistan is a national institution in Afghanistan which based on clause number 58 of legislation law and based on Boon concordat 2 in 1381/3/16 according to jun 6th 2002 to improve the human right aim, and support it. For the first time, this commission had established under the direct control of Dr.

Sima Samar. According to its roll and capability lead this commission to the right way (Annual report of the human right commission,2006:20). This commission had donned many activities regarding the removal of prejudice and inequality to reach to the real human rights in Afghanistan.

➤ *Future of women's political participation in Afghanistan (hops & fear)*

Women in Afghanistan facing the situation which create hop for their future, on the other hand extremely considerable fear and challenge to them. Even after Taliban destroying in (September 11 event) women have seen herself a little free, but the reality is that the Taliban wasn't only the barrier for women's political and social participation in Afghanistan. Women in Afghanistan are not independent in political activities. they follow their father and husband order in an election to vote. As Kumar mentioned in new legislation law had secured the equal right for women but this subject mostly had remained on the paper. The patriarchal emotion must change (Kumar & Ray, 2007:78). Based on paper and legislation law many women's problems in political areas have been solved, but in practice, many problems of women still have remained. The Afghan government despite western support still has many problems in deferent areas. The power is in the hand of local people with patriarchal ideas that are so difficult to find an equal position for men and women in society. Political participation after the Taliban were not for mental and values, that was because of an international force to make change the government forms into a democratic model. Moving to democracy in Afghanistan wasn't a process but it was a project which started by United state attack in Afghanistan. Still, the equality of men and women, in political participation, and other democratic values like peace has no place in Afghan society. Although the women's political participation recently has increased, that is quantitatively rather than qualitative. Based on the Afghan Research Evolution Unit (AREU) in June 2011 have published, shows still the women's achievement is superficial, and has no control over resources (Oxfam, 2011:12). Afghan women still worried about the Taliban if they joint to government from the peace process and take power, the women again will go down. This situation is not far from women's minds. On the other hand, there is some hope for women which in the presidential election in 1388 showed 42% of voters and two candidates were women. that is the women's strong decision in political participation. In 2011 Afghanistan had 69 women as parliament representatives which 28% percent of all parliament members that was the high level in the world as parliament member (Oxfam, 2011:11). Nowadays a million girls going to school, women returned to medical, justice, police, and other jobs that create hope among people of Afghanistan especially women. According to the ministry of women affair, the women achievement is as below:

Table 1: Female participation in the public sector

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Population	51.2	48.8
Second Boon Meeting	68%	32%
Judges	90%	10%
Security	95%	5%
Decision making	91%	9%
Parliamentarians	73%	27%
School teachers	70%	30%
Schoolgirl student	62%	38%
University teachers	85%	15%
University girl student	81%	19%
Health sector	76%	24%
Peace process	75%	25%
Meshrano Jirga	78%	22%
Tradition meeting	82%	18%
Contemporary loygirga (meeting).	88%	12%
Loygirga (large meeting) of constitutional law legislation.	80%	20%
Employee in governmental administration	78%	22%
Participation in (presidential, parliament and provincial councils' election)	60%	40%

Source: Ministry of women affair 2011

IV. CONCLUSION

Women in most countries in the world especially in a developing country like Afghanistan still have a problem in political participation. Women's history in Afghanistan is full of challenges and barriers in socio-cultural, economical, especially political participation. Afghan women have had a dark and tyrannous history in deferent eras. Recently the political participation women came out with a little difference from the past; but the women's problem still is in areas: Powerlessness and motivation because Afghan women have no emotion for active political participation. Due to a long-time passive of women in politics, finally, the situation had changed to the usual issues. the socio-economic barrier is another reason for active political participation for women in Afghanistan. Due to the kind of job in society, women working as a wife, or mothers so they do not have enough experience in political participation. moreover, the economical dependency of women on men itself is another barrier to them in political participation. cultural and social traditions reason are important barriers to the political participation of women. a country with patriarchal culture, people mostly believe that women do not suit to political activities, and even have no abilities. This idea was also had accepted by women due to the historical ascendancy of men, and the lake of women's awareness. Finally, we can say the Afghan women's political participation barrier is the psychological, socio-economic, and cultural, barriers. women still worried about the Taliban if they joint to government from the peace process and take power, the women again will go down.

The opportunity for the development of women exist is: the new legislation law has secured the equal right for men and women. In that has mentioned the creation of a civil society without evil, devil, discrimination, and brutalities based on social justice and the role of law. Moreover, the creation of a new structure for women's improvement: women network, ministry of women affair, an independent commission of human rights and others which working seriously on the improvement of the fundamental rights of women; their awareness and education, until their mind can gradually change and they believe their abilities. The achievement of women in participation in the election as a voter or candidate at high levels.

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