

Rural Education of Girls and Poverty in Afghanistan: Implications for Social, Political and Economic Welfare

Ifeyinwa Odokoro¹, Anthony Orji², Ikubor. O. Jude³, Jonathan E. Ogbuabor⁴, Onyinye I. Anthony-Orji⁵ and *Ndubuisi Isaac⁶

¹ Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria (odokoroifeyinwa94@gmail.com)

² Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria (anthony.orji@unn.edu.ng)

³ Department of Economics, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna (ojikubor@nda.edu.ng)

⁴ Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria (jonathan.ogbuabor@unn.edu.ng)

⁵ Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria (onyinye.anthony-orji@unn.edu.ng)

⁶ Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (ndubuisi.isaac@unn.edu.ng) *(**Corresponding Author**)

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of poverty on rural education of girls in Afghanistan. The study employed the Randomized control trial in a field experiment which is structured to include two groups namely the treatment and control groups. Variables used include; the level of individual wealth, village based school as the treatment group, the interaction of being poor in a village-based school. The findings showed that girls from poor homes do not have access to education when compared to girls from rich homes. When schools are established in rural areas, girls from poor homes still cannot be enrolled in schools. Also, from the results, it was observed that girls who are enrolled in schools often score more than boys in class test. To policy makers, this research recommends a shift from pursuing only boy child education to also include the girl child in education policies either by allowing girls to join the boys in same school or create a separate girls' school for the girls. Achieving this balance has

huge implications for the social, political and economic welfare of the citizens.

Keywords: Poverty, Rural Education, Gender, Afghanistan

JEL Classification: J16, I21, I24, O18

1. INTRODUCTION

For several decades, people of Afghanistan were subjected to conflict and devastation. Women have been the worst victims of the conflict. Under the Taliban rule, several restrictions were imposed on the female gender of the society that resulted in the low rate of girl's participation in primary education (Utsimu, 2022). The gender gap is prominent and only 37 percent of the primary school children attended these village schools regularly (Burde and Linden, 2012). The government has recently engaged in

promoting girls education and has focused on improving the condition of village-based schools to encourage education of girls from the poorer background (Inayatullah, 2022 and Olson, 2005). It has also been shown that Afghanistan has been experiencing different degrees of social and economic instability. Over the past few decades, the country has been reported to develop different schools, colleges, and educational institutions, although the discriminations for women have remained constant. In comparison to the rich girls in rural areas, the social norms regulations, and jurisdictions do not favour the poor girls in the Afghanistan social environment (Tareen & Muhammadi, 2021 and Lundahl & Wadensjo, 2015). The absence of proper resources in the villages of Afghanistan has started to pose a serious threat to the future of the poor girls of Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, there are different activities that are involved in increasing the status, position and conditions of women in the Afghan society. However, there are different factors that have been the major causes of discrimination against women in the country. Afghanistan has engaged strict male biases, tribal norms and regulations for women, religious extremists, poor law and jurisdictions (Tareen & Muhammadi, 2021

and Selod and Zenou, 2006). These factors coupled with strict laws and norms for women have been increasing women's discriminations in the country. In Afghanistan, the women and girls have also been facing issues for educational participations against males in the country. According to Rahimi (2015), the girls from poor family face more problems in the society in respect of rich girls of the society. The girls from the poor family may be more brilliant but they do not hold any influence over the schools whereas, the rich family has influences which help them to get their children's marks better even if they do not perform well in their exams. The society is biased not only against girls but also mainly against poor girls (Mashriqi, 2016). The community only respects the rich families and so, they do not interfere in the life of the rich families.

Afghanistan has 42 per cent of its population under poverty. In rural areas, 45 per cent of its population is under poverty and in urban areas, about 21 per cent of its population is under the line poverty. In rural areas, the population is around 23 million. The population in rural areas consist of 90 per cent illiterate women and about 63 per cent illiterate men. The population has always been highly dependent upon the agricultural

activities. Due, to the war, most of the agricultural areas has been devastated and ruined (Trani and Loeb, 2012). Thus, this has caused a lot of problem for the rural people. Most of the people have gone under the poverty line and many of them starve due to the bad financial condition. Up to 70 per cent of Afghan is insecure to get food. The food price is also highly inflated which causes many Afghans to suffer from malnutrition.

In Afghanistan, some of the basic reasons like strict tribal rules, norms and regulations for women have reduced the scope of improvement of their situations. There is a lack of educational opportunities, job opportunities, and illiteracy that has led to a continuation of gender discriminations against women in Afghan society. In the country, the male dominant nature has also been observed as the key reasons of the gender and educational discriminations in Afghan for women (Olson, 2005).

In the year of 2013, about half of the girls were enrolled in the primary schools for education compared to the boys that were 60%. The current year observation over the women's status in Afghanistan dictates that they still have very less scope of education, 45% of men are literate in the country compared to 18% of girls. The women are still facing hurdles for gaining liable

education comparable to men in the male dominant society (Shavarini and Robison, 2005).

In Afghanistan during the period of 1996-2001, a ban was imposed on the participation of women to gain education and go to different schools and educational institutions. During the rule of Taliban in the country, the discrimination increased at the higher range. However, by 2004 at the end of Taliban rule, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has engaged different provisions and rights to reduce such gender inequalities for women in the country (Morley. and Crossouard, 2015). Against this background, this research is therefore focused on analyses and evaluations of different causes of poverty, gender and educational discriminations against the women of Afghanistan. With the development of this research, the issues of poverty, gender discrimination and the importance of literacy and education have been discussed. This study is very useful and will show case the importance of the educational system and reduce the criminal issues faced by women in Afghanistan. The research will further highlight the disparity between the poor girls and boys, and implication of village schools to reduce these major hurdles and enhance education for the girls in the country.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of discrimination due to poverty

Poverty is seen as a problem everywhere around the world (Orji, Ogbuabor, Nwosu, Anthony-Orji, Amoji, 2020). Discrimination has also been considered as violations of the civil and social rights of the human beings in the society. Jolliffe and Campos (2005) argued that discrimination is the treatment of any particular gender or group in populations, better than the opposite gender. These discrimination issues are commonly experienced and seen in most of the countries around the globe. Russo (2006) has argued that discriminations engage different forms and categories with different cause and impact, and based on the categories, several countries usually experience them.

Discrimination is categorised as direct, indirect, associative, perspective, harassment and abuse. In the different types of discriminations, the gender inequality, labour and regional discrimination, describes that nations are included in the direct discriminations. Cerise and Francavilla (2012) has evaluated that discriminations are

experienced in the countries that have a lack of or developing social facilities and public attributes. Discrimination between rich and poor is present in most of the developing countries including Brazil, India and China. This sort of discrimination can be highly observed in the third world countries. Afghanistan being one of those countries shows discrimination based on wealth largely. Especially, in the rural areas the discrimination is out in the open. The rich people in the rural areas of Afghanistan have total power in their hands (Krueger and Malečková, 2003). Most of these wealthy people also hold high posts in the government. Being an elite government official or politician also help them in getting all their wishes done. They have influence over the elders of the community in the villages. They are able to pressurise the teacher to make any changes they want regarding the marks of their children.

Discussing the realms of poverty in Afghanistan

Poverty has been a real problem in this global era. The effects of poverty are very much diverse in nature (Mba, Nwosu, & Orji, 2018 and Nwosu & Orji, 2017). Many effects are mediocre in nature but most of them have devastating effects (Mashriqi, 2016). The poverty in any country causes misbalance in

the distribution of wealth for that particular country. It causes the destruction of the economy of the country. It is not only limited up to the people of that country but also to the future generation of that country. Poverty also makes some people very much rich in comparison to the other or the vast population of the country (Agu & Orji 2015a and Agu & Orji 2015b). These few people try to take control of everything they could possess. They also are the main cause of the creation of the bad bureaucracy of people. These rich people try to achieve everything they could. When they cannot they try to bribe the bureaucrat which start the beginning of the bribing in the country.

In the case of Afghanistan also, the poverty is very much visible. About 76 per cent of the people in Afghanistan are poor. Most of the people are poor while few have managed to become rich. The rich people have dominance in the government of Afghanistan. The rich people hold a lot of influence in the tribal regions. The rich people encourage bribing in the government. Thus, the rich people have also made the government corrupt. The education sector of Afghanistan has not escaped from the hands of these rich people (Trani and Loeb, 2012). These rich people are able to send their kids to better schools while poor family could not

even think of sending their wards to any village-based schools. The rich people also want to remain at the helm of the society. The education system of Afghanistan is also very much biased in the sense that the number of female teachers teaching in the schools are very less.

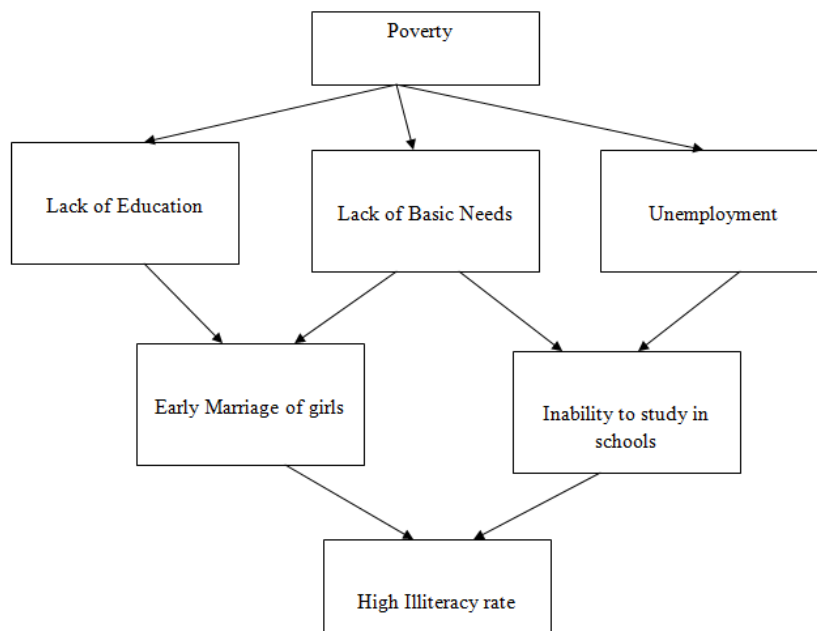
Only education has the power to guide women away from crimes. Many crimes committed, can be reduced, if women are encouraged for education. Discrimination has the power to cause such problems that are very hard to cure. It can cause anxiety, depression, and aggressiveness.

People can acquire manual problems; also, living in society becomes very difficult for those who suffered from direct discrimination in education. Teachers must not inflict any biased attitude towards students. He should give attention equally to all students. School dropout rates can be reduced if the teacher does not do partiality while teaching students. Eradicating discrimination can lead the student to have a positive attitude about the school. A student can improve his performance and will not lose hope about the school. Mostly Children of immigrants are at a risk of facing discrimination in the schools. Due to this bad practice, the students develop depressive symptoms and unnecessary aggressiveness

(Channar *et al.* 2011). Discrimination has the potential to cause many mental problems. The victim can feel sad about him/herself and he will feel that whatever is given to him or her is not sufficient. Food intake of the victim also gets hampered and he will lose enthusiasm. In the society, people develop the confused vision and become addicted to

harmful substances. They start imposing their ideas and opinion upon other members of society. Many talented people lose that stamina to work hard. Therefore we can see that discrimination causes the serious shortage of mental and manual energy (Abbas *et al.* 2015).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



(Source: created by researchers)

2.2 Theoretical Literature

The labelling theory

This theory argues that most of the population makes a mental thought process of being proposed as an important source of contribution towards the society. In this theory, it is argued that the group of the population uses the self-esteem factor to create a particular thought process for the rest of the human individuals in respect of religion, region, gender and colour complexions. Greenwald and Pettigrew (2014) has mentioned that some of the terminologies such as gender or region are been influenced by these group of people to make specific classification and identification for them. As such, an individual or group of individuals judge a particular individual as per his or her religion or region which has good or bad influence on the behaviour of that group of individuals towards the particular individual being judged. For instance, it has always been seen that the people from South Africa living in United States are identified as black Americans, thus they may be discriminated against because of their nature of religion and region (Barreto *et al.* 2009). There are several cases that have been observed in which, the people from Africa residing in the USA are mistreated, harassed and tortured. Thus, it appears the regulations and human rights for the black Americans are different in the country. That describes a basic nature of labelling form of discrimination.

Game theory of discrimination

The conception and formation of discrimination are widely dependent on the significant characteristics of human mind stimuli that quickly react over the differentiations in the identity of an individual with them. Zaman *et al.* (2015) have opined that any individual with their significant identity and characteristics, lacks any special facilities, they usually get irritated with the other people's identity and nature, who enjoys every specific social facilities and positioning. These created a discriminated thought process within the individuals, In most of the cases, the inequality occurs due to thinking of some basic things are not in their favour in the society such as status, high class, money, job and standard of living (Moro and Norman, 2004).

Social psychology theory of discrimination

In this particular theory, poverty, gender inequality and harassment are focused on evaluating the basic nature and reasoning of the formation of discriminations in the society. As per the theory, the basic issues of discriminations and inequalities are formed inside the society and most due to the improper involvement of human physiology. Burde and Linden (2012) has mentioned that human beings have a usual tendency to

compare and disseminate other individuals in respect of their assets, values, status and positioning in the society.

The development of such thought process gives formations to the bias that is based on the favouritism and favouritism of majority and minority group of people in the society. In the human society, there are some group of people that tend to de-motivate and pinch for the absence of social elements with them, which enhances the differences and bias

characteristics between different groups of people. Monahan *et al.* (2008) have argued that this particular theory highlights a process and stimuli perception that originates the discrimination in the society. However, other factors and environmental forces cause origin of inequality within the people. It has been analysed that the lack of literacy, educators and proper learning of behaviours have led some of the people to start believing whatever they have learned is the final truth.

Figure 2: Theories of discrimination



(Source: Goldman, 2015, p.36)

2.2.1 Models of discrimination

Becker's discrimination Model

The discrimination model of Becker argues that the engagement of the personal characteristics and assets of the individuals in the society usually enhances the urge of getting more. However, the inability to gain such positions like another group of people sometimes increases irritative or inappropriate behaviours of the people. According to Childs (2002), one of the basic tastes of discrimination is the behaviour of the individual in the society. The model has assessed that competitiveness over the individual's mind, might decline the issues and possibilities of formation of discriminations in the society. The behavioural approach that has been presented by Becker stated that an individual's behaviour needs to be positive and negative towards a situation (Moghadam, 2015).

Thompson's PCS model of discrimination

The PCS model of discriminations is based on the anti-oppressive practices that are involved in the society. In the mode the PCS highlights personal, cultural and structural analysis, based on which the discriminations are been categorised and thought by the mind of an individual in the society. As per the model, it evaluates the three basic practices

that an individual is commenced in the society. Czarniawska (2006) has supported the fact that with the development of the practitioners, researchers are able to acknowledge the formation point of discriminations by an individual in the society. The three basic practice level of the individual in the society has been analysed and evaluated are as follows;

Personale

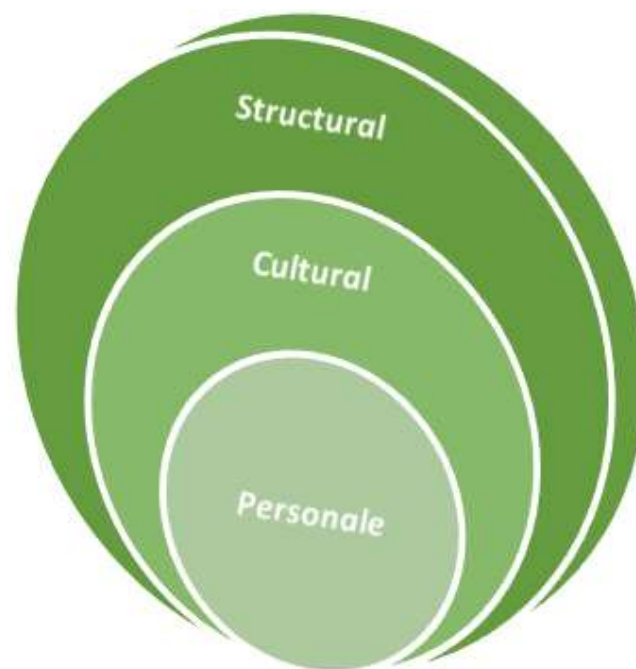
The first level of the PCS mode is personal level. In that particular level, the individual thought process and viewpoints are measured. In a specific society, any situation and circumstances are been viewed, evaluated and analysed by the individual's mind (Bergemann *et al.* 2015). In the particular level of practices, the human being analyses the situations as per their beliefs, learning and literacy to make proper understanding and assessment of the scenario. In this model, the P is indicated in the core or middle of the circle, as it has been evaluated by the perceptions through which procedures are formed as per the beliefs, learning and lodge of an individual (De Paola and Scoppa, 2015).

Cultural

The cultural level includes the share of thought procedures and views over a situation or circumstances with the other group of individuals or an individual in the society. It has been observed that the individuals search for a commonality for sharing their views and ideas with the individuals in the society (Zaman *et al.* 2015, p.122). This is one of the basic sources of creation of the group of people forming the majority and minority in the society. It has

been analysed that a particular person has a particular thought or idea about a specific individual or person, seeks to share the value and beliefs with the other people. As such, the person is found with same thinking nature and visions, the sharing is been made. However, Morley and Crossouard (2015) have stated that individuals in the society have not met the thoughts that are commonly and usually discriminated and forms inequalities in the society.

Figure 3: PCS Model of discrimination



(Source: Moghadam, 2015, p.388)

Structural

The structural else is been observed as the support of overall societal beliefs, visions, and perceptions by the individuals. It has

been assessed that the particular level analysis the flow of beliefs, views and thoughts that are been adopted or accepted by the individuals in the society. In the particular

level, it describes, the arguments and conflicts between the thoughts and views are originated in the level, as the acceptance of one specific common fact is not possible, due to different mean, visions, ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of individuals in the society (Greenwald and Pettigrew, 2014).

2.2.2 Poverty in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, about 76 per cent of the population is under the poverty line. The population of the Afghanistan is mainly based upon the agriculture, which has been disbanded due the series of wars, which ravaged the country for about three decades. The arrival of Taliban also put an end to the education, which was flourishing before (Krueger and Maleckovà, 2003). Poverty has caused about 80 per cent of the Afghan women to remain illiterate. However, in the rural areas the illiteracy percentage of women is around 93 percent. The main reason of poverty in Afghanistan is the destruction of the agriculture. The people of Afghanistan were more or less dependent on the agriculture. After the destruction of the agricultural fields, the people were left with no choice but to do odd jobs. Many of them joined Taliban, as they were the only organisation from where they could gain wealth. Many of those whose join the Taliban died in battles fought with the Northern

Alliance or later with the US coalition parts. Many of the wives of the Taliban fighters became widows in this fight between the Taliban and the other groups. Those widows of the Taliban were left with no choice but to starve.

As of the year 2014, the total population of Afghanistan was nearly 31 million. Out of this, 23 million was the population of the rural areas, which is approximately 74% of the total population. As most of the people are from poor families, the mortality rate of infants is also high. In Afghanistan, 70 infants die on birth out of 1000 births every year. While 97 children died on reaching the age of 5 years in 1000 children every year. The poverty of the country also denies the people to spend on their health. The total expenditure on health is around 8% of its GDP (Rahimi, 2015). Poverty is also the main obstacle to the education and literacy of the girls in Afghanistan. About 42% of girl student takes poverty as the main blockage in accessing education. About 40% of the girl student thinks that early marriage is the main factor in stopping their studies.

2.2.3 Analysing the impact of poverty in the discrimination processes occurring in Afghanistan

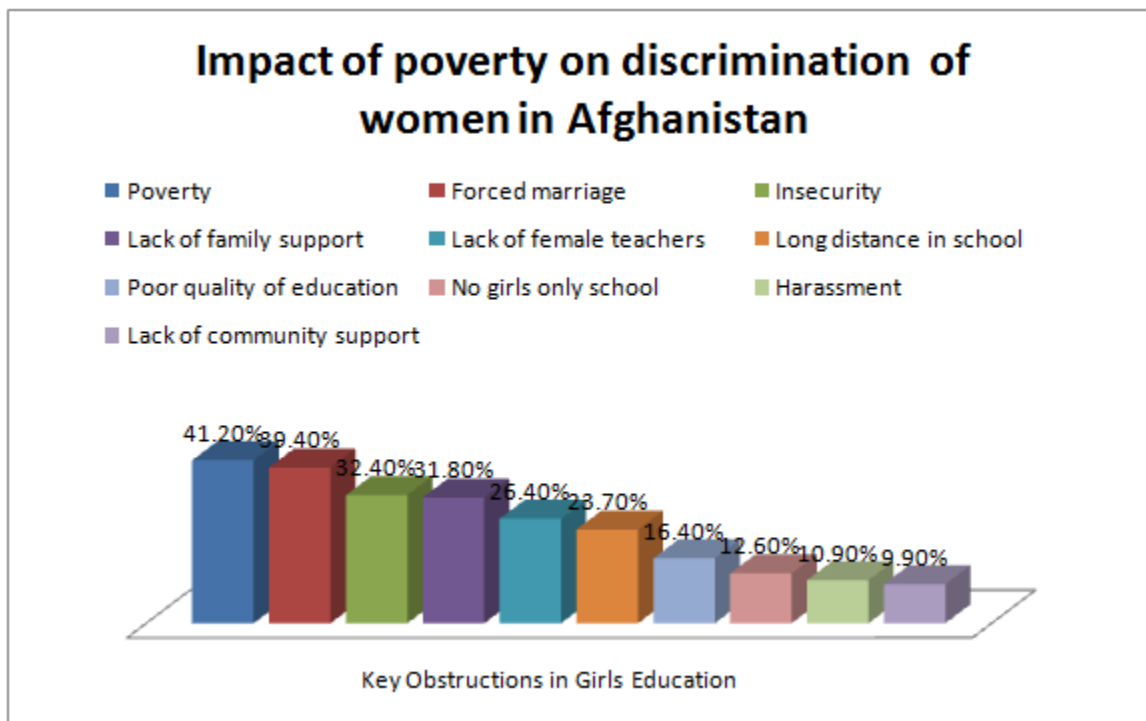
In Afghanistan, a poor status and positioning of the women has been observed. In recent

days too, many cases has been found in which the women are tortured, forced and humiliated. The development of the economy has dictated in the country, the status of gender discriminations which has been constant and continued since 2001 (Olson, 2005). From a decade, it has been observed that the literacy rate of Afghanistan is very low compared to the people that have attended schools. In Afghanistan, due to the strong roots of cultural and tribal traditions, the regulations are higher in respect of the male and female in the society. During the

Taliban ruling, many cases of violence, deaths, harassments, and violence against the women has been experienced (Shavarini and Robison, 2005). Thus, these unstable circumstances have resulted in instability in respect to the government in the country. The strict rules and regulations against the women in the society have been observed to be major reasons of discriminations.

However, the figure 4 below evaluates those poverty discriminations that have formed due to the influence of the rich people in the country (Kandiyoti, 2007).

Figure 4: Impact of poverty on discrimination of women in Afghanistan



(Source: Krueger and Maleckovà 2003, p.130)

In rural areas, many village-based schools have been established. These schools are

mainly to provide education to every child in the rural areas. These children include the

rural children from the poor family as well as from rich families. The village-based schools are the advantage for the poor children in the villages. Many of those children are very much poor and are not able to go to any school located in the urban areas. The families of poor people do not have money to support transportation to schools in urban areas. For those students, village-based schools are of great advantage to them. Most of those schools are opened at houses, which have been vacated or damaged during the war (Rahimi, 2015). These schools provide basic primary education up to intermediate level. These schools have female teachers for the girl students. However, the number of female teachers is far less than the male teachers. Many schools do not give any textbook or copy to write to the students.

Most of the village girls in Afghanistan have high aspirations regarding their education. About 78 % of the girl students want to continue their studies up to the university. Also, about 58% of their parents want their daughter to continue education up to university level.

Often, girls are not supported in their aspiration to get the education. This is mainly due to the perception of the community that women play the subordinate role in the society. Families of the girls also succumb to

the pressure of the community as most of the parents think of marrying off their child in the same community (Moghadam, 2015). However, within few years there has been a lot of progress in the education sector. Many new village-based schools have opened up. These schools do not have the number of female teachers but they are providing education as much as possible.

In the country, the women are kept in strict rules such as prohibition over shaking hand with male, carrying women bags, going out without the burka. The tribunal rules has declined the freedom level of women in the court, this can be assessed one of the highlighted cause of increasing discrimination in the country.

2.2.4 Critical appraisal of the educational system of Afghanistan

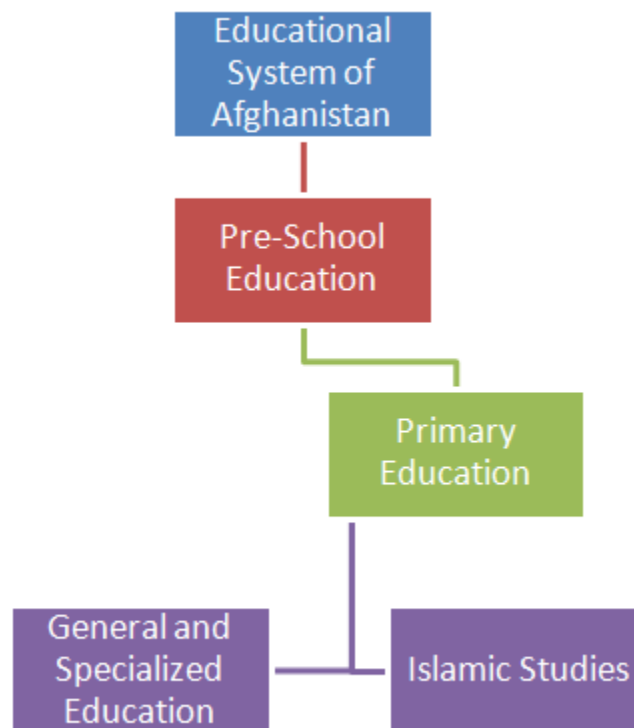
In Afghanistan, the Islamic laws provide same rights to men and women regarding the education they can obtain from the system. According to Channar *et al.* (2011), the new constitution of Afghanistan forbids discrimination between men and women. But in contrary Burde and Linden (2013) stated that in those said laws, there is a large discrimination between men and women in Afghanistan. This discrimination is mainly due to misguided customs, which are followed by most people of Afghanistan.

These discriminations can be observed in the education system of Afghanistan also. The women are regularly demoralised and prevented from joining schools and colleges. However, the men too are not encouraged by the elders to join schools and colleges.

The population of Afghanistan constitutes of 90% illiterate citizens. The formal education system of Afghanistan comprises of Pre-school Education, which is given to children of 3 months to 6 years, primary education which is given to 6 years to 12 years, after

this, education is divided into two categories, Islamic education, general and specialised education (Abbas, *et al.* 2015). In Islamic education, there is an Intermediate level after which student studies in upper secondary and Islamic colleges after which the student studies higher education. In general, students study Intermediate level after which he or she can opt for teacher training, vocational training or general upper secondary. The school year in Afghanistan consists of two semesters.

Figure 5: Types of Education in Afghanistan



(Source: Kanyangarara *et al.* 2012, p.132)

The school year depends on the location of the school in Afghanistan. The schools which are located in cold areas such as Kabul and most northern parts of Afghanistan starts their school year from the Islamic New Year which falls on 21st March and if 21st is a holiday then the next following day. Whereas if the school is located in the Southern or South-Eastern parts of Afghanistan which are considered as the hot area of Afghanistan then their school starts from September of the year. The school years are mostly of nine months with a two and half month vacation after each school year.

The school days have the duration of three and half hours class. Teachers in rural Afghanistan work in a school as the part-time teachers only. They teach in a school for half the day and after that, they search for an alternative job. The school located in the urban parts of Afghanistan are mostly overcrowded. Due to this reason, the schools in urban parts operate in shift style. Many schools operate in four shifts a day to counter overcrowding. Schools located in urban areas of Afghanistan offer co-educational schooling for girls and boys. However, some schools offer education in separate shifts for boys and girls.

Table 1: Effective Transition from Primary to general secondary education in Afghanistan based on gender

ETR			
Year	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
2013	95	85	91
2012	95	85	91
2011	91	82	88
2010	93	84	90
2009	81	80	81

(Source: Alvi, 2011, p.18)

Therefore, the schools have a shift for boys and another shift exclusively for girls. Especially, in rural areas the community don't

allow girls to study with boys even if the boys study in a different shift and only allow girls to study if the teacher is a female teacher and

closely known to them and trusted by them. In most parts of Afghanistan, the children get to study collectively till they obtain their primary education. After that, they are separated into their respective shifts in the school. When students enter the universities and teacher training courses they again have to study collectively. Only the students whose chose to study academic course or teacher training course get a chance to do teacher's job or higher education.

2.2.6 State of women education in Afghanistan

The women in Afghanistan have a very low rate of literacy. And the responsibility of educating them lies with the government of Afghanistan but also with educated women of Afghanistan. The main reason behind the illiteracy of women in Afghanistan is the gender bias. The community in Afghanistan is severely biased towards men. From the small age, the girls are not allowed to go to school if the school is co-educational in nature.

The community wants that even if the school operate in shifts exclusively for girl students, the teacher should be very familiar with the community. However, this is not the only issue which affects the education of girl children in Afghanistan. They are also affected by a lack of infrastructures such as

school buildings, lack of security for the children, lack of qualified teachers and much more (Alvi, 2011). The school buildings which are used for schooling are more somewhat damaged by the wars ravaging the country from the era of Northern Alliance and onwards.

After the overthrowing of the Taliban government by the US and the establishment of the Karzai government, the Taliban has always tried to enforce their Sharia laws but are unable to do so. Therefore, they are now targeting the schools to stop the children from getting an education. For this purpose, they keep raiding the schools to establish fear in the minds of the parents of those who send their ward to school. To prevent this, Afghanistan government provided security to the schools. To the contrary, most schools still lack security and are unprotected against the Taliban's aggression. According to Burde and Linden (2013), Taliban wanted the girls to be treated as slaves and for this, they abolished girl education. The education system of Afghanistan also lacks the required numbers of teachers. Since the girls are not allowed to study, there were very few female teachers to teach the girl students of the future generation. However, this was not the case in the year 1921. Then the Queen of Afghanistan, Queen Soraya and later on King

Amanullah promoted the education of women on an equal level with the men's education. However, with the forcibly taking the power of Emir Habibullah, the women education was abolished from the system. Again in 1960, during the rule of Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan, the education system consisting the education of the girls was developed. The women were allowed to study together with boys and many of them went abroad to get a higher education. The workforce of the Afghanistan also comprised of a large percentage of women along with men. The women excelled in all fields including medicine, journalism, law, and science.

2.3 Gaps in Literature and Value Added

Theories and models for evaluating the conception and approach of discrimination including its impact and causes have been reviewed. With the development of theories, this work has been able to obtain viable learning about the discrimination. However, the use of the sociological theory of destination has provided better information about the effects of this form of the thought process of a group of individuals in the society. In the literature section, the description of the categories of discrimination has helped to analyse more

specific assessment over the core formation of poverty and gender discrimination. On the other hand, the models used in this research have discussed the human perception and procedures that encourage the possibility of discriminating an individual or group of people. However, the involvement of economic model of discriminations might have provided a political view and highlight over the causes and consequences of discrimination of the country's growth and positioning.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the use of Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in a field experiment. Most times, these randomized control trials (RCTs) are structured such that some groups in an experiment receives a "treatment" while another set of groups does not, these groups are known as "the control group". Randomized controlled trials are the most scrupulous method of analyzing whether a cause-effect relation exists between treatment and outcome and for evaluating the cost efficacy of a treatment.

The research design adopted for this study is similar to the research design adopted by Burde and Linden (Burde and Linden, 2012, 2013). They researched about the random assignment of schools which allows the

researcher to assess the differences between the treatment and control group. Data for 31 villages were obtained from the Ghor province during the 2007 to 2008 period. The data obtained was divided into two groups: 13 villages in the treatment and 18 villages in the control group. Treatment villages are those villages where village-based schools were established in the year 2007 while no school was assigned to the control villages until 2008. The aim of their research was to check the impact of the village-based schools on the academic performance and the formal enrollment of children in Ghor province of northern Afghanistan. They achieved the results of their research by conducting surveys from all available households in the fall of 2007 and in the spring of 2008. They were able to collect three types of information which are; the demographic information, the determination of the enrollment status of each child that is between the ages of 6 and 11 living in household, the administration of a short test including math and language skills for each child available. Burde and Linden (2012, 2013) stated that provision of village-based schools solved the problem of distance to schools for rural children and also schools improved their formal enrollment and their academic performance. The data used for this

analysis is derived from the original data of Burde and Linden (Burde and Linden 2012, 2013).

Randomized controlled trial method is employed to evaluate the impact of the village based schools on the poor and rich girls in Ghor province of northern Afghanistan.

Our result was evaluated by running an ordinary least square regression using Stata 2014 software. The regression was based on the data for the girls in the different households in year 2007/2008, because this research is based on poverty, the wealth status of girls had to be determined. Burde and Linden (2012, 2013) determined the assets of the households by collecting the data for the Jeribs of lands and number of sheep. The number of sheep was used to measure the wealth status of girls by using the number of sheep in spite of missing data. In other words, we assumed that the households with less than 6 numbers of sheep are the poor households, therefore the girls from those households are the poor girls and the rest of the girls in the households with more than 6 numbers of sheep are the rich girls.

3.2 Model Specification

The dependent variables are formal enrollment and test scores while the independent variables are;

- i. The level of wealth for individuals in the sub-sample, comparing the poor girls to the rich girls. This is the dummy variable with 1 representing poor.
- ii. The village-based schools which is described as the 'treatment'.
- iii. The interaction of being poor in a village-based school (treatment) which is denoted as poor*treatment.

The model is stated as follows

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_k + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \epsilon_{ijk}$$

The variable Y_i is the impact of the independent variables on child i , in household j , and village group k . The variable T_k evaluates the village group k that was categorized for treatment, and X_{ij} describes other independent variable.

4. Presentation of Data and Analysis

This study evaluates the effect of wealth on girls' education in Afghanistan. The main result indicates village based schools are beneficial for girls and low levels of wealth reduces the percentage of girls performance and enrolment in village based schools.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics Based on Wealth Status 2007

			Poor			Not poor		
			Treatment Average	Control Average	Estimated difference	Treatment Average	Control Average	Estimated difference
Panel A. Child-level variables								
Household head's child			0.923	0.887	0.036	0.913	0.934	-0.022
					(-0.048)			(-0.015)
Girl			0.505	0.565	0.441	0.455	0.474	-0.019
					(-0.083)			(-0.027)
Age			8.275	8.177	0.097	8.309	8.361	-0.051
					(-0.276)			(-0.09)
Panel B. Household variables								
Years of family			31.132	26.226	4.906	29.48	28.164	1.316

in the village								
					(-2.653)			(-0.849)
Farsi		0.242	0.226	0.016	0.211	0.193	0.018	
				(0.070)				(0.022)
Tajik		0.198	0.097	0.101	0.189	0.289	-0.101***	
				(0.059)				(0.023)
Farmers		0.637	0.79	-0.153**	0.739	0.683	0.057**	
				(0.074)				(0.025)
Age of household		42.385	42.532	-0.148	39.701	40.237	-0.536	
				(1.848)				(0.609)
Years of education of household head		4.308	3.194	1.114**	3.261	3.291	-0.031	
				(0.522)				(0.200)
Number of people in household		9.165	9.209	-0.045	8.217	8.313	-0.096	
				(0.63)				(0.181)
Jeribs of land		6.055	7.016	-0.961*	1.021	0.866	0.155**	
				(0.614)				(0.051)
Number of sheep		24.176	11.419	12.756***	8.106	5.026	3.0803***	
				(3.821)				(0.501)
Distance to nearest formal school (non village-based school.		2.913	3.312	-0.398**	3.097	2.829	0.267***	
				(0.159)				(0.062)

Source: Authors' Computation

This table explains average demographic characteristics from the fall 2007 survey based on the wealth status of the households in Ghor province of northern Afghanistan. The differences are evaluated using equation 1 and 2, that is treatment (without controls) and with controls. It is statistically significant at 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, denoted by ***, **, *. Some of the differences are statistically significant.

Formal enrollment: In this analysis, the benefits of education based on wealth are evaluated by directly comparing formal

enrolment of poor girls to rich girls in 2007 and 2008. Establishment of village-based schools increased the formal enrolment of girls by 48% in 2007 and slightly reduced to 34% in 2008. In households, being poor leads to a reduction of 15% of girl's formal enrollment. In addition when girls from poor households are enrolled in village-based schools, there is no effect on formal enrollment. Burde and linden (2012) shows that girls enrollment did increase when village based schools were established. Thus, the increase in enrollment is not only

determined by establishing village based schools but also by poverty levels of families.

Table 3: Impact of Poverty on Formal Enrolment of Girls in 2007/2008

Formal Enrolment	2007	2008
Poor2	-0.153*** (-3.32)	-0.139** (-2.79)
Treatment	0.484*** (10.53)	0.344*** (6.67)
Poor2*treatment	0.0855 (1.38)	0.129 (1.89)
Constant	0.254*** (7.16)	0.475*** (11.99)
Observations	736	688

Source: Authors' Computation

IMPACT OF POVERTY ON FORMAL ENROLLMENT OF BOYS IN 2007/2008

For boys, the reverse is the case; presence of village-based schools increased formal enrollment of boys in 2007 by 31% and has a 19% increase in 2008 to 50%. Low level of wealth of boys also reduce formal enrollment by 13% in 2007 and 17% in 2008 compared to rich boys. Apparently, being poor in the village-based schools affects boys' enrollment, it reduces formal enrollment by 14% compared to poor girls

Table 4: Impact of Poverty on Formal Enrollment of Boys in 2007/2008

Formal Enrolment	2007	2008
Poor2	-0.130** (2.76)	-0.177*** (-3.71)
Treatment	0.312*** (6.41)	0.504*** (10.70)
Poor2*treatment	0.148* (2.31)	0.153* (2.37)
Constant	0.434*** (11.57)	0.282*** (7.85)
Observations	835	623

Source: authors' Computation

Table 5: Impact of Poverty on Girls' Test Scores in 2007/2008

Test Scores	2007	2008
Poor	-0.243* (-2.38)	-0.200 (-1.89)

Treatment	0.666*** (6.58)	0.814*** (7.80)
Poor*treatment	0.0864 (0.63)	0.0543 (0.34)
Constant	-0.214** (-2.74)	-0.243** (-3.04)
Observations	710	610

Source: Authors' Computation

From table 5, going to village-based schools is beneficial for girls; it increases their academic performance by a 66% increase in their test scores. Low level of wealth seems to slightly reduce academic performance of girls by 24% while in 2008, benefits of village based schools has a positive effect on academic performance of girls by an 81%

increase in test scores but also being poor slightly reduced academic performance by 20% though it does not have a significant impact on the test scores. Village based improves performance of girls irrespective of their financial status. However, being poor in the village based schools have no significant impact on the test scores.

Table 6: Impact of Poverty on Boys' Test Scores in 2007/2008

Test Scores	2007	2008
Poor	-0.400*** (-3.38)	-0.544*** (-4.18)
Treatment	0.268* (2.19)	0.296* (2.20)
Poor*treatment	0.300 (1.86)	0.434* (2.45)
Constant	0.578*** (6.16)	0.682*** (6.59)
Observations	743	641

Source: Authors' Computation

From table 6, low level of wealth doesn't seem to matter a lot for girls as it does for boys. The presence of village-based schools does not increase academic performance of boys. In 2007 and 2008, the test scores are low by 26% and 29% respectively. Meanwhile, being poor in different

households leads to a very low reduction in test score for boys by 40% and 54% test scores in 2007 and 2008 respectively, compared to girls. However, poor boys in the village-based schools have no effect on the test scores in 2007 but have a little impact on the test score in 2008.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results presented above, it can be seen that in Afghanistan, school enrolment for girls in villages remain relatively low especially girls from poor homes while there was an increase in enrolment rate for boys despite their backgrounds. Also, whether in the city or in the villages, the average test score for boys does not improve significantly

while for girls, their test score tend to increase significantly as they attend school especially those in their villages.

As a result of this research, the study recommends the following; First, Afghan government should provide equal opportunities for both males and females. Second, special schools for girls can be established to educate girls.

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