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The Development of Education in Afghanistan

This article deals with the development of education in Afghanistan, including the history of the development of higher education. The article presents the origins of the education system formation, starting from the beginning of the XX century to the modern stage, and the higher education system - from the second half of the XX century, as the main reasons for slow progress of development of education indicates a period of struggle of the Afghan people to foreign aggression. The article describes the development of education periods: during the reign of Khan Nabibulah, Amanulah Khan, Zaher Khan, Communists, Mujahedeen, the Taliban, Karzai Ahmadi. The study focuses on the history of secular and religious schools, and also the existence of different standards of education that have been upgraded in accordance with the traditional values of the country. As one of the main reasons for the low level of development of the education system in Afghanistan, indicated the need for and dependence on external sources of financing, the relentless struggle for independence for centuries, as well as the devastating effects of the reign of the Taliban. The authors point to the poor quality of the implementation of standards of education, poor infrastructure, lack of teacher training, financing and other issues that need to be discussed and to seek solutions.

Key words: education, school, religious school, the educational system, Taliban, government.

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Ауғанстандағы білім берудің дамуы

Мақалада Ауғанстанның жоғары білім беру және жалпы білім берінің дамуы жайлы сұрақтар қарастырылған. Сонымен қоса, мақалада жалпы білім беру жүйелерінің XX ғасырдан, жоғары білім беру жүйелерінің XX ғасырдың екінші жартысынан қазіргі кезеңге дейінгі қалыптасу негіздері жайлы ақпарат берілген. Білім беру жүйелерінің дамуын тежеуші себептерге Ауғанстанның сыртқы агрессияға жауап ретіндегі кезеңдік кикілжіңдер сипатталған. Білім берудің даму кезеңдері: Набибулах Хана, Аманулах Хана, Захер Хана, коммунистер, Муджахедина, талибтер, Ахмади Карзая басқару кезеңі. Зерттеуде зиялы және діни мектептердің даму тарихына, сонымен қатар білім беру стандарттарының әр түрлі үлгілері орын алатыны және стандарттардың модернизациясы мемлекеттің дәстүрлі құндылықтармен сәйкес келмейтіні қарастырылады. Ауғанстан білім беру жүйесінің дамуының төменгі деңгейінің себептері ретінде сыртқы қаржыландыру қажеттілігі, сонымен қатар ғасырлар бойы жалғасып келе жатқан тәуелсіздік үшін күрес және Талибан билігінің жанама әсері. Мақала авторлары білім беру стандарттарының жүзеге асуының төмен деңгейі, әлсіз инфрақұрылым, педагогикалық кадрлар даярлау, қаржыландыру қажеттілігі және тағы басқа мәселелері талқылану және шешу жолдары ізделу керек екеніне назар аударады.

Түйін сөздер: білім беру, мектеп, діни мектеп, білім беру жүйесі, тәлібтер, өкімет.

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Развитие образования в Афганистане

В статье рассматриваются вопросы развития образования в Афганистане, в том числе история развития высшего образования. Представлены истоки становления системы образования, начиная с начала XX века до современного этапа, а системы высшего образования - со второй половины XX века. В качестве основной причины замедления прогресса развития образования указываются периоды борьбы афганского народа с внешней агрессией. В статье рассмотрены периоды развития образования: период правления Набибулах Хана, Аманулах Хана, Захер Хана, коммунистов, Муджахедина, талибов, Ахмади Карзая. В исследовании акцентируется внимание на истории развития светских и религиозных школ, и также существование различных стандартов образования, которые модернизируются не в соответствии с традиционными ценностями страны. В качестве одной из основных причин низкого уровня развития системы образования в Афганистане указывается потребность и зависимость от внешних источников финансирования, непрекращающаяся борьба за независимость в течение столетий, а также разрушительные последствия правления режима Талибан. Авторы статьи указывают на низкое качество реализации стандартов образования, слабую инфраструктуру, недостаточность подготовки педагогических кадров, финансирования и другие проблемы, которые необходимо обсуждать и искать пути решения.

Ключевые слова: образование, школа, религиозная школа, система образования, талибы, правительство.

**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF EDUCATION IN
AFGHANISTAN****Introduction**

According to the historical findings, Afghanistan didn't have an organized system of education until the late nineteenth century, but it was traditionally accomplished in the educational and cultural centers such as mosques, school houses, Religious Schools etc. inherited from hundreds of years ago. This method perhaps in most countries in that era was a common practice. For the first time during Amir Shir Ali Khan's rule approximately 1912-1913, two schools named Harbyah School in Kabul were opened which they served as the first official schools [1]. Amir Shir Ali Khan's efforts in cultural aspect included specific reforms in Pashto language. Because Pashto language was officially used for the first time during his state alongside Dari language the main and common language of the people. His efforts to promote the Pashto language entered into a new level through inserting the Pashto military terminology and using this language in official and state facilities. Later at the time of Amir Habibullah (1901-1919) and Amanullah (1919-1929) this project was seriously continued. By that time, the efforts were only to promote the Pashto language for which many cultural and educational centers were established in the centers of the provinces where only Pashto language was taught [1].

After Nader Khan's reign (1929-1933) and during the reign of Zaher Khan (1933-1973) this process changed as it was not only to promote the Pashto language but also it was accompanied by eliminating Persian language. The process of strengthening and promoting Pashto language had started upon establishing an entity called "Marka Pashto" years ago during the reign of Amanullah Khan (1869-1901). The mission of this entity was empowering the Pashto language and ethnicity throughout Afghanistan.

Education during Habibullah Khan's reign

The first school called Habibia High School was established during Habibullah Khan's reign in 1903. The performance of Habibullah Khan in terms of cultural development was more productive than his father. As mentioned above, cultural development in its new form was started during Amir Shir Ali Khan's reign. Upon the decline of

his reign and the beginning of Abdulrahman's reign who was a cruel person, not only nothing was done to promote the culture but also previous efforts were stopped [2]. The era of Abdulrahman was the period of suppression and terror. In addition of brutal massacres the light of knowledge and awareness was also diminished. During his reign there was only one religious school called Madrasaye Shahie Kabul (Kabul Royal Religious School) established in Kabul. This religious school has probably been established in 1300 and the purpose behind its foundation was to justify the cruel performance of the king. "During the 21 years of Abdulrahman's reign, there weren't published even 20 titles of books throughout Afghanistan. The period of Abdulrahman's reign is called the era of darkness and gloom. According to Gholam Mohammad Ghoobar, there is no promising point about culture in this era's history." In addition of the main school building, there were also 6 more branches established in Kabul under titles like Baghe Navvab elementary school, Tanoorsazi elementary school, Khaniha elementary school, Paranchaha elementary school, Indians elementary school. Later, an elementary class for princes was established in which, according to Gh. M. Ghoobar, there were four princes where later based on king's command due to completing the class capacity they brought in 14 of Mohammadzai commanders' children to the class. The total number of the school students was 269 and considering the whole elementary schools this number reached 700 students which several years later this number increased to 1534 students and 55 teachers. The first teacher training facility was established during Amir Habibullah Khan where training was for three years and 80 students studied there. In each period of this institute there were 30 teachers trained to go to other provinces to establish new schools. In the provinces and cities of that time, the training was accomplished in a traditional manner and in mosques by Mullahs, but Amir Habibullah ordered that mosque trainings shall be accomplished according to the official program of education system and under the supervision of the officers of official schools. During Amir Habibullah Khan's era, other than Kabul and surrounding areas there were 6 elementary schools established in Nuristan areas which had recently, during his father's reign, converted to Islam and obeyed the Kabul state.

Education during Amanullah Khan's reign

Amanullah took serious steps in order to developing the education, inclusive of his efforts in addition of developing the activities of Habibia High

School was establishment of Amani high school, Rashidi Ghazi, Roshdie Esteqlal, Telegraph school, Painting school, architecture school, Maktab Al-senna, Agriculture school, Arabic knowledge center and Roshdie Mostoorat which were established in Kabul [3]. There were also new state schools established in other provinces the most famous of which are as following:

Roshdie Jalalabad, Roshdie Kandahar agriculture, Roshdie Herat, Herat teacher training facility, Roshdie Mazare Sharif, Roshdie Qataghan, police school, music school, carpet weaving training center, architecture school, home care school and medical school.

The rule of Amanullah Khan continued up to 1928 by when more than 322 new state schools were established while in many areas of the country education was accomplished in a traditional manner in mosques and by Mullahs by the time. Based on some statistics in 1926, the number of elementary students throughout the country reached approximately 51000 where according to Basir Ahmad Dolatabadi if it continued with that pace, Afghanistan wouldn't drop behind the progress of culture, literature and even industry in comparison to neighboring countries. During Amanullah reign, the first constitution of Afghanistan was defined in 1922 which according to its article 68 it was compulsory to study up to elementary grade. The ministry of education was officially established and from 1923 to 1306 there were totally 693595 volumes of books for 133 educational titles published by this ministry and the publication center of this entity was established. In this period for the first time, there were several hundreds of students sent to study in universities of Soviet Union, Germany, Italy and Turkey as scholarship grantees by the ministry of education and a number of female students were sent to study in Turkey while the plan to send students to England was also discussed to be started [4]. Two libraries with plenty of equipment and books were established in Kabul city by the government. Hence, the ground for research and study was provided and the progress of education and training was ascending. With respect to the stable security condition of the country there were a relatively good number of schools and cultural centers established in capital and other provinces every year and if the condition didn't change there would be a bright future for the country. But after the escape of Amanullah Khan and upon the empowering of Habibullah the son of Saqa everything was messed, the existent discipline was breached and the people got once more disappointed, the progress of education was ceased for

some time because during 20 years i.e. from 1305, when the number of official schools had reached to 322, to 1325 this number reached 346. In this period, there were only 21 schools constructed which is suggestive of government's negligence towards development of education while on the contrary the main focus of the government was the promotion of Pashto language centers all over the country during which time 446 Pashto training centers were established throughout the country [5].

Education during Zaher Shah reign

The condition of education during Zaher Shah could be divided into two main periods: the first period started from 1933 after the murder of Nader Shah up to 1963 and the second period started from 1963 up to 1973 which was the last year of Zaher Shah's reign. During the first period, which is named the period of uncles and cousins of Zaher Shah in Afghanistan history, three people were assigned as prime ministers. From 1933 to 1946, Mohammad Hashem Khan the elder uncle of Zaher Shah was the Afghan prime minister. One of the decisions of Hashem Khan was to issue an order to teach in Pashto language in all schools of the country a trend which lasted for more than 10 years. This not only led into no scientific or cultural achievement but resulted in more dissolution of the education system [6]. Another plan which was adapted in this period was a cut of elementary education from five years to four years which had a severely negative effect on education process because after four years students didn't have a proper ability to read and write. According to Mir Mohammad Seddiq Farhang, in 1946 when it was the last year of Hashem Khan's prime ministry the number of schools all over the country reached 346 and the total number of students reached 93000 a quantity which is insignificant for a country with more than 10 millions of population. In 1946, Zaher Shah deposed Hashem Khan of premiership and assigned his other uncle Sardar Shah Mahmood to this post. In this period, the new constitution was defined according to which elementary education was compulsory and the Islamic beliefs training was also allowed.

During this era, education had a relatively good progress rather than previous era. The government notified the ministry of education to restart the teaching in Dari language from educational year 1947 and hereby the teaching process in Pashto speaking areas was in Pashto and in Persian speaking areas it was in Persian language. The total number of schools at the end of Mahmood Khan's premiership period in 1943

reached 627 elementary schools, intermediate and high schools and also professional schools in which 111254 male and female students studied and 3441 female and male teachers were teaching. In 1953, Zaher Shah deposed Mahmood Khan of premiership and assigned his cousin Mohammad Dawood to form the cabinet when he remained prime minister for 10 years during which there were no significant developments in education system [7].

Education during communists' period

In seventh of Saur 1978, Parcham (flag) party ended the reign of Dawood Khan through a bloody coup and the democratic republic of Afghanistan established [8]. Afghanistan people's democratic party and Parcham communists governed for nearly 14 years in Afghanistan where they insisted on developing education system because they believed education as the best means to promote the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, therefore they brought in many changes in education area. Babrak Karmal the leader of Democratic Party and its head during the first teachers' congress held on third of Jawza 1980 in Kabul had a speech on the duties of teachers where he said: "This is the main and instructive duty of a teacher to make his students aware of the goals and duties of national and democratic revolution of the Afghan people (communist coup of 1978). They should foster the sense of patriotism; loving people, land, humanity; internationalism i.e. philanthropy; irreconcilable spirit against reactionary ideology, against the enemies of the Afghan workers and against exploitation and oppressors in students" [9].

Education during Mujahedin period

According to the agreements between Jihadi parties, Burhanuddin Rabbani the leader of Islamic Jamiat Party was assigned as the head of the Afghan Islamic government in Saratan 1992, on education he said: "The Islamic government will strongly try to provide free education facilities for all the children and youths of the country." He also emphasized on the development of education to support the achievements of the Islamic revolution and said that he aimed to arrange the educational curriculum according to the Islamic principles and the requirements of the new society life, in order to eliminate illiteracy and introduction to religious knowledge establish the literacy centers in cities and villages or through educational centers and mosques, define the religious knowledge as the most essential subject in the curriculum of schools and educational centers.

According to this plan, religious subjects including Hadith, Tafsir, Aqayed, Feqh, Islamic insight, Tajweed and Sarf & Nahw were considered as educational curriculum in following years in elementary, intermediate and high school education [10].

Soon, the Islamic government faced serious challenges in all areas especially in education because civil wars which previously used to happen in other provinces were drawn to the capital city Kabul after the collapse of the communist state. Different parts of the capital were under the control of specific groups and the education system was terribly damaged by war as many of the schools and Madrasas were the shelters for military groups and in many districts of the capital it wasn't possible to study as a result of war and insecurity. According to a report by ministry of education in 1995, as a result of Kabul conflicts around 60% of schools and educational entities' buildings were ruined and in other provinces around 70% of these building were ruined.

Education in Taliban period

Taliban had their own unique policy for Afghanistan education which was unprecedented not only in Afghan history but in world history. Before occupying Kabul, Taliban had closed all intermediate and high schools in their dominated provinces like Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Ghazni arguing that education is a surplus matter while participating in Jihad is the main preference. After occupying Kabul, Taliban ratified and published the education law. The second article of education law in Islamic Emirate of Taliban recognized the education as an equal right of all Afghan residents without segregation of men and women and assumed the elementary education compulsory. But the performance of Taliban was against their own rules on education as the rules insisted on the equal right of men and women to study but Taliban had a different practice.

Third article of Taliban education law said that the education for females will be provided within the Islamic Sharia framework through a specific legal note but this legal document about the females was never prepared and approved while Taliban prohibited the education of women and girls in Afghanistan. Maulawi Sayed Mohammad Sadozai, one of the intellectual leaders of Taliban during the Islamic Emirate reign, described home as the only place for female duties and presumed the presence of women out of home especially in educational centers and in social capacities as illegal and against Islam.

In the early of 1998, the association of women and the general directorate of kindergartens where

women used to work were abolished and 7014 female teachers were dismissed of their duties and also during the filtration of staff and teachers of the ministry of education in the same year, 27054 employees who were mostly females were dismissed. The first article of Mullah Omar command read: "Putting on turban is necessary for persons above 12 years of age. It is necessary for all people to wear like the prophet used to" [11].

Afghanistan education after the collapse of Taliban

Fourteen years is passed after the collapse of Taliban regime and during this time the education in Afghanistan has revived. Although there are some shortages but generally the development of education is one of the most important achievements of the Afghan government as girls were deprived of going to schools during the Taliban rule but now most of them go to school. In 2001, there were 3400 schools active throughout Afghanistan in which 1 million students were taught by 20000 teachers while the share of girls was almost zero. But in the current year, there are around 14000 schools active throughout Afghanistan in which there are 8,100,000 students of which 38% are girls and they are taught by 175,000 teachers. During the last 14 years, many schools have owned new buildings or been reconstructed [8].

The ministry of education has a total of 190,000 teachers of which 36% are professional teachers. While 14 years ago, among 20,000 school teachers there were a limited number of them professional. The reason for shortage of professional teachers was that there were only 4 teacher training centers 14 years ago all over the country where the total number of graduated didn't exceed 400. The spokesperson for ministry of education says: "nowadays this ministry has 42 teacher training facilities which are in all provinces of the country. Additionally, 111 supplementary units are active in remote districts of the provinces and these centers can train up to 61,000 teachers per year" [11]. One of the other achievements of the ministry of education is the establishment and prosperity of private schools. The spokesperson of ministry of education states: "there were no private schools in the country fourteen years ago but now there are 500 of them in which 100,000 students study." During the last years, there was no educational curriculum for semi-high technical and professional trainings but the ministry of education has been able to accomplish this curriculum [8].

Table 1 – Statistics in 2001

No	Educational facility name	Number	Number of educators			Number of students		
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Teacher Training	4	-	-	-	400	-	400
2	Knowledge Center (Daroloom)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	Religious School	222	500	-	500	42000	-	42000
4	Technical and Professional	38				1500		
	Institute							
5	Literacy course	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Public school	3400	20000	-	20000	1000000	-	1000000
7	Private school	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Statistics are not complete due to lack of information resources [8].

Table 2 – Statistics in 2002-2015

No	Educational facility name	Number	Number of educators			Number of students		
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Teacher Training	42	4000	2200	6200	21000	40000	61000
2	Knowledge Center (Daroloom)	104	-	-	-	180000	20000	200000
3	Religious School	614	-	-	-			
4	Technical and Professional	145	-			46000		
	Institute	40	-					
5	Literacy Course	26000	-	-	-	600000		
	Literacy School	89	-	-	-			
6	Public school	14000	110250	64750	175000	5022000	3078000	8100000
7	Private school	500	7000	5000	12000	55000	45000	100000

* Statistics are not complete due to lack of information resources [8].

Nowadays, 46,000 students are studying in technical and professional schools while 14 years ago there were only 1500 students in this educational area. According to the statistics by the ministry of education, there were only 38 technical and professional institutes 14 years ago but now there are 145 of such schools of which 40 units are institutes.

The ministry of education has accomplished steps in the area of literacy where there have been 2,500,000 people graduated from literacy courses. In Afghanistan, there were 1000 literacy courses 14 years ago and now there are 26,000 of such courses and 89 literacy schools the capacity of which is 600,000 graduated per the current year. In spite of

this progress, educating 10 million illiterates is a big challenge.

Another problem of Afghanistan in the past was about Islamic education. Fourteen years ago, there were 222 religious schools throughout Afghanistan where 42,000 students were studying Islamic subjects who were taught by around 500 religious scholars. Religious people of Afghanistan mostly used to send their children to religious schools of neighboring countries as a result of this shortage. Many of such schools abroad, encourage children to extremism, violence and sometimes suicide attacks. The ministry of education says that they have prepared a complete curriculum for Hanafi and Jafari feqh for afghan children to study religious subjects in their own country. According to the spokesperson of ministry of education, “there are now 775 religious schools in Afghanistan among which 614 are religious schools, 58 are Darololum (religious knowledge center) and 104 are Darolhefaz (Quran citation centers) where out of approximately 200,000 religious students 10% are females.” Despite of progresses in the last 14 years, there are still challenges and shortages in afghan ministry of education. For instance, there are still 4.5 million children at the age of school but they cannot go to school. Out of 14,000 schools all over Afghanistan 7,000 don't have a building where children study under tents or even in the open air. The ministry of education builds 1000 new schools per year which is insignificant against 7,000 schools without buildings because the need for new schools is increasing every year and upon the arrival of new students. One of the other problems of this ministry is insecurity. During the last 14 years, insecurity has caused the death of hundreds of teachers and students and also tens of schools have been burnt by terrorist especially Taliban. Although the authorities of ministry of education refuse to provide statistics referring this responsibility to the afghan ministry of interiors but published statistics in media show that during year 1389 more than 300 students and teachers have been killed in different areas of the country. Last year, the authorities of ministry of education had stated that around 30 schools have

been burnt or destructed by the armed insurgents. The most of such attacks on schools and students have been reported in southern Afghanistan where Taliban are actively present. Regarding the effects of insecurity on education the spokesperson for ministry of education says: “We don't have any female school above 10th grade in 200 districts of 412 provinces of the country. We don't even have professional female teachers in 212 districts of the country which is a big obstacle against education equality.” According to him, as a result of insecurity there are 500 schools closed throughout the country where 400,000 students cannot study. The ministry of education has plans for resolving the problem of insecure districts. The spokesperson of ministry of education said: “The government in agreement with international donors considers paying 800\$ monthly for teachers and if they are female teachers for both them and their husband who wish to teach in insecure areas” [11]. He added that higher district points are considered for 18 insecure provinces.

Conclusion

By studying the history of Afghanistan education it is such understood that negative points and shortages have been more obvious than positive and productive points. Accordingly, the process of education has been declining in any aspect and it hasn't been possible to achieve the targets in any period where not only any increase in literacy didn't happen but on the contrary illiteracy was increased in every period. The current progress of education is promising with respect to the present developments but the education in Afghanistan has many problems. As mentioned above, there are still 7000 schools without buildings and approximately 62% of teachers are not professionally trained and even some of them cannot read and write properly. The other major problem above all is insecurity which has caused the deaths of hundreds of teachers and students so far and as a result of which tens of schools have been burnt by terrorist groups especially by the Taliban.

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