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THE TALIBAN AND GIRLS' EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN – with a case study of the situation in the Swat District

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ABSTRACT

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The Taliban movement has been a problem for the government and security forces in Pakistan as well as for the Afghan government and NATO forces in Afghanistan. This is only one side of the picture as on the other hand it has affected common peoples to a great extent. It has deeply affected the education system in both countries. Education is a prerequisite for development. It makes the horizon of vision wider, helps to increase the role of women in family decision, including in matters of fertility, child birth, their upbringing and socialization.

Unfortunately the Taliban movement has affected the education system all over Afghanistan and in some areas in Pakistan. This thesis includes a case study of district Swat in Pakistan, which has been under the Taliban control for more than two years. The Taliban destroyed and damaged both girls' and boys' schools in the area. Although the Taliban did not openly oppose boys' education, still they damaged it along with girls' education. The aim of this thesis is to find out the ideology of the Taliban about education with a special focus on girls' education. Therefore another important aim is to find out whether or not the Taliban have any alternative for the modern education system to cope with modern complex issues.

The Taliban have been resisting U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan since 2001. They have also started armed resistance against Pakistani forces in Pakistan. The U.S. has started negotiation with the Taliban in Afghanistan for peace. Looking into the current situation the Taliban seem to have a future in Afghan politics. It is also one of the purposes of this study to find out whether or not the Taliban are ready to bring change in their view about education, especially girls' education, if they want to be part of the mainstream politics in Afghanistan.

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ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporation

CD- Compact Disc

EFA- Education for All

FATA- Federal Administered Tribal Areas

FM- Frequency Modulation

GNP- Gross National Product

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

IMU- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

IRIN- Integrated Regional Information Network

ISAF- International Security Assistance Force

MDG- Millennium Development Goals

MP- Member of Parliament

NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEAS- National Education Assessment System

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

NPA- National Plan of Action

NWA- North Waziristan Agency

PBUH- Peace Be Upon Him

TNSM- Tanzim Nifaz Shariate-Mohammadi

TTP- Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan

UN- United Nations

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

U.S. - United States

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

It is obvious that education plays a key role in the development of a nation. It is a pre-requisite for development and countries all over the world have been re-focusing on education. This study concentrates on finding out the ideology of the Taliban surrounding education taking in a special consideration of education for females. The Taliban have their roots in the Pashtun society and is a military force which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, when the United States overthrew their government after the Twin Towers' attack. The Taliban started a military resistance against them within Afghanistan and later on they spread their military activities to Pakistan as well.

While ruling in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 the Taliban have been forcing people to follow the Islamic rules and they even treated women more harshly as compared to men to follow the cultural laws of Islam, for instance, Islam and the Code of Pashtunwali¹ is mixed up in the Pakhtoon² society in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where it is difficult for common people to differentiate between Islam and Pashtunwali. A research report written by David Cortright and Sarah Smiles Persinger on the situation of women regarding their security and human rights in Afghanistan states that when the Taliban took control of the government, they enforced a strict interpretation of Islamic law and Pashtun customary law which is known as Pashtunwali. It was made obligatory for men to grow beards and women to be veiled. Women were not allowed to work outside the home. They were not even allowed to come out of their homes without a male member of the family. The Taliban religious police used to give severe punishment on disobeying the moral orders, including public executions, amputation and stoning (Cortright and Persinger 2009:4).

After their government came to an end, the Taliban started military resistance. David Cortright and Sarah Smiles in their research report further mention that girl's education in Afghanistan is

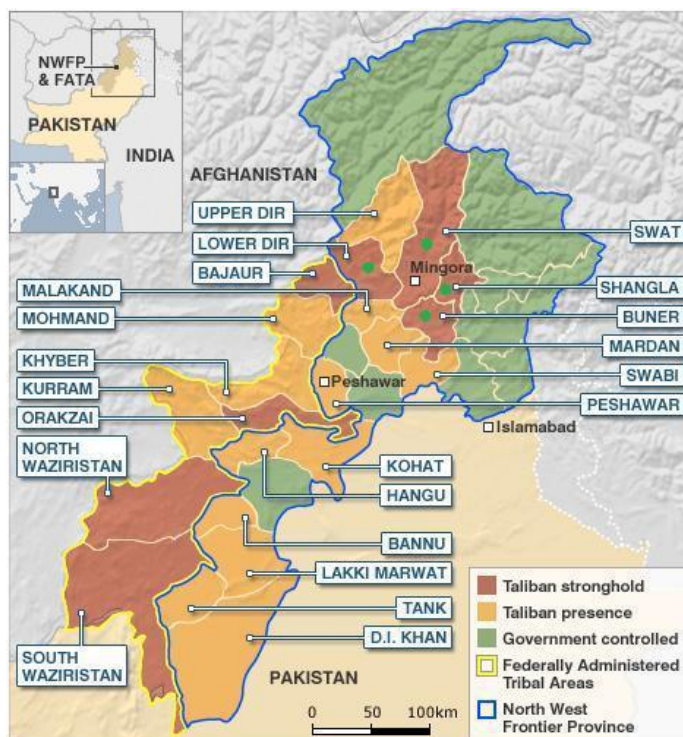
¹ It is the name of the traditional customary law, which has been adopted by Pathans (Pashtuns) from times immemorial. The more a man adheres to its maxims, the higher esteem he enjoys in his brotherhood and community. It is a concept conveying the meanings of tribal socio-economic, political and cultural system in totality---courage, hospitality, kinship, loyalty, love for friends, hostility with enemy, chastity, morality, respecting her rights, etc. are different decrees of Pakhtunwali. This code requires a Pathan to defend his motherland, to

² Pakhtoon, Pathan and Pashtun are the terms used for the people who live in the South-eastern Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan which is now called Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa and FATA.

in an alarming situation. Hundreds of schools across the country have been attacked, destroyed or closed due to insurgency. The ministry of education in June 2009 reported that 695 schools were closed across the country which affected over 340,000 students. According to a Care (NGO) study, from January 2006 to December 2008 there were 1,145 attacks on educational institutions including arson, murder of teachers and acid attacks on girl students (Cortright and Persinger 2009:13-14). David Cortright and Sarah Smiles further said that the girls' schools have been attacked at a disproportionate rate compared to boys' schools. An interesting fact in this report is that the attacks have happened in greatest number in Pashtun areas in the south where the Pashtun insurgency is the strongest (Cortright and Persinger 2009:14).

After 9/11 when United States started war against terror and Pakistan became a front line ally of the United States, Pakistan also started suffering the heat of militancy. Pakistan has also a history of extremist groups, so those groups who were in favor of the Taliban started military activities within Pakistan with the name of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In Pakistan they took control of many areas in Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa province and mainly in FATA.

Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa and FATA with areas where Taliban are/were having strong hold (Source: BBC News 2009)



In Pakistan the Taliban have been involved in military activities to enforce their ideology. In 2008 they took full military control in Swat district. Women's education was banned and they were not even allowed to come out of their homes without a veil and only when a male member of the household was present. According to a UNESCO publication by Brendan O'Malley, the Taliban are totally against girls' education. They ordered in mosques and on illegal radio stations the closure of all girls' schools and set a deadline of 15 January in 2009. They warned the people that if any school continued to provide classes for girls, the school would be blown up, and if any girl came out of home for school attendance, she would be attacked like in Afghanistan, where acid had been thrown in the girls' faces (O'Malley 2010:79).

1.2 Aims of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the education system Pakistan and Afghanistan with a special focus on female's education. There are three main research questions (see below). All questions have been answered on the basis of empirical analysis. These questions are based on my own experience, the 11 year-long resistance against the Taliban in Afghanistan, their armed struggle in Pakistan, and the current frequent changes of NATO policy regarding the Taliban. Being brought up in a Muslim conservative society in Pakistan, there were two predominate views about female education. One view was in the favor of female education, where parents were educating their children regardless of their gender. The other view was not in favor of female education, but those who held this view never opposed other people in their view to educate their child. So after reflecting upon the Taliban's destructive attitude towards female education it seemed natural to try to find out the ideology of the Taliban surrounding gender issues in general, and also specifically regarding education, especially in comparison with other Muslim countries. I will also try to make a comparison between the Taliban's ideology and Islamic views concerning gender issues.

Modern education is a prerequisite for specialization and an advanced division of labour in society. It creates specialists for every field i.e. doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants, etc. If there was no modern education there would be no modern technology, inventions, facilities etc. So one might wonder that if the Taliban are against the modern education, then what is their

strategy to cope with the modern world's complexities. Keeping this idea in mind, the second objective of the study is to determine whether the Taliban have any alternative system in lieu of the modern education in order to run the society smoothly. In the last section, based on empirical analysis, I will try to examine any change or compromise surrounding women's issues regarding education in the Taliban's ideology. Looking at the contemporary scenario at hand, a peace talk is going on between the Taliban and NATO forces, and if the Taliban come to power once again, it is very important for a number of people to know what would be their possible approach regarding women's issues.

1.3 Research Questions

The focus of my research would be on the following questions.

1. To find out the ideology and actions of Taliban about gender and education.
2. Does Taliban have any alternative for the modern education system to cope with the modern issues?
3. Is there any possibility of change or compromise about women's issues in the Taliban's ideology of education, if they would come again in power?

1.4 Review of the Thesis

This study is conducted to address the Ideology of the Taliban about education with a special focus on girls' education in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The whole thesis has been organized in seven chapters. The first chapter is about introduction of the topic. The second chapter provides detailed information about education. It includes education and development, education in Pakistan, Islam and education, the ideology of the Taliban and history, women's education and empowerment, patriarchy and women's education and theoretical framework. The third chapter identifies the research methodology. In this chapter, I have explained the methods used during the whole research study. The fourth chapter has a special focus on district Swat as a case study. This chapter puts light on the birth of the Taliban in district Swat, their popularity in the beginning, how they got military control and destroyed the school system and their defeat in Swat district. Chapter five gives an overview of the influence of the Taliban movement in

Afghanistan and Pakistan and a comparison with some Islamic movements in the Muslim world. Chapter six focuses on the recent changes in outlook among the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan with focus on the education system, especially girls' education system. The study is concluded in chapter seven.

1.5 Limitations

My research topic is very broad and it focuses on the issues of Taliban and education both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was impossible for me to collect data in both countries or even from a single country. It would need more resources and time. So to overcome this issue I limited my research area to district Swat as I also belong to this area. District Swat suffered a lot due to the control of the Taliban for more than 2 years.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

2.1 Education and Development

Recent United Nations documents emphasize "human development," measured by life expectancy, adult literacy, access to all three levels of education, as well as people's average income, as a necessary condition of freedom of choice (World Bank 2004). Development is a complex term which has been defined differently by different scholars. Amartya Sen describes development as, a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Development can be identified with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance, or with social modernization. But freedom depends also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements i.e. facilities for education and health care, as well as political and civil rights i.e. the liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny (Sen 1999:3).

Education and development are essentials for each other. One can argue that GNP, or rise in income is more likely to be the basic factor to raise the living standard of people. As Amartya Sen in his book 'Development as freedom' says, "low income can be a major reason for illiteracy

and ill health as well as hunger and undernourishment, and conversely, better education and health help in the earning of higher incomes” (Sen 1999:19). . He further says, “Illiteracy can be a major barrier to participation in economic activities that require production according to specification or demand strict quality control (as globalized trade increasingly does)” (Sen 1999:39). So it is obvious that education plays an important role in the development of nations. According to Alexander L. Peaslee, in the last ten decades a significant economic growth has been achieved in those countries in which a high proportion of the total population is enrolled in primary schools. High enrollments in elementary education do not guarantee growth, as obviously there are other complex factors involved but high enrollments appear to be a requisite for significant growth (Peaslee 1969). Japan is the pioneering example of enhancing economic growth through social opportunity, especially in basic education (Sen 1999:41).

Amartya Sen explains the importance of education by giving the examples of India and China. Chinese government in 1979 and Indian government in 1991 decided to move towards a more open, internationally active, market-oriented economy. The kind of massive progress that China has seen has failed to occur in India. Besides of other factors when China turned to marketization in 1979, it already had highly literate people, especially the young, with good schooling facilities across the country like South Korea and Taiwan, where educated people had played a major role in making the economic condition better by a supportive market system. On the other hand, India had a half illiterate adult population when it turned to marketization in 1991, and the situation is not much improved today (Sen 1999:42).

2.2 Education in Pakistan,

Education has been a major challenge for Pakistan, especially in rural areas that are culturally rich and rigid and where it has always been ignored as compared to urban areas. Although Pakistan is a signatory of the universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other declarations, i.e. the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), the World Education Forum: Dakar Framework for action 2000, the Recife Declaration of E-9 Countries 2000 and the Beijing Declaration of E-9 Countries on ICT and EFA 2001. But despite all the policy statements and target settings in various education policies, Pakistan is still far below universal primary

education access and retention. The important policy statements and strategies for the expansion of basic educational opportunity to all and for quality education are listed below:

“The National Education Policy 1992 recognized that the quality aspect of primary education has been compromised and required urgent examination of the measures needed for its raising. The policy has mentioned several strategies for the purpose including teachers’ training; updating “primary kit”; provision of books; etc.” (Mirza 2003:9).

The National Education Policy 1998-2010 had also included among its objectives the improvement of elementary education. The policy gives a comprehensive list of quality inputs such as merit-based recruitment of teachers; pre-service and in-service training of teachers; improving the quality and availability of books; etc. (Mirza 2003:9).

According to a thesis report by Azhar Hameed Qamar, a survey was conducted in 289 union councils of Faisalabad, a major city in Pakistan, where it was found that eight union councils were without schools. While in the other schools there were problems of teachers’ availability, furniture, drinking water, teaching methods etc. (Qamar 2010:31).

Beside the structural and organizational problems, the government of Pakistan needs to focus on the serious threat to education system in the shape of Taliban in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa, FATA and Baluchistan. The Taliban have been posing severe threats to the already suffered education system in these areas. They destroyed and damaged the educational infrastructure to a great extent.

2.3 Islam and Education

Islam and girls’ education is a complicated debate now-a-days in the Muslim world. If we want to find out the reality about this, we have to approach to the Holy book of Muslim “Quran”, as it is obvious that the first five verses of the beginning of the revelation on Muhammad (PBUH) was about Knowledge. Translations of the five verses are below.

1. “Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists),
2. He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood)
3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous,

4. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.
5. He has taught man that which he knew not. [Quran, al-‘Alaq, 96:1–5]” (Guided Ways).

According to Dr. Raheeq Ahmad Abbasi, the very fact that the first revelation upon the Holy Prophet (PBUH) contained the commandment to ‘read’ speaks volumes of the emphasis Islam lays on education. The importance and excellence of knowledge has been highlighted both directly and indirectly in over five hundred places in the Holy Quran. He further wrote that with in Islam there is no disagreement found on acquisition of knowledge being binding and obligatory. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also said,

“Acquisition of knowledge is binding on all Muslims (both men and women without any discrimination)”.

He (PBUH) said at another place,

“Acquire knowledge even if you may have to go to China for it”.

It is apparent from the Holy Quran and Hadith (saying of Muhammad (PBUH)) that the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for women in the same way as in the case of men. The study of the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) also shows that he himself made special arrangements for the education and training of women (Abbasi 2009).

Dr. Raheeq Ahmad Abbasi wrote about the Abu Said al-Khudri (friend of Muhammad), who told the story on how some women said to the Holy prophet (PBUH) that men have gone ahead of us in getting knowledge and therefore, appoint a special day for our benefit as well. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) would meet them on a specific day, advise them and educate them about commandments of Allah Almighty.

Abbasi further wrote about Aisha, the wife Of Holy Prophet (PBUH), who was a great scholar. The people used to ask her about different issues after the death of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and she would answer their questions. People also would send letters from far away areas and Aisha used to respond to them with solutions to their issues (Abbasi 2009).

The above was a short description of the Islamic views about girls’ education. The Taliban ideology of girls’ education with comparison to Islam will be discussed in chapter six.

2.4 The Taliban Ideology and History

The Taliban (meaning students) is an Islamist militant and political group that ruled large parts of Afghanistan from September 1996 to October 2001. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the states that gave support and diplomatic recognition to Afghanistan. The Taliban arose from Kandahar and the main leader of the Taliban is Mullah Muhammad Omer. The Taliban enforced its strict interpretation of Shariah law when they were in power but leading Muslims were highly critical of the Taliban interpretation of Islamic law. The Taliban movement was primarily initiated in the Pashtuns tribes, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. The majority of the Taliban leaders were influenced by Deobandi³ fundamentalism and many also followed the social and cultural norms of the area called Pashtunwali. The Taliban were highly criticized and condemned by the international community for their brutal repression of women (Wikipedia Taliban).

From 1995-2001 the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence and military are widely blamed by the international community for providing support to the Taliban. Many international officials has accused Pakistan of continuing to support the Taliban today, but Pakistan denies this accusation and claims that they have dropped all the support for the group since 9/11. Al Qaeda also supported the Taliban with imported fighters from Arab countries and Central Asia while Saudi Arabia provided financial support. After the 9/11 incident the Taliban were overthrown by the American-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Later it regrouped as an insurgency movement to fight the Afghan government backed by America and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Taliban have been accused of using terrorism as a specific tactic for their ideological and political goals. Today the Taliban operate in Afghanistan and Pakistan and it is believed that one of their major headquarters is near Quetta in Pakistan (Wikipedia Taliban).

³ Deoband, a country town ninety miles northeast of Delhi, has given its name to ulema (scholars) associated with the Indo-Pakistani reformist movement centered in the seminary founded there in 1867. The Deobandi scholars not only responded to Hindu and Christian proselytizing, but engaged in public debate, polemical writings, and exchanges of fatawa (an opinion of Islamic scholar about Islamic teachings) among themselves (Islam and Islamic laws).

The Taliban have a clear view about education and women. According to a statement of Muslim Khan, spokesman for the Taliban in the Swat valley, “We are Muslims. Had there not been an Islamic system of education and curriculum, then it would have been all right to import a system of education belonging to others. But fortunately, Islam provides its own system of education, politics, economics and justice....If Islam is a complete code of life, then what is the need to import education from the United Kingdom?” (Shehzad 2009). About women’s education, the statement of Muslim Khan in “Destroying Schools: How About the Taliban’s View, Please?” by Bint Abu Umar, clearly indicates the ideology of the Taliban. Muslim Khan said that, “Even if the girls’ schools were singled out to be destroyed it would still make sense. Women are the key to the establishment of khilafa (Caliphate). If our women are not educated in the Deen (religion) but rather in western education (alone), they will impart false information to their children, or they may raise their children to hate jihad (holy war), to pursue an education for the sake of an education, to get a high paying job and not have any interest with spreading the Deen of Allah. If we lose our mothers, we lose the Islamic tarbiya (training) of the children, which means we have children who either do not care or are ignorant about Islam, which means we do not have a strong generation of youth who are the fuel of this ummah (nation) and this jihad, which means we potentially do not have an Islamic khilafa” (Umar 2009). So it proves that the Taliban do not like the modern education of both male and female but unlike male education they openly oppose female education.

2.5 Women’s Education and Empowerment

According to Amartya Sen, education makes the horizon of vision wider and helps to disseminate the knowledge of family planning. Educated girls tend to have greater freedom to exercise their agency in family decision, including in matters of fertility and child birth. Education of female is also important in the reduction of mortality rates (Sen 1999:199). Girls’ education is being considered very important and very beneficial for bringing changes in every sphere of life. Women’s empowerment requires improvement in a lot of other factors but the most important and beneficial one is education. Unfortunately the current situation for girls in the education sector is not satisfactory. In 2000, 188 heads of the state from around the world

signed the Millennium Declaration about gender parity in primary and secondary education as below.

Target 3.A:

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (UN Millennium Development Goals 2000)

It was decided to be achieved by 2005 but more than 75 countries were likely to miss the goals. Then in UN, Millennium Development Goals (2010) it was described as goal 2:

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (UN Millennium Development Goals 2010).

Education has a profound effect on girls' ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. Providing girls with one extra year of schooling beyond the average can boost their eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent (Department for International Development 2005).

Despite all the above steps girl's education is facing the threat of wars and civil wars in different regions. The Taliban affected the education system severely, especially the girl's education in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The education system has also suffered a lot in Palestine, Iraq and many other countries because of wars and civil wars. The governments in these countries and the world community have to launch a great organized struggle to overcome the problems of girls' education and to achieve the UN, Millennium development goals.

2.5.1 Patriarchy and Women's Education

There is a strong view about the Taliban's opposition of the modern education system, especially girls' education that the Taliban stand on women's education is for the control in the country. They treated Women as a private entity as Juan R.I. Cole mentions in his book, 'The Taliban,

women and the Hegelian private sphere' about the Hegel that, "radical Muslim fundamentals code women as essentially subjective and private, and therefore excluded from the public sphere. They advocate a neo-patriarchal counter modernity in which they actively combat those elements of the modern condition that contribute to the entry of women into the public sphere, including mass coeducation, mixed sex factory and office work, women's entry into many professions, and consumerism and the consequent desire for a second income within the family. In Afghanistan, the Taliban feared the advent of such developments, given that few actually existed on the ground" (Cole 2003:775-776). The Taliban confined women to their homes, they could not come out of their homes without a veil and without being accompanied by a close male relative, they were not allowed to be treated by male doctors, and they were not allowed to do any jobs and get any education. Juan R.I. Cole further writes in his book that the Taliban largely excluded women from going to school, and from working outside the home. When the Taliban took control of Kabul, they closed the girls' schools. Within three months, the Taliban had closed 63 schools, affecting 103,000 girls (Cole 2003:797-798, 804). The patriarchal mentality in Afghan society means that the girls have the rights to be wives only and the boys have to be the heads of the families, thus women are oppressed all over Afghanistan.

A traditional patriarchal ideology similar to the one expressed by the Taliban was common both in Europe and Arab countries earlier. According to Andersen and Taylor the exclusion of women from public life has been labeled as gender apartheid. Gender apartheid is also evident in other countries, i.e. in Saudi Arabia women cannot drive a car and in Kuwait they cannot vote. The gender apartheid is not as extreme in these countries as it was under the Taliban rule (Andersen and Taylor 2008:316). Peter Marsden in his book, "The Taliban: War, religion, and the new order in Afghanistan" stated that the females in Afghanistan have been isolated in the society and have no rights to interact with the male members outside the family or village on the basis of clearly defined rule. This restriction of contact has been given the name of purdah (Marsden 1998:92). The Taliban policy was just a reflection of the traditional patriarchal ideology in Afghanistan in its worst shape. Although Patriarchal ideology in itself is injustice to women but patriarchy with guns as it was in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule is extreme injustice.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The main theory which is used to analyze the study is Sen's Capability approach. This will be applied on the data collected on the situation existing in Pakistan and Afghanistan regarding gender and education.

2.6.1 Capability Approach

The Capability approach is about the capability of an individual, what he is able or capable of doing. What one is able to do or to be relates to the other factors of the society, i.e. the law, health conditions, education and so on. According to Ingrid Robeyns, the core characteristic of the capability approach is its focus on what people are effectively able to do and to be. Sen argues that we should focus on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life that, upon reflection, they have reason to value. (Robeyns 2005:94).

There is a little difference between Capability and functioning. According to Sen, 'A functioning is an achievement, whereas a Capability is the ability to achieve. Functioning are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead' (Sen 1985:36). According to Rod Hick, the various possibilities a person may possess are components of their overall capability, which is conceived as a set which reflects the alternative combination of functionings the person can achieve and from which he or she can choose one collection (Hick 2009:2). As mentioned by Robeyns the difference between capabilities and functioning is between the realized and the effectively possible; in other words, between achievements on the one hand, and freedoms or valuable options from which one can choose on the other (Robeyns 2005:95).

The distinction between both concepts can be explained with using Sen's classical example of two people who stay away from eating. One person is very poor and does not have any alternative because of famine while the other person is very religious and he is fasting. In one sense both persons are equal in that both are hungry and malnourished. But one person is hungry because he is fasting. He is choosing to starve, whereas the poor person has no such choice to

starve or not. The person who is hungry because of fasting has the capability to achieve the functioning which the other person does not have.

The capability approach has enormous potential for addressing feminist concerns and questions. Ever since its inception, the women's movement has focused on many issues that are not reducible to financial welfare, such as reproductive health, voting rights, political power, domestic violence, education and women's social status (Robeyns 2005:62). I also agree with the views of Robeyns that Sen's Capability approach does not provide a readymade recipe that we can apply to study the gender inequality. It only provides a general framework and not a fully fleshed-out theory. I will try to examine and analyze the situation on the ground or the result collected on the basis of my research questions in the light of Sen's Capability approach.

It is obvious that education is very necessary for development. Illiteracy can make one to be dysfunctional or might hinder someone from actively participating in activities that concern well-being of the society. It can influence the people's functioning and capability. The gender inequality in education also affects the capabilities and functionings on individuals. I will try to link the Sen's Capability approach to my findings regarding education with a special focus on gender perspective.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will discuss the methods and procedure for data collection. The study is mainly consisting of a qualitative approach for data collection. According to O'Reilly, "quantitative methods might provide us the skeleton, but only qualitative methods can give us the flesh and the soul" (O'Reilly 2005:9). Primary data acquisition was achieved through conducting interviews with different respondents.

The different methods used during my research are briefly explained below.

3.1 Data Collection

For a good research, it is always essential to gather information from both primary and secondary sources. For this research study I used both primary and secondary sources to collect data as the primary sources need to be verified in the light of the secondary data.

3.1.1 Primary Sources

The primary source for my thesis was the interview. Interview as research method is always useful when studying a complex situation. To gain in-depth information, an interviewer is able to use observation and is flexible in explaining questions.

3.1.1.1 Sampling Techniques

The respondents were collected through snowball sampling technique. For economic reasons, I was not able to go to the field and collect data there myself; I had to rely on a snowball sampling technique. The people in district Swat are still afraid and they do not want to talk openly about the Taliban. I interviewed 11 respondents for data collection, though I contacted more people and tried to arrange more interviews but the interview list remained limited to 11 interviewees.

3.1.1.2 Interviewing Informants via Skype

Among the 11 respondents, three respondents belonging to Swat district, were students at Lund University and lived in Lund. I arranged face to face interview sessions with them. During face to face interaction with people, a researcher is in better position to change and modify the questions according to the understanding level of the interviewee. The remaining 8 respondents lived in Swat, and as it was not possible for me to go there by myself, I arranged interview via Skype. Flick described that ‘online interviewing is a way to transfer face-to-face interviewing to internet research’ (Flick 2006:259). Some of the advantages which Flick described are as follow:

It can be very helpful if you want to include respondents in your study, who are not easily accessible, because they live far away or because they do not want to talk to a stranger (about a

possibly sensitive topic). Online interviewing produces data, which are already available in the form of texts, so that you can skip the time-consuming step of transcribing your interviews (Flick 2006:259).

3.1.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary data is the primary data of other researchers. Basically secondary data is the pre-existing data which was not specifically collected for the current research. M. Katherine McCaston discusses secondary data as, “Secondary data analysis can be literally defined as ‘second-hand’ analysis. It is the analysis of data or information that was either gathered by someone else (e.g. researchers, institution, other NGOs etc.) or for some other purpose than the one currently being considered, or often a combination of the two” (McCaston 2005:1).

Secondary sources for collecting the data regarding the thesis consist of a wider variety of literature including books, articles and journals. Internet was also used extensively to collect secondary data. All the information about the history of the Taliban, the quantitative information and the information regarding Afghanistan and other Muslim countries and other areas of Pakistan was collected with the help of secondary sources. I have used Lund University library and Lund University electronic or online resources to get the literature I needed for this research study. The literature i.e. articles, journals, books etc. were selected to fulfill the requirements and needs of the research study.

3.2 Problems Related the Fieldwork

Regarding data collection, different people were interviewed online through Skype and telephone since travel options to Pakistan were understandably limited. This decision limited the sample group to mainly educated people. Eighteen persons were contacted for an interview but only eleven among them agreed while seven persons did not agree to an interview because of the issue of sensitivity. Dickson-Swift., James and Liamputtong define ‘socially sensitive’ research as ‘studies in which there are potential consequences or implications, either directly for the

participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by the research' (Dickson-Swift., James and Liamputtong 2008:1).

While online interviews give options and makes it easy to access people who live far away or to whom access is difficult, it was still a difficult experience as it took a long time to complete the interviews since Pakistan is facing an energy crisis at the moment which disturbed the internet connection.

The interview method for data collection was suitable for this research study. However it was difficult to compare the interviews with each other since, of course, no interview is exactly the same. There was also a question which the interviewees did not know exactly how to answer, and this is gone into further depth later in the paper. Besides that particular question, all of the respondents were very clear in their views, although there were little differences in their views revolving around the main issue, which will be pointed out further on in this research study.

3.3 Source Criticism and the Possibility to Understand the Situation

Both primary sources and secondary sources have been used for data collection. For primary data, interviews were conducted with those living in the field. All the respondents were friends or friends of friends of the author and were highly educated people. Modern education brings changes in the attitude and way of thinking. So the data which was collected from the primary source is the ideas and views of educated people.

For secondary data, the author used internet, newspapers, articles, speeches, books etc. which can be biased towards a phenomenon or anything, especially in the case of the Taliban as there are a lot of stakeholders involved in that area. So there was a fair chance of it being biased, although a balanced understanding was striven for.

To find out the accurate information about the Taliban views and stance upon different issues is very difficult. In the various areas in Pakistan where they held power, they never did what they were saying in the beginning to gain public support. The same can happen again and this is why a lot of people regard the Taliban change in views about different issues with doubt. Looking in some areas, the ground situation surrounding female education is in their favor as they are now

allowing female education. Their view about modern education also seems to be changed, but this change in their attitude might be only for getting the public and international community support and sympathy. The international community is also looking at the Taliban shift in policies with doubt. According to Yaroslav Trofimov in 'Emboldened Taliban Try to Sell Softer Image', the U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti in Afghanistan said that, "One might believe that they would change over time; you see some messages that they might open their thinking a bit about women, a woman's place in society. But I don't know that I would bet on it." (Trofimov 2012)

Both the selection of respondents and sources has a big impact on the whole thesis. It has affected the interviews and the results. As it was not possible to go to the field myself, ultimately the author had to contact the people with whom he already had a set relationship with. The respondents were students at the University in Pakistan or the friends of those initially spoken with. This decision to interview people via Skype or phone limited the views of the people to a specific group i.e. educated people. Uneducated people do not have access or knowledge about the computer facilities in Pakistan. According to the data collected from the respondents, those people who did not have formal education were in favor of the Taliban unlike educated people. Unfortunately those people could not be interviewed on why they gave support to the Taliban and what were their recent views about the Taliban. So this study is the reflection of the educated people in Pakistan who consist of only about 1/3 of the total population. Due to the sensitivity issue seven people refused an interview among eighteen which also affected the result. Because of fear and threat those people could not express their views which might have proven very valuable for the thesis and could have provided new and worthy information. Regarding newspapers, articles, internet, books, etc. as I have mentioned above, one could never trust them because of the various stakeholders. These stakeholders do a lot of propaganda and perform actions to achieve their goals as the Taliban did in Swat in the beginning to get the support of the people. So it could be difficult to analyze and get accurate results in that kind of scenario and the same applies to this research study. Although I have tried to focus on research studies without being biased, it is possible that the analysis will be affected by my way of thinking as I belong to the area which is severely affected by the Taliban.

It is clear from the above that in Pakistan and Afghanistan many actors are involved to act or influence the situation which makes the political and ideological situation unstable. This instability and subjectivity affects the author's understanding in reading various documents and interviewing the respondents. Material reality is independent of human thought but meaning and knowledge are always derived by human beings as the only reality we can know and is represented by human thought. It means that this knowledge and reality are created by social relationships and interaction. From a perspective of theory of science it means that the situation the author tries to analyze is subjective and unstable, and in a constant state of revision (can be changed anytime) which depends on the actors' interpretation and kind of construction (Bryman 2012:33,35). I think that this also affects my work as a student.

3.4 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues arise at a variety of stages in social research. Ethical issues cannot be ignored and are important to take into account when conducting research (Bryman 2012:130). Keeping in mind the ethical principles in the book 'Social Research Methods' by Alan Bryman, all the interviewees were informed about the aim of the study before the interviews. All interviewees were told about confidentiality and that their names will not be published in the thesis and will not be disclosed to anyone. They were also informed that the interview is entirely based on their consent whether to answer all the questions or to skip some specific questions. They were also informed that they can leave the interview at any point.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 The Taliban in Swat

District Swat situated in the Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa province, is one of the districts which is affected worstly in the war against terror. To study and understand the background of the Taliban in District Swat it is better to put some light on the role of Maulana Sufi Muhammad and his movement TNSM. Lubna Abid Ali and Naveed Iqbal Khan in their paper talk about Sufi Muhammad who after playing his role in Afghan war against Soviet Union, supporting

Hikamatyar Hizbi Islami, Maulana Sufi Muhammad laid the foundation of TNSM on June 28, 1989. He restricted the activities of the TNSM to the Malakand division. Maulana Sufi Muhammad demanded for Islamic law (Shariah) in 1991 when he camped at Timergara (district headquarter of Lower Dir) and in November 1994 along with his thousand followers he launched an armed campaign for Islamic law. To satisfy his demands and to stop violence, the Pakistan government introduced 'Shariah regulation 1994' (Ali and Khan 2010:93-95).

After 9/11 when the United States attacked Afghanistan, Maulana Sufi Muhammad collected funds from the people and gathered 10,000 people, who poorly equipped with weapons led by him, crossed the Pak-Afghan border to fight against the U.S. army. Most of the people were either killed or arrested by anti-Taliban forces. Maulana Sufi Muhammad managed to return to Pakistan along with some followers. In November 2001 TNSM was banned by President Pervez Musharraf and Maulana Sufi Muhammad was sentenced to three years imprisonment (Ali and Khan 2010:93-95).

A few years later Maulana Fazlullah, the son in law of Maulana Sufi Muhammad, started the group TNSM again in a new way. Maulana Fazlullah led the uprising in District Swat and Shangla and created a separate militant faction from 'Tanzim Nifaz Shariate-Mohammadi' with the name 'Tehrik-i-Taliban Swat' while strongly seeking enforcement of Shariah (Islamic law).

4.2 Growing Influence/ Popularity of the Taliban and its Reasons

In the beginning, when the Taliban were trying to spread their influence and get attention of the people, they used different methods and techniques. The most important and influential method was the FM radio, as the people in Swat love to listen to radio (especially FM radio), and it was a cheap source of entertainment for them. The Taliban would use an illegal radio station to air religious sermons on the radio. The Taliban leader who used to deliver religious sermons and became famous in Swat was Maulana Fazzlullah, also known as 'FM Mullah', Shah Dauran and Muslim Khan.

After long discussions with my respondents the conclusion was reached that those people who had received formal modern education were not in favor of what was happening in the district of

Swat. Almost all of the respondents were of the same view that whatever the Taliban were doing in Swat would lead them towards destruction as it did in Afghanistan and FATA, Pakistan. One of the respondents said in the interview that, “It is the duty of the government to fulfill the rights of the people and listen to them, but if people start armed protest by challenging the writ of the government then it leads to anarchy and destruction”. But, on the other hand, according to all the interviewees, people without formal education (almost 67% of the total population), could not see what was happening in Swat. These people, especially women, supported the Taliban and donated a huge amount of money including their gold ornaments. One of the interviewees disclosed that his mother donated all of her and her daughter’s gold jewelry (worth millions) to the Taliban. According to my respondents and also based on my experience, one can say that People in Swat are religious-minded, innocent people, who do not even have very good religious knowledge. They have been asking for Shariah (Islamic) law in the district. They considered the Taliban as a source for implementing Shariah law in the district because in the beginning the Taliban were talking about religion and were not involved in any terror or militant activity.

Like other areas of Pakistan, the people in Swat were also affected by a poor law and order situation. In the beginning the Taliban acted against the criminals effectively to gain the sympathy of the people. Almost all of the interviewees except one were of the view that people thought that the Taliban could be an alternative to the government law enforcement agencies to safeguard them against the criminals as well as the influential people of the area. People were also tired of the existing judiciary system. Cases have been pending in courts for decades without any outcome. According to one interviewee, he had a case of his stolen car in the court. The thieves were arrested, but still the case was been pending after so many years. When the Taliban took control in the area, they decided his case within three days. All of the respondents said that later on, however, the Taliban cheated people about Shariah courts, when it was promised that the cases would be settled within a short span of time. This was never properly enforced except for a week or two in the beginning when they took control of the area. Due to the support of the people of the area the Taliban easily got a place in the society.

4.3 Military Control

Once they got popular support, they started criticizing the government agencies openly. In July 2007 Fazlullah ordered his supporters to avenge the security force operation to clear militants out of the red mosque (Lal Masjid) in Islamabad (IRIN 2009). They took control of several key towns of district Swat like Matta, Kabal, Khwazakhela, Madyan and Charbagh, all located near Imamdheri, the stronghold of the radical cleric Maulana Fazlullah. Hundreds of militants took over the police stations in these towns and established their own checkpoints. Fazlullah appointed 'governors' in Kabal, Matta, and Khwazakhela and ordered the setting up of Islamic courts in areas under his control. Fazlullah made a call for jihad in Swat and was moving around Swat like a ruler (The Economic Times 2007). My respondents told me how the Taliban spread into Swat District which adversely affected the social and economic life of the residents of the area. The education and health institutions were closed and the children and women were confined to their homes. They destroyed music and CDs shops, police stations and also those barber's shops which refused to obey their order by shaving beards. They also killed many female singers and dancers in the district capital Mingora City.

4.4 Destruction of School System

In the district of Swat the educational infrastructure was severely destroyed by the Taliban. All of the interviewees agreed that the Taliban were against both female and male education, but the level of opposition was different. They were not in the favor of boys' education because they were of the view that it is an 'English' education system, which according to them, is not Islamic. But the Taliban never opposed it until the government started a military operation against them. After that, they started destroying boys' school buildings as well. On the other hand, the Taliban were against education for females from the beginning. One of the interviewees said that may be the Taliban were against the girls' education because of their patriarchal thinking.

All of the respondents were of the view that in the beginning the Taliban were strictly against female education. They were against the co-education and the modern way of dressing of the girls. People in District Swat were in favor of veils as it is a compulsory part of Pashtunwali and they did not like the mixing of boys and girls, so at first there was not any problem. The problem

arose when the Taliban started to follow the cultural form of Islam of the area. According to one of the respondents from Mingora, the main city of District Swat, the Taliban were of the view that female education is against the law of Islam, and thus women are not allowed to receive education. Another respondent came up with an interesting saying that the Taliban believe that, “Women are for home or for grave”. According to a report published in “The Guardian”, during their rule in Swat district, the Taliban destroyed or damaged 401 schools, out of which 70% were girls’ schools (The Guardian 2011). One of the respondents said that the Taliban would say that girls’ education is against the preaching of Islam and it is a curse. After interviewing all of the respondents a conclusion was reached that women were confined to household activities in this district. They were not allowed to go out of their homes for jobs. The Taliban were of the view that women’s modern education brings awareness of women about their rights (i.e. jobs, selection of mate, right of inheritance in property etc.) and these things are considered evil in Pakhtoon society. There are a lot of customs and traditions in Pakhtoon society, especially regarding women, which are totally against the teachings of Islam, but due to unawareness these are considered as Islamic.

4.5 Military Defeat

In response to all these misdeeds, the Government of Pakistan initiated first military action ‘operation rah-e-haq’ on October 25, 2007 against the Taliban. The military forces were engaged in District Swat more than a year when the Government released Sufi Muhammad and introduced Shariah (Islamic law) in Malakand division and made a peace deal with the Taliban. Meanwhile Maulana Fazlullah had fled to the remote Peochar mountainous area along with his supporters to escape capture. In March 2009 the Taliban broke their ceasefire by attacking the Government forces and regrouped and captured Swat, Mingora and Shangla along with Buner. The Government restarted military operation in May 2009 ‘operation rah-e-rast’ to get control of District Swat and got success in it on 15 July (taken from various sources on the Internet).

4.6 Situation Today in Swat

After asking the question “What is the political situation in Swat now? Can the Taliban come back?” all of the respondents were of the view that District Swat is now a very peaceful place in Pakistan. The army has taken back control from the Taliban. The Pakistani army has been doing search operations on various occasions whenever they get any track of the Taliban in Swat, to finish any possibility of the Taliban coming back in power once again. The political situation is getting better day by day. One of the respondents was a teacher of government at Jehanzeb College, Swat. After the Military operation, he has again started to work at Jehanzeb College and deliver lectures. According to him, majority of the students are now satisfied and finally unafraid after the army took control in the area. Some of the respondents were of the view that military forces are trying to make the environment suitable for the civil government to gain back control, but the political leadership is reluctant to take control of the district from the army as they are still afraid of the previous experience with the Taliban. They want the presence of the army to make sure that the Taliban are not getting strong again in the area. One of the respondents who lives in Matta Village in District Swat, said that the memories of when the Taliban took control of the valley brought so many miseries for the people which ultimately changed the mind of the people so that now the people hate the Taliban. So all the respondents were in agreement that there is very little possibility of the Taliban to come back once again and take control of the area; it might happen only if the civil government fails to deliver and the security forces do not continue their hold in the area. The current assault on Malala on 9 October 2012 shows that their fears were real. Malala, a 14 year old right activist who has campaigned for girls’ education in district Swat and became famous in 2009 by writing a diary for BBC Urdu about her life under the Taliban militants who had taken control of the valley, was attacked by the Taliban on her way home from school in Swat district. She got injured along with two other female students (BBC NEWS ASIA).

One of the respondents said that the presence of military forces in District Swat is also causing some problems for the people as they feel as if they are living in a war zone. I asked this question of five more respondents in which two respondents did not agree on this point and said that the presence of military forces are for their security and whatever they are doing is for their protection. On the other hand, the remaining three respondents supported the views of the first respondent. They said that sometimes the behavior of the soldiers gets very bad. The soldiers look at common people with suspicion and have established so many check points on the

roadside where they search people and their clothes. So a lot of people are not so happy with the military forces.

5. THE INFLUENCE OF THE TALIBAN MOVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in early 90's and governed Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. The Taliban's movement affected both Afghanistan and Pakistan very badly. In the first part of this chapter I will discuss about the influence of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the second part I would compare it with some other Islamic movements in the Muslim world. As we know that the Taliban movement was initiated in Afghanistan, I would like to start from Afghanistan.

5.1 Influence of the Taliban Movement in Afghanistan

Before the Taliban took control in 2001, Afghanistan had faced the invasion from Russia from 1979 to 1989 and then after Russia's withdrawal the civil war started which affected the whole country severely. In 1996, when the Taliban took control of the country, the people were in a bad situation. According to Adam Ritscher, though already severely repressed by the various Mujahideen warlords, the plight of Afghanistan's women was made even worse under the new regime. The Taliban shared a vision of creating an ideal Islamic society just like the one created by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 1,400 years ago. The country became politically and diplomatically isolated and the international community turned a blind eye to the suffering of Afghan civilians throughout the 1990s. It was the attack of September 11, 2001 that brought the country sharply into focus (Ritscher 2008).

When the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden to America, a few weeks after September 11, United States began bombing the impoverished country. At least thousands have been killed by U.S. bombs and many more are dying as the Taliban warlords fight it out.

Hundreds of thousands of land mines and unexploded cluster bombs lay scattered across the nation's landscape. And there is no end in sight to the misery (History World).

Before the Taliban movement, the people of Afghanistan were living in a war zone. The Taliban movement proved a continuation of the same situation for them or perhaps even worse. The Taliban has been resisting NATO forces for almost last 11 years and no one knows when there will be an end to this. Due to this situation, the people of Afghanistan do not have their basic rights. The country's infrastructure has been damaged severely from the last few decades and no attention has been given to its improvement. People are deprived of education facilities, health facilities, sports facilities etc. Thousands of Afghan civilians died directly from insurgents and military actions and indirectly from displacement, starvation, disease, exposure, crime and lawlessness resulting from the war. The social and political situation has been influenced severely. The Taliban are responsible for imposing a war on the people of Afghanistan. It is hard to say how much longer the Taliban will continue to fight, or when the U.S. will end its war, though there are positive signs of peace talks between U.S. and the Taliban leaders. The Taliban are also allowed to open their office in Qatar, so it seems that the Taliban has a future in Afghanistan. But looking to the prevailing situation in the country, Afghanistan's future like its past, looks to be very hard.

5.2 Influence of Taliban Movement in Pakistan

Pakistan has a long history of religious extremism. The Kashmir issue provided a perfect platform for strengthening the religious extremism within the country. Even major religious political parties like Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam and others openly backed the religious extremist groups, raised money for them and even invited them to their political gatherings. But the current militancy in Pakistan is linked to the war in Afghanistan. After the U.S. attack on Afghanistan, Pakistan stopped supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan and became a front line ally of the U.S. in the war against terror. Supporters of the Afghani Taliban transitioned into a mainstream Taliban force and they called themselves Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Bait Ullah Mehsood was the leader of this group who was killed in a U.S. Drone predator attack in 2009. TTP gained support and power by joining forces with other terrorist

groups and they started a full pledged war against Pakistani army and NATO forces in Afghanistan (Haq 2010:34,37).

Fighting against the Taliban in Pakistan began in 2004 when Pakistan's army entered South Waziristan, where the al Qaida and the Taliban fighters used the area as a base for attacks against American and allied forces in Afghanistan. Pakistani forces suffered almost daily casualties due to roadside bombs and ambushes. The Taliban started a full-fledged war with the Pakistani army and spread from FATA to other areas in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa and took control in district Swat, Dir lower, Buner and Shangla. The Pakistani army took control back from the Taliban after difficult military operations.

The Taliban severely affected these areas during their control. They killed a lot of people, destroyed educational infrastructure, exploded government offices, hospitals, police stations etc. They destroyed economy of the country to a great extent. In the beginning it looked like that the Taliban influence was spreading to other areas from FATA but Pakistan's army military operation limited them to some parts of FATA. Now-a-days the Taliban do not have practical control of any area in Pakistan except North Waziristan, where it is believed that the Haqqani network has strong roots in the area. The Taliban are still involved in extremist activities in Pakistan, though they are not engaged in any direct war with the army but they have been performing suicidal attacks and bomb blasts in various cities.

The situation in North Waziristan is very complex. The Haqqani network has influence in North Waziristan which is believed to be backed by Pakistan's intelligence agencies. U.S. and Afghan government believe that the Haqqani network is involved in various terrorist activities in Afghanistan. According to the Dawn newspaper, Defense press secretary of USA, George Little said about an assault in Kabul, Afghanistan which lasted for 18 hours that, "initial indications are that the Haqqani network was involved in this set of attacks that occurred yesterday in Kabul" (Dawn 2012). U.S. has been demanding from the government of Pakistan a military operation in North Waziristan but the government of Pakistan uses delayed tactics. According to a report published in an E-Paper, the Pakistan Today, "Pakistan has firmly turned down renewed US demands for a full-scale military operation in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) against the Haqqani network allegedly based there, and blamed by Washington for recent coordinated attacks in Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan" (Hussain 2012).

According to my understanding, the situation in Pakistan is not easy for the Taliban as Pakistan's army is involved in military operation against them in FATA and they are resisting Pakistan army by suicidal attacks, bomb blasts, etc. They are also involved in terror activities in cities to pressurize the government. But unlike Afghanistan they do not have that much influence in Pakistan except in FATA, where in South Waziristan the Pakistan's army has been doing military operation against them. In North Waziristan, Pakistan's government refused to start a military operation, which has created so many doubts in the relation between Pakistan and U.S.

5.3 Comparison with Some Other Islamic Movements

Islamic history is full of various kinds of movements. In this part of the chapter I will put light on some Islamic movements that happened in different countries at different times and would try to find out whether there is any common root or element between them and the Taliban movement. These movements will help us to understand the Issue of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

5.3.1 The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

The IMU first emerged as a militant Islamist group in 1991 to overthrow the government of Uzbek President, Islam Karimov. This group was formed by Tohir Abdouhalilovitch Yuldeshev and former Soviet paratrooper, Jumaboi Ahmadzhanovitch Khojaev, who later adopted the name alias Juma Namagani. When this group was banned in Uzbekistan, their leadership moved to Tajikistan and then to Afghanistan. This group launched many operations and campaigns in Ferghana Valley, where the Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik borders converge, in 1999, 2000 and 2001, which affected all the three countries and disrupted their relations. The group was also involved in a series of car bombings in Tashkent, and kidnappings. The group also fought in the civil war in Afghanistan (Burgess 2002).

Just like the Taliban ideology this group was established to enforce Islamic law in the country. For this purpose they started armed struggle and received funds and sanctuary from Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence agencies and was based in Peshawar from 1995 to 1998. It has been claimed that this group was also funded by intelligence services and Islamic charities in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey. The group has suffered heavy losses by U.S. and coalition forces. Pakistan's intelligence agencies and press have also been claiming that the militants of IMU with the Taliban are conducting violent operations in Pakistan's tribal areas along the Afghan border (Sidikov 2008).

5.3.2 Hezbollah

Hezbollah was initiated in 1982 when several pro-Iranian groups appeared in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. It emerged as an umbrella organization of these groups in 1985 in an organized way (CFR.org Staff 2010). Unlike the Taliban, Hezbollah emerged as the result of Israeli invasion, while the Taliban emerged due to a long prevailing civil war in the country. It is different from that of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, as it claims to believe in the freedom of choice. It is also active in politics and participates in elections. Hezbollah is also extremely hostile to Al Qaida (CFR.org Staff 2010).

Alyssa Fetini writes in her paper, 'A brief history of: Hezbollah' that this group became famous by the 1983 suicide bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen. The U.S. pullout from Beirut in 1984 gave Hezbollah credibility and strength within Lebanon. They continued their attacks against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon until their withdrawal in 2000. This group got various responses from the world community. On one hand, in the Middle East they won support from Arab nationalists and the backing of Iran and Syria as the most successful anti-Israeli military group while, on the other hand many Western countries considered it a terrorist group and it was placed on the U.S. State Department's terrorist list in 1999. In 2006 the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah exploded again causing the death of 1000 Lebanese. The conflict was ended by UN, whereas Hezbollah claimed its victory in the conflict (Fetini 2009).

What this short comparison shows is that there are different types of Islamic movements depending on the historical situation. These movements will help us to understand the nature of the Taliban movement in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hezbollah in Lebanon appears to be a more liberal movement than both the Taliban and the IMU in Uzbekistan. Hezbollah was founded to counter the aggression of Israel, while the Taliban movement and IMU in Uzbekistan were founded to establish the Islamic laws in their countries by the help of weapons and killing people.

6. THE TALIBAN AND EDUCATION

6.1 The Taliban Ideas of Education

As already discussed in Chapter Two about Islam and education, it is clear that Islam is in the favor of female education. In this chapter the ideology of the Taliban will be discussed in the light of the respondents' views concerning education. The Taliban in District Swat were totally against all modern education, especially female education. On the other hand, they fully supported Madrassa schools. About Madrassa schools, all the respondents had the same opinion that these schools are a kind of religious institutions where Muslim children get religious education. Two of the respondents said during the interview that Madrassa schools in other Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and even in non-Muslim country like India play an important role in educating the people. In some Madrassa schools children get religious education along with modern education which allows them to become useful members of the society. There are also some kinds of Madrassa schools in Pakistan which provide religious education to children along with modern education, and these kinds of Madrassa schools are very successful. In Pakistan the situation in most Madrassa schools is very different and difficult because of various reasons. The first reason which was mentioned by all of the respondents was the prevailing poverty in the area. Usually rich people send their children to high-standard private schools and those who cannot afford the expenses of private schools send their children to government schools. Those parents who cannot even afford government schools expenses just send their children to Madrassa schools where they have free education and free room and board. According to one of the respondents, the age of students in Madrassa schools

range from 10 to fully mature individuals. Due to the absence of proper organization and control the younger children whom are vulnerable become mentally, physically and sexually abused by other students and people in the society. Due to poverty and having limited knowledge of religion, the children's parents are unaware of what is being taught and happening to their children in Madrassa schools. So a majority of the children do not go there by their choice, but are instead compelled to go there.

Capability and function of an individual can be directly linked to his or her standard of living. A better standard of living likely leads to more capability and ultimately improves a person's functioning. The case here is exactly the opposite in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the people's standard of living is very low. They cannot afford modern education for their children. A poor standard of living has limited the capability for poor people. They send their children to Madrassa schools as they do not have the capability of sending their children to modern, more expensive private schools, and Madrassa schools' education in general has only limited the capability of people to actively participate in the society.

Most of my respondents considered the Russian-Afghan war responsible for the establishment of hundreds of Madrassa schools in Pakistan. Five of the respondents had almost the same view that the stakeholders in that war, especially the USA and Pakistan, were only interested to produce a breed of people who can be used in war in the name of religion. So they started funding Madrassa schools in order to prepare children for war instead of focusing on their syllabus and education. This policy created long lasting negative implications for the Madrassa schools' education.

According to all interviewees, the Madrassa schools in Pakistan provide only religious education and that education alone is not suitable to create or prepare professional people for modern issues to run the society smoothly. Modern education is essential for dealing with complex issues and for smooth functioning of the society. The Taliban were against modern education despite of not having any alternative system for modern education system to run the society. Keeping people away from modern education and allowing them only religious education is also responsible for limiting their capabilities and functioning. I have mentioned before that illiteracy or limited knowledge can hinder someone from actively participating in the society. Modern education is responsible and playing a major role in creating the division of

labor within the society. Keeping people away from modern education ultimately leads to limiting their capabilities and functioning in the society.

In my view Islam is not against modern education. On the other hand the Taliban has opposed modern education as they considered it against Islam. It shows that the Taliban were not aware of the basic teachings of Islam. They did not have depth in their planning and their strategies. Either it was beyond the thinking capability of the Taliban leaders or they might have been opposing the modern education for some latent purpose which the local people were not aware of.

6.2 Recent Changes in Outlook among the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan

While interviewing the respondents, a question was asked of them about the Taliban, if they were being prepared for a compromise about women's education. This was the question where all of the respondents were confused and could not answer the question as the question was not relevant to District Swat in the sense that Taliban were not present anymore in District Swat, and there is almost no chance for them to come back and get the control of the area. In other areas in Pakistan like in FATA, as I understand it, the Taliban have been conducting activities to avenge the military forces' activities. For their revenge they destroy almost every government property i.e. hospitals, schools etc. So it does not reveal the policy of the Taliban regarding education. The Pakistani Taliban has been saying of female education in the past that it is un-Islamic. So I would like to find answer to this question regarding Afghanistan's Taliban as policy of the Afghan's Taliban and the Pakistani Taliban is almost similar regarding education. The Pakistani Taliban has a history of following the Afghan's Taliban and they have announced many times that Mullah Omer is their leader. So it means that a shift in Afghan's Taliban policy will also bring a shift in Pakistan's Taliban policy.

The Taliban who ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 banned female education in Afghanistan forcefully and parents in Afghanistan were afraid about the security of their children to the point of being afraid to send them to school. However, the last couple of years, the Taliban seem to be ready to bring change in their policy about female education. The Taliban are now facing the realities of the result of their stance on modern education. They destroyed and damaged a lot of

schools, especially in many southern and eastern Pashtun populated districts which resulted in an entire generation growing up without knowing how to read, write or do basic math. This scenario created difficulty for young Pashtun people to find jobs for themselves in competition with the well-educated young people from the ethnic minority Hazara community (Trofimov 2012). Illiteracy affects the capability and functioning of people as it affected the Pashtun people in Afghanistan. If we follow Amartya Sen, modern education of girls is necessary for getting jobs and for smooth and proper functioning in the society. In Afghanistan a high literacy ratio has made the Hazara people capable of having a better life than the illiterate Pashtun community.

The education minister of Afghanistan, Farooq Wardak, said during the Education World Forum in London, "What I am hearing at the very upper policy level of the Taliban is that they are no more opposing education and also girls' education". He further added that, "I hope, InshAllah (God willing), soon there will be a peaceful negotiation, a meaningful negotiation with our own opposition and that will not compromise at all the basic human rights and basic principles which have been guiding us to provide quality and balanced education to our people" (BBC News 2011). According to Yaroslav Trofimov in 'Emboldened Taliban Try to Sell Softer Image', Mr. Wardak said, "Our communities have told the Taliban: 'Hey, guys, you're telling us you're trying to topple the government of Hamid Karzai and establish your own government. But when you have your own government, you'll still need doctors and engineers. So why are you not letting my kids go to school?'" (Trofimov 2012). Trofimov further said that more than 600 schools were reopened over the last three years and 398 districts from all over the Afghanistan have received assurance from the local Taliban commanders that their schools would be protected. According to Mr. Wardak, the Taliban even frequently told government paid teachers that you have to do justice with your job, in case of your too much absenteeism; we are going to fire you (Trofimov 2012. No page since it is online source).

Mr. Qalamuddin, the former Taliban's police chief, is no longer involved in the armed struggle. In his home district of Baraki Barak, a small German aid group named Ofarin has been working on the topic of education since 2001. With the support of Mr. Qalamuddin the NGO provides basic education to thousands of people in the area. In recent years the Taliban took control of Baraki Barak, Mr. Schwittek, the coordinator and the co-founder of the NGO, and Mr. Qalamuddin have not been able to visit the area, but according to the teachers and the parents,

the Taliban have never interfered in their work, although they sometimes monitor the classes (Trofimov 2012).

In an article by Rachel Reid, the recent trend regarding education may be connected to a deal made between communities, government officials, and the Taliban, where education is allowed in exchange for teachers or a curriculum that the Taliban officials approve of. He mentions a senior official in the Ministry of Education who says they have recruited 3,000 Mullahs to teach the literacy classes. By appointing Mullahs they do not oppose female education (Reid 2012). According to a report by IRIN, “Girls can attend separate schools provided female teachers, and the curriculum and education environment are in keeping with religious and cultural values, the Taliban commanders have told elders in southern Afghanistan”(IRIN 2011). So a drop in attacks may be an improvement, but at the cost of families seeking modern education (Reid 2012).

Though the overall situation regarding girls’ education seems to be heading in right direction, all the Taliban commanders are not on board with this policy. In 2011, there were 440 attacks and threats against schools compared to 500 in 2010. These attacks were not only from the Taliban, but were also from the criminal gangs and non-Taliban militias. This situation still creates doubts in the people (Trofimov 2012). According to a report by Sanjeev Miglani published in Reuters, there are two types of groups; one group reacting to this shift in policy of the Taliban towards female education with disbelief. Women members of the Afghan parliament have their view that the situation on the ground has remained the same and that it is just as difficult for women. Roshanak Wardak, a female member of the Afghan parliament, said that there has not been a single school opened to girls in six Pashtun dominated district of her province. The only schools opened were in two districts dominated by the Hazaras. Merman Gusher, another MP from the Kunar province said that she does not think that the Taliban would ever change their stance on education for females (Miglani 2011).

In the above paragraph it is demonstrated that there is gender discrimination in the Pashtun dominated areas regarding education. The Taliban have made the situation worse for females to get an education. It is obvious that inequality in education can be a major cause of inequality in capability and functioning. The Taliban are limiting the capabilities and functioning of females by keeping them away from education, and it becomes even more severe when the Taliban do not allow male doctors to treat female patients and male teachers to teach girls in the schools,

etc. According to Juan R.I. Cole in his book “The Taliban, women and the Hegelian private sphere”, the women suffered more than the men, because the Taliban would not allow them to be treated by male doctors. For the Taliban, if a woman was sick, it was better for her to die than to be treated by a man. If she refused to let a male doctor touch her, she would be certain of going to Heaven. If she let herself be treated by him, she would be condemned to Hell (Cole 2003:797-798). It is very necessary that there be gender equality in every sphere of life, but in education it is most important because education opens doors to all other spheres of life. The author is not in favor of the Taliban policy that males should treat only males and females should treat only female patients and males should teach only boys and females only girls in schools, but if it is so, then they need female doctors and female teachers in the society to treat women patients and to teach girls students in schools. For this purpose the Taliban need to provide education to girls and ensure gender equality in capability and functioning because this is the only solution to a long-term society.

The other group mentioned approaches the shift of the Taliban Policy towards education in a different way. A tribal elder in the southern province of Kandahar said that, “The Taliban have told us that they are not against schools for girls”. Local people in the Marof, Daman, and Panjwaye districts said that, they had received similar assurances from the insurgents (IRIN 2011). Thomas Ruttig at the Afghanistan Analysts Network says that there does seem to be a gradual shift in the Taliban position regarding education but it is not necessarily because they have suddenly realized the value of education for children, boy or girl. A lot of credit goes to the ordinary Afghani parents, who like other parents in the world want to educate their children including girls. Although a lot of conservative Pashtun people might not necessarily believe in educating girls through university level, but almost all the Pashtuns believe in female education at least at the village level. Thomas Ruttig says, citing local sources that the shift of the Taliban’s stance on education started in the Aandar and Waghaz districts, where people pushed for the reopening of schools that had been closed for many years. Now schools are opening in all Pashtun districts of Ghazni (Taliban controlled), in Aandar, and even female schools are also said to be functioning (Miglani 2011). The shift in the Taliban’s policy regarding female education is a positive shift; however, there still are some doubts about the Taliban regarding education policy. The Afghan people, while they still have far to go and have suffered a lot to

achieve their rights of education, seem to be taking the first steps to equal education in this regard.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, the topic of education, especially female education in Taliban-controlled districts, has been explored in context of District Swat in Pakistan. The author has tried to find out answers to some of the questions related to the Taliban and education in Swat, Pakistan. As mentioned in the first chapter, the aim of the study was to answer three questions based on the empirical analysis. First of all the author wanted to know the ideology of the Taliban about gender issues regarding education, in comparison to Islamic views surrounding female education. The Taliban were against female education in District Swat throughout their control of the area. They declared female education un-Islamic and opposed it violently by destroying educational infrastructure severely in the area. The interesting fact is that the Taliban even did not like the education for males. They were instead in favor of Maddrassa schools which provide solely religious education.

The Taliban banned female education in the name of religion, but interestingly there is no such command in Islam which is against education or even female education. In fact they were instead following a traditional patriarchal ideology which is deeply rooted in the Pashtun population of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The second question was to find out whether the Taliban have any alternative for modern education system to cope with modern, complex issues, as we all know that modern society is the society of specialization. Without division of labor, the society cannot perform all its functions properly. For this purpose, modern education plays an important role. On the other hand, the Taliban-supported Maddrassa schools were available which provide only religious education. Religious education is not enough alone to cope with modern complex issues. Interestingly one could not even find any valid reason for why the Taliban were against modern education, especially if they did not have any alternative for the modern education system, and thus, more needs to be found out regarding the Taliban's alternative education system to the modern, scientific education system.

The third aim of the thesis was to find out whether the Taliban are ready to make a compromise about female education, if they rise again in power. The Taliban have been resisting U.S. and NATO forces for the last 11 years in Afghanistan, and there has been a policy shift in the U.S. strategy regarding the Taliban. The latter were also allowed to open their office in the Qatar. Looking at all these facts, it seems that the Taliban may have a future in Afghanistan. So this question became very important to investigate. Looking at the ground situation in Afghanistan, the Taliban have compromised their position regarding female education. They are ready to allow education to females if they have separate schools, same-gender teachers, if all wear the veil, and the curriculum is according to the culture and religion. Although this is a positive change in the Taliban policy about female education in general, still some people in Afghanistan do not believe in this shift in the Taliban policy.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1 Interview Guide:

8.1.1 Questions for the Respondents:

- What is your age and profession?
- What is your level of education?
- In the beginning when the Taliban started taking control of the area and started their preaching, what was the reaction of the people and what was your reaction?
- If the people do not welcome them, what was the reason behind this?
- If the people welcome them, so what was the reason behind this?
- Do you think the Taliban were only against (a) Girls education or (b) both girls and boys education?
- If (a) Why were the Taliban against girls education?
- Do you think that the Taliban were following Islamic rules by forbidding girls from getting education?
- What do you think about the views of Islamic religion regarding modern education and especially about girls' education?

- If (b) Why were the Taliban against both girls and boys education systems?
- Was there any alternative education system for the modern education system to which the Taliban forced or invited people to join?
- What do you think about the education at Madrassa schools?
- Do you think that Madrassa's education system is capable to prepare or create professional people to run the society or to cope with modern issues?
- Yes (b) No
- If Yes, then how?
- If No, then did the Taliban have any alternative system for the modern education system to prepare or create professional people to run the society or to cope with the modern issues?
- Is there any sign of the Taliban being prepared to make a compromise about girls' education?
- What is the Political situation in Swat now? Can the Taliban come back?