WOMEN AND AID IN AFGHANISTAN: A FEMINIST GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**WOMEN AND AID IN AFGHANISTAN: A FEMINIST GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS**" submitted by me for the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

Sneha Dubey

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Abbreviations

AACA	Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AIHCR	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Systems
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AP	Associated Press
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
AWBF	Afghan Women's Business Federation
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
CDC	Community Development Councils
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERP	Commanders Emergency Response Program
CIPE	Centre for International Private Enterprise
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DOAW	Democratic Organization of Afghan Women
ESF	Economic Support Fund
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
EVAW	End Violence against Women
FTS	Financial Tracking System
GDI	Gender Development Index
GHA	Global Humanitarian Assistance
HAWCA	Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan
IBG	Institute of British Geographers
ICRU	Icelandic Crisis Response Unit
INCLE	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
JCBM	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility in Afghanistan
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report (Afghanistan)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
Noref	Norwegian Peace-building Centre
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAWA	Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNIFEM	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNMACA	United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VAW	Violence against women

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Chapter One

Introduction

Feminism is a broad, complex, contested term that comprises both an intellectual and a political project that seeks to identify, understand, and dismantle inequalities between men and women (Staeheli 2001). The past few years have witnessed a growing recognition of the importance of feminism within geographical enquiry. Feminist geography is a relatively recent discourse in human geography. Feminist Geography is a part of human geography inspired by feminist scholarship and focused on representing adequately women's worlds and transforming research practice in accordance with principles of feminist scholarship. It is now widely acknowledged that in order to promote the development of feminist perspectives within geography research must do more than simply document existing inequalities but must recognise the importance of gender as a fundamental influence on person/society/space relationships. The development of feminist theory cannot be divorced from its political context. The intersections and conversations between feminist geography and political geography are thus imperative. Political geography is thought of as being concerned with territory and territoriality, exploring how power is exercised in and through spaces and how spaces (and their boundaries) are defined, defended, and contested. Similarly, it seems fair to claim that most often the scale of analysis for political geographers is the state (arguably the most important), region, globe, and, to some extent, locality. Finer scales get far less attention (Nelson and Seager 2005). In an attempt to traverse this gap, the notion of a feminist geopolitics needs to be elaborated.

Feminist geopolitics is not an alternative theory of geopolitics, nor the ushering in of a new spatial order, but is an approach to global issues with feminist politics in mind. A feminist geopolitics is sought by examining politics at scales other than that of the nation-state; by challenging the public/private divide at a global scale; and by analyzing the politics of mobility for perpetrators of crimes against humanity (Hyndman 2005). As such, feminist geopolitics is a critical approach and a contingent set of political practices operating at scales finer and coarser than the nation-state. 'Feminist geopolitics' offers a critical framework for analyzing the events. Feminist geopolitics attempts to develop a politics of security at multiple scales, including that of the body. It decentres state security, the conventional subject of geopolitics, and

contests the militarization of states and societies with a 'world system' perspective (Kofman 2001). Thus political events in the international arena that impact women are relevant for geopolitical analysis because they operate outside the macro and formal political spaces and scales of geopolitics. Afghanistan and its women are a case in point. Their experience provides a basis on which to explore geopolitics from a "highly embodied, situated, yet globalised location" (Hyndman, 2002). The political constructions of scale and body-politics that form integral part of feminist geopolitics can be analyzed through an empirical study of the women and aid intervention in Afghanistan which is attempted in this research.

Afghanistan's chequered history is marred by misery and human debris. The imperial powers attempted to take over this country through the Anglo-Afghan war that stretched for seven long decades, but failed to colonize it. The entry of Soviet Union in the seventies with the intention of monopolising the political scenario led the Afghans to revolt against their rule. This was followed by the rise of the Taliban, who, nurtured by the United States became the lawmakers (Wahab and Youngerman, 2010; Runion (2007). The brazen attacks on the World Trade Centre a decade ago imprinted the word 'terrorism' on the world's collective conscience and made Afghanistan witness another war- this time "on terrorism". This became the familiar pattern in Afghanistan and further dissuaded any possibility of development in the region. Years of continuous war and the Taliban Regime left the majority of the population traumatized and impoverished. The poverty, political instability, authoritarian rule and Civil War coupled with the atrocities faced under the Taliban Rule brutally throttled the limited hopes of rebuilding the country and its population. The worst affected were the women of Afghanistan. With their basic rights denied, they were banned from public life. Prior to the Taliban Rule the women were an integral part of the policy making, economic life, judicial undertakings and society. However, this was drastically altered. Severe beating, stoning, public flogging and executions of women over the slightest of issues became the norm (Clements, 2003). The physical and emotional abuses inflicted on the women, further deteriorated their already pitiable state. The "War on Terrorism" orchestrated by the United States managed to contain the Taliban Regime, to an extent, but it was naive to believe that it can be completely wiped away. Afghanistan's history demonstrates how gender relations have been affected by ethnic conflict, state formation, state–society relations and imperial domination.

The Fall of Taliban and ushering in of an Afghan Administration signified the emergence of a new political order that could've meant peace after decades, in this strife-torn country. The underlying dynamics of the Afghan crisis have to be addressed from a geopolitical perspective. Despite being landlocked, Afghanistan is strategically very significant both in terms of its regional location in Central Asia as an energy corridor and substantial deposits of oil and natural gas. Territorially, it lies at the intersection of the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan), the Middle East (Iran), Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), and China (Wakhan Corridor). Afghanistan is thus a pivot for relations among regional actors, principally Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, India, and Pakistan. The US security presence in the region is providing additional impetus toward a redefinition by those regional powers of their strategic interests vis-à-vis each other and the United States. With the changing internal dynamics at Washington, the U.S. has decided to end its combat role in Afghanistan, but the fact that it executed two military interventions in Afghanistan in a span of twenty years underscores its geopolitical significance.

However, war cannot simply be declared over (Goodhand 2002). Military and diplomatic measures, though important are unlikely to restore peace. A substantial aid package for Afghanistan was necessary for the peaceful transition of the economy. One of the main purposes for aid has been "To promote practices that are consistent with international standard of human rights and to distance the donor country from those regimes that are consistent violators of the rights of their citizens" (Regan 1995). Aid was also intended to promote democracy in the country and provided for "humanitarian relief, family planning, and reductions of infant mortality" (Graham 2002). A large proportion of the assistance given to Afghanistan has also been for emergency relief (Woods 2005). An important avenue for aid in the aftermath of conflict in Afghanistan has been gender focused international aid. The deplorable condition of women in the country has necessitated efforts in this direction. It is, however imperative to understand gender politics in this context.

A focus on historical and contemporary role of aid in relation to women is attempted in this research. It will question how international assistance has interacted with the scenario of violence and suffering of the Afghan women in the past and whether international support garnered against women's oppression helped in further legitimizing US led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. This research thus attempts to analyze the apparent as well as the surreptitious intentions behind gender

assistance and discern the geopolitical causes that influence the donor countries. The research puzzle therefore revolves around a feminist geopolitical critique of international aid to Afghan women, examining the progress made so far and the various implications of gender politics that intricately link the donor countries to Afghanistan.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Feminist Geography, Critical and Feminist Geopolitics

The geographical literature on women has grown rapidly over the past decade and there has been considerable discussion over appropriate approaches and areas for research in geography. The feminist critique challenged geographers to analyze the part played by gender role differentiation in people-environment relations. Feminist geopolitics as a critical discourse has an ongoing relationship with feminism and a range of other progressive political movements that emerged in the 1960s. The nature of feminist geopolitics has shifted dramatically over time, a consequence of changes in feminist theorizing and politics, as well as of changes in the discipline of geography. Feminist theory is a vast terrain of political and social thought. Feminist theorists offer a variety of typologies for surveying this vast terrain. Tong (1998) and Lorber (2005) divide feminist theory into schools of thought —liberal, Marxist, socialist, radical, lesbian, psychoanalytic, multiracial, postmodern, and post-colonial. Highlighting individual schools and labelling them differently, they categorize schools by their dominant substantive or methodological concerns. This typology helps us to see an aspect of the landscape of feminist geography and is particularly helpful in understanding key distinctions in different feminist theories.

Millet's *Sexual politics* (1970) represents one of the first serious theoretical attempts to come to grips with the specific nature of women's oppression. It also provides the theoretical basis of radical feminism. Millet asserts that our political and social structures are patriarchal because they are governed by a double subordination-female by male and younger male by older male. Class differences are considered less significant than these gender based power relations. The family is central to this analysis since it is within this institution that patriarchal ties are reinforced. For feminist practice this thesis has led to

demands in which men are seen as the sole oppressors and therefore to be excluded from radical feminist politics. Indeed, some women see liberation only in a society of complete gender separation and this has led to demands for concomitant changes in the built environment. The use of patriarchy as a universal theory of women's subordination has been criticized as inadequate by socialist feminists like Barrett (1980) who attempts to explain the continuation of women's oppression through class and patriarchal relations using an Althusserian concept of ideology to analyze changing ideas about feminine and masculine sexuality.

Women and Geography Study Group of the IBG (1984) in *Geography and Gender* give an introduction to feminist geography and presents feminist analyses in geography through examples of urban spatial structure, women's employment, industrial location and regional change, access to facilities and women and development. This is followed a discourse on the methods of research in feminist geography. The writers' aim to focus not just on women and women's activities, but on patriarchy as a factor in determining how spatial relations are worked out, and how those spatial relations contribute in turn to women's oppression. They give a beginner's guide to feminism, which sets a useful framework. Almost a decade later the next text on feminist perspectives in geography was published. Rose (1993) gives a broad overview of how women comprise everyday spaces and discusses the politics of paradoxical space. She argues that the various forms of white, bourgeoisie, heterosexual masculinity have structured the way in which geography as a discipline claims to know space, place and landscape. Resistance to the consequent exclusions and absences of geographical knowledge is difficult as it is impossible to find a position entirely outside the hegemonic discourse. The two problems outlined by the author are how to represent women as social subjects without referring to the figure of Woman and how to avoid the racism and compulsory heterosexuality of hegemonic geography. Rose argues that the predominant emphasis of what is classified as feminist geography- the materialist bases of women's oppression is relatively well known and the new agenda lies in discursive and deconstructionist analyses of the foundation of this knowledge itself. Rose et al (1997) represent the contested and negotiated histories of feminist geography; discuss gender in feminist geography and the methods and methodologies in feminist geographies- namely- politics, practice and power. They analyse the feminist geographies of environment and landscape and

of space and place through resisting boundaries. In conclusion the authors state that a focus on gender relations greatly improves geographical analyses and that gender relations are central to understanding gender inequalities.

Raju and Lahiri-Dutt (2011) present contributions by Indian geographers towards an understanding of geography and gender. Through an innovative use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, they have posed a challenge to the androcentric nature of conventional geography and unearthed the existential lives of women and men in India. The collection of articles represents the emerging concerns and research tools in doing gender in geography. The themes of work, reproduction and domestic/public spaces are dealt with in detail. The volume reveals how gender, space and place intersect to create geographies of their own. It explores the feminist research methodologies to present the geography of gender with a focus on India and argues that to understand gender research in Indian geography; one must situate both geography and feminisms in India and recognize their hierarchies and historic inequities. Geographical studies of gender in India have different issues and agendas, according to the authors, and they present a compelling voice that needs to be heard by those who dominate feminist knowledge production in international geography. The authors thus attempt to initiate a dialogue with more established feminist scholars who currently hold the hegemony over knowledge production in feminist geography.

Despite a growing body of research, the integration and recognition of feminist perspectives in geopolitics have not yet been achieved. Dalby (1994), for example, argues that critical geopolitics tended to overlook gender issues and perspectives. This is somewhat disheartening, because critical geopolitics was one of the developments in the sub-discipline that would seem to be particularly receptive to feminism, given its theoretical and methodological orientations. He notes the lack of attention to gender at the intersection of IR theory and critical geopolitics, reiterating issues long raised by feminists both in geography and IR. Following feminists in IR, he examines the ways in which geopolitical categories of security are gendered and of the gender-blind analysis of much IR theory. His overview of gender and feminism in IR underscores the dearth of feminist voices in this area of geography with notable exceptions. Dalby asks us to mind the gap, one that remains in place today despite important interventions by feminist political geographers who straddle the divide. Dowler and Sharp (2001) argue that critical geopolitics simply reproduced the

‘masculinism’ of the subfield and the absence of feminist perspectives and of gender extends beyond critical geopolitics. Staeheli (2001) suggests that political geography remains largely unaffected by developments in feminist geopolitics. Taylor's (2000) assessment is acute: political geography has not accepted the challenges of feminism. As Dear (1999) notes, one would be hard pressed to know what political geographers think of feminism.

Kofman (2004) imagines feminist geopolitics as one which would incorporate feminist analyses and gender into an extant set of geopolitical practices. The most successful incorporation of feminist insights and gender issues into geopolitics would dismantle and democratize geopolitics such that it no longer involved the personnel of statecraft located with the most repressive echelons of the state. Real groups would then begin to figure in the landscapes and maps of the global economy and power relations. Kofman's description of feminist geopolitics is uniquely situated within both political and feminist geography. It aspires to a less punitive version of the state-centric realist geopolitics. It also tacitly identifies a gap in the geographical literature: that the scale at which security is generally conceptualized precludes collective concerns, civil groups, and individual protection.

Kofman and Peake (2004) conceptualized politics as an activity relevant to all spheres of public and private life; it is manifested in activities of cooperation, negotiation, and struggle over the production and distribution of resources, and it involves the transformative capacity of social agents and institutions. This feminist perspective on the political involves a radical reworking of concepts that moves beyond the boundaries created by a topical focus on formal political spheres and spaces. In addition to an expansive approach to political issues, processes, and relationships, it includes normative visions of social change to combat exclusion, oppression, and marginalization.

As can be seen from the review of related literature, feminist geopolitics owes a significant debt to feminists in political science who have developed substantial critiques of international relations theory. Many of these analyses, however, have failed to go beyond the neo-realist narratives of international relations. That is, feminist critics and IR proponents alike are working within a singular problematic of modern geopolitics. While a few feminist critics of IR are interested in taking apart this dominant discourse, most are engaged in a more oppositional stance in relation to IR and modern geopolitics. Critical geopolitics, however, as a sub-field of political

geography aims to fill this gap. Critical geopolitics here is ‘‘broadly understood as the critical and poststructuralist intellectual practices of unravelling and deconstructing geographical and related disguises, dissimulations, and rationalizations of power cautions,’’(Tuathail 1996). Feminist geopolitics might be viewed at once as a critical approach and a contingent set of political practices operating at multiple scales that include, but are not restricted to, the nation-state. The synthesis of critical geopolitics with feminist politics galvanizes this political engagement and strengthens the project of critically assessing dominant politico-geographic discourses. A feminist geopolitical imagination thus aims to remap realist geopolitics by interrogating scale as pre-given and discrete from other levels of analysis.

The volume edited by Nelson and Seager (2005) is a compilation of articles ranging from the politics of bodies, spaces and places, situating gender in varied contexts like work, city, body, environment and the state/nation. These form the basic literature of feminist geopolitics that help in a deeper and critical comprehension of this perspective and would aid in analysing the scenario of Women in Afghanistan, required for this research. Hyndman (2004) seeks to show that sites, scales, and spheres of activity cannot themselves be separated into political and non-political categories. The local, the domestic, and the private cannot be deemed “apolitical” and the national or international, the public sphere, and the world of paid work “political.” She questions the epistemological tradition leading to such categorizations, of distinguishing things using binaries or dualisms. The marginalization-and even exclusion-of gender and of feminist perspectives has yielded a field that is partial in the understandings and knowledges produced within it. In her work she outlines what specifically feminist geopolitics could entail, through a consideration of key concepts and issues. In so doing, the importance of situated knowledges that are derived from the lives and experiences of women in different social and geographic locations are revealed.

The main critique of feminist geopolitics, according to England (2003) concerns the preoccupation of mainstream political geographers with ‘big’ political issues: the power mechanisms of formal political institutions at the global or national level. England introduces the concepts of empowerment, citizenship, political embodiment and subjectivity, differencing and issues of scale. Citizenship is not defined primarily as a legal status, but in terms of inclusion, belonging, access to human rights and the struggles to get access. Empowerment of marginalized women

forms an important theme. Social movements demonstrate how women's political activism originates from the private sphere and how the public and the private are interconnected. The public-private debate is highly connected with issues of scale. The geographic construction of the political that locates politics within the global or national scale needs to be revisited according to the author and focus should be on the lower levels of scale of the local, the private home and the body as sites of oppression and resistance. The analysis of rape as a weapon in the Bosnian war in the papers by Mayer and by Gilmartin and Kofman (2004) illustrates in a depressing way how the different scale levels are interconnected. The Serbian army organized rape in systematic way, starting with rape within the private home, then in the public spaces of the local neighbourhood and ending with rape in camp brothels outside the region in order to destroy a nation. In her paper on feminist methods Sharp (2009) refers to the complex relationship between researcher and subject. Literature refers to differences in race, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, life course and ability. Nagar deals specifically with North-South differences in relation to (post)colonialism and development. Nagar (2006) reports on a complex example of differencing in the debate on the mut'a, a temporary marriage contract between Shi'ite South Asian men and Sunnite women in Tanzania.

Speaking of feminist geopolitics in another context, Smith (2001) calls for a rescaling of geopolitics, and outlines how women of the former [East] German Democratic Republic resisted western models of the gender division of labour, and agitated for child care provision after reunification. She illustrates how their particular combination of work and motherhood represent key parts of their femininity, a femininity that is quite distinct from their West German female counterparts. . Smith also invokes the concept of ''human security'' in relation to geopolitics, arguing for ''cross-scale interactions of state, nation, economy, polity, family and the embodied (gendered) subject.'' Human security potentially transposes security discourse to a finer scale at which smaller political constituencies and less powerful groups become visible and their freedom from fear a public matter of concern. The threat of sexual violence against women, for example, serves to restrict their mobility. In practice, however, human security and 'saving the women' may also be used as a rationale for international intervention into the affairs of sovereign states

not solely for the purpose of protecting people's fundamental human rights. It is with this approach that we delve into the theme of women and international aid.

1.1.2 International Aid

The multidisciplinary issue of international aid is experiencing explosive growth driven by several factors. This has spawned exhaustive research in an effort to improve the understanding and underlying reasons for international assistance. The reservoir of knowledge generated through aid research has been accumulated through decades of work in this field where Afghanistan stands out as one of the most prominent cases worth studying. This section reviews some of these works in contemporary literature, including gender-based aid.

The literature on foreign aid can be divided into two parts. One studies the effects of foreign aid on the receiving countries; the other investigates the determinants of foreign aid, namely which donor gives to which recipient and why. Dollar et al (2000) scrutinizes the pattern of allocation of foreign aid, trying to fathom the considerations that shape the flow of foreign aid. Through their detailed research they establish that the direction of aid is strongly dictated by political and strategic considerations. The economic needs, political preferences (like democracy) and policy performance of the receiver country is deeply linked with the donors' generosity. According to Dollar, there is historical evidence indicating that the colonial past is a major determinant of aid. The author goes on to analyze the difference in the behaviour of various donor countries. Hattori (2001) has criticised the way aid has been addressed by scholars in terms of security or development policy objectives. He attempts to reconceptualise foreign aid in a "larger systemic context of international relations", emphasizing the social relations involved in aid, its functions and effects. His argument centres on the representation of power politics and what it symbolises between the donor and recipient country. He concludes that the 'material dominance and subordination" in transformed into "gestures of generosity of gratitude." Abrams and Lewis (1992) give a contrasting viewpoint and through their findings based on the foreign aid offered by the United States affirm that humanitarian concerns play a vital role in the distribution of U.S. foreign aid. Their conclusions ascertain that the aid programme relates to the need of the recipient countries and rewards the nations for adhering to human rights initiatives. Further, it does not discriminate on racial or religious lines and responds to national security

interests of the U.S. The authors thus, refute the criticisms that foreign aid "fails to achieve its putative humanitarian and national-interest objectives" and insist that the "program's size and distribution of benefits seem impervious to change". These diverging perspectives make international aid and its underlying intentions an interesting object of research.

The politics of international aid is deftly addressed by Woods (2005). He claims that foreign aid has "moved up the global agenda". He analyses the reasons of the shifting politics of aid through time. The aftermath of the Asian Earthquake and other such catastrophes around the world, led to a call for developmental assistance, he says. 9/11 altered the backdrop of aid and the global security agenda shifted to the "War on Terror" in Afghanistan where extremists may instigate international terrorist activity. Soon after the invasion of Iraq, the focus shifted to the containment of Weapons of Mass Destruction and disarming countries that possessed them. After giving this background, the author is concerned with the goals of aid, the issue of money (the huge costs incurred may exhaust the aid budget) and the delivery of aid. In his article, he assesses these concerns of aid policies of the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Stockton (2002) discusses the international humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and the impending challenges in the context of war against terrorism. He believes that the "humanitarian principles clash with organizational considerations". Stockton assesses that instead of being neutral and impartial, the international agencies in Afghanistan "have successfully advocated for an outside monopoly over the provision of relief aid in spite of the insecurity and remoteness of much of the country." The author thus enlists evidences that prove the failure of the international community to provide timely and adequate aid in certain areas of Afghanistan and tries to interpret the causes of this state of affairs. Through the review of these and other such literature on international aid, Afghanistan emerges as an attractive area for further research on this theme.

Describing the role of international aid in Afghanistan, Goodhand (2002) takes a historical approach to assess the situation in this conflict-ridden land. He considers the "historical processes of state formation and a crisis in the identity and capacity of the state" as the reason of the ensuing Afghan crisis and identifies the nature of state-society relations as the core problem. After delineating the history of aid received by Afghanistan, he enquires into the role of contemporary aid. According to him, for rectifying the crisis, it is imperative to have a deeper understanding of the issues like

religion and ethnicity and the reasons for failure of previous governments. He is sceptical of the transition from Taliban Regime to nascent Afghan Administration and maintains that the main priority is to have peace in the region for which substantial aid would be necessary. He is doubtful whether the aid would 'materialise' and be used for 'winning the peace' or whether it would further aid violence in this war-torn region.

Of the several reasons that scholars cite for the donors to provide assistance to Afghanistan, one that has not been emphasized enough is the geopolitical and geostrategic aspect. Strandow et al (2010) have done some path-breaking work on geocoding foreign aid projects throughout the world. The authors have mapped the foreign aid projects and violent event locations and thus examined the correlation between aid and conflict zone. They perform a temporal analysis to understand how much aid provided to conflict countries is actually given to conflict area within them. Thus by disaggregating aid and conflict geographically they have revealed that that aid and conflict are often closely associated, clustering in time and space. Findley et al (2010) have done a similar research, following up on the earlier one, to enable an examination of project-level information in a wider variety of systematic research contexts. They have demonstrated the utility of the new data, discussed how geographically disaggregated foreign aid and armed conflict data are needed to capture the theoretical mechanisms in the aid-conflict literature. Their research provides an interesting new perspective and it is a crucial first step in georeferencing and comparing foreign aid projects to various localized development outcomes. These methods can be utilised in the research to discern the causal relationship between aid and conflict in Afghanistan. The Conference sponsored by National Intelligence Council (2002) analysed the regional geopolitical dynamics of Afghanistan in the post September 11 scenario. The Proceedings of the Conference affirmed that Afghanistan being so strategically located is a pivot for relations among regional actors that include Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, India and Pakistan. It assesses the strategic interests of these actors vis-a-vis each other and the United States. According to the panellists at the Conference, despite recognition of a key US role in combating regional terrorism and despite their own constraints, Russia, China, Iran and India are in many ways deeply ambivalent about the US presence in Central Asia. Many officials in Iran and China fear further encirclement by the United States, while Moscow has had to accept the humiliating reality that Russia is not capable of

maintaining stability in the former Soviet region. Participants of the conference generally agreed that U.S. actions and events in Afghanistan could play an important role in influencing the political dynamics in Iran and Pakistan. In contrast, developments in Afghanistan can affect the internal balance of power in Russia and China but will not have a decisive impact on the direction of either state. They construed that geography, poverty, high birth rates, disputed borders, and polities run by short-time, authoritarian, post-Communist leaders make Central Asia an ideal location for al-Qaida to re-establish itself. The Central Asian states have compelling reasons to pull the United States deeper into its commitment to the region. US engagement increases the value of Central Asian states as comrades in arms against terrorism and ensures that the United States does not simply use them and depart, leaving them to contend with the aftermath. Most participants emphasized that the situation in Afghanistan is still fluid, that much can change—including the nature and duration of the US presence—and that it may be premature to establish new, long-term strategic priorities. Participants argued, however, that despite considerable, deep, and enduring differences among the various ethnic groups, most Afghans prefer to be together as part of an Afghan state. Some participants argued that the states of Central Asia now have an opportunity to transform the area into a regional economic zone by establishing economic and transportation routes. Sustainable peace will require not just an end to fighting and a political agreement but a regional economic transformation that provides alternative forms of livelihood and promotes accountability. Considering the arguments put forth at the conference it can be established that an effective way to 'transform' Afghanistan from a war-economy to peace economy and to restructure the life of its neglected and impoverished population, foreign aid is essential. However, with the geopolitical dynamics of Afghanistan just described, it is plausible to consider that the international assistance can come in many hues.

As gathered from various sources, there are many countries that provide aid to Afghanistan, the majority of which is by the United States, followed by others like Japan, UK, Canada, Italy, Germany. These are some of the countries which donate a considerable amount in aid and others like Norway, Australia, Sweden contribute a small part in the overall aid. According to Graham (2002), the aspirations of all the countries are generally along the same lines- to help in reducing poverty and helping in economic development. In reality although some of the aid is humane, it is more of

political and military step taken by the donors to ensure a part in the already divided country. “Aid is most effective when it influences policy at the level of ideas: when reforms are endorsed by a critical mass within society and then implemented as sustainable policies”(Graham 2002:29). The author believes that this is the idea which is being gradually realised by the donors and taken into implementation. Among the several channels through which aid flows into Afghanistan, a sizable sum is directed towards ameliorating the condition of the Afghan women.

1.1.3 Afghan Women

Afghan women have borne the brunt of the violence and remain subjected to practices that reflect gender biases. While the international community still hopes to ‘liberate’ and ‘empower’ Afghan women in so-called post-conflict Afghanistan, gender programs are struggling to take ‘gender’ into account. Over the past years, Afghan women have been the subject of unprecedented levels of interest and international attention; most of it well intentioned, much of it ill-informed. In *Modernising Women* (1993), Moghadam has done an exhaustive study on the impact of social change in Afghanistan, Middle East and North Africa on the roles and status of women and the women’s responses to this change. The construction of gender is also dealt with during the periods of social and political change. The author attempts to “normalize” the Middle East by emphasizing the importance of structural determinants other than religion and portrays how women’s lives are shaped not just by “culture” but also by economic development, the state, class location and the world system. The book accentuates the policy implications and has a detailed chapter on Women in Afghanistan that has explained the subordinate position of women, resistance to female education and the inability of state to implement its programme due to the persistence of patriarchal social structures and the existence of a weak state, while highlighting the gender dimension of the long Afghan conflict. The author has further elaborated on Afghanistan in *Building Human Resources and Women’s Capabilities in Afghanistan: A Retrospect and Prospects* (1994). Here, she examines past and present efforts to extend literacy and education to Afghan women and girls in the context of an underdeveloped and patriarchal society still in conflict despite the end of a long civil war. The central argument is that aid programs should target the female population in building human resources. This is necessary not only to redress traditional gender bias and female disadvantage but because women’s education and

productive activities are key to both national development and women's capabilities. Consequently, "gender conditionality" may be an appropriate method to insure the integration of women's concerns in development assistance. In *Revolution, Religion and Gender Politics* (1999), the same author compares the trajectory of gender politics and religiopolitics in revolutionary Afghanistan and revolutionary Iran since the late 1970s, and draws attention to the gendered nature of political and cultural projects. Whereas the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan began as a secular regime that sought to extend women's rights, the Islamic Republic of Iran was a religious regime that worked to circumscribe women's roles. In the 1990s, the Islamic Republic of Iran became less rigid and more secular in its approach to social and economic issues while Afghanistan has become a captive of religious fanaticism. Women have increased their visibility and public participation in the Islamic Republic of Iran; in contrast, women have become all but invisible in Afghanistan. She explains the divergent and unintended outcomes in terms of tribal patriarchy and underdevelopment in Afghanistan versus Islamic modernism and socioeconomic development in Iran. In response to this, Maley in *Women and Public Policy in Afghanistan: A Comment* (1996) gives an account of the historical context within which policies must be devised. Memories of the terroristic means used by communist regimes during 1978-92 to impose "reforms" upon an unreceptive society remain a significant barrier to the expansion of women's opportunities. According to the author, it is counterproductive to abuse or threaten the new Afghan rulers and a carefully executed process of consultation with established power-holders is required if enlightened policies for Afghan women are to be implemented.

Women for Afghan Women (2002), an edited book by Mehta put forth a South Asian perspective that aims to shatter myths about Afghanistan through its compilation of essays. It charts the history of this land and its women and offers stories, testimonies and strategies of diverse Afghan women engaged in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Several of its essays are by Afghan women. The collection includes pieces by Quranic scholar Sanaa Nadim and feminist theologian Riffat Hassan that ascertain the fact that Islam undergirds the lives of most Afghan Women and the goal of Western intervention should not mean an imposition of alien values on them. The women must find their path according to their own spiritual and intellectual vision. The theme of Islam resonates through most of the literature available on Afghan women and hence requires a deeper understanding. *Gender,*

Politics and Islam (2002) is a miscellany of essays that demonstrates that the face of Islam is a complex composite- 'a heterogenous set of historically and contextually variable practices and beliefs shaped by region, ethnicity, sect and class' as well as by varying responses to local and transnational cultural and economic processes- all of which have diverse effects on the lives of Muslim women. It counters the assumption that Muslim or Middle Eastern women are incapable of agency. Some of the essays in this volume focus on Islamic Feminism or on fundamentalist responses to western hegemony and the failures of post-colonial nation-states. Through critique of the prevailing discourses of Orientalism, Islamism, nationalism, modernity and liberal feminism, the authors examine women's participation in religious, cultural and nationalist movements. The thematic concern of the collection on women's agency moves beyond analysis of Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim women as merely victims or dependents of government structures or as symbols of national or religious identity and towards understanding these women as agents of their own lives. This critical engagement with the lives of Muslim women expands the boundaries of global feminism by reconceptualising constructions of feminist agency and suggesting new possibilities for transnational feminist alliances. Some of the essays examine the controversy surrounding Islamic feminism and explore the potential for gender equality within an Islamic framework. Although Islam is often defined as major determinant in these women's lives, some essays like Vom Bruck's draws on Judith Butler's notion of gender identity as a performative act to investigate the bodily practices of some elite Muslim women in Yemen and thus asserts that feminity is achieved rather than given. The documentary *Women in Islam :Behind the Veil* (2006) has Yusuf Estes talking about his interpretation of the Quran and the status of women in Islam. He answers a range of questions relating to Muslim women and their customs including hijab, marriage et cetera and presents his interpretation of the Sharia.

Kandiyoti (2007) argues that gender issues are becoming politicised in novel and counterproductive ways in contexts where armed interventions usher in new blueprints for governance and 'democratisation'. Using illustrations from constitutional and electoral processes in Afghanistan and Iraq, she analyses how the nature of emerging political settlements in environments of high risk and insecurity may jeopardise stated international commitments to a women's rights agenda. The disjuncture between stated aims and observed outcomes becomes particularly acute in

contexts where security and the rule of law are severely compromised, where Islam becomes a stake in power struggles among contending factions and where ethnic/sectarian constituencies are locked in struggles of representation in defence of their collective rights. Most approaches to gender justice are premised on the existence of a viable apparatus of governance that may support or hinder women's rights and that may, ultimately, be held accountable to its citizenry.

Rostami-Povey (2007) intends to counter the often inaccurate and misleading impressions put about by the media and politicians in the West when they talk about Afghanistan and Afghan women in particular. She also poses a challenge to western feminists who do not try to understand women in Muslim majority societies and cultures, and who today do not take a stand against the misogynistic culture of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism that promotes western superiority and the imperial strategy of 'saving Afghan and Muslim women'. She discusses the current reactivation of Islamophobia, fear of Islam and depicts how Afghan women in the West alongside other practising Muslim women have been the victims of this contemporary racist discourse. She questions that with the world's eyes on Afghanistan and billions in aid pumped into the country, why are Afghan women still suffering. In the oversimplified world of Western media and politics, Afghan women are often portrayed as weak, oppressed, and in need of 'liberation.' They are seen as the victims of their own male-dominated culture. Rostami-Povey sets out to counter this view, attempting instead to present the world – in particular the international events that have enveloped Afghanistan – from the perspective of Afghan women. 'It is only by listening to Afghan women's voices,' she writes, 'that we can begin to understand their struggle for their identity, rights and recognition.' She concludes with the thought that the future of women's rights in Afghanistan does not just depend on challenging local male domination, but also on challenging imperial domination. The book thus centres on gender, agency and identity, and the extent to which men and women, through their engagement with violence, diasporic communities and with the invading forces, are agents for change. The author in *Gender, Agency and Identity, the Case of Afghan Women in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran* (2007) discusses how Afghan women, as diverse groups, exercised autonomy and agency in diaspora (Iran and Pakistan) and in Afghanistan under US-led invasion. Negotiations between social, political, economic, ethnic, cultural and gender spheres are a constant battle for Afghan women. They have invented different

ways of coping with life, under the most extreme forms of coercion, fear and high levels of uncertainties. In diaspora, despite marginalisation, they established women's voices and agency. Exile became an important factor to reshape their identity according to their diverse positions. The author draws the attention of the reader to the enormous influence of state policies (Afghanistan /US, Iran, Pakistan), as well as the impact of women's movement in Iran and the NGOs in Pakistan, on the lives of Afghan women and men in Afghanistan and diasporic communities. The author discusses Afghan women's struggles and their resistance to a hostile environment, either in diaspora or under invading forces. Critical theme running through the work is the issue of gender, agency and identity and the complex ways these discourses intersect with other discourses of class, ethnicity, religion and age. This critical theme is firmly grounded in the finding of the field research. Based on testimonies and life histories and in-depth interviews she argues that there are similarities between women's experiences under the Taliban and under the US-led invasion. In both periods women felt alienated and had to strategise their coping mechanisms. In both periods they resisted and struggled against diverse forms of dominations. This is important because, contrary to the popular view even in academic circles, Afghan women are portrayed as passive victims, waiting to be liberated by the west. She argues that state policies (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the US) have enormous influence on the lives of women. However, they had the support of the women's movement in Iran and the NGOs in Pakistan. The aim, therefore, is to contribute to the understanding of the processes by which many Afghan women, as diverse groups, exercised autonomy and agency even under alienating circumstances, discuss how diaspora and exile shaped their identity, a multiple identity which is made up of their past history and present circumstances and how in exile they struggled against and resisted the circumstances that barred their way and demonstrate how on their return to Afghanistan they tried to rebuild life and renegotiate gender roles according to their own culture, but faced enormous difficulties.

Sultan (2005) examines the effectiveness of the international community's commitment to women's rights. The study also provides an overview of women's initiatives and activities in Afghanistan, and examines the potential contributions of Afghan women to the struggle for peaceful and democratic change in their country. It makes the case that women have the potential to foster religious and political

moderation by providing social services and pioneering human rights education and reforms. Fulfilling that potential will depend upon the extent to which the international community encourages and supports it.

Fahmy (2004) content analyzes the depiction of Afghan women in AP (Associated Press) photographs during the Taliban regime and after the fall of the Taliban regime. Analysis is based on visual subordination, point of view, social distance, imaginary contact, behaviour and general portrayal. Findings suggest despite signs of visual subordination and framing stereotypes, women after the fall of the Taliban regime are portrayed as more involved, interactive, more socially intimate and symbolically equal to the viewer. Analysis shows AP photographs portray a more complex version of Afghan women's liberation. Women after the fall of the Taliban regime are depicted still wearing their burqas, reflecting the complexity of a social liberation movement in a traditional society. The methodology followed is interesting- Two data sets were collected from the AP data archive. A content analysis was done based on five variables: visual subordination, point of view, social distance, imaginary contact, behaviour and general portrayal. Chi-squares were conducted to test differences between the two sets of photographs on the five variables. Significant chi-squares would suggest that the women have been depicted differently between the two time-periods: during and after Taliban rule in Afghanistan. A *Report on Taliban's War on Women b*y Physicians for Human Rights (1998) reflects the extent to which the Taliban regime has threatened the human rights of Afghan women is unparalleled in recent history. Taliban policies of systematic discrimination against women seriously undermine the health and well-being of Afghan women. Such discrimination and the suffering it causes constitute an affront to the dignity and worth of Afghan women, and humanity as a whole. A piece of oral and visual literature documenting this is *Beneath the Veil* (2000) by Saira Shah that takes her through war-ravaged Afghanistan as she discovers how the Taliban regime has affected people's lives. In this covert trip, she explores the appalling conditions at the women's hospital and then travels to a region where resistance to Taliban is still strong. The documentary contains footage captured by RAWA's undercover photographers of public executions and flogging of Afghan women and men who are convicted of 'un-islamic' behaviour. It is a timely insight into a country which has become the focus of international military, political and media attention after September 11. Saira Shah presents a devastating portrait of a country veiled in sorrow. Another film that

captures the sentiments of the Afghans during the Taliban years is *Buddha Collapsed out of Shame* (2007) directed by Hana Makhmalbaf. Set in the Afghan town of Bamiyan, amid the rubble of the statues of Buddha blown up by the Taliban in 2001, the film follows the heartbreaking attempts of a six-year-old girl to take herself to school, which is not easily attained. Her allegorical travails, as she struggles first to find the money to buy a schoolbook, then to get past the barrier of boys "playing" Taliban in the desert – a game that includes putting a hood over the girl's head, threatening to stone her, and digging her grave – speaks volumes about the plight of women in her country.

Ciazza (2001) analyzes women's roles as victims, supporters, and opponents of violence, terrorism, and militarism and proposes policy recommendations from its findings. She outlines important links between economic development, violence, women's activism, and peace-building efforts. Economic instability, combined with patriarchal views of women's roles, breeds conditions that lead to violence against women and undermine their capacity to build peaceful societies. In turn, violence against women heightens economic instability—as a result it sows the seeds of other forms of violence committed worldwide by men. In reaction, women sometimes resort to violence themselves, although more often they become activists for peace. Understanding why and when women fight for peace—and including them in peace building efforts—is crucial to guaranteeing higher levels of peace and security throughout the world. Khan (2002) analyzes the experiences of Afghan women refugees in Pakistan in terms of the disintegration of their family, community, and state support structures due to the ongoing war. Privileging the voices and experiences of refugee women, the research on which this study is based allows Afghan women to be heard as powerful advocates for their own needs, and illuminates their complex survival strategies despite enormous adversity. It says that refugee women's perspectives, together with those of Afghan women activists outside the camps, should be included to shape refugee and reconstruction policy today.

Barakat and Wardell (2002) consider the recent debate surrounding the plight of Afghan women and ask whether Western-originated approaches that seek to target or 'single-out' women, in isolation from their wider social, cultural and family context, have more to do with international politics and the agendas of external agencies than they do with meeting the expressed needs of the majority of Afghan

women. The study identifies five important points to emerge from research conducted into the ways in which Afghan women describe themselves. Following a brief historical overview tracing the impact on women of tensions between traditionalists and modernisers within Afghan society, it considers each of these points in turn, including: distinctions between urban/rural and educated/ uneducated women; the different spheres of influence inhabited by women and men within Afghan culture; the impact on women of war, displacement, and refugee life; vulnerability and coping strategies; and the divergent perspectives of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' on Afghan life and culture. Finally, it offers a number of suggestions for ways in which agency interventions may work with Afghan women, by harnessing their capacities in ways that are consonant with their social, cultural and family context.

1.1.4 Afghanistan

An insight into Afghanistan is imperative for peering into the lives of Afghan women. Harpviken, Strand and Ask (2001) emphasize the role of the gender dimension in Afghan civil society. An argument here is that a unique opportunity for securing women larger influence risks being lost as gender issues now seem about to be moved from the centre stage into one among several cross-cutting issues. Within the Afghan context there is, moreover, a further range of limitations to freeing the positive resources of the various Afghan civil society organisations. Most prominent here is the lack of security, and the fact that elements within the current formal and informal Afghan leadership do not necessarily have an interest in promoting a strong Afghan civil society. Goodson (2001) depicts that the Taliban of Afghanistan have enacted extremely severe gender policies and justified them with the claim that the Shariah supports such measures as do the traditional customs of Afghanistan. Just a short list of their gender policies includes forbidding women to work outside of the home, requiring women to wear a head-to-toe covering when they venture out into public, forbidding girls from attending school, preventing women from going out in public unless accompanied by a close male family member, preventing women from wearing certain kinds of clothing or jewellery, applying harsh punishments for fornication and adultery, and using captured women from Afghanistan's internal war as slaves. Among the effects of these policies have been that Afghanistan's women suffer from the lowest life expectancy and literacy rates in Asia, the highest infant

mortality rate in Asia and substantially increased incidences of begging and prostitution than before the rise of the Taliban. Goodson enquires that despite their condemnation and rejection by the vast majority of the world community, why have the Taliban chosen this path on gender issues, which deviates so far from the 'straight path' of Islam, as well as from the norms of the international community of the 21st century; whether Afghanistan's women have resisted the Taliban's gender policies and, if so, how? Lieven (2009) says that if the West loses in Afghanistan and its region, the most important reason will be that the west are pursuing several different goals simultaneously, most of which are in contradiction to the others. Western governments need to choose between these goals, and co-ordinate a strategy in pursuit of the most desirable and achievable ones. The creation of a democratic Afghanistan needs to be recognised as a hopeless fantasy. In the meantime, something to be avoided at all costs is the further destabilisation of Pakistan, since Pakistan in the end constitutes a far greater potential threat to the region, the West and the world than does Afghanistan.

Riphenburg (2003) takes the country in the period following the declaration of war on terrorism, as an opportunity to undertake a case study to examine the gender dynamics of a major process of social change in South Asia. The rebuilding of the country would be incomplete without attention to gender and its interaction with class, state and the world system. She discusses whether the fall of the Taliban regime offers new opportunities for Afghan women and girls to gain their rightful position in society and become equal partners in peace building and the reconstruction of their country. Her study analyzes gender dynamics and social change in post-Taliban Afghanistan, the archetype of a weak state. As the rebuilding of Afghanistan begins, the role of women in the process remains a vital issue. Women's roles are structurally determined by the sex/gender system, state structure, and level and type of economic development. These factors serve as independent variables in this analysis, which examines their impact on a six-dimension framework of women's status developed by Janet Z. Giele: political expression, work and mobility, family, education, health and fertility, and cultural expression. The purpose of her study is to assess the impact of gender, the state and economic development on the status of women in Afghanistan.

Coleridge (1999) says that even before the war Afghanistan did not score high on indicators of social development. Now it occupies a spot almost at the bottom of the global league table. The primary factor affecting any attempt to do sustainable

development work in Afghanistan is the war. However, to many development professionals working for the United Nations and foreign non-governmental organisations, cultural factors also appear to present obstacles to development. These factors are a mixture of values that derive from culture, ethnicity, and religion, and tend to be lumped together as "cultural values". Development, as conceived here, is the sum of people's own aspirations, efforts, and learning towards bettering themselves materially, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.

Kreczko (2003) writes from the perspective of the leading donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and assesses the extent to which this Afghan experiment succeeded in increasing coherence on assistance policy issues, improving efficiency in assistance programmes and added synergy between assistance and peace efforts; He identifies factors that limited further achievements; suggests how the mechanisms could have been improved; and analyses whether the overall effort politicised humanitarian assistance.

1.1.5 Gender-focussed Aid in Afghanistan

Unfortunately not much literature is available on the women-focussed developmental aid in Afghanistan. However, a host of organizations working on this front corroborate the vast amount of funds that are routed for this purpose. RAWA (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan) is the oldest socio-political organisation of Afghan women struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in fundamentalism-blighted Afghanistan. During the Mujahidin civil war (1992–1996) and the rule of the Taliban (1996–2001), RAWA's resistance methods became increasingly covert. As part of their operations, RAWA members clandestinely photographed and videotaped the corporeal results of war such as physical injury to the body, poverty, lack of resources and the destruction of homes and communities. These images were used to discredit the legality and political legitimacy of violence and fundamentalism during the civil war and Taliban eras. Documentation was also used to politically mobilize support for RAWA's socio-political projects. Thus, political movements such as RAWA can be relevant for geopolitical analysis through an empirical study of RAWA through their documentations and literature. Similarly HAWCA (Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan) was established in January 1999 by a group of young Afghan women and men. HAWCA's establishment was motivated by the

despair and devastation suffered by Afghan women and children as victims of war and injustice in Afghanistan and as refugees in Pakistan. HAWCA encourages the active participation of Afghan women and youth in the reconstruction and development processes of their country, and works in partnership with institutions and organizations that focus on just development in Afghanistan. They have a vast array of donors ranging from Afghan Women's Empowerment Grant Program (U.S. Government Initiative), International Medical Corps, The Italian Coordination Support for Afghan Women, UN Women, Womankind Worldwide et cetera. Their reports and publications also provide relevant literature for this research.

Literature on aid to Afghanistan is also highly useful from which necessary information relevant to the research can be culled out. Tamang (2009) examines important issues concerning forced migration of Afghan refugees and how these issues are related to the politics of aid, gender, place, identity, power, and inequality. His paper argues that the experience of forced migration in conjunction with the challenges encountered by Afghan refugees in Pakistan refugee camps aid in reproducing social structures and shaping gender relations. In the process, many Afghan refugees are able to reaffirm self and group identity and belonging from multiple locations. The paper concludes with an analysis of the prospects and challenges of returning to Afghanistan. Slater and Bell (2002) raise certain questions regarding power, knowledge and geopolitics to engender a wider, conceptual, policy-oriented debate.

Atmar (2001) outlines the implications of international approaches to humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, focusing in particular on the period since the Taliban assumed power. He argues that international efforts to use conditionality on humanitarian assistance have proved ineffective in influencing the Taliban's policies, and have been implemented despite the negative impact on the welfare of the whole population. Efforts to adopt a principled approach to aid programming in this environment have also raised many ethical dilemmas which are likely to remain major challenges in that country and elsewhere.

Waldman (2008) assesses that the increasing insecurity and criminality is jeopardising progress in Afghanistan. With low government revenues, international assistance constitutes around 90% of all public expenditure in the country, thus how it is spent has an enormous impact on the lives of almost all Afghans and will determine the success of reconstruction and development. Given the links between development

and security, the effectiveness of aid also has a major impact on peace and stability in the country. Yet thus far aid has been insufficient and in many cases wasteful or ineffective. The author quotes certain important aid flow figures. Reconstruction assistance is a fraction of military spending. Since 2001 the United States has appropriated $127 billion for the war in Afghanistan and the US military is currently spending nearly $100 million a day in the country, some $36 billion a year. Yet the average volume of international aid provided by all donors since 2001 is woefully inadequate at just $7 million per day. One quarter of all aid to Afghanistan has been allocated to technical assistance which is intended to build government capacity. In the design or execution of projects, too often the promotion of the capabilities, status and rights of women is an afterthought or perfunctory consideration. Areas such as agriculture have been under-resourced due to a lack of prioritisation. There are significant disparities in the geographical distribution of aid. A number of major donors direct a disproportionate share of their funds to the southern provinces where the insurgency is strongest. Waldman thus provides useful information on the sectoral distribution on aid.

Howell and Lind (2009) trace the effects of the increasing securitisation of aid and development in Afghanistan after 9/11 on aid policy and civil society. The research argues that although aid has not been wholly subordinated to security objectives, security interests have been sufficient to shape the objectives, policies and practices of aid policy in Afghanistan in significant ways. Furthermore, it is argued that the securitisation of aid has not only nurtured a 'rentier' civil society, comprised of an assortment of donor-funded NGOs, but also promoted a particular model of state–civil relations that prioritises service delivery over the deliberative role of civil society. The article begins by outlining the key changes in aid policy in Afghanistan since 2001. It then explores the effects on existing civil society of external donors' attempts to manufacture a liberal civil society. Finally, the article examines the short-term impact of security policies and objectives on civil society in Afghanistan. The authors in another book *'Civil Society With Guns Is Not Civil Society': Aid, Security And Civil Society In Afghanistan* (2008) portray that US pursuit of its geopolitical interests through force and the soft touch of democracy and markets has accelerated and intensified the convergence of aid, security and foreign policy goals, operations and institutions. This intensified convergence of aid, security and foreign policies has also impinged upon donor approaches towards civil society. The new governance

agenda that emerged in the post-Cold War context assigned a key role to civil society, not only in playing a watchdog role in relation to government but also in acting as an alternative service-provider to the market and state. The 1990s was a golden era for civil society as donors strategized to strengthen and support the development of civil society for the ends of poverty reduction and democratisation. The launch of the War on Terror cast a shadow over this euphoria. The introduction of counter-terrorist legislation and practices has reshaped the political, legislative and regulatory environment within which civil society actors operate across the world.

Fielden (1998) seeks to explore the geopolitics of aid in the context of the provision and termination of international humanitarian and development assistance to Afghan refugees. The discussion then progresses to consider the geopolitical motivations behind the provision of assistance and the way the aid supplied became heavily politicized. Levels of aid are shown to have fallen dramatically in the post-Soviet era, and this downturn is linked to the geopolitical repercussions of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The policy reasonings behind the ending of assistance reflect these changed geopolitical priorities, and are considered from the perspectives of both NGO and donor institutions. The geopolitics of the ongoing proxy war is carefully considered and the ending of assistance to Afghan refugees is shown to be highly problematic in humanitarian terms. Finally, discussion considers the broader implications of the conclusions drawn from the Afghan context.

Abirafeh (2009) has provided insightful information and perspectives on the issue of gender and international aid in Afghanistan. She begins by giving an overview of the aftermath of conflict in Afghanistan and explains how aid intervention is represented and understood. She believes that these developmental interventions are political processes and hence gender-focussed aid should also be viewed through the comprehension of gender politics. Retracing the history of Afghan Women, she explains that evolutionary change was abandoned for revolutionary change, and believed that enforced modernity brought a conservative backlash. While prescribing aid solutions, she entails that aid for women is supply driven, without any contextualised understanding or consultations with Afghan women, led by “conflict experts” not “Afghanistan Experts”. There is high illiteracy, lack of available schools, security concerns, poverty, discrimination and gender inequality in customary practices. Afghan women have very low life expectancy and one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Their political participation is low and they are

still a minority in public life - marginalized in policy-making and decision-making. Displacement and urbanization brought a transition from agricultural economy that challenged daily survival. Women entered new fields to support their families – opium production being the most dangerous. More women entered into sex work. The author, after making a careful assessment of the situation of the women in Afghanistan discusses the "bourka"- a topic for discourse among feminists around the world. According to Abirafeh, Afghan women long for choice and the issue goes far beyond the fabric of the bourka; too much focus can push women into a position of defending their culture and it can become a symbol of resistance to 'tyrannical Western influences' against 'good Afghan women'. It also simplifies the complex situation of gendered identities and roles within Afghan culture. The author does not suggest that women do not have less access to power or control of resources in Afghan cultures but believes that it is too simplistic to suggest that once women remove their bourkas they are free and everything has been made right. On the issue of aid, Abirafeh quotes an Afghan woman "I have hope, but I have no faith". Although a lot of attention is given to women on paper, she is sceptical if it is helping women in real life. In conclusion, Abirafeh construes that the engagement of the aid apparatus in Afghanistan did not begin based on an analysis of real needs or a carefully planned process, but was a knee-jerk reaction following the events of 11 September 2001. In *Lessons from Gender-focussed International Aid in Post-Conflict Afghanistan* (2005), Abirafeh says that twenty-three years of conflict – Soviet occupation, civil war, the Taliban, and finally the US-led bombing campaign – have taken a toll on women in Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghan women have been the focus of much international attention and the cornerstone of the largest gender-focused aid intervention. Yet today, many people in Afghanistan believe that there is less funding for women and for gender programs than there were some years ago. The themes addressed in this study include the continued politicization of women's rights, neglect of men in gender programming, perceptions of 'gender' as a negative term and an external construct and lessons that have not been learned. According to Abirafeh in *Freedom is only won from the inside* (2007), Afghan women are fighting to reverse perceptions that they have no agency, that they are victims. Yet they are experiencing increased levels of violence, particularly domestic violence.

The intellectual structure of the geopolitics of gender-focussed international aid reveals the existence of several subfields of research such as conflict, foreign policies, regional studies, gender and political violence. These subfields reflect the influences of several social science disciplines such as political science, international studies, geopolitics and history. The relevance of geography, especially political geography is substantiated through the review of literature and gives impetus to explore the various issues that have emerged.

1.2 Structure of the Research

1.2.1 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

The review of available literature signifies that the economic aid to other countries is a feature of foreign policy in the international system. Although the donor governments usually state the promotion of economic development and humanitarian relief as the principal purpose, foreign aid has more often been used to promote the donor country's own economic and political interests in the recipient countries. Multilateral aid has increased over time, but it is still the bilateral aid programmes of the individual western countries that dominate international aid-giving. This trend is evident in several countries, one of the most prominent being Afghanistan, which justifies it being selected as a case study.

On the 1 May 2011, Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden was killed by United States Special Forces on a raid in Abbotabad, Pakistan. So came to an end the life of the worlds' most wanted man, nearly a full ten years since the events he planned or inspired, the 9-11 hijackings and the subsequent destruction of the twin towers. Yet the work of Bin Laden did more than dominate global affairs for much of the decade, it also greatly affected the pattern of aid. This can be seen in the aid profiles of many countries but in Afghanistan in particular. This is unsurprising given that the country was invaded by the US and allies as a direct result of those events in New York in September 2001. Back in 2000 Afghanistan was very low priority for official development assistance (ODA) and was ranked 73rd, receiving US$220 million and most of that money was for humanitarian aid (75%). This amount still guaranteed a top ten ranking in terms of volume of humanitarian assistance, however, with Afghanistan placed 5th (Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC). An examination of data on the top recipients of internal aid a decade apart reveals that the

countries in the top ten have changed. The latter rankings (2009) are dominated by countries that are arguably very much connected to the Global War on Terror. This includes Afghanistan. Also volumes of humanitarian assistance have increased significantly. The increase is particularly evident in Afghanistan in 2008 and 2009 where a UN appeal helped push up funding to close to US$800 and US$600 million respectively.

The most dramatic impact Afghanistan has had on aid flows over the decade can be seen in total ODA rather than the humanitarian subset. The release of 2009's aid figures reported to the OECD DAC confirms that Afghanistan remained the leading global recipient of aid in 2009 with an increase on USD 1.3 billion on 2008 (based on 2008 constant prices). Moreover, Afghanistan commands an increasing share of the total official aid (excluding debt relief) flowing to developing countries, rising from 1 per cent of the total aid from all donors in 2001 to 4.1% in 2008, and rising further to 4.9 % in 2009. The donor responsible for the largest share of this increase (63%) was the United States, which gave USD 836 million more in 2009 than in 2008. Other donors also significantly increased their aid to Afghanistan in 2009. A further 10% increase on the 2009. A further 10% of the 2009 increase came from an USD 139 million increase in aid from the World Bank and 5% of the increase from the Asian Development Fund (USD 62 million more than in 2008), 4% from Germany (USD 52 million and 4% from the United Kingdom (USD 49 million) (Global Humanitarian Assistance Afghanistan Report, 2010). Humanitarian aid rose sharply in 2008 to a historic peak of USD 870 million when food shortages and increased insecurity contributed to an increased elevation in human needs. Despite the USD 1.3 billion increase in total aid to Afghanistan, growth in humanitarian aid however has not been sustained and aid fell by USD 278 million to just USD592.5 in 2009.

The international aid flowing into Afghanistan is also channelled into assistance for Afghan women. There are several organizations that are working towards improving the condition of the women in Afghanistan like RAWA, HAWCA, that are supported by various international organizations and governments. This presents an exciting avenue for research into the causes and consequences of gender-focused aid in Afghanistan. The research proposes to enquire into this aspect of international aid to Afghanistan. The complex dynamics between gender politics, foreign aid and geostrategy need to be unravelled to permit an all-encompassing

approach that highlights that empowerment is not a top-down effort and exposes the geopolitical rationale of the aid received from different countries for this purpose.

1.2.2 Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Question

The research attempts to explore the following research questions in order to solve the research puzzle:

- What are the various agents through which international aid is channelled into the country for the women of Afghanistan?
- What are the shares of different countries in total aid given to Afghanistan? Do these reflect the geopolitical dynamics of the agents involved?
- What could be the possible motives behind the gender-focused international aid in the aftermath of conflict in Afghanistan? How far does women's "liberation" and "saving the women trope" to justify intervention?

Hypothesis

The research problem involves an inquiry into the complex interplay of power- politics , foreign aid, gender issues and geopolitical concerns in a conflict area like Afghanistan. Women and the aid provided for them are analyzed from a feminist geopolitical perspective, taking into account the political use of violence that focuses on the body and gender politics "from below" as part of a social morphology of counter-violent politics to resist, produce and reproduce political subjects as well as the rationale for foreign intervention through aid for women. Due to the exploratory nature of the research the hypotheses conforms to perceiving the status of Afghan women through a feminist geopolitical approach, assessing the distribution of donor countries and their geostrategic rationale for aid intervention in the sphere of women-oriented financial assistance.

1.2.3 Objectives

The study attempts to explore the following objectives:

- To examine the aid flowing into Afghanistan, spatially and temporally- and investigate the geopolitical dynamics of the actors involved.

- To analyze the disaggregated data for aid channelled into different sectors for diverse purposes, with a special focus on humanitarian assistance and aid for women.
- To present a feminist geopolitics critique of the women of Afghanistan and perception of gender-focused international aid.

1.3 Sources and Methodology

1.3.1 Sources

Content analysis of relevant literature and critical survey of contemporary foreign aid research has been done. The study also draws from government statements and reports of various international organisations and non-governmental organisations providing aid to women operating in Afghanistan during the last decade. These include Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), Afghan Women's Mission, Humanitarian Assistance to the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA). Oral literature in the form of documentaries and films has also been used along with articles and excerpts from the Newspapers such as *Guardian* and *The Hindu.*

Empirical data on the amount of aid provided by different countries to Afghanistan and for what purpose can be culled out from various sources. **Global Humanitarian Assistance** in its annual reports presents the latest data on financial flows to humanitarian crises. Within the main report chapters on the provenance, destination and journey of humanitarian funding, the forces which shape humanitarian assistance, and looking beyond humanitarian assistance to put it in the context of other resource flows, reveal the complexity of humanitarian response. It analyses the changing patterns in donor development and humanitarian financing, focusing specifically on the key players and the changing trends in delivery and recipient allocation. It attempts to go beyond the numbers by providing some context to the data to try and understand why these government donors allocate humanitarian aid in the way that they do and the influencing factors. Finally, it looks at the various levels of donor reporting and the transparency of the aid information available. Data for amount and trend of foreign aid to Afghanistan is available from **United Nations Development Program in Afghanistan. UNICEF and UN WOMEN** also provide data on the allocation of international aid for particular purposes in Afghanistan. Data

is also gathered from **ActionAid, AfganAid, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Amnesty International, Center for American Progress**- 'U.S Aid to Afghanistan by the Numbers', **Central Statistical Organization of Afghanistan; CIA World Factbook and The World Bank.**

A vital source for aid related data for this research is the **Development Initiatives based on OECD- DAC (Development Assistance Committee)** and the **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Financial Tracking System (FTS) Data**. **PLAID** – Project level aid database, that has now become **AidData** is a portal for information on development finance. It contains records of over 900,000 international development projects financed by bilateral and multilateral donors from 1950-2010. PLAID, along with **CRS- Creditor Reporting System** (aid activity database of DAC that contains statistics on individual aid activities) has provided relevant data for the purpose of this research.

1.3.2 Methodology

For the purpose of this research a multi-pronged methodology is required. This is done on various levels- media and policy discourses, perspectives of policy makers and policy implementers are taken into account, as well as the experiences of the Afghan women and feedback of the Afghanistan specialists. This is attempted in the research for attaining a comprehensive perspective of the situation.

Several variables are examined- the amount of aid, the allocation for specific purpose like aid directed for women, sectoral and geographical distribution of aid, and the donor countries and agencies from which they are channelled into Afghanistan. These are analysed on a temporal as well as spatial scale and the relationship between donors and direction of aid flow is discerned.

Statistical tools like the bar graph, pie chart are employed to portray the temporal trends in the amount of aid received by Afghanistan across space. Cartographic techniques are used to represent the patterns that transpire with the processing and analysis of data. Maps prepared in a GIS environment help locate and identify the spatial networks of aid flow.

1.4 Organization of the Study

After the first chapter which initiated the study, the second chapter on feminist geopolitics perspective discusses the meaning of the approach and how it is used to problematize the women in Afghanistan. The feminist geopolitics analytic examines mobility in terms of access and accountability and explores how the lives of Afghan women can be studied through its lens. This theme is carried forward in chapter three that delves deeper into the subject of research- the women of Afghanistan. A feminist geopolitical analytic is applied to identify geographically and historically the condition of women in Afghanistan that promotes international aid intervention and reconstructs geopolitics as we know them. Chapter four on International Aid conforms to describing the meaning and perspectives of international aid, elaborating on humanitarian and gender-focussed aid in Afghanistan. The data for aid flow from various countries and agencies is assessed and the spatial patterns of the donors analysed to present a geostrategic rationale. A feminist geopolitical critique entailing the perception of Afghan women to international aid is also presented. Chapter five concludes the discussion.

Chapter Two
A Feminist Geopolitical Perspective

Political Geography, for long, has been plagued with the problem of dichotomies- the public-private sphere, the political- non political, domestic-local, national-international. It is thought of as being concerned with territory and territoriality, exploring how power is exercised in and through spaces, and how spaces (and their boundaries) are defined, defended, and contested (Gallaher et al, 2009). Similarly, it seems fair to claim that most often the scale of analysis for political geographers is the state, region, globe, and, to some extent, locality. Finer scales get far less attention (Kitchin and Thrift, 2009).This chapter attempts to highlight the significance of gender in the making of political geographies, and chooses to emphasize the different understandings of "the political" that underlie theory and research and what these mean for a feminist political geography. The intersections and conversations between feminist geography and political geography have been surprisingly few. Lately studies have aimed to bridge scholarship in feminist and political geography by creating a theoretical and political space in which political geography becomes a more gendered and racialized project, one that is epistemologically situated and embodied in its conception of security. For a better understanding of this approach, it is imperative to have a brief overview of the related themes of feminism, feminist political geography, feminist geopolitics and the gender perspective.

2.1 Feminism

A common perception about feminism is that it is about equal rights for women. However it is more complicated than that- feminism isn't just about equal rights, it is a critical project and it looks at all aspects of life to identify those elements that might be oppressive and suggests alternatives. Feminism is a broad, complex, contested term that comprises both an intellectual and a political project that seeks to identify, understand, and dismantle inequalities between men and women (Tong, 1998). Feminist methodology takes the lives of women as central. A feminist reading, as a critical project, would look especially at what is being said about women: what social roles are they expected to take, what are their liberties or privileges in relation to men,

and similar sorts of inquiries. Feminism, in other words, follows the critical project with action to bring about social change (Scholz, 2010).

Many feminists now critique discourses concerning the singularity of knowledge and truth and note the partiality of projects that treat 'women' as an already constituted, homogeneous group or that treat 'gender' as a stable, social category (Millet, 1970). The philosophical, political, and theoretical diversity that now characterizes feminist thought makes it difficult to generalize its key aspirations and achievements and it is now more accurate to talk about 'feminisms' in the plural. Nevertheless, through their strong ethical, political, and utopian impulses, feminists have sought to highlight and resist the systematic production of social difference around gender and challenge the persistence of inequalities between men and women (Lorber (2005).

Over the past few years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of feminism within geographical enquiry, a recognition which has given rise to a significant increase in literature and research output.

2.2 Feminist Geography

Feminist Geography is a part of human geography inspired by feminist scholarship and focused on representing adequately women's worlds and transforming research practice in accordance with principles of feminist scholarship (Kitchin and Thrift, 2009). Feminist geography is a relatively recent discourse in human geography. Emerging from the Women's Liberation Movement and feminist academic interventions in the 1960s and 1970s, Feminist Geography has involved a critique of geography – as a discipline with particular bodies of knowledge and set of research, field, institutional, and teaching practices – as well as its reconceptualization (Rose, 1993). Not only have key geographical concepts been rethought – such as class, work, mobility, migration, development, and even space itself – but feminist geographers have developed whole new subject areas – such as the home, the body, and sexuality in space – and modes of working within the discipline that are reflexive, collaborative, cross disciplinary, and situated. While varying across time and space, feminist geographers are united in their concern for the importance of gender in the constitution of space and social relations, in their indebtedness to feminist theorizing, and their commitment to understanding and ameliorating the inequitable place of women (Rose et al, 1997). Current debates cohere around transnationalism, economic

inequality, and multiple axes of difference and identity. Feminist geographers approach these and other issues in uniquely critical, synthetic, and progressive ways that see gender as a fundamental analytical and organizing socio-spatial category.

The nature of feminist geography has shifted dramatically over time, a reflection of changes in feminist theorizing and politics, as well as of changes in the discipline of geography. Jo Little and Ruth Panelli (2003) delimited three phases in feminist geography:

1. **1970s–1980s**: politically motivated work that was informed by women's studies and focused on gender relations in areas, especially women's subordination compared to men, and a politics that aimed for greater equality;
2. **Late 1980s to 1990s**: concepts focused on feminist theories and gender relations in areas which valorised women, such that equality was replaced by a focus on and celebration of gender difference; and
3. **1990s onward**: work focused on theories and concepts within gender studies which looked at masculinities, femininities, that is, multiple identities with an emphasis on difference, diversity, and change along with studies of the social construction and representation of the categories studied. Such latter work is well represented by Jo Little's 2002 *Gender and Rural Geography: Identity, Sexuality and Power in the Countryside.*

As a discourse, feminist geography has always been highly political and engaged, though this has lessened with the cultural and textual turn. This potential disengagement of feminist geography constitutes one of a number of current issues. The development of feminist theory cannot be divorced from its political context. The intersections and conversations between feminist geography and political geography, however, have been surprisingly few.

2.3 Feminist Political Geography

Political geography was during a long time a male dominated domain within geography. Feminist geography developed first in urban geography and development studies. More recent is the feminist critique on the neglect of gender from political geographical analysis and the tendency to define political geography in such a way that gender seems to be irrelevant (Gallaher et al, 2009). There is a widening gap between the growing richness of feminist political geographical theoretical and empirical work and the silence on gender issues in mainstream political geography.

Feminist geography has always been far more than a discursive intervention, but integral to it has been a progressive and active politics of institutional change. From the earliest head counts of women in the discipline, there were organized as well as informal efforts to alter universities, geographical curriculum, and the operation of the profession. In addition, feminist geographers have been active in designing better and safer public spaces, lobbying for gender sensitive and better services for women – especially transport and also child care and health services (Rose et al, 1997). Feminist political geographers have conceptualized the political in three overlapping approaches that involve the political as distribution, the political as antagonism, and the political as constitutive. Gender relations are important in understanding distributional issues and antagonistic politics, but they have been underrepresented in political geography.

The introduction of critical social theories, postmodernist ideas, and critical geopolitics into political geography was part of an increased attention to the constitutive. With this acceptance came a broader range of theoretical perspectives that were seen as relevant to politics, including theories of cultural and identity politics. The incorporation of these theories was part of a cultural turn in which feminists also participated. In addition, these theories pointed to new sites or arenas of politics that moved outside the state and formal institutions, thereby changing the ways in which politics could be conceptualized and spatialized (Dalby, 1994). Similarly, new social movements theory pointed to the ways that agents outside the state turned away from formal politics to eschew change in culture and society, thus promoting the democratization of civil society and an expansion of citizenship in substantive and formal senses (Dowler, 2001).

Feminist political geographers challenge the 'masculinism' of political geography by reworking its basic concepts and the practices involved in knowledge creation (Dowler and Sharp, 2001). The reworking of concepts includes core ideas related to the constitution of the political, such as power, citizenship, and difference. In so doing, feminists and other critical social theorists often invoke geographies or locations for politics that have not been the traditional focus of the sub-discipline (Dear, 1999). But it has not been enough to simply reconstruct political concepts and locations; feminist political geography has challenged the very processes of knowledge construction within the field. In particular, it has attempted to democratize knowledge production through recognition of the importance of situated knowledge

and through critical engagement between scholarship and the world in which we live and work (Raju and Lahiri-Dutt, 2011).

Reworking the very concept of the political has been at the centre of creating feminist political geographies by considering the ways in which political relationships are shaped by and resisted through gender roles and relations in a variety of settings (Staeheli, 2001). The political is not just relevant to elections, the state, and international conflict writ large; it is seen in the ways in which women mobilize at the grass roots, in the ways an ethic of care is brought into political discourse, in the ways masculinity and femininity are invoked in ideas of nation and in international conflicts (Taylor, 2000). What is important is that reworking the political involves a commitment to social change. The political is a contested concept within feminism. The political is not tethered to particular sites or institutions as much as it is a struggle for inclusion in a wide range of settings, acts, perspectives, and embodied experience. But the political is not just about differences either- between people or between perspectives; it is also about the webs of power and social relationships that are the basis of connections. One of the goals of feminist political geography, then, is to disrupt the seemingly coherent and perhaps closed project of the sub-discipline. Its definition of the political, thus, is one that implies a radical openness to new voices, perspectives, relationships, and strategies (Staeheli, 2001).

The main critique of feminist political geography concerns the preoccupation of mainstream political geographers with 'big' political issues: the power mechanisms of formal political institutions at the global or national level. The geographic construction of the political that locates politics within the global or national scale needs to be revisited. Most feminist geographers focus on the lower levels of scale of the local, the private home and the body as sites of oppression and resistance (Dowler and Sharp, 2001). They emphasize the importance of differencing. Feminists are sensitive with respect to differences between groups and the processes that give power to some groups and marginalize other.

The focus of feminist political geography is to develop further the ''political'' within feminist geography, and also to establish common terrain between elements of feminist and political geography and generate grounds for applying feminist geopolitics as an analytical approach.

2.4 Feminist Geopolitics

Feminist geographers' forays into geopolitics and international relations within political geography have been relatively rare compared to their presence and influence in social, cultural, and economic geography. Likewise, only a few political geographers concerned with IR and geopolitics have engaged with scholarship in feminist geography (Tuathail,1996). In an attempt to traverse this gap, the notion of a feminist geopolitics is elaborated in this section. Building upon scholarship in critical geopolitics, feminist international relations, and transnational feminist studies, a theoretical framework for feminist geopolitics is sketched here. Feminist geopolitics represents more accountable and embodied political responses to international relations at multiple scales. Its application to pressing issues of security and mobility is also illustrated.

The significance of geopolitics as a form of thought and practice in the acquisition and peopling of imperial settlements and knowledge of the world needs to be examined, as also the exclusion of women from active participation in this pursuit, along with the relevance of gender issues for imperialism and geopolitics. Women's exclusion and later sequestration within a textual and metaphorical landscape continue today.

The notion of a feminist geopolitics remains undeveloped in geography (Dear, 1999). Feminist geopolitics is not an alternative theory of geopolitics, nor the ushering in of a new spatial order, but is an approach to global issues with feminist politics in mind (Kofman, 2004). 'Feminist' in this context refers to analyses and political interventions that address the unequal and often violent relationships among people based on real or perceived differences. Building upon the literature from critical geopolitics, feminist international relations, and transnational feminist studies, a framework is developed for feminist political engagement. It interrogates concepts of human security and juxtaposes them with state security, arguing for a more accountable, embodied, and responsive notion of geopolitics. A feminist geopolitics is sought by examining politics at scales other than that of the nation-state; by challenging the public/private divide at a global scale; and by analyzing the politics of mobility for perpetrators of crimes against humanity (Kofman and Peake, 2004). As such, feminist geopolitics is a critical approach and a contingent set of political practices operating at scales finer and coarser than the nation-state. 'Feminist geopolitics' offers a critical framework for analyzing the events. This grid of

intelligibility seeks to provide a more accountable, embodied understanding of intersections of power and space at multiple scales. It challenges the logic of either/or reasoning. Critical and feminist geopolitics are crucial if we are to go beyond the binaries and establish a third space of 'neither/nor' (Kofman, 2004).

Finally, to generate a more accountable and embodied political vision, feminist geopolitics is employed in relation to body counts at two distinct geographical and geopolitical sites. For the purpose of this section, ‘feminist’ is defined as analyses and political interventions that address the inequitable and violent relationships of power among people and places based on real or perceived differences. While gender remains a central concern of feminist politics and thought, its primacy over other social, political, and economic locations is not fixed across time and place. Feminist geopolitics attempts to develop a politics of security at multiple scales, including that of the (civilian) body (Nelson and Seager, 2005). It decentres state security, the conventional subject of geopolitics, and contests the militarization of states and societies with a 'world system' perspective. It seeks embodied ways of seeing and material notions of protection for people on the ground.

Within geography, Kofman (2004) imagines a feminist geopolitics as one which would incorporate feminist analyses and gender into an extant set of geopolitical practices.

> “The most successful incorporation of feminist insights and gender issues into geopolitics would dismantle and democratize geopolitics such that it no longer involved the personnel of statecraft located with the most repressive echelons of the state. Real groups would then begin to figure in the landscapes and maps of the global economy and power relations. Geopolitics would open out into a broader context which we could call global political geography, in which comparative analyses and the local, however that is defined, would also be included” (Kofman, 2004).

Kofman's description of feminist geopolitics is uniquely situated within both political and feminist geography. It aspires to a less punitive version of the state-centric realist geopolitics. It also tacitly identifies a gap in the geographical literature: that the scale at which security is generally conceptualized precludes collective concerns, civil groups, and individual protection. A feminist geopolitics might be viewed at once as a critical approach and a contingent set of political practices operating at multiple scales that include, but are not restricted to, the nation-state. Critical geopolitics here is ‘‘broadly understood as the critical and poststructuralist intellectual practices of unravelling and deconstructing geographical and related

disguises, dissimulations, and rationalizations of power cautions,''. The synthesis of critical geopolitics with feminist politics galvanizes this political engagement and strengthens the project of critically assessing dominant politico-geographic discourses.

Feminist geopolitics does not attempt to introduce new strategic perspectives for mapping war, rather it attempts to challenge the binary between those perspectives already entrenched, and ultimately dismantle it (Hyndman, 2004). Feminist geopolitics allows for "new ways of seeing, theorizing, and practicing the connections between space and politics and between nature and culture" (Hyndman, 2004). By redefining scales to employ analyses both finer and coarser than that of the nation-state and global economy, different epistemologies are produced and subjects analyzed. By employing the body as both the subject and object of geopolitics, a different scale and measure of ''security'' is forged. Critical analysis of mobility at multiple scales opens up a space for developing common ground between feminist geopolitics and political geography. Redefining scale changes the geometry of social and political power.

Within geography,

> ''[c]ritical geopolitics is one of many cultures of resistance to Geography as imperial truth, state-capitalized knowledge, and military weapon. It is a small part of a much larger rainbow struggle to decolonize our inherited geographical imagination so that other geographies and other worlds might be possible'' (O ´ Tuathail, 1996: 256).

This aspiration to create other possible worlds overlaps with the project of feminist geopolitics. The value of critical geopolitics is more questionable if it provides few clues for ''seeing'' in other ways. A feminist geopolitical imagination aims to remap realist geopolitics by interrogating scale as pre-given and discrete from other levels of analysis (Nelson and Seager, 2005). The invocation of scale is critical in structuring political action yet it is historically produced, variegated, and contested. Scale entails more than deconstructing dominant geopolitical narratives; it involves engaging relationally with processes that are made powerful by the existence of borders, or that appear to exist beyond borders. International borders can serve to naturalize difference, refuse political alliances, and obscure commonalities between discrete spaces and linked oppression. Studying mobility across such borders represents one tool for problematizing scale and foregrounding power relations that

include, but exceed, the borders of nation-states (nelson and Seager, 2005). The analytical and political valence of deploying feminist geopolitics in relation to mobility, violence, and security needs to be explored. By analyzing state power at a multiplicity of scales and focusing on embodied epistemologies and subjects, geographers can begin to forge a bridge between political and feminist geography. Critical geopolitics is a useful departure point and antecedent to a feminist geopolitical imaginary; it is necessary but insufficient. Where critical geopolitics proves weakest, feminist geography galvanizes its radical political aims. Critical geopolitics exposes and interrogates the power relations embedded in dominant geopolitical narratives, but it largely fails to articulate other, more embodied ways of seeing. Without a feminist sensibility, critical geopoliticians are left with well-interrogated categories and a politicized approach to analysis, but no clear way forward in terms of political practice.

A feminist geopolitical analytic not only dismantles the dominant discourse of geopolitics but subverts, shifts, and animates the geographically specific narratives of particular groups. Just as critical geopolitics should not be understood as a general theory of geopolitics or an authoritative intellectual negation of it, neither is feminist geopolitics about ushering in a new order of space. Developing a feminist geopolitical analytic is an important step towards reordering the conventions of security.

In closing, a feminist geopolitics does not promote a new theory of geopolitics. It does not usher in a new order of space, nor advocate an alternative universal standard of practice. Rather, it embodies an approach that advocates a finer scale of 'security' accountable to people, as individuals and groups, and analyzes the spaces of violence that traverse public/private distinctions (England, 2003). A feminist geopolitical approach examines mobility in terms of access and accountability. It does not aim to endorse a single set of judicial practices or institutions, nor even a punitive approach to justice, but does underscore a quest to improve the security of people at the finest scale by strengthening the institutions of civil society in situ. By asking- 'security for whom?' a feminist geopolitical analytic identifies the geographically and historically contingent practices which promote the security of persons, and reconstructs geopolitics as we know them.

2.5 Body Politics

The body is the touchstone of feminist theory. Within contemporary feminist theory "the body" does not have a single location or scale, rather it is a concept that disrupts naturalized dichotomies and embraces a multiplicity of material and symbolic sites, ones located at the interstices of power exercised under various guises (Nelson and Seager, 2005). Feminist geography, anchored in the body, moves across scale, linking the personal and quotidian to urban cultural landscapes, deforestation, ethno-nationalist struggles and global political economies (Gilmartin and Kofman, 2004). The surfacing of the body as a vital subject of analysis brought with it intense engagement with an ongoing feminist dilemma about the core source of sex and gender identities; this time it manifested as a debate between biological and social constructionist conceptualizations of the body (Shilling, 1993).To overcome the dichotomous approach to understanding the body by distinguishing theories that address bodily order and bodily control, an alternative- a theory that addresses *real* bodies, is preferred- bodies that are at one time both biological and social. The exploration of body as a new site for geographic inquiry by reviewing recent research about gendered landscapes of violence and fear. Bodies are conundrums, paradoxes, riddles that are impossible to solve (Longhurst, 2005). They are deeply embedded in psychoanalytic, symbolic and social processes, yet at the same time they are biological, material and *real*. Bodies are an effect of discourse but they are also foundational. They are referential and material, natural and cultural, universal and unique (Nast and Pile, 1998). Everyone has a body, is a body, but bodies are differentiated through age, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, gender, size, health and so on. Bodies exist in places, at the same time, they are places. Perhaps the paradoxical nature of body has resulted in the recent explosion of work on bodies in social sciences and humanities. Feminist geographers have been especially influential in pushing bodies to the forefront of theoretical and empirical agendas. Following de Beauvoir, many feminists tended to see women as prisoners of their bodies and to view bodies as problematic and something to be transcended. Some feminists denied the relevance of women's bodily "difference" (women's bodies were constructed as 'different' while men's bodies were constructed as norm), while some celebrated it, arguing that women's bodies are powerful sites of reproduction, nurturance and female sexuality. Feminists have also challenged the binary division between body and mind. The body has become a preoccupation in geographic literature. Due to the

centrality of bodies to understanding gender and space relations, it is likely that they will remain at the top of many feminist geographers' agendas for some time to come.

Given the fascination with the body and embodiment in geography and social sciences, it is not surprising that a political geography of the body is emerging around the political connections between the body, power and spaces (Kofman, 2005). Influenced by Foucault's writings the body can be seen as a political field, the object and target of power and manipulation. Thus, bodies are the site of oppression and resistance to both the individual and the collectivity. They are being used strategically to assert power over, control and weaken camps in times of conflict.

The political constructions of scale and body-politics addressed in the study of feminist political geography include: surveillance and documentation, public representations of this documentation through media and Internet technologies, and the political use of private (and seemingly apolitical) spaces as key sites for developing war victims into political subjects (Nelson and Seager, 2005). This study also responds to feminist political geographers' call for scalar analyses of political geography, which include local politics as part of rather than separate from geopolitical analyses.

The political use of violence discussed here focuses on the body and gender politics ''from below'' as part of a social morphology of counter-violent politics to resist, produce and reproduce political subjects (Sharp 2009). Political resistance and epistemologies of violence as discussed in this study draw upon the theoretical concept of ''situated knowledges'' as discussed by feminist political geographers. Situated knowledge recognizes perspective and position as significant factors in determining knowledge claims. Examining disparate political situations and motivations provide alternative understandings and experiences of place and politics (Rose, 1997; Staeheli & Kofman, 2004). For feminist geographers, situated knowledge includes corporeal and lived experiences of place and space, which are integral for reworking theoretical concepts of nation and nationalism, territoriality, and globalization.

As argued by feminist scholars, the burqa's symbolism of women's oppression, effectively garnered U.S. and international support for the local victims of ''terrorism'' in Afghanistan, namely women. The violence and suffering of Afghan women under the Taliban provided the visual empathy necessary for enacting the ''saving women'' trope to further legitimize the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of

Afghanistan (Nagar, 2006). This enacted a politics of violence from above by way of bombing and discursively invoking the saving women trope. Informal politics, resistance, and the situated knowledge of violence exemplified by local geographies were politically scaled from the site of the body to the international in order to reach beyond the control of the state. As argued by feminist political geographers, political movements such as RAWA are indeed relevant for geopolitical analysis because they operate outside the macro and formal political spaces and scales of geopolitics. Critical scholarship on political violence should include examinations of gender and the geopolitics of violence from below (Fluri, 2009). It is within these informal places and sites below macro-scale political frameworks that require additional and further study in order to increase a nuanced understanding of the spatial, social and far reaching impacts of and resistance to local, state, and inter-state conflict.

Feminist geopolitics has become increasingly accountable to the security of women's bodies through new codification in the rules of war and their adjudication in the international legal system. ''To rape women with impunity and to mark their bodies with the symbols of the other side is to assert domination and to symbolically assault ethnic identity in its most protected space'' (Smith, 2001). People's bodies are construed as territory or property. They become public sites of violence on which constructions of the nation and its boundaries take place, and are therefore, of central concern to feminist political geography. It prescribes no single political program or philosophical treatise. Rather, it aims to expose the pitfalls of dominant geopolitical discourse in concert with critical geopolitics. Feminist geopolitics is accountable to the care of bodies, shifts scales to include the security of state but in relation to the security and well-being of people who live in and across its borders. From the disembodied space of neo-realist geopolitics, and critical geopolitics, to the historically and geographically situated condition of peripheral subjects, a feminist geopolitics promulgates a multi-scalar approach to analyzing power relations. While the state remains an important subject of study in relation to security, it obscures issues of protection and freedom from violence at other scales, beyond the purview of the state. According to feminist IR and critical geopolitics, security is not principally about states (Smith, 2001; Sharp, 2009). Rather it is a contentious process that is at once elusive and partial.

2.6 Relevance of Feminist Geopolitics Approach in Studying Afghan Women

Afghan women have struggled and negotiated the various fluctuations in their social status throughout history, using long-established mechanisms to achieve gains on their own terms. An Afghan feminism—perhaps not labelled as such—has a long history in Afghanistan (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Afghan feminism seeks firstly to distance itself from a Western feminist model (Moghadam, 1993;1994). Although the underlying principles are the same, a link to Western feminism could appear to be a cooptation by the aid-occupation, thereby undermining Afghan women's long struggle. Furthermore, Afghan feminists challenge dual oppressions: imperialism and patriarchy (Rostami-Povey, 2007). In such cases, the feminist struggle is often superseded by the national struggle. Afghan women have always been exercising agency—despite the aid apparatus' inability to recognize it as such (Rostami-Povey 2007).

Women's status as keepers of family honour and identity becomes increasingly magnified—and purdah (restrictions on contact between men and women) more strictly enforced—when men lack economic and social autonomy, fundamental to their understanding of masculinity (Abirafeh, 2009). The aid apparatus tended to view the reinforcement of purdah as a manifestation of Islamic intolerance. It more likely signified as an attempt to preserve the family—and its dignity—in the context of rapid change beyond men's control. The idea of honour is deeply embedded in Afghanistan.

> "The primary scarce resources remain land, water, livestock, and—in a very real, but obviously different, sense—women. All four are vital, easily lost, and endlessly trouble-some.... It is women, however, who are widely considered the most volatile cause for serious dispute.... With their sexuality generally considered unmanageable, women are secluded as much as possible from all but the narrowest circle of family males." (Abirafeh, 2009)

Here they serve as the primal embodiments of masculine honour. A man may suffer the loss of material property and still keep the core of his self-respect intact. Mere suspicion, on the other hand, of illicit access to his women requires an overt response: immediate and extreme. Namoos, pride, refers to the chastity of women, and implies the duty of men to protect and respect women. The term also refers to men's pride in safeguarding women's chastity. The women explained that they run risks of losing their chastity, or the perception that they have lost their chastity, with greater public exposure and the assuming of traditionally male roles. In Afghanistan,

the worst insult for an Afghan man is to call his women binamoos, without chastity (Mehta, 2002).

Gender segregation is a key part of this communal setting. Women socialize with women and men socialize with men. It is also a part of the family and community code of honour which advocates the cultural practice of masculine protection of women. Gender segregation is in the context of the institution of mahram which places relationships between the sexes in two categories: mahram relationships, which are formed either by birth or by marriage; and namahram, the opposite, that is, men with whom women are not permitted to interact. Hence, women have to be accompanied by a mahram in public (Moghadam, 1999). Another form of segregation is the covering of the female body. Afghanistan's history demonstrates that communal identity and gender relations are not static and absolute; they are constructs which are negotiated and changed as they encounter socio-economic and political changes, especially changes in power relations within the family and the community (Maley, 1996). The personal is still political—perhaps even more true when it comes to gender issues in Afghanistan. It is worthwhile advocating for a renewed understanding of the connection between personal and political—particularly as this plays out in aid interventions. This reconnection could fuse an Afghan feminism and a contextualized politics presenting opportunities for advancement grounded in human rights and gender justice. But this has not been the path taken. Gender policies do not operate in a socio-political vacuum. Afghan history demonstrates that externally enforced social reforms have been resisted time and again. Attempts at engineering a social transformation will continue to have serious repercussions for women as long as their agency is denied in the process.

Despite daily tragedies, Afghan women know how to struggle for their rights. They refused the gender identities that the Taliban attempted to impose and now they are refusing to conform to those imposed by invading forces (Rostami-Povey, 2007). In their own way and according to their own culture, religion and ethnicity, they have been resisting the social control that the family and community try to impose on them. During the Taliban, in the diaspora and in Afghanistan today under foreign invasion, women's lives are shaped by gender power relations. Afghan Women centres on gender, agency and identity, and the extent to which men and women, through their engagement with violence, diasporic communities and with the invading forces, are agents for change (Rostami-Povey, 2007).

Despite the horrifying conditions of life under the Taliban, Afghan women found a space in which to exercise autonomy and agency. They broke the pre-defined spaces of confinement and silence and contested the idea that Muslim society is about building barriers to shut women out, condemning them to a life of domesticity and oppression. Afghan men also realized that gender solidarity was essential to their survival and the image of male domination, which is expected from them by ethnic and religious norms, was unrealistic and did not mean that they hold all the power while women are subordinate.

Afghanistan's constitution recognizes the formality of women's rights without having any serious intention of implementing them (Sultan, 2005). Under the US-led invasion, the violation of women's rights continues. Young girls are sold to secure food for cash (Physicians for Human Rights, 1998). There are no institutions to protect women economically, politically and culturally. Women have been kept in jail for refusing to marry men chosen by their fathers or for refusing to live with abusive husbands. They are accused of endangering the honour of the family and the community. Human rights abuses against women continue to occur with the active support of state institutions such as police, the army and jail keepers. The practice of exchanging girls and young women to settle feuds or to repay debts continues, as do the high rates of early and forced marriage (Shah, 2000). Despite racism and marginalization, Afghan women have shown great resilience and have challenged their portrayal as vulnerable and passive victims. In this way they have become advocates of social change. Women see some aspects of traditional gender relations, such as sex segregation, including covering the woman's body, as empowering (Ciazza, 2001). Afghan women do not see themselves as part of the western feminist movement. They feel excluded by feminists, more so in the USA than in the UK, because of the failure to construct a more inclusive feminism that embraces all ethnicities, nations, religions and cultures. Images of shrouded women in the blue chaddari are a visible reminder of the way women are under pressure from both local males and imperial domination and so do not feel safe without it (Barakat and Wardell, 2002). Yet the chaddari is only the tip of the iceberg of male control over female bodies. Patriarchal family laws with regard to marriage, divorce, custody of children, forced marriages, honour killing and the denial of women's access to healthcare, education and employment are continuing ((Physicians for Human Rights, 1998).

The Afghan women are resisting the East–West, tradition–modernity, Islamic–sinful dichotomies and have tried to be engaged with the dynamics of the encounter of their culture and feminism in the West (Barakat and Wardell, 2002). They have been learning from the positive contribution of western feminisms and have passionately adopted the commitment to enable women to develop their full potential to struggle for gender equality. Their strength is in their ability to cross the boundaries of different forms of feminism to find a commonality between women's global concerns and their own local needs (Harpviken et al, 2001). Today, western feminism can benefit from Afghan women's critical adaptation of the ideas of individualism and the values of westernization which are not unambiguously beneficial.

The conventional understandings of security need to be construed in ways that are broadly in keeping with feminist politics. The events and aftermath of September 11 provide a basis on which to explore geopolitics from a highly embodied, situated, yet globalised location (Hyndman, 2005). A feminist geopolitics would enable to incorporate feminist analyses and gender into an extant set of geopolitical practices. A feminist geopolitics aims to trace the connections between geographic and political locations, exposing investments in the dominant geopolitical rhetoric, in the pursuit of a more accountable and embodied geopolitics that contests the wisdom of violence targeted at innocent civilians, wherever they may be (Hyndman, 2005).

From the above write-up it is evident that a better understanding of the women of Afghanistan can be achieved through a feminist geopolitical analysis. Several facets of the lives of Afghan women- ranging from their culture, their history, Islam, ethnicity, the burqa, the war in Afghanistan and their resistance to it- form the subject matter which can be examined via the lens of feminist geopolitics. This approach can further help in evaluating the aid directed towards the women of Afghanistan, undertaken in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three
Women in Afghanistan

The women in Afghanistan can be studied through a feminist geopolitics perspective as explained in the preceding chapter. A brief history of the women of Afghanistan would facilitate a deeper appreciation of their present situation and justify the need for undertaking this research.

3.1 History of Afghan Women

Afghanistan's history is one of gender politics (Abirafeh, 2010). Afghanistan's history demonstrates how gender relations have been affected by ethnic conflict, state formation, state-society relations and imperial domination (Wahab and Youngerman, 2007). Afghanistan may be the only country in the world where during the last century kings and politicians have been made and undone by struggles relating to women is status. Recently, the situation of women under the Taliban rule has been center stage. The situation of women came to symbolize to Western military powers a justification of war in the name of freedom of women. But the situation of women in Afghanistan today is not only the result of the Taliban's policies. There is a history over the centuries of women's subjugation (Clements, 2003). Even in more recent times the Mujahedeen's (1992-1996) record is worse than the Taliban's. Thus, one must approach the analysis of women's situation in Afghanistan, not through the ideological formulation of before and after the Taliban, but within the larger historical context of Afghanistan. Only such a perspective can ensure that women will be seen as integral to the rebuilding of the Afghan nation.

In 1901, Abdur Rahman Khan died, his son Habibullah succeeded him and took steps towards modernization. After the First World War, resistance to British interference grew. Habibullah was assassinated and his son Amanullah Khan seized power, declaring independence in 1919. He introduced a limited degree of reforms such as land reform, trade, tax collection, improving infrastructure, provision of healthcare and education and a degree of women's rights (Wahab and Youngerman, 2007). However, the constitution, which was proclaimed in 1923, was abrogated in 1924, because only a very few people benefited from its reforms, and the weak rentier state, surviving on foreign grants and loans,

remained unpopular with the majority of the people. King Amanullah was overthrown. Nadir Shah, who became the next monarch, consolidated his rule by making concessions to religious conservatism and hierarchy and the 1931 constitution omitted any mention of women's rights (Runion, 2007).

Following Nadir, his son Zahir Shah (1933–73) once again attempted reform, including a new secular constitution of 1964, provision of education for women and an end to sex segregation by voluntary removal of the veil. But, in the end, he too was overthrown for being unable to alleviate poverty and the 1972 famine during which 100,000 Afghans died (Mehta, 2002). In 1973, Mohammed Daoud took power and dissolved the monarchy. Yet, like his predecessors, he failed to build institutions according to the needs of Afghanistan's diverse society; instead, he created a large bureaucracy and relied on economic and military aid from the Soviet Union and the USA, but failed to bring benefits to the majority of the population (Rubin, 2000). In 1978, he was overthrown by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was established. The pro-Soviet rulers in this period were divided into two factions, the Khalg (Masses) and the Parcham (Flag) (Clements, 2003). They attempted a number of reforms from land reform to the reform of family laws as well as the provision of healthcare and education for women. But because of their lack of understanding of the complexities of Afghan society and because they did not extend the benefits to the majority of the population, there was a widespread rural revolt against them. Nancy Tapper (1991) suggests that the reform of family law in this period was not much different from the reforms of earlier regimes since the 1880s, in the sense that none of these reforms resolved the harsh reality of the majority of the people and all were formulated by the male Afghan elite, based on western models.

In the 1960s and 1970s, middle- and upper-class women in Kabul had access to education and employment and moved freely around the city without chaddari and mahram. During the Soviet invasion, women in Kabul and a few other major cities worked as scientists, pharmacists, teachers, medical doctors and civil servants (Mehta, 2002). These, however, were a small minority of urban women who enjoyed considerable freedom of movement, educational opportunities and a relatively wide range of career choices, in contrast to the majority of women in urban and rural areas who lived in poverty and were excluded from this emancipatory process favouring urban areas, certain classes and ethnic groups.

The women's movement marks time in Afghanistan and tells the story of social change in a context where evolutionary change is repeatedly abandoned for revolutionary change (Abirafeh, 2009). An understanding of Afghan women's history therefore could begin in the 1880s, when Afghan rulers of the period launched one of the earliest attempts at emancipation and social reform in the Muslim world. However, these rulers also proclaimed men as the guardians of women, marking the beginning of a non-linear pattern of social change.

During the 1920s, women's emancipation began to play a prominent role in the nationalist ideology of modernization. Popular perceptions of King Amanullah's immorality and excessive Western influence fueled a strong resistance, and religious conservatives and the rural population met his attempts at reform with violent opposition (Wahab and Youngerman, 2007). This is significant in that the rural population has historically presented the greatest challenge to social reforms. This dynamic plays out again in present-day Afghanistan and is increasingly magnified by the rural population that is now displaced in Kabul city (Nouri et al, 2011).

Emancipation continued to be enforced and subsequently challenged. Despite incremental changes, responses to women's rights vacillated between enforced modernity and conservative backlash. And yet, attempts at modernity throughout history have always been imposed from above, without local foundations and popular support—and with little impact on the lives of the majority. Reforms have repeatedly flooded Afghanistan faster than the country can absorb them, should it choose to do so. Such modernity has also been selective: so-called modern contributions such as technology and advanced weapons are accepted, while movements towards women's public participation in Afghan society are not (Harpviken, 2001).

Afghan women were officially enfranchised in the 1964 Constitution and later were given equal rights in the 1977 Constitution (Runion, 2007). The Saur (April) Revolution of 1978 introduced an aggressive program for social change, enforcing such modernizations as women's right to work, serve in the army, and choose their spouses (Moghadam, 1993). Mandatory literacy programs for women and the abolition of bride price were viewed as direct attacks on Afghan culture and honour, instigating yet another wave of violence. Afghans felt a total disdain for their values, so much so that an Afghan woman said that the Russians deliberately "came [to Afghanistan] to play with the dignity of women." (Abirafeh, 2009). Thus, Afghan women once again found themselves at the center of a conflict between Western

concepts of modernization and Afghan codes of culture. Social change and attempts to improve women's status have repeatedly brought strong resistance because of affronts to honour. Women's honour is the cornerstone on which the politics of women's rights rests. These fluctuations in women's rights—enforced by the state's attempt to exercise centralized control—have actually led to violent, fundamentalist backlashes (Rostami-Povey, 2007).

The combination of colonialism, economic dependence, and rapid social change is a recipe for Muslim fundamentalism to flourish. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the international pressure that is exerted at the intersection of Islam, the state, and gender politics. As a result, the place of women becomes "one of the few areas of relative autonomy left to societies whose ties of political and economic dependence severely restrict their choices in every other sphere" (Leiven, 2009)

The failure of the West or the United Nations to take active role in rebuilding the nation after the Soviet defeat in 1992 left a dangerous power vacuum, which was filled, first by the avaricious warlords and then the primitive religionists- the Taliban. Mujahedin factions vying to fill the power vacuum, brought in fresh horrors. Many women report that this four- year period— virtually ignored by the Western media— rivaled, often outdid, the subsequent Taliban era for barbarism and oppression, with rapes, kidnappings, and forced marriages, along with relentless street fighting, looting, and the launching of rockets into quiet neighborhoods, blowing buildings to rubble, and maiming and killing innocent bystanders Goodson, 2001; Runion, 2007; Wahab et al, 2007). The United States, instead of seizing an opportunity to rebuild Afghanistan, had walked away (Heath and Zahedi, 2011). The "students," meanwhile, were quietly massing and training in Pakistan. In 1995, they took Herat and in 1996 conquered Kabul, then spread out across most of the rest of the country. Many welcomed them as liberators and bringers of peace. Various Mujahedin led north, where they formed the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, or Northern Alliance. It is impossible in this space to give more than a highly abridged version of the twisted geopolitics that has affected Afghanistan across the years.

Between 1994 and 1997, the U.S. government supported the Taliban, again through its allies, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, its policy motivated by the possibility of an oil pipeline project, as well as its belief that the Taliban would "tighten the noose around Iran…There was not a word of criticism [from the Bill Clinton administration] after the Taliban captured Heart… and threw thousands of girls from schools,"

(Heath and Zahedi, 2011). But such incidents did at last begin to enlighten Western consciousness about the misery of Afghan women.

Afghanistan repeatedly demonstrates the strong and yet volatile link between women's honour and external interventions. The Taliban ironically drew world attention to the situation in Afghanistan. Prior to the fall of Kabul in September 1996, Afghanistan was hardly a part of the international community's agenda. During the Taliban period, Afghan women were portrayed as victims of violence and oppression by the international media (Riphenburg, 2003). Yet the situation of women in Afghanistan is not simply a product of Taliban policies, and the chaddari is not a Taliban invention. Nonetheless, the international shock at the Taliban's treatment of women took place in a historical vacuum, with little attention paid to pre–Taliban abuses and chaddari uses.

Belated discovery of the discrimination of Afghan women (discrimination that passed largely without comment during previous regimes) is a reflection both of the political agenda and of wider ignorance of the realities of Afghan society. Much has been written on women's abuses during this period. For these purposes, it is sufficient to say that women suffered under many regimes in Afghanistan, but women's sphere of influence under the Taliban was virtually annihilated. The Taliban were able to manipulate the deeply embedded system linking women to honour, issuing policies that "wrapped entrenched practices and patriarchal attitudes in the mantle of Islam." It is worthwhile to note that men also suffered under the Taliban, although this was hardly noted by the media. In fact, Taliban authority extended beyond women to non–Taliban men. The simplistic assumption was that the expulsion of the Taliban would bring women's liberation. The Bush Administration's vociferous concern for Afghan women's rights as justification for military intervention was undercut by their support to the lawless factions that have repeatedly perpetrated violence against women.

There are Afghan women who say that the Taliban era was an improvement over the civil war period, for at least there was peace of a sort (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Even as women were barred from education and employment, their health care severely restricted, and Draconian laws applied (to everyone), the Taliban era brought comparative quiet and order, a respite from Mujahedin guns and rockets.

In 2001, the "liberation" of Afghan women became a justification of the George W. Bush administration for the Afghan invasion .In December 2001, with the Taliban defeat, there began a brief period of hope. Yet right from the start, opportunities to

salvage Afghanistan were again missed, first with the Bonn Agreement, which set up an Afghan Interim Authority-including the Northern Alliance and other players. The AIA was inaugurated with a six- month mandate to be followed by a two- year Transitional Authority, after which elections were to be held (Riphenburg, 2003). Bonn, however, was not a peace agreement, and it did not include the Taliban, who, at that weakened stage, might have been willing to negotiate. Instead, even the more "moderate Taliban" were driven back into the extremist fold and have grown again in strength.

After a decade of misguided U.S. and international policy, the need for security is undeniable, but there has been widespread agreement that substantial increases in troops continue to radicalize insurgents— as is inevitable in a war of occupation— and generate far more severe problems than ever before.

The issue of women's rights in Afghanistan has historically been constrained by two structural factors – the patriarchal nature of gender and social relations, deeply embedded in tribal community and the existence of a weak central state, which has been unable to implement modernizing programs since the beginning of twentieth century (Kreczco, 2003). The two are interconnected for a state's weakness is correlated with a strong society resistant to state bureaucratic expansion, civil authority, monopoly of means of violence- the business of modern states. During the 1980s the Afghan state became stronger than it had been in the past and some important steps were taken to improve the legal status and social position of women. Yet war, the fundamentalist backlash and a hostile international climate eventually defeated the goal of the emancipation of Afghan women and modernization of society. In the late 1980s the Afghan leadership shifted from social transformation to national reconciliation, postponing the emancipation of women until a more stable future. In May 1992, the government of Afghanistan collapsed and the mujahideen assumed control (Lederman, 2002).

Conditions for Afghan women, especially urban dwellers, have somewhat improved since 2001, but the resurgence of the Taliban has cast serious doubt that this can be sustained (Mehta, 2002). At the provincial level, the situation remains unchanged and/or is deteriorating notwithstanding the influx of billions of dollars of foreign aid to the Afghan government. Lack of security and few "respectable" employment opportunities hinder the pace of progress in gender matters. A comparative examination of the gender policies of varying Afghan governments since

1919 is a lesson in caution: controversial and/or unpopular social measures have never succeeded unless applied with brute force, as during the Daoud, PDPA, and Taliban eras. In some cases— notably Amir Amanullah and the PDPA— they contributed to the overthrow of the regime.

The first lesson for bolstering the position of Afghan women is to no longer construct or attempt to execute social policy as it relates to female empowerment without the agreement of a broad social base. Second, the government must acknowledge cultural, ethnic, urban, and rural dichotomies in gender issues and bridge these gaps by identifying common, unifying goals, such as provision of elementary education and access to health care. Government must be seen as an honest broker in its provision of social services and aid to urban and rural parts of the country. Third, it is essential to understand what the realistic needs of most women are and to address these, rather than mandate incendiary policies such as unveiling, dress codes, coeducation, and other hot- button issues that are destined to fail at the outset and/or may be leveraged for propaganda purposes by those who resist such changes as being un- Islamic. Finally, if efforts toward gender justice are to be sustainable over the long term, they must be primarily home-grown, integrating external assistance only as needed— not the other way around. The notion of compromising on sensitive gender policies has been notably absent amongst these leaders until, and unless, threatening social forces have challenged or confronted the implementation of specific social policies. Without tangible improvements in both the security and economic realms, Afghan women will continue to be pawns in endless cycles of violence and suffering. As history has repeatedly shown, pragmatic considerations must take precedence over pure self- interest if there is to be a gradual but consistent move toward prosperity and opportunity for all Afghan women.

Afghanistan's political history highlights the sporadic efforts made to empower women in an attempt to create a sense of nationhood. This is essential to explore because the political and powerful nature of tribal dictates in the Afghan countryside, and the oppositional ruling parties and elite are instrumental in determining the scope of women's lives. Women in Afghanistan are not an isolated institution; their fate is entwined with and determined by historical, political, social, economic and religious forces. In addition to a range of internal tensions, outside or international political forces have impacted Afghanistan in significant ways. The history of Afghan women

has broadly shaped the varied aspects touching their lives- their family, education, socio-economic relations, religion, tribe affiliations and their political aspirations.

3.2 Afghan Women

An Afghan woman's life is guided by numerous considerations- the most important ones being Islam, tribe and family. A brief overview of the varied dimensions of their lives is attempted below.

3.2.1 Afghan women and Islam

A study of the religious aspect in the lives of Afghan women is imperative in a country where Islam plays a prominent role in the fabric of the social structure. Islam as a complete way of life does not discriminate against women in social affairs. Women are an integral part of a Muslim society. There are hundreds of scenarios, dictums, and maxims of the Prophet Muhammad as well as historical events that illustrate that women were not only involved in politics but also in all social affairs (Estes, 2006). Representations of Islam and Muslims in the media are more often than not negative, highlighting terrorists, human rights and women's rights abuses, and war. In the light of recent studies, the western media regards Islam with a problem based attitude with normative ideas of improvements. the relationship between media and Islam as well as the discourse of Islam as the other, where Islam is demonised and women represented as victims, identified that Islam's multiple voices and forms, the variety of people, states, ideologies and politics, are being reduced to a static image of evil Islam that includes fundamentalists, terrorists and that oppresses women. In other words, demonizing Islam constructs an image of West as just and peaceful, unlike Islam, and hence legitimizes the actions of the West. Furthermore, women within this "discourse of risk" are typically presented as victims and their identity is constructed through veiling (Shah, 2000). Women's agency is, indeed, alleged to be nonexistent within Islam and further encourages the demonizing representation, The representations of Muslim women, on the other hand, have been mainly analysed by focusing on veiling and the veiled identity.

A majority of women in Afghanistan choose religion as the primary social category with which they identify themselves (Shirazi, 2010). This reflects the

prominence Islam enjoys in Afghanistan. According to Abirafeh, who surveyed several Afghan women, they are resolute about defining themselves in the context of Islam and its prescribed roles for women. Many of her respondents evoked a historical responsibility to defend and protect the religion from "outside interference." The importance of their operating first and foremost in the context of Islam cannot be overstated. Many women in the aforementioned survey were quick to blame "invading cultures and customs" (Abirafeh, 2009) for polluting the Afghan version of Islam. The women strongly expressed a dislike for foreign intervention and a desire to regain Afghan autonomy.

The justifications made for American intervention in Afghanistan in terms of liberating, or saving, Afghan women was in many ways harboured on Afghan culture and Islam This led to the dangers of reifying culture, apparent in the tendencies to "plaster neat cultural icons like the Muslim woman over messy historical and political dynamics" (Abu-Lughod, 2002) Attention needs to be paid to contemporary discourses on equality, freedom, and rights with earlier colonial and missionary rhetoric on Muslim women in order to develop, a serious appreciation of differences among women in the world—as products of different histories, expressions of different circumstances. Rather than seeking to "save" others we might better think in terms of working with them in situations that we recognize as always subject to historical transformation and, considering our own larger responsibilities to address the forms of global injustice that are powerful shapers of the worlds in which they find themselves.

To understand the representation of Muslim women in Afghanistan, it is essential to adopt a highly critical and searching attitude towards it and to move away from reducing Muslim women to one or the other stereotype. Studying Muslim women through a feminist geopolitics paradigm gives us an array of interpretations. In certain parts, especially the rural areas of Afghanistan, and during certain times during the course of the country's turbulent history, like the Taliban era, Muslim women may be the manifestations of patriarchal oppression and misogyny (Abirafeh, 2009). Thus in this respect there is a legitimate discoursing role for feminist geopolitics that emphasises questions of gender inequality and the oppression of women in all spheres of life and its goals include uncovering and countering such inequality and discrimination. Feminist geopolitics recognizes women's common experience of, and resistance to, oppression by men and a commitment to end it so

that women can define and control themselves and provides a foundation on which resistance to the masculinist hegemony can be based (Buang, 2003). Extant discourses on Muslim women are largely confined to the veiled, victimised, ever-passive lot that the world media has been offering or the bold and 'liberated' feminist image that are found in westernised Muslim societies. Feminist geopolitics can play a role in bringing the study on Muslim women closer to the wider feminist project of studying the lives, experiences and behaviour of the women. A feminist geopolitics discourse also distinguishes between Islam, the religion and Islam as cultural translations, so as not to discredit the religion because of the cultural failings of its adherents. Also, the social construction of the discipline of feminist geography is such that it is necessarily 'secularist'. The constraint is thus that it finds it appropriate to judge these non-secular forms of knowledge according to its own terms. The feminist geopolitics approach takes cognizance of the political-economic context of the women studied, to account for the significantly critical role of the Islamic state in the production of identities of Muslim women, linking these to the interests of nation state and issues of global geopolitics and uneven development.

As Afghan women have emphasized, through various studies, interviews and surveys (conducted by Abirafeh, 2009, Rostami-Povey, 2007) , the form of feminism that they identify with is within Islamic culture, the rights and roles of women in Islam and how in this context they are looking for emancipation in their daily lives. Feminist geopolitics interprets the Afghan women in relation to Islam by analysing issues pertaining to women's lives as well as human sexuality and relationships. The "ownership of the body" has to be deliberated upon (Nelson and Seager, 2005). Women's identification with body rather than the mind and spirit is a common characteristic of the dualistic thinking that pervades many religious, cultural and philosophical traditions. Although women have been identified with their body, they have not been seen as 'owners' of their bodies and the issue of who controls women's bodies has never been decided in the favour of women. Muslim societies seem to be far more concerned with trying to control women's bodies and sexuality than others (Mehta, 2002). Feminist geopolitics through the discourse on body geographic can affirm that Islamist societies like Afghanistan's, assert women's sexuality only to deny it by posting it as a threat to the foundation of Muslim identity. In this formulation, women's bodies are understood as endangering their own heterosexual purity, which is the key to marriage. Certain public spaces are viewed as

dangerous for women that can be countered through norms like appropriate female dress. Younger, mostly unmarried women occupy the weakest social position beneath men and older women and are considered to present a greater danger to collective identity because of their sexualised bodies and relative lack of socialization in community norms (Nelson and Seager, 2005). Radically conservative, religio-cultural-nationalist discourses represent space as gendered and further divided into public-private, western and non-western. In conservative contexts, the sphere of home is the 'private' space and gets naturalized as the domain of women. Radical Islam can be viewed as a response to western imperialism and subordination. To control women's bodies is an expression of possession and territoriality and the fabrication of Islamic identities proceeds by marking women's bodies in terms of both targeting and inscribing.

3.2.2 Afghan Women, The Tribal Structure and Ethnicity

In the contemporary world, the tribal structure is the pristine form type of patriarchal organization and can still be found in Afghanistan. The social organization of the tribe (Qabila) or the communal group (Qawm) (Moghadam, 1993) is based on blood ties and is patriarchal in the classic sense. More than 99.9% of Afghan people are Muslim, about 20% Shiite and 80% Sunni Muslim (CIA World Factbook, 2011). Among the several distinct ethnic groups living in Afghanistan are the Pashtun speaking Pashtuns (45-50%), Dari speaking Tajiks (25-30%), Hazargi speaking Hazara (10-12%), and the Turkic speaking Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kirghiz and Kazakhs (10%) (CIA World Factbook, 2011).

These tribes are generally endogamous and endogamy increases the tendency to maintain property within families through the control of women in tightly interrelated lineages. It encourages family integration and cooperation. Ethnic groups are particularly important to an understanding of gender in Afghanistan, although ethnicity itself is complex and variously defined by language, religion, descent, region and profession. The Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, estimated to be 40 per cent of the population (CIA World Factbook, 2011). They are based predominantly in the south and east of the country. They are largely Sunni and have their own code of ethics known as Pashtunwali (Pashtuns' way of life) and their own language (Pashto). Pashtunwali, the customary law of the Pashtuns, is

practised among eastern Pashtuns as part of their system of values and norms. According to Pashtunwali, it is the absolute duty of men to protect the respectability of women and to protect the integrity of the homeland (US Library of Congress). This does not imply that women stay passive. In Pashtun folklore, Malalai is praised for her decisive role in winning the battle of Mayward against the British in 1878–80 (Maley, 1996). The Pashtun ethnic charter is based on patrilineality. However, sub-ethnic groups within Pashtuns, such as Afridi or Ghilzai, are connected to other Pashtuns through matrilineality. This history enables women, especially older women, to exercise power by practising Pashtunwali more strictly than men and being less ready to compromise when matters of honour of the family and community are at stake. Besides the Pashtuns in the east of Afghanistan, there are Pashtuns who live in the west, in Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan and there is a significant minority of Shi'a Pashtuns in the Kandahar region. The traditional norms and values of these Pashtuns are more similar to those of other ethnic groups than to those of the Pashtuns in the east of Afghanistan. The concepts of honour and shame may be similar to Pashtunwali with its implied male domination and regulate gender relations in varying degrees, but these communities do not claim a specific ethnic monopoly over these norms and values as Pashtunwali does for the Pashtuns in east Afghanistan (Rais, 2008).

The Tajiks constitute the second largest group in Afghanistan (US Library of Congress). They are Sunni and Dari speakers and are organized along local lineages, village clusters, valleys and occupational groups. They live in Kabul and other cities and identify with the geographical areas that they come from as well as their ethnicity. The Hazaras, who are predominantly Shi'a, are the third ethnic group. They live mainly in the central Afghan highlands known as Hazarajat and since the fall of the Taliban many Hazaras live in Kabul and Mazar Sharif. They speak a dialect of Persian known as Hazaragi. Some Hazaras are Sayids; they believe they are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad; there are also Sunni and Ismaili Hazara minorities. Despite religious diversity, since the 1992 civil war Hazaras have become more united as one ethnic group. The Uzbeks are the fourth major ethnic group. They have lived in Afghanistan for centuries and were ruled by their own Emirs. Other Uzbeks migrated into Afghanistan after the expansion of Tsarist Empire and during the Soviet expansion. They are mostly Sunni, live in the north of Afghanistan

and speak their own Turkish language, although in the cities they also speak Dari. There are also many other smaller ethnic groups, cultures and languages (Rais, 2008). The diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities in Afghanistan have been formed and reconstructed as a consequence of broader historical processes involving local and regional wars and colonial intervention. The gender relations have evolved in the context of social struggles. Afghan history is characterized as much by conflicts arising from ethnic identities as by interethnic relations through marriage which demonstrate very different principles of coexistence, harmony, tolerance and pride in diversity (Rais, 2008).

The importance of ethnicity in gender relations is reflected by how women negotiate gender in different forms and how they sometimes find themselves in positions of domination, able to exercise power within the family and the community as well as subordination. The inviolability of women and land is closely connected, and even considered identical (Heath and Zahedi, 2011). In this way, and others, the obligations of one to oneself are inseparable from one's obligations to the community. Any Afghan, at any given time, can choose between group advantages and personal interests, but more often than not, "self-interest and group advantage tend to coincide, since it is only through his own group that any individual can protect or improve his position" (Nouri et al, 2011). Understanding the importance of religion and the concepts of akl and namoos is important. Akl can be translated as 'responsibility' in Dari, but has much deeper meanings (Rais, 2008). It refers to a code of accepted behaviour, and reflects a combination of honour and shame with a notion of responsibility that together represents men's control of resources and includes men's control over women. Namoos, pride, refers to the chastity of women, and implies the duty of men to protect and respect women. The term also refers to men's pride in safeguarding women's chastity. They run risks of losing their chastity, or the perception that they have lost their chastity, with greater public exposure and the assuming of traditionally male roles. In Afghanistan, the worst insult for an Afghan man is to call his women binamoos, without chastity (Rostamy-Povey, 2007; Heath and Zahedi, 2011). This distinction reflects the Afghan tradition of strong divisions between the public and private sphere. The term is used by men to exert control over women, by women to instil fear in other women, and by women to rationalize their role.

The impact on women has been especially harsh, since women's lives have often been used as the raw material with which to establish ethnic prominence. Tribal laws and sanctions have routinely taken precedence over Islamic and constitutional laws in deciding gender roles, especially through kinship hierarchies in the rural regions. Tribal power plays, institutions of honour, and inter-tribal shows of patriarchal control have put women's position in jeopardy. Tribal laws view marriages as alliances between groups; women are pawned into marriages and not allowed to divorce, total obedience to the husband and his family is expected, and women are prevented from getting any education. Women are perceived as the receptacles of honour hence they stay in the domestic sphere, observe the veil and are voiceless. The honour of the family, the tribe, and ultimately the nation is invested in women.

The link between Islam and tribalism can be traced to the fact that Islam itself was revealed in a tribal society. Although Islam introduced many reforms that changed the status of women, yet it left many aspects of the tribal life unchanged. Tribalism, therefore survived under Islam, and tribal customs continued to exist, sometimes violating the laws of Islam (Shirazi, 2010). In Afghanistan, extravagant marriage ceremonies, child marriages, polygamy, divorce and inheritance seem to be influenced more by tribal custom than by Sharia. Quranic rules about women's rights are more important in urban settings than in the rural areas. As Roy (2002) explains:

> The tribal code and Muslim law are in opposition. Adultery (Zina) should, according to Sharia, require four witnesses to be proven; for the *pushtunwali* hearsay (peghor) is sufficient, for what is at stake is honour (self image) and not morality. Women in the tribe are not allowed to inherit property, for that would contradict the principle of strict patrilineage, which is the very basis of the tribal system; while the Quran grants to women half the share of the male. The dowry, a sign of prestige, frequently exceeds the limits set by the Shariat; while on the other hand, the repudiation of a wife by her husband, something which, according to the Quran, presents no difficulties, is practically impossible in the tribes, for that would be an insult to the wife's family. Vengeance (badal) is commended within the tribal code, while the Shariat attempts to limit the occasions on which it can take place.

The feminist geopolitics perspective of the tribal structure and its relation to the women of Afghanistan can be revealed through the Pashtun saying- "A woman is best either in the house or the grave" (Heath and Zahedi, 2011). This seclusion from the world outside the walls of the house, outside the 'private' confines of this space, is justified by the notion that women are basically licentious and tempt men.

3.2.3 Afghan Women and Family Life

Patriarchy: Contemporary Afghanistan is situated in what the demographer Caldwell (1982) has called ‘‘the patriarchal belt,’’ and is an extreme case of what Kandiyoti (1988) terms ‘‘classic patriarchy.’ The society is introverted and conservative, and is based on the patriarchal values of male dominance. Other than that, a strong sense of ‘honour’ which strictly defines ‘modesty’ of women is integral to the Afghan mindset. It is important to realize here that this mindset pre-dates the Taliban regime, and that women of Afghanistan have been subjected to male dominance-and still are-with or without the Taliban, contrary to what has been portrayed in the media (Shirazi, 2010).

The family is considered the one of the most important components of Afghan life, along with religion, tribe and community. Family life in the context of this research would include the concept of patriarchy that forms the overarching framework within which an Afghan family operates the customs and rules of marriage, divorce and the status of the women in a household- viewed from a feminist geopolitics position. Male dominance and female subordination in Afghanistan can be traced back to pre-Islamic civilizations in the region when male dominance and the patriarchal family were entrenched through the rise of urban class societies and increasing military competition. Since the expansion of the Islamic empire in the region, Afghanistan reformulated gender power relations, according to ethnic diversity, internal socio-economic changes and external influence. It was endogamy that set the shape for oppression of women in matrilineal society, long before the rise of Islam. Acknowledging existing patriarchal attitudes and structures requires us to recognize the diversity of male attitudes and actions, and to admit that while some men resist gender equality, others respond positively to women’s demands. As much as there is conflict between men and women, there is harmony and solidarity between them and family and community are important parts of their lives (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003). The roots of patriarchal oppression go deep in Afghan society – far deeper than the Taliban or al-Qaida. The western perception that women’s liberation will come with liberation from these forces is simplistic at best and damaging at worst (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Afghan patriarchy is tied to the prevalence of such forms of subsistence as nomadic pastoralism, herding and farming, and settled agriculture, all organized along patrilineal lines. Women and children tend to be

assimilated into the concept of property and to belong to a male. This is particularly the case among Pashtuns, whose tribal culture, Pashtunwali, is highly masculine.

Kandoyoti (2007) points out that the basis of patriarchy lies in the operations of the patrilocally extended household, which is also commonly associated with the reproduction of the peasantry in agrarian societies. The subordination of women is linked to the sexual division of labour. Childbearing is the central female labour activity. The products that a female produces –children or rugs- are considered not her property but that of the patriarchal family. Women are considered a form of property and are exchanged. Their honour- and the honour of their family- depend a great deal on their virginity and good conduct.

According to Mann (2010), the collective actors that have affected gender stratification are the atomised person, the networks of household/family/lineage, genders, social classes and nation states and that the patriarchal society is one in which power is held by male heads of households. There is also clear separation between public and private spheres of life. In the private sphere, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary powers overall younger males, all females and children. In the public sphere, power is shared between the male patriarchs. No females in the household hold any formal public position of economic, ideological, military or political power. Females are entirely isolated from the public sphere and hold no formal position of economic, ideological, military or political power. Contained within patriarchy are two fundamental nuclei of stratification: the household/family/lineage nexus and the dominance of the male gender.

In a patriarchal context, marriage and bride price are a transaction between households, an integral part of property relations and the exchange system, and an indicator of status. In Afghanistan, marriage, forced or voluntary, has been a way of ending feuds, cementing a political alliance between families, in- creasing the family's prestige, or accumulating wealth (Moghadam, 1999). Mobility and migration patterns have revolved around the bride price; Tapper has described how in the 1970s men from one region would travel to another to find inexpensive brides, while other men would travel elsewhere because they could obtain a higher price for their daughters. Women's economic and political dependence on men is reinforced by this religiously based patriarchy. Perceived as the receptacles of family honour, women's complimentary and subordinate relationship to men in the family ensures the unity,

cooperation and ultimate dignity of the family and the community. In this honour also lies her oppression (Ahmad-Ghosh, 2008).

Most women interviewed by Abirafeh (2009; 86), felt that Afghan women do suffer under a patriarchal system but that slowly women are beginning to exert their rights. Many of these women are seeing themselves through the eyes of the world for the first time, and in doing so, they have become conscious of their own suffering. Almost without exception women voiced a desire to be the ones governing those changes taking place in their lives. The interviewees recognized that they have agency and acknowledged being perfectly competent to act on their own behalf, despite the challenges they might face.

In the past women did not actively fight social injustice and male oppression, but occasionally women did defy patriarchal traditions and revolt against them. Afghan folklore depicts several legends of women's bravery and struggle for freedom- Rabia Balkh, Mahboob- were some women who fought for their rights under the patriarchal social structure. Women have often despised men's control of their lives and sexuality and have expressed their feelings of defiance in local folk songs, songs that reveal their fantasies as well as their frustration and anger at their lowly position in society.

A feminist geopolitics critique of patriarchal state system in Afghanistan is imperative here. The patriarchal mentality is central and the standard for being human is being male, while women become the other or the invisible. Enveloped in an all-encompassing tent-like veil, while men roamed freely, unencumbered by anything but their guns (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003). In Afghanistan, the public–private distinction has been highly gendered in a most exaggerated way. Pre-existing patriarchal concepts and practices can exacerbate the vulnerability of women during conflict. Wars, and especially occupations by foreign powers, often are accompanied by crises of masculinity that lead to restrictions on women's mobility and increases in violence against women (Enloe, 1990). Women become the symbols or markers of contending ideologies or competing cultures. A culture of "hegemonic masculinity" prevails among the major political actors, be they the occupiers, the resistance, or the state (Moghadam, 2011). As Anne Sisson Runyan (2002, p. 362) has aptly noted, "The world is awash with contending masculinities that vie to reduce women to symbols of either fundamentalism or Western hypermodernity." "Hegemonic masculinity" has become a key concept in gender analysis since Connell (1998) identified it as a

particular culture's standards and ideal of real manhood at a particular time in history. Feminist geopolitics objects to the dichotomization of public and private to re-orient the approach to separate worlds. This gender segregated social worlds are viewed as a severe limitation, an expression of unequal power, an indication of exclusion and a form of social control by men over women. Males in patriarchal societies such as Afghanistan continue to control not only their female relatives' access to public space, but also the access of women as a social group. The concepts of public space and private space are perhaps nowhere more relevant than in Afghanistan, where women's access to public space has long been politicized, contested, and denied.

***Marriage**:* Marriage in Islam is not a sacred matrimony but a social contract between a man and a woman. In tribal societies, it is only understood that men can divorce but women do not have that right, which is a pure violation of Islamic law. According to Islamic law, no one can marry a virgin girl, a widow, and a divorced woman, without her consent (Younus, 2003)

In Afghanistan, a man may acquire a wife in any one of the following four ways: mainly to inherit a widow, gain a bride in exchange marriage, gain a bride in compensation for a crime of which he or his relatives were the victim, or pay bride price (Moghadam, 1993). In a combination of Islamic and pre-Islamic customs, men exercise control in two ways: by controlling marriage and property, and by barring land ownership for women, especially among the Pashtuns.

Forced and underage marriage also occurs when women and girls are given in marriage as a means of dispute resolution by informal justice mechanisms. In Afghan civil law, the legal age of marriage is given in the article 71 of the constitution: "Marriage or the consummation of marriage is not allowed before the age of 16" (Heath and Zahedi, 2011). However, early marriages are part of Afghanistan's traditions and continue to take place despite the law. In Afghanistan today, 50% of women get married not merely without their consent, but positively against their will and are hence not happy with their spouses, leading to disturbed family life and worse still, domestic violence (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003).

Baal, the practice of exchanging women between families in marriage, is recognized by all the different groups researched as a practice that perpetuates a cycle of violence and abuse toward the women who have been exchanged in marriage (Moghadam, 2003). However, in reality, it is far more common to hear that families use the bride price to meet basic needs or for wealthier families to invest in assets. As

with exchange marriage and bride price, polygamy is also recognized by respondents to the research as a common and highly problematic practice. Another terrible aspect of Afghanistan's women's life is temporary marriage. According to this practice which is common among the Afghan Shiite community, the wife and the husband can be separated after the fixed period or change the temporary marriage to a permanent one. The husband and wife can marry and live together for a day or till whenever they want, but after the end of the fixed period the legal relationship ends and the wife is illegal to the husband.

In April 1978 the PDPA seized power in the Saur Revolution and introduced rapid reforms to change political and social structure of the Afghan society. Decree number 7- the most controversial, was designed to stop the payment of bride price and give women more freedom of choice in marriage. It was recognised that women were economically exploited in Afghan society and the decree therefore outlawed traditional cultural practices that were economically significant. Putting a price on the bride was prohibited, and the woman's dowry was limited. Forced marriages and the practice of levirate were outlawed, along with marriage through subterfuge or coercion. A minimum age was set for both the genders- sixteen for women, eighteen for men (Mehta, 2002). This was clearly an audacious program for social change, one aimed at the rapid transformation of a patriarchal society and a power structure based on tribal and landlord authority.

Feminist geopolitics views marriage in Afghan society as an approach to maintain the status hierarchy in the households. Men are ranked in the first and the highest sphere.-vengeance and feud, political support and hospitality and the practise of sanctuary- are its prime expressions. Women belong to the second sphere- often treated exclusively as reproducers and pawns in economic and political exchanges. Mobility and migration patterns revolve around the custom of bride price- men will travel from one region to the other to find inexpensive brides, while other men will travel elsewhere because they can obtain a higher price for their daughters.

3.2.4 Afghan Women and the Socio-Economic Dimension

The socio-economic milieu of the Afghan society can be discriminating towards its women. Women in Afghanistan face many hardships: poverty, high rates of maternal mortality, lack of education, lack of access to health care, and laws that

limit women's rights (Ministry of Women's Affairs, United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2008). The condition of women can be judged through their involvement in the country's economy and polity, their educational attainments and state of health (MoWA, 2008). Afghanistan ranked 174 out of 178 countries in the 2005 Human Development Index (NHDR, 2007). The 2005 Gender Development Index for Afghanistan is the lowest in South Asia at **0.310** .The average woman had **6.3** children in 2003 (NHDR, 2007).

Economy: Even before the revolution that triggered its era of conflict, Afghanistan was already one of the poorest countries in the world. The years of war, instability and oppressive regimes, along with the ravages of nature, have only made the situation worse by most measures of human development and human security. The Human Poverty Index (HPI), which also measures health and education ranked Afghanistan third from the bottom, above two African countries, Burkina Faso and Niger (Human Development Report,2008).Although poverty affects both women and men, there is evidence that women are poorer and their capacity to cope with poverty is more limited than men. Women also face multiple exclusions and obstacles manifested by restricted mobility, loss of women's inheritance entitlements to male relatives and denial of their property rights which constitute other important causes of poverty among women. Although women are often contributors to household economy, through agriculture, livestock management, handicrafts, involvement in small and medium enterprises and civil service, their contributions are either completely non-monetized, hugely underpaid (in the agriculture sector, women's wages are often even lower than those of children) or undervalued. Many women who earn an income are not permitted to control their earnings (Abirafeh, 2009).

In rural areas, the definition of "economic activity" frequently "excludes the exchange of labour and products between households" and "post-harvest processing of crops (drying/cleaning/preserving), which is a predominately female domain." It also seems to exclude "the vital role women in the South play regarding a household's contracting of poppy harvesters, for whom three solid daily meals are part of their wage packet" (Abirafeh, 2009). In urban areas, women's access to the labour market "is constrained by historical circumstances, low skills, limited opportunities, stringent cultural norms, occupational sex segregation and a number of demographic factors"(Rostami-Povey, 2007).

Outside the domestic sphere, women's employment has always been subject to severe restrictions, and the limited access to childcare continues to pose a significant obstacle to women's employment outside the home. Widespread poverty in Afghanistan has had a debilitating effect on the lives of women. Widows looking after large families having no opportunities amidst high inflation in the country to deal with are the prime recruits for the expanding illicit trade. One of the many effects of rising poverty is an increasing trend of exchange marriages and women as chattel (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003).

Under the Taliban, women were banned from working in the public sphere. Many women work in the agriculture sector, but their access to land is very limited and very few own land of their own. Afghani women have only limited access to bank loans, although this is not necessarily a sign of discrimination: most Afghans, men and women, are too poor to provide collateral for loans (NAPWA, Chapter 7). Although women in urban areas had a wide variety of professional jobs before the Taliban came to power, women's employment was outlawed for the entire reign of the Taliban regime. Due to a number of factors, women have limited access to education resulting in a low skill base among women, reduction of economic productivity and impairment of access to economic opportunities. Although women are important contributors to household income, their contribution mostly takes place within the household, particularly in the fields of agriculture, livestock management and handicraft production, such as carpet weaving. The cultural constraints on women's movement, security concerns and limited transport, restrict their ability to work outside of the house. Denial of property rights also limits women's access to capital, especially since banks normally require collateral for loans. Within the formal sector, especially the civil service that constitutes the largest formal sector at present, women are mostly employed in lower ranks, with very low pay (NAPWA, Chapter 7). Within this sector, they are usually discouraged from rendering overtime services, and even when they do so, unlike their male counterparts, they reportedly do not get financial compensation for the time they spent.

Success in family planning programs has been shown to have a significant impact on women's social and economic development. By freeing women's time to participate in gainful economic activities and lifting the growing pressure on education and health services, lower fertility rates have the potential to contribute to growth in GDP and per capita income (Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2003).

Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance has established a Gender Responsive Budgeting Cell to mainstream gender within the government's budget preparation process and has also included gender specific elements in the relevant budget statements and circulars, thereby making these processes more gender responsive.

Three decades of war and conflict have left about 1 million widows to support broken families in a deeply impoverished and divided country, where it is still frowned upon for women to leave home or take jobs, so that sex work too frequently becomes the only possible source of income. A dangerously taboo subject in Afghanistan, sex work is strictly forbidden, and many Afghans claim it is only an imported foreign vice, practiced by women brought into the country to serve Western men (Abirafeh, 2009). In "Selling Sex in Afghanistan," Alisa Tang portrays women and girls forced by poverty into sex work, a primary underground source of income for women, as well as for some men and boys, and as Tang notes, even whole families can be involved. Landless and poorer women work on land as wage workers. Women actively participate in the various stages of opium cultivation and their labour has become crucial because of the intensive manual work required during the six-month growing cycle.

A feminist geopolitics analysis of work expands "work" beyond solely waged work to encompass unpaid reproductive work and the work of politics and community activism. It also studies the multitude of ways in which work is gendered. Feminist reconceptualisations of work are trying to break down the dichotomy of work into public and private. These binaries linger and still shape the lives of Afghan women. Mainstream definitions of "work" continue to ignore or undervalue informal, domestic sphere and reproductive work, positioning the home as a site of domestic 'non work' where waged work is secondary or supplemental (Nelson and Seager, 2005). These gendered constructions of home as domestic, feminised space mean that women's homework is devalued, unregulated and without political representation. Feminist geography also demonstrates that women who work in feminised occupations are often spatially constrained. The embodied nature of work influences the gendered construction of social division of labour. From a feminist geopolitics context, it can be said that a woman's labour power is controlled and allocated by someone other than herself. The partial penetration of capital in rural areas, allows male kin to exploit woman's labour without paying any wages. Here, women's ability

to contribute substantially to the family income leads directly to intensified subordination and intrahousehold inequality.

Women and Politics: Afghanistan ranks in the world's top twenty countries for numbers of women in parliament (AREU Policy Notes Series, 2011). In the Wolsey Jirga (Lower House) alone, women hold sixty- eight seats, comprising 27 percent of the plenary— partly due to a reserved seat system established during the Bonn Process (Hamid, 2011). The Bonn Agreement in December 2001 set the foundation for governing the country after two and half decades of war. The 2001 Bonn Agreement called for specific attention to the role of women and established a dedicated government structure for this purpose. Core strategy for women's advancement is defined as "gender mainstreaming" in the national and development framework.

Women's rights groups working in Afghanistan-both government sponsored and independent- do agree that women in Afghanistan today have acquired a variety of rights, at least on paper. Mechanisms employed to empower Afghan women by the new regime after the Taliban's ouster include: financial assistance and aid channelized for women's uplift projects and schemes; new laws and amendments to previous laws in order to do away with gender bias in the letter of the law; fixing quotas for women in government/decision-making institutions; the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs which supervises multifarious women's rehabilitation and uplift projects; efforts to politically empower women (UNIFEM Factsheet, 2010).

The Constitution of Afghanistan, passed by the constitutional Loya Jorge in 2003, proclaims that any kind of discrimination or privilege is prohibited (article 22), and that Afghan citizens have equal rights and duties before the law (article 23)(DAC Senior Level Meeting, 2008). The Constitution guarantees Afghan women 25 percent of the seats in the lower house of parliament, the Wolesi Jirga, and almost 17 percent in the upper house, the Meshrano Jirga, or House of Elders (Article 83). All this highlights the need to recognize women's role in society and politics. The tasks and duties of public office were determined and a timetable for creating a new constitution and holding parliamentary and presidential elections was identified. Because most victims of the wars are women and children, the Bonn Agreement placed special importance on their status. Equal rights, affirmative action, and preparation for

women's participation in the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of Afghans were some of the objectives.

The degree of influence the Constitution will ultimately have is contingent on two factors, namely; the customary laws in question, and the degree to which recognition of, and compliance with, the Constitution occurs in the communities in which these girls and women live. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the constitution in empowering women will depend upon its application and interpretation. In the absence of judicial reform and extensive training of judges, profound change is unlikely. Conservative interpretation of the law could negate the gains made by women, and untrained, unqualified judges could impede application of the constitution and related laws. Quotas have ensured women a foothold in formal governing structures in Afghanistan. At the Bonn negotiations in 2001, less than 10 percent of the delegates were women. At each subsequent assembly of national leaders, however, their participation increased.

In the long term, the effectiveness of women legislators will determine the extent to which their inclusion in formal governing structures serves the goal of broad, national women's empowerment. While there is much international debate regarding the ability of women's ministries to mainstream a women's agenda, the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), mandated by the Bonn Conference in November 2001, and was Afghanistan's first act to foster empowerment. MOWA is charged with coordinating various government ministries and other partners tonsure that the policies, plans, resource allocation, and monitoring undertaken by governmental agencies incorporate a gender perspective.

Afghan women can provide an important counterbalance to the political and religious extremism that threatens to undermine democracy in Afghanistan. Afghan women can serve as a moderating force against extremists, in part because they were the prime victims of political violence and extremist interpretations of Islam, before and during the Taliban regime. Women have also demonstrated their willingness to support ethnic pluralism in Afghanistan. In addition to leading the AIHRC (the country's human rights instrument), Afghan women have already proved valuable allies in efforts to recognize and manage the country's inter-ethnic conflicts (Hamid, 2011).

On the one hand considered women's presence to be a positive step forward for the Afghan legislature, on the other hand, their sizeable presence is often equated,

by men and women parliamentarians alike, with the achievement of "women's rights." This approach could lead to the conclusion that, if women's rights have already been "accomplished," there is no need to further promote women's gender interests in parliament. Almost 30 percent of women won their seats in their own right and not as a result of the reserved seats system, and yet these seats were included in the sixty- eight finally given to women after the elections (Lough, 2012). Another factor is women's allegiance to diverse parties or influential individuals, which can be prioritized over and above any commitment to promoting women's gender interests.

It is clear that women's presence in Afghanistan's legislature has not led to the collective representation of women in general or the promotion of women's gender interests to date. However, until MPs feel secure enough to broach and vote on controversial subjects such as women's gender interests— with the confidence that their opinions will not generate violent opposition— the chance of these interests being promoted substantively will remain elusive. Political participation is seen as a luxury rather than a necessity by much of the Afghan population because basic needs such as food, shelter, clean water, and safety still are not being met (Women for Women International, 2009).

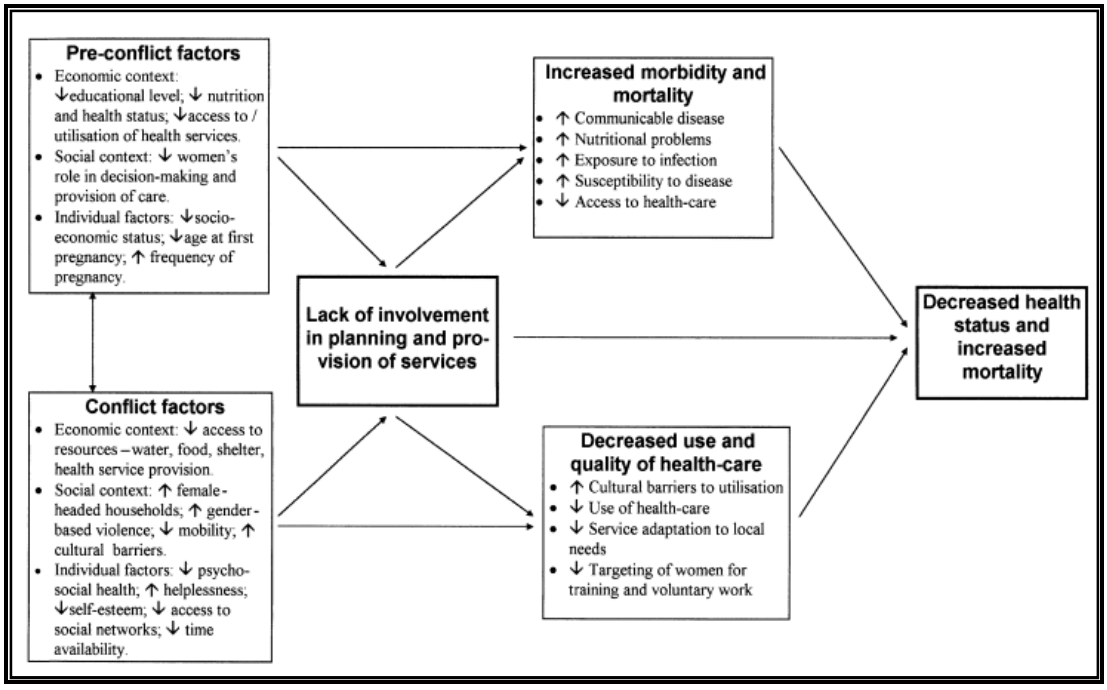
Women and Healthcare: Afghanistan has the second- highest maternal mortality rate in the world, with 165 women dying for every 1,000 live births (Afghanistan Gender Report, the World Bank, 2005). One woman dies every twenty- nine minutes in child birth (NHDR, 2007). Access to reproductive health care is minimal. One in five children dies before the age of five (Women for Women International, 2009). Not having an active war in a country is not the only measure of security. Without proper health care, especially for women, human security and peace are unattainable. Numerous factors have contributed to the virtual destruction of the health infrastructure in Afghanistan - the decades of war and internal conflict, the Taliban regime, particularly their policies towards women, the crumbling of the economy, the drought, decades of inadequate investment in the country's healthcare sector and the continuous drain of health personnel to other countries. Malnutrition among women, low age of marriage, high fertility rates and lack of family planning leading to no spacing out of childbirth put women and children's health at high risk.

Apart from the physical health, the mental health of women has also suffered. In several surveys and interviews (Mehta, 2002), a majority of respondents met the criteria of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. Many are even

suicidal. But mental health services are virtually nonexistent. Three decades of war and conflict have left at least two generations of Afghan women with emotional scars and severe psychological traumas. This intergenerational trauma is a bitter reality. In addition to negative consequences of long- lasting war and conflict, severe human rights abuses have exacerbated Afghan women's psychological and physical well-being. Cultural and traditional rules have prevented them from asserting independence or engaging in self- determination and deprived them of choice. As human rights abuses continue, Afghan women's mental health has so deteriorated that the Ministry of Public Health labelled it an "epidemic" and made it the number- two priorities after maternal and child health.

Figure 3.1

Factors that may reduce the health status of Women in Conflict



Source: Womankind Worldwide, 2002

A main source of women's fears and psychological dysfunction is related not only to ongoing abuses but also to memories of abuses— rape and other sexual violence— committed by war criminals. Increasing numbers of women are abusing drugs as a form of self- medication to cope with their psychological suffering (Mehta, 2002).

As custom and tradition does not allow women to be checked up by male physicians, absence of female health personnel means women cannot get medical services at all. A 2004 countrywide National Disability Survey of Afghanistan,

conducted by the United Nations to enable intelligent planning for physical rehabilitation programs, found that an average of 2.7 percent of Afghans are disabled, of which of which 1.1 percent are female.

The number of the Afghan women and girls whose injuries are caused by buried land mines, bombs, and artillery shelling since the 1979 Soviet invasion is staggering, coupled with increased disease and the challenges of surviving in the economic collapse with the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Dealing with the dire physical and mental problems currently afflicting the Afghan people and establishing a new public health system are the most urgent tasks among a formidable list of goals for Afghan reconstruction.

Women and Education*:* A number of social factors have a negative impact on school enrolment for girls and on their retention rate. The major issue here is security as girls' schools are being targeted and there is campaigning against female education (Heath and Zahedi, 2011). Although education is free, the cost of school uniform and stationery along with loss of girls' domestic labour/income earning activities are disincentives to enrolment. Low marriage age in particular leads to low retention rates for girls. Arguing that the education of women is un-Islamic, Taliban officials immediately closed down schools for girls, dismissed women teachers, and prohibited females of any age from attending any school not strictly for the teaching of the Quran(Nemat,2011). The reasons for girls not going to schools are both the unwillingness and inability of girls to continue their education owing to a variety of factors like widespread gender discrimination, poverty, security challenges, shortage of female schools, early marriages, insecurity which keeps most girls home results from a number of reasons, and is not quite without basis.

The problems faced by Afghan women are complex and multifaceted. However, when they are offered an education contextualized in Afghan religion and culture (based on a credible assessment of what they perceive to be their actual needs and including topics on ethics, values, health, and family), they are empowered to stand up for their rights and choices. Access to education allows them an equal place as contributing members of society, at home, in the workplace, or in public arenas.

3.3 Women and the Veil

Women's rights and roles have been an ongoing part of political processes throughout Afghan history, from fuelling conflict to "liberation." Unfortunately, it is not unusual for any act of veiling to be misconstrued as a denial of women's agency. Afghanistan is not unique; many have documented a history of Western obsession with the veil. On the one hand there is the mainstream, pop culture view: Muslim women are completely and utterly subjugated by men, and the veil is a symbol of that. In 1985, well before Afghan women were objects of public interest, Nancy Hatch Dupree wrote that women in Afghanistan "dismiss the stereotyped image depicted by most Western media which insist on picturing Afghan women forever enveloped in billowing veils."After the downfall of the Taliban, the media were flooded with images of women ripping off their veils. The New York Times wrote of gleeful women who were finally free to pursue their lives. It is a fact that Western organizations rushed for aid to Afghanistan bolstered up by the media images of women in 'burqas.'

The media, and women's organizations in the West, have used it to successfully attract the attention of mainstream Western audiences. Therefore, it may seem paradoxical that Afghan women are appealing to the public to end their fixation with the 'burqa.' Afghan women worry that the international community's obsession with the burqa distracts attention from their more pressing issue the media contributed to whatever negative images they might have had about "helpless women who don't have rights or privileges," perpetuating "negative images of repressed women, veiled unhappy victims" (Abirafeh, 2009). For books on Afghanistan, images of women in burqas have become the primary means by which audiences identify the women as Afghan. As a result, these books perpetuate images that may have certain effects, reinforcing the victimization of Afghan women. Gillian Whitlock's analysis of books about Afghan women noted that these auto-ethnographies are employed as propaganda to justify a military intervention with the surface objective of liberating Afghan women from the oppressive clutches of Islamic fundamentalism.

The fall of the Taliban has led to the virtual disappearance from the media agenda of the issue of the veil, and indeed of Afghan women in general. The analysis of policy texts reveals a constructed image of Afghan women, fuelled by the media and popular perceptions. As a result, images of women in burqas become dominant and

the only way to tell that the women are Afghan. The pervasive image of the chaddari was reduced to a symbol of Afghan women's oppression. The Western construction of this garment fosters an artificial construct of Afghan men against Afghan women. This unconstructive image of Afghan women serves only to feed stereotypes and deny Afghan women's agency.

Afghans employ the word "burqa" in discussions with foreigners as this corresponds with foreign images of Afghan women. One of the women interviewed by Rostami-Povey sums it up well:

> "The Taliban imposed it on us. After five years … [it has] become part of our culture, we feel comfortable with it. Our community and society do not accept women without chaddari. We will not take it off just because the West wants us to … Some of us may take it off once we are ready and our society is ready. To be pressured by the West to take off our chaddari is as bad as Taliban imposing [it] on us [in the first place]. We have the right to choose what to wear."

Men are kept away from women through seclusion and veiling. Apart from veiling it also refers to the restriction on the physical movement of Afghan women. Purdah signifies dress as a form of coverage that creates a private space secluding women. There is another school of feminists, both Muslim and non-Muslim, that also listens to the voices of covered women, but reaches different conclusions about covering from those of the liberal feminists. Afghans, and Afghan women in particular, have been at the receiving end of these ideological offensives as a result of their perceived association with the Taliban, al-Qaida and terrorism and have been physically and emotionally abused, especially those Afghan women who wear the hijab.

Butler contemplates the 'suffering over war' that is lost in the visual representations of 'liberated' Afghan women. Bahman identifies burqa as the "symbol of traditionally conservative Afghan society which pre-dates the Taliban, in which women are viewed as men's possessions, to be hidden from other men." The representations of Afghanistan with repeated portrayals of Afghan women as oppressed bodies behind the veil were common. There is no denying the misogyny of the Taliban Government that damaged the lives of many women, but the singular media representation of veiling and the veiled woman as a symbol of underdevelopment and patriarchy neglects the multiple meanings of veiling. Some Muslim women have adopted the veil as a brave act of defiance against the social corruption of a western-oriented market economy. The veil simultaneously hides

women and marks them as different. It reinforces women as out of place in public spaces.

The chaddari should be viewed in its socio political and historical context. A nuanced understanding reveals that the chaddari can also be seen as a symbol of resistance. Its earliest uses by the Pashtun elite provided freedom of mobility and anonymity. During the Taliban era, the chaddari was used strategically "as a shroud of anonymity and disguise" to transport messages, weapons, cameras, and banned publications. Instead of reducing Afghan/Muslim women to one of the stereotypes, efforts have been made by some feminist geographers to explore the complexity of the issue. Dowler and Sharp (2001) explain the range of meanings that veiling can hold- from religious piety, to a strategy that avoids hassle in public space to a fashion statement. Media- driven images of women- as- victims shift focus from women's agency and facilitate the creation of technical solutions to a political problem, clearly designating space for an aid intervention as the only solution to liberate Afghan women.

3.4 Afghan Women and Violence

Women's insecurity has both a structural and contextual dimension. It is now widely understood that there is no single female experience (Koskela, 2005), but the patterns of structural vulnerability are of great importance Feelings of insecurity are bound into structurally subordinate positions of women. Violence has risen dramatically in the last few years. There are continuing levels of violence and there is utter disregard for women in many areas (Abirafeh, 2007).

Prior to the Taliban, women had to endure restrictions on rights to work and to dress. Violence against men accompanying women made it difficult to retain female staff as men were unwilling to support them in fear of retaliation. In the latter part of the 1990s, the ruling elite of Afghanistan, known as the Taleban, instituted the harshest and most bizarre theocratic dictatorship in the world, with a gender regime that was particularly severe on women, though men also suffered. The world came to know about the dire condition of Afghan women largely through the efforts of women's organizations working within their countries and transnationally. The

repression of women was an attractive element to this band. Public toilets and baths were closed to women. The Taliban mobilized their women supporters to suppress the anti-Taliban women and their activities. In most cases women cooperated with male Taliban because of poverty, famine and hunger. According to the United Nations, about 31 per-cent of Afghan women suffered physical violence, 30 percent suffered psychological violence, and 25 percent were subjected to sexual violence. Amnesty International reports that women and girls remain at highest risk for abduction, rape by armed males, sexual violence, forced marriages, domestic violence, and chronic trauma.

In the period of conflict prior to constitutional negotiations, Afghan women were concerned about two overlapping spheres of violence against women, violence in the family and violence outside the family. Violence in Afghanistan has been borne disproportionately by rural women (RAWA, 2011). Violence against women in the family including physical abuse and underage marriage is widely reported. Rape of women and girls by armed groups continues to occur. An increasing incidence of sexual abuse has been reported among women in prisons (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007[j]. No safeguards are in place to protect women from sexual abuse while in police custody. Abuse and violence suffered by Afghan women takes various forms. Domestic (family) violence; underage marriages; forced marriages; temporary marriages; exchange marriages and trading and exchange of women as chattels ; sexual abuse and rape (Afghanistan Gender Report, The World Bank, 2005).

Domestic (family) violence implies violence against women in the home by husbands, male family members and, on rarer occasions, female family members are widely reported. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission's report shows 50% of women undergo daily beatings at home. The Committee on the Elimination of Violence against Women has stated, "Family violence is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women. Within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes." Lack of economic independence forces many women to stay in violent relationships. It also leads to drug abuse by women seeking escape, rising prostitution

and escape from home due to violence and severe restrictions. More recent feminist press describe domestic violence as both a social problem and a violation of women's rights. The pervasiveness of domestic violence in Afghanistan endangers physical and mental health, productivity, and security not only of women but of society as a whole. Underage marriages, forced marriages and temporary marriages and 'badal' (exchange of brides) are also forms of violence and often result in violence against women. Sexual Abuse and Rape are the gravest form of violence against women in Afghanistan.

Women experienced war and violent conflict differently from men. To ignore women and their organizations in the process of reconstruction would deny women in Afghanistan the right to rebuild and solidify their new reality. Feminist geopolitics perspective document the corporeal results of state/military violence and politically constructed scale by way off-linking this violence to international discourses and political action. It examines the geopolitics of violence from below by way of investigating gender politics and the political construction of scale by the documentation of Taliban violence captured by media and organizations like RAWA. The image of the burqa-clad suffering Afghan woman proved effective for rallying public support in the U.S. against the Taliban, which was also criticized for further essentializing Afghan women. Feminist politics when scaled internationally simplified Taliban violence and inscribed it onto women's bodies, rather than illustrate the complexities of the Taliban's gendered violence, which is more pronounced in politics locally. This enacted a politics of violence from above by way of bombing and discursively invoking the saving women trope. Political construction of scale, situated knowledge, and documentation framed corporeal state violence as both local and international. Simultaneously, RAWA linked corporeal violence to ''universally'' recognized human/women rights abuses. This scalar construction of human/women's rights was linked locally through RAWA's portrayal of its social programs.

"Domestic violence and the fear of it are often key factors in limiting women's participation in development projects" (Pickup et al 2001). This backlash could return women to their pre-war roles, or perhaps leave women worse off than they were before the war. Development programs that do not take gender dimensions into

account may be exacerbating violence against women. It is possible to emphasize women's centrality to post-conflict reconstruction and development programs without marginalizing men. Working with men in gender programming as participants and as advocates and supporters could help change male perceptions of women and help to overcome traditional practices which restrict women's rights. This is integral to combating violence against women. Women's rights activists advise caution in order to avoid backlash from the conservative elements of Afghan society. An Afghan woman explained that "when society is ready [for changes]... the women will ask [for] it by themselves" (Abirafeh 2009).

Chapter Four

Aid in Afghanistan

4.1 Afghanistan as a Case Study

A conflict-torn country with a brutal past and a population reeling under extreme poverty- Afghanistan has had reasons to need help. Being a popular destination for international assistance and possessing some of the poorest development indicators in the world, the country makes for an interesting case to study the impact of aid. Aid, in a certain sense, has been synonymous with Afghanistan. Due to low government revenues in Afghanistan, international aid constitutes around 90 percent of public expenditure (Waldman, 2008). It is very important, therefore, to examine how it is spent- for it has a colossal impact on the lives of Afghans. Afghanistan Human Development Report (2007) had estimated that at 62.3, the Human Poverty Index for Afghanistan is one of the worst in the world. As one of the poorest countries, it would be a candidate for development assistance under normal circumstances; but, as a result of the war on Al Qaeda, the 2001 military effort that removed Taliban rule and the geopolitically tactical location of the country, Afghanistan has become a strategic priority and recipient to billions of dollars in foreign assistance serving multiple objectives. Since 2002, donors have provided around $25 billion of security-related assistance, primarily for building Afghan security forces, yet only $15 billion has been provided for civil reconstruction and development (Afghan Ministry of Finance, 2008).

The women of Afghanistan, made famous by media as the blue-chaddari clad oppressed figures, have been an object of worldwide sympathy and interest. Gender issues remain one of the most contested in the context of assistance to Afghanistan, and the restrictions placed on projects addressing women are problematic. Since 2001 there have been some improvements in the situation of women in Afghanistan, but the gender commitments of the Afghan government are still far from fulfilled. Many have expressed the legitimate fear that women's regained rights will be traded off in the ongoing peace negotiations. The transition of security responsibilities to Afghan authorities is planned to take place in 2014 and a review of the work done and the results accomplished in the last decade is imperative.

4.2 Aid in Afghanistan

Overseas aid, which is also known as Official Development Assistance has as its main objective the promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries and does not include military-related support although humanitarian assistance is within the scope of its definition. The OECD, the inter-governmental body mandated with monitoring and improving donor contributions and practices, is the official international data source for measuring aid flows. Total net official development assistance (ODA) provided by members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) amounted to USD 3 billion in 2006. In 2006, aid accounted for approximately 36% of Afghanistan's gross national income (GNI). For 2006-07, the volume of aid was almost double the level of central government expenditure. It is thus obvious that aid is of great importance to the Afghan economy.

An analysis of the aid received by Afghanistan is important to determine its effect on Afghanistan and its people, especially women. This is attempted through a review of aid related data, surveying the amount of aid received, the donors and agencies involved and the sectoral and spatial distribution of aid. An examination of gender-focused aid follows, studying the impact of certain initiatives on the lives and condition of Afghan women from a feminist geopolitical perspective. For the purpose of this research, data derived from varied sources has been used to assess the aid situation in Afghanistan. Data on aid to Afghanistan is maintained in different forms among numerous and often-incomplete systems, according to a 2008 study on aid effectiveness by the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). These systems include several databases of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as the Afghan Ministry of Finance's (MoF) Donor Assistance Database. Data from the MoF's Donor Assistance Database, which has the benefit of on-the-ground presence in Afghanistan, is able to offer data on the more specific sectoral allocation of aid. Data availability is a major constraint while dealing with women-specific information. Since the research is concerned with the aid that is channelled into programmes to benefit women, development assistance is emphasized in this study.

Using OECD Database it is observed that Afghanistan received 3.78% of official assistance provided to all developing countries throughout the world in 2008. That is to say, Afghanistan received, on a per capita basis, nearly 10 times as much aid as the

average developing country in 2008. A major shift is discernible when the data for major recipients of individual DAC (Development Assistance Committee) member's aid is analysed- Afghanistan which was either absent or ranked low in the top ten recipients for the years 1989-1990 and 1999-2000, has shown a quantum jump and features as a high priority for most of the DAC members in 2009-2010.

Table 4.1

Major recipients of DAC Countries' Aid: Gross Disbursements as % of total ODA

1989-90		**1999-00**		**2009-10**	
Egypt	4.5	Indonesia	4.0	Afghanistan	3.9
Indonesia	3.9	China	3.5	Indonesia	2.2
China	2.9	Egypt	2.4	India	2.1
Israel	2.6	India	2.4	China	1.8
India	2.5	Thailand	2.0	Iraq	1.7
Bangladesh	2.0	Vietnam	1.9	Vietnam	1.7
Philippines	1.9	Philippines	1.6	Pakistan	1.4
Kenya	1.7	Bangladesh	1.4	Ethiopia	1.4
Pakistan	1.6	Mozambique	1.2	Congo, Dem. Rep.	1.3
Tanzania	1.5	Tanzania	1.2	Sudan	1.3
Thailand	1.5	Serbia	1.0	West Bank & Gaza Strip	1.2
Turkey	1.3	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1.0	Haiti	1.1
Mozambique	1.3	Peru	0.8	Tanzania	1.1
Senegal	1.2	Pakistan	0.8	Mozambique	1.0
Congo, Dem. Rep.	1.1	Uganda	0.8	Kenya	1.0
Total above	**31.3**	**Total above**	**26.1**	**Total above**	**24.2**
Multilateral ODA	26.1	Multilateral ODA	27.9	Multilateral ODA	27.2
Unallocated	12.2	Unallocated	17.6	Unallocated	21.5

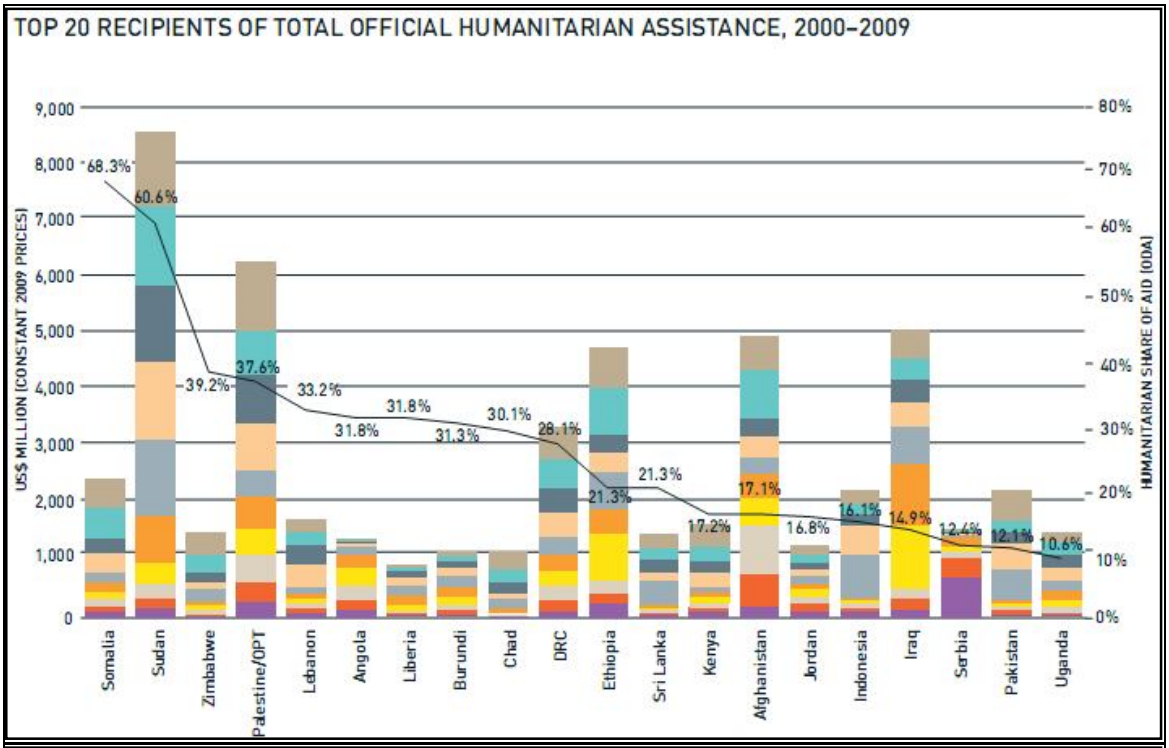
Total ODA USD mill.	**54 976**	**Total ODA USD mill.**	**60 174**	**Total ODA USD mill.**	**136 376**
LDCs	24.3	LDCs	19.2	LDCs	27.2
Other LICs	9.3	Other LICs	8.6	Other LICs	9.9
LMICs	35.4	LMICs	39.0	LMICs	27.0
UMICs	7.8	UMICs	7.5	UMICs	6.4
MADCT	6.5	MADCT	1.3	MADCT	0.0
Unallocated	16.6	Unallocated	24.4	Unallocated	29.5
Total Bilateral	**100.0**	**Total Bilateral**	**100.0**	**Total Bilateral**	**100.0**
Sub-Saharan Africa	29.6	Sub-Saharan Africa	20.5	Sub-Saharan Africa	26.9
S. and C. Asia	10.6	S. and C. Asia	10.3	S. and C. Asia	14.7
Other Asia and Oceania	19.4	Other Asia and Oceania	23.7	Other Asia and Oceania	13.3
Middle East and North Africa	14.3	Middle East and North Africa	8.9	Middle East and North Africa	8.7
Latin America and Caribbean	10.6	Latin America and Caribbean	11.7	Latin America and Caribbean	8.9
Europe	2.4	Europe	6.1	Europe	3.5
Unspecified	13.1	Unspecified	18.7	Unspecified	24.2
Total Bilateral	**100.0**	**Total Bilateral**	**100.0**	**Total Bilateral**	**100.0**

Source: Development Initiatives, OECD DAC

Looking at the figures for the top twenty recipients of international humanitarian assistance, it is noticed that the volume of aid to Afghanistan has considerably increased in the last decade, from US$ 17.1 million in 2000 to US$ 394.7 million in 2009.

Figure 4.1

Top 20 Recipients of Total Official Humanitarian Assistance, 2000-2009



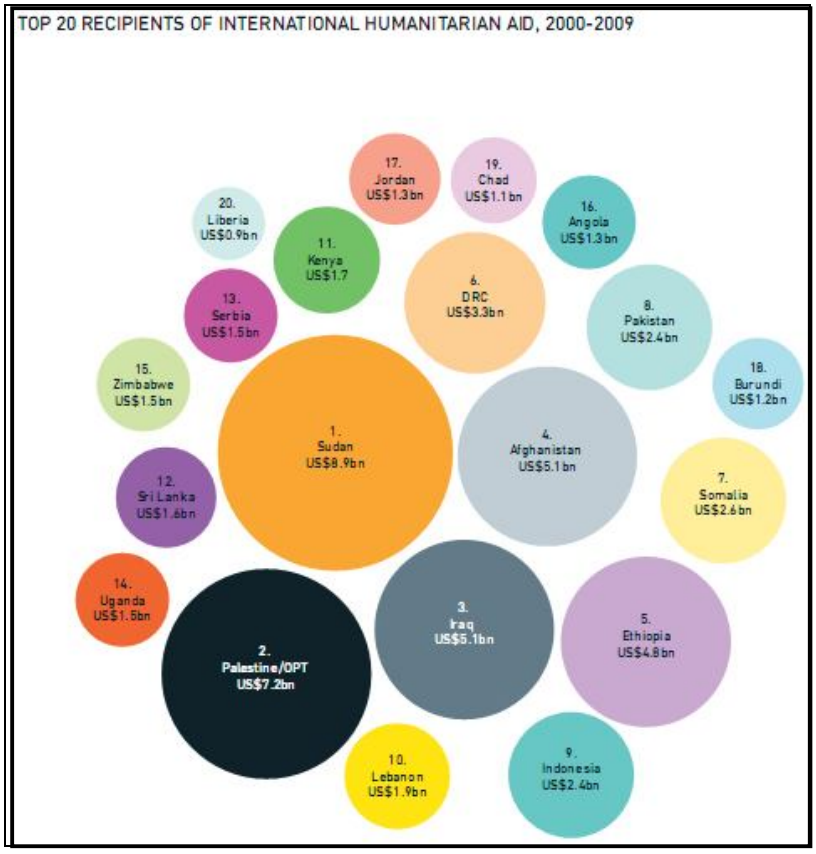
	Somalia	Sudan	Zimbabwe	Palestine/OPT	Lebanon	Angola	Liberia	Burundi	Chad	DRC	Ethiopia	Sri Lanka	Kenya	Afghanistan	Jordan	Indonesia	Iraq	Serbia	Pakistan	Uganda
2009	528.5	1304.9	389.9	1187.5	192.3	6.8	43.5	88.4	318.0	560.9	680.7	231.2	394.7	577.9	150.0	257.1	490.9	16.5	544.3	152.0
2008	552.3	1371.2	328.0	772.7	248.8	10.8	88.8	86.9	239.0	528.2	832.4	242.2	299.9	850.2	146.9	133.1	381.5	21.3	174.1	234.7
2007	267.3	1314.4	162.7	857.7	337.9	28.0	108.2	108.5	182.4	415.9	301.6	209.6	194.1	318.3	120.5	237.2	375.8	28.6	243.8	224.8
2006	318.8	1363.1	114.1	804.8	418.0	57.4	147.6	151.2	107.4	435.6	343.3	161.8	243.0	351.6	116.3	506.8	432.6	31.5	448.3	228.3
2005	190.4	1375.5	213.3	447.9	111.9	120.2	144.9	169.7	123.0	306.6	656.5	400.0	84.6	319.5	118.7	739.7	668.1	41.8	533.2	179.7
2004	153.7	844.7	68.9	564.0	91.0	214.8	172.2	163.5	96.8	286.6	439.2	48.0	89.9	428.7	109.4	31.9	1077.1	133.1	55.4	164.5
2003	134.2	357.8	92.6	462.4	81.2	311.1	104.5	150.1	11.0	255.9	803.5	39.0	76.7	485.9	136.0	64.3	1140.3	128.4	66.1	145.3
2002	129.2	261.4	83.4	465.0	90.2	276.5	48.6	104.0	4.0	261.3	231.9	48.4	94.7	855.9	123.5	72.8	147.0	108.8	67.4	79.9
2001	97.7	172.0	7.5	363.3	86.6	144.6	24.1	78.4	10.1	187.0	212.6	41.0	88.4	561.6	125.5	79.6	177.5	308.7	80.4	59.1
2000	79.9	130.4	4.5	273.2	78.4	157.5	40.4	57.0	8.3	95.4	229.0	44.6	75.1	164.0	118.5	73.5	140.3	720.6	33.7	35.6
00-09	68.3%	60.6%	39.2%	37.6%	33.2%	31.8%	31.8%	31.3%	30.1%	28.1%	21.3%	21.3%	17.2%	17.1%	16.8%	16.1%	14.9%	12.4%	12.1%	10.6%

Source**:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Data

Overall, Afghanistan features as the fourth largest recipient of international humanitarian aid during the years 2000-2009 with an assistance of US$ 5.1 billion, topped only by Sudan, Palestine/OPT and Iraq. Even among the developing countries of South and Central Asia, Afghanistan manages to hold the top position as aid recipient from DAC donors. Analyzing the total bilateral aid flow to Afghanistan temporally, it is observed that the volume of aid received has increased very rapidly. Such an interesting profile is worth investigating into.

Figure 4.2

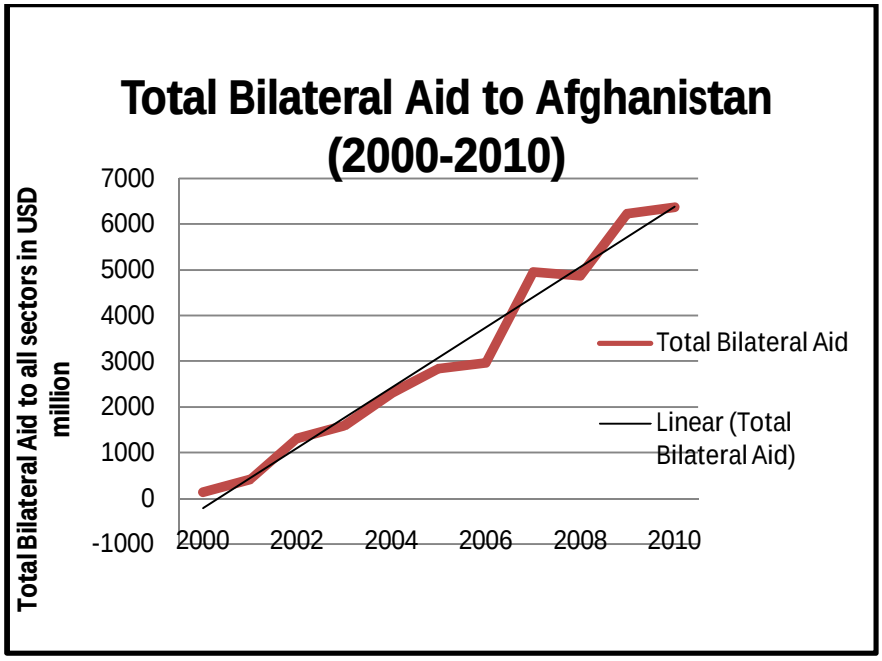
Top 20 Recipients of International Humanitarian Aid, 2000-2009



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Data

Figure 4.3

Total Bilateral Aid to Afghanistan, 2000-2010

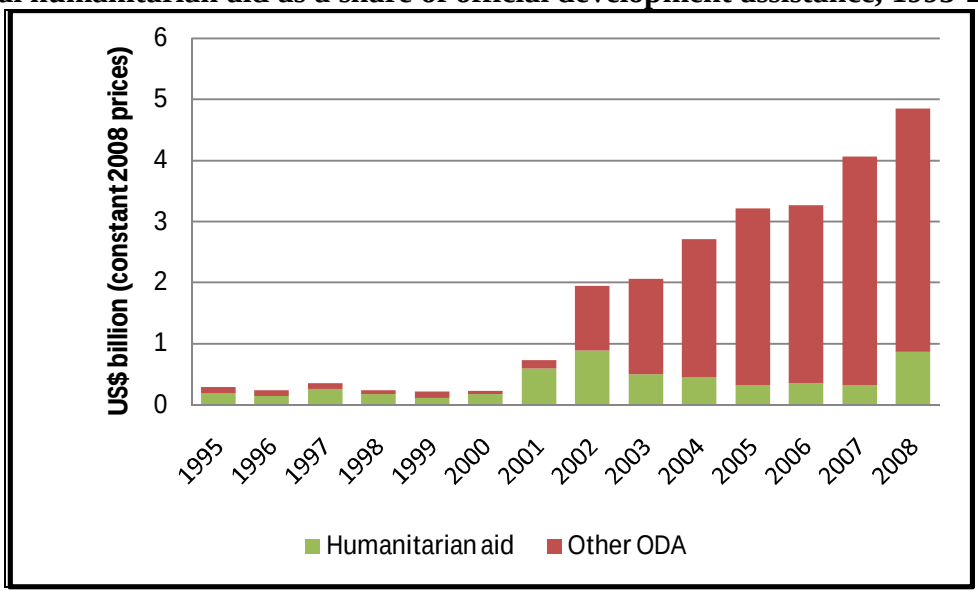


4.2.1 Humanitarian Aid

Humanitarian assistance has comprised a relatively smaller portion of the total aid received by Afghanistan as can be seen from the figures that follow.

Figure 4.4

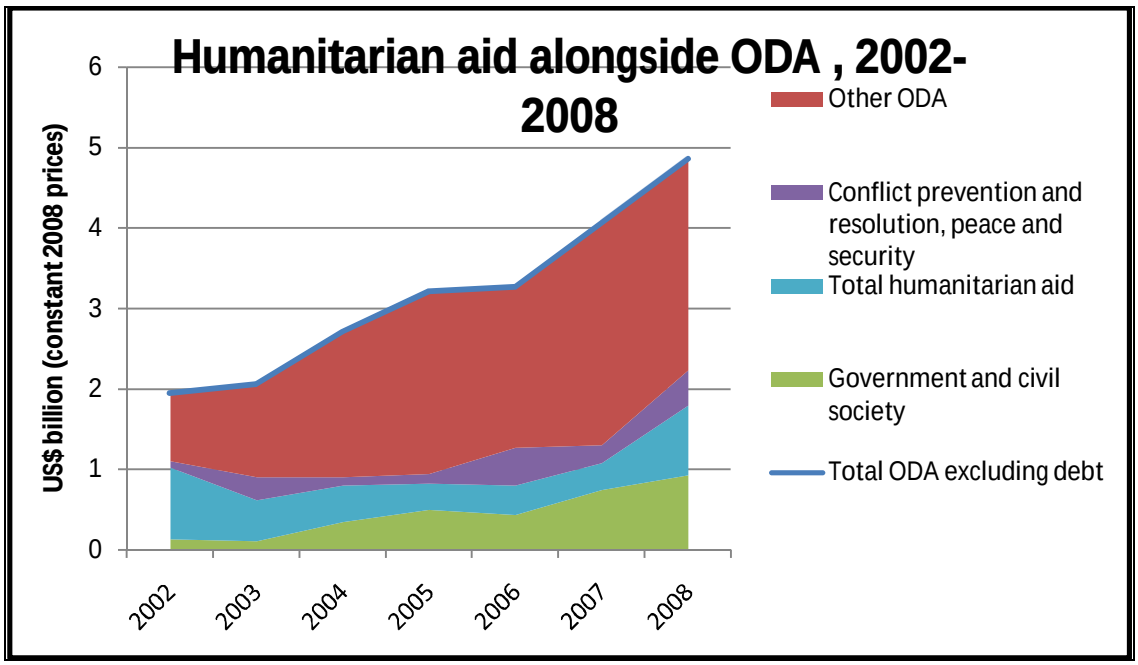
Total humanitarian aid as a share of official development assistance, 1995-2008



Source**:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

Figure 4.5

Humanitarian aid alongside ODA on conflict prevention and governance, 2002-2008



Source**:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC (constant 2008 prices) data.

The top humanitarian aid donors to Afghanistan between 1999 and 2008 (Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC and OCHA FTS Data) have mostly been amongst EC, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, UK, US and lately, Australia (Table 4.2). The volume of such aid has expanded considerably but it still lags behind security and debt relief in terms of proportion of total aid.

Table 4.2

Top three Humanitarian aid donors to Afghanistan, 1999-2008

Top 3 donors (US$m)	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1	EC 17.6	EC 33.3	Netherlands 125.2	US 261.2	US 151.9	US 83.6	US 81.5	US 119.6	US 92.8	EC 225.2
2	Germany 17.6	Norway 25.6	Germany 87.9	UK 153.9	EC 73.4	EC 69.7	EC 69.2	EC 38.4	Germany 32.6	US 215.5
3	Netherlands 17.2	UK 21.9	EC 86.4	EC 134.2	Norway 69.7	Norway 47.9	Germany 47.8	Germany 34.5	Australia 32	Australia 90.6

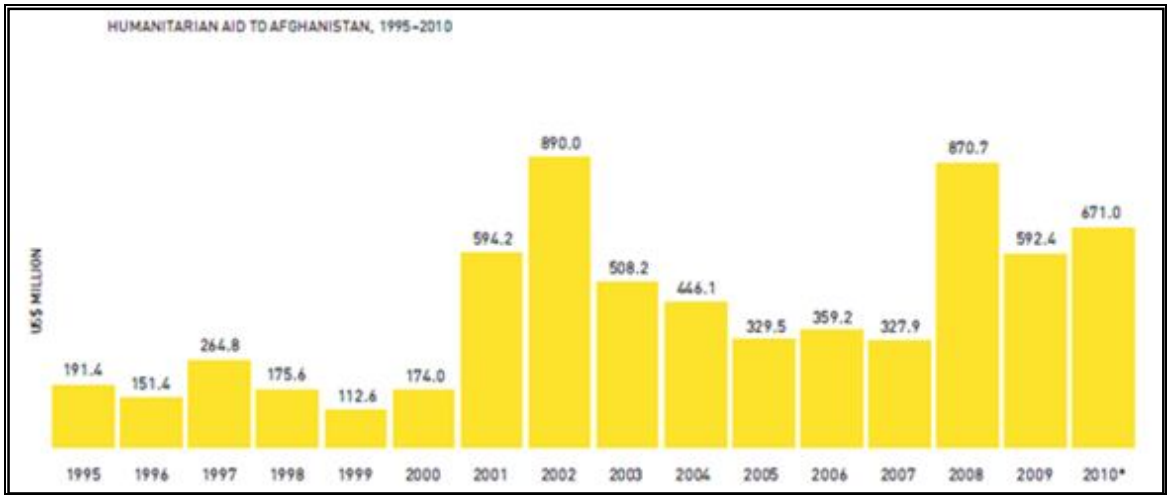
	projects (US$m)	Share via EC (US$m)	Core to UN agencies (US$m)	Share via CERF (US$m)	Total humanitarian aid (US$m)
EC	*225.2*		*0.0*		225.2
US	215.3	0.0	0.0	0.2	215.5
Australia	90.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	90.6
Germany	45.9	43.0	0.0	0.6	89.5
Spain	49.7	19.3	0.3	1.8	71.1
UK	21.7	34.3	0.2	3.2	59.5
Japan	42.6	0.0	0.2	0.1	42.8
Italy	11.6	29.3	0.4	0.1	41.5
Norway	37.4	0.0	0.5	2.2	40.2
Canada	35.1	0.0	0.3	1.6	36.9
Other governments	71.2	99.3	3.8	8.0	182.4
Total	**845.91**		**5.8**	**18.2**	**869.9**

Source**:** Based on OECD DAC and UN OCHA FTS Data

A temporal analysis of humanitarian aid received by Afghanistan reveals that it increased by 241.5% between 2000 and 2001, reaching a peak of US$890.0 million in 2002, following the invasion in late 2001. Humanitarian aid had been on a sharp downward trend since 2002 until a second upsurge in 2008 to US$870.7 million, when food shortages and increased insecurity contributed to a significant elevation in humanitarian needs. This growth in humanitarian aid has not been sustained, however, and in 2009, despite the US$1.3 billion increase in total aid, it fell by US$278.3 million to just US$592.4 million.

Figure 4.6

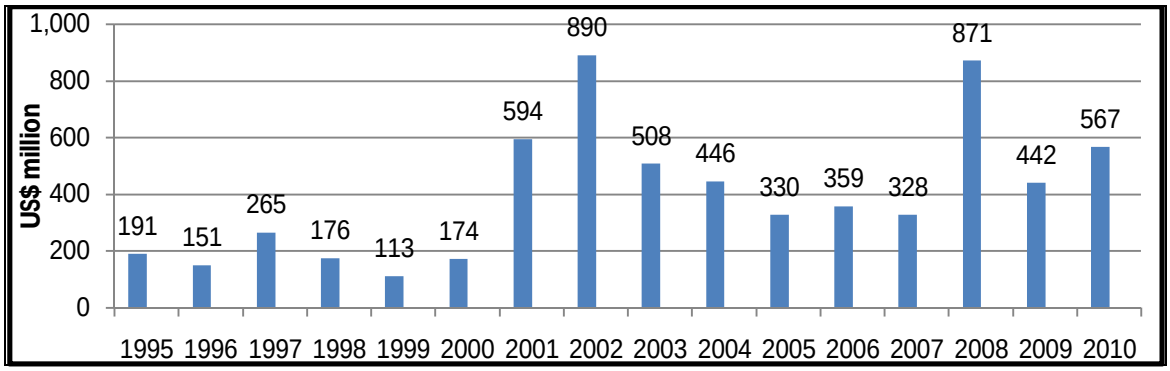
Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan, 1995-2010



Source: Global Humanitarian Aid- Afghanistan 2011

Figure 4.7

Humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, 1995 – 2010



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC (constant 2008 prices) for 1995 - 2008 and UN OCHA FTS data for 2009 - 2010.

4.3 Donors

The aid landscape of Afghanistan has seen a major alteration post 2001. Afghanistan has been receiving aid from about 47 donor countries and development agencies since 2002. The amount of international aid disbursed since 2001 – $57 billion against $90 billion pledged – is a fraction of what has been spent on the war effort (Waldman 2008).

There is no doubt that there is a need for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and that it needs to move away from emergency relief towards rehabilitation and development support. While analyzing the aid data for development

and reconstruction, United States tops the list of the largest donors, contributing one-third of all aid since 2002 (Waldman, 2008). Other major donors are Japan, the UK, European Commission, the World Bank, Germany and Canada. The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden also make substantial contributions. Given the historical involvement with Afghanistan, the contribution of Russia is minimal. Countries such as Turkey and Australia are also becoming increasingly engaged in providing development assistance. Turkey's aid to Afghanistan has more than doubled each year, on average, between 2002 and 2008 to the point that it is now the sixth most significant bilateral donor to the country! There seems to be a geopolitical motive behind this move. There has been a similar leap in the assistance provided to Afghanistan by several of the DAC countries.

Table 4.3

Major Donors to Post-2001 Afghanistan

Country	ODA to AFG, 2008 *(USD Millions)*	Proportion of ODA to AFG, 2008	Proportion of ODA to AFG, 2002-8	Annual Rate of Change in ODA to AFG, 2002-8[5]
United States	2,111.58	43.40%	40.31%	28.37%
United Kingdom	322.31	6.62%	7.63%	13.75%
Germany	294.02	6.04%	4.94%	17.95%
Japan	208.03	4.28%	4.17%	30.83%
Canada	207.86	4.27%	4.79%	28.56%
Turkey	141.96	2.92%	1.56%	133.07%
Australia	138.44	2.85%	1.35%	40.56%
Norway	129.05	2.65%	2.78%	11.34%
Italy	116.71	2.40%	1.73%	22.41%
The Netherlands	111.97	2.30%	3.15%	3.45%
Total EU/EC[6] (Bi- & Multi-lateral)	1,532.55	31.50%	32.76%	14.16%

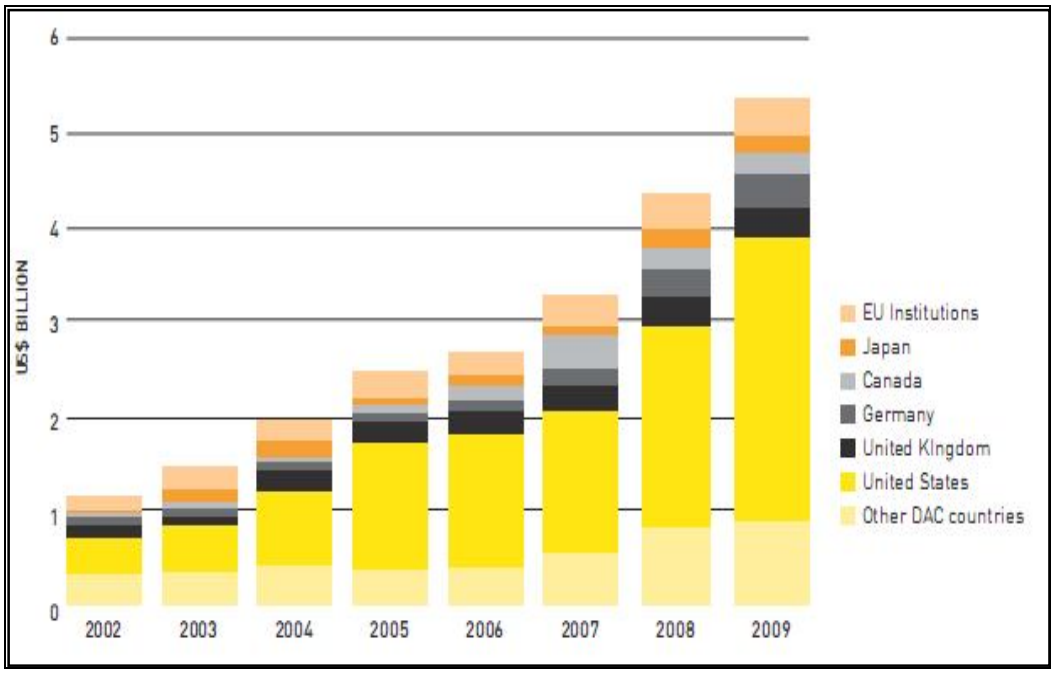
Source: OECD, Query for International Development Statistics

Since 2002, Afghanistan has been provided with a remarkable amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA). The country has been pledged development assistance through a series of Pledging Conferences. The Tokyo Conference in 2002 was the first event where donors pledged to provide the country with US$ 5.1 billion. It was followed by the Berlin Conference in 2004 and the London Conference in 2006. Finally, at the Paris Conference in 2008 the Government of Afghanistan

presented its first five-year National Development Strategy (ANDS). As a result, a further aid assistance of US$ 14 billion to achieve the ANDS targets was pledged.

Figure 4.8

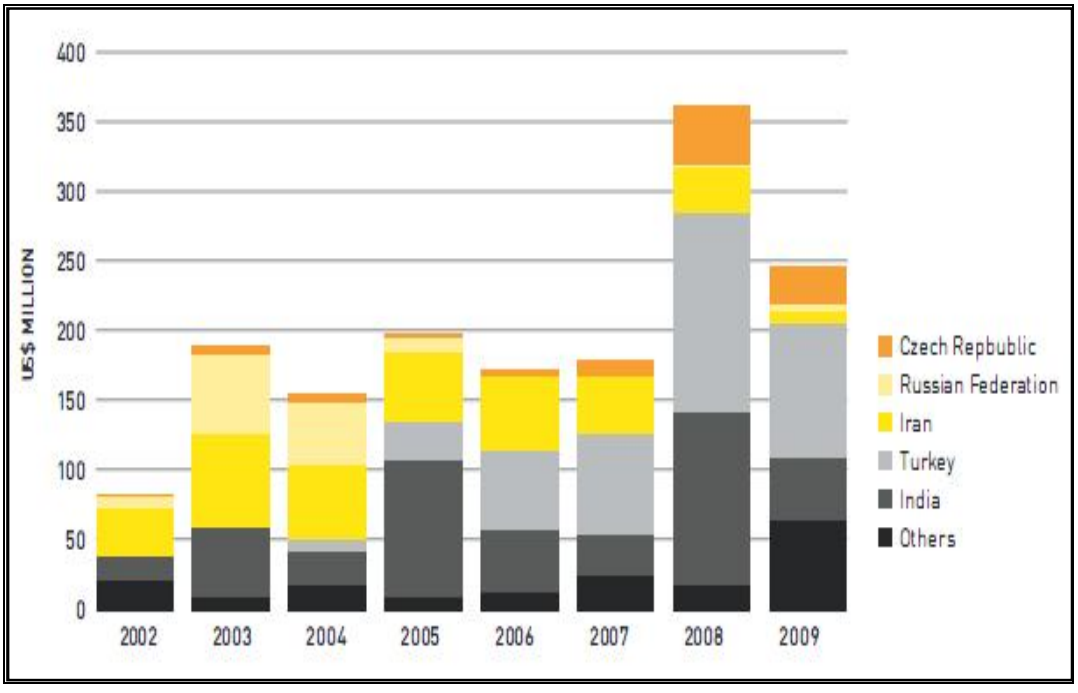
DAC Donor Aid to Afghanistan 2002-2009



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD Data

Figure 4.9

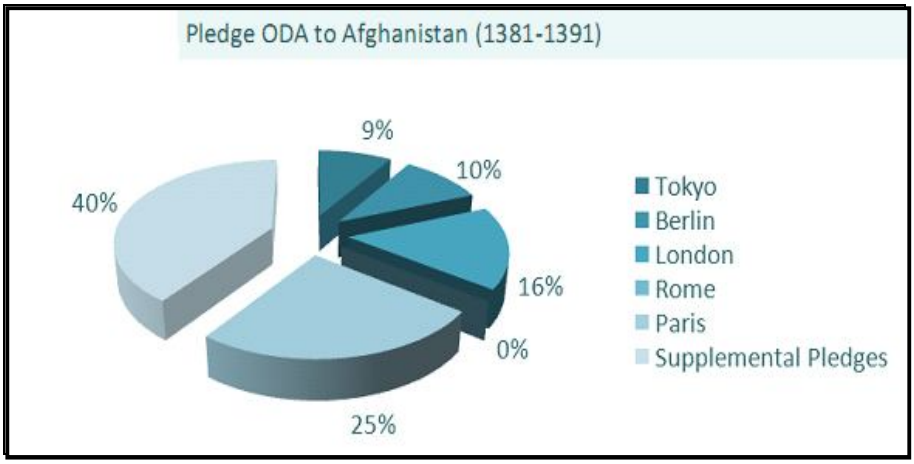
Non DAC Donor Aid to Afghanistan 2002-2009



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD Data

Figure 4.10

Pledge ODA to Afghanistan: 2002-2012

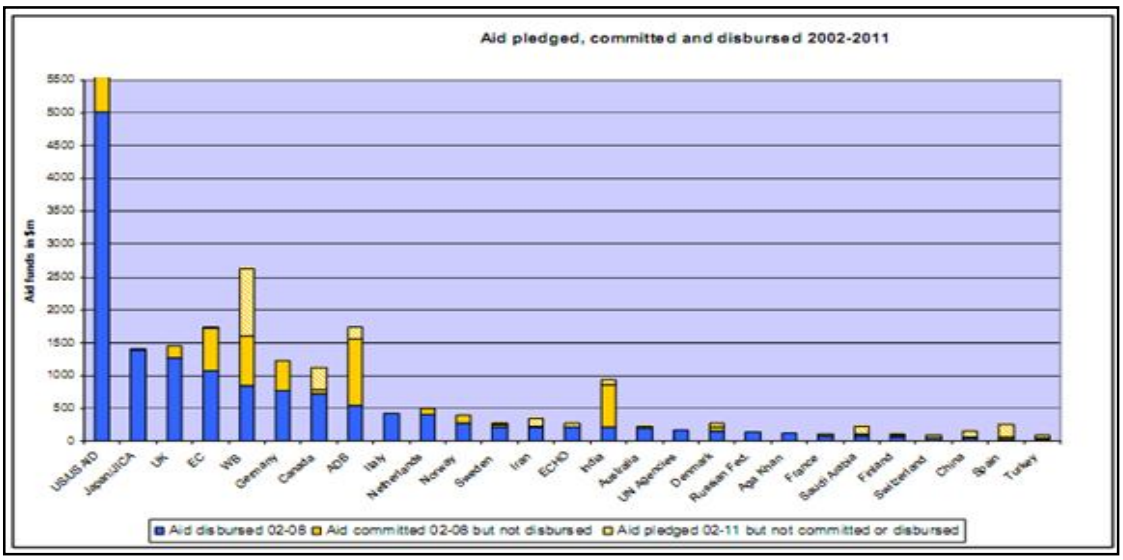


Source: Afghan Ministry of Finance

Figure 4.11 shows that many donors have failed to fulfill their aid commitments. While Japan and Canada have delivered 90 percent of their aid commitment during 2002-2008, the ADB and India have disbursed only a third of their 2002-2008 commitment. These shortfalls are partly attributable to challenging operating conditions, high levels of corruption and weak absorption capacities (Waldman, 2008). Lengthy timeframes of some projects and capacity constraints are also responsible for the aid not being delivered. However the ability of Afghan government to undertake medium term budget planning is considerably limited due to the uncertainty in future aid flows.

Figure 4.11

Aid pledged, committed and disbursed 2002-2011



Source: Waldman, 2008

Since discussing the details of all the donors to Afghanistan is beyond the scope of this study, a few important ones will be deliberated upon. The United States is the single largest donor to Afghanistan. The bulk of U.S. assistance is in security-related activities. The second-largest portion of assistance has been aimed at economic, social and political development efforts. The main provider of these programs is the Agency for International Development (USAID), with the Department of State playing a significant role in democracy and governance activities.

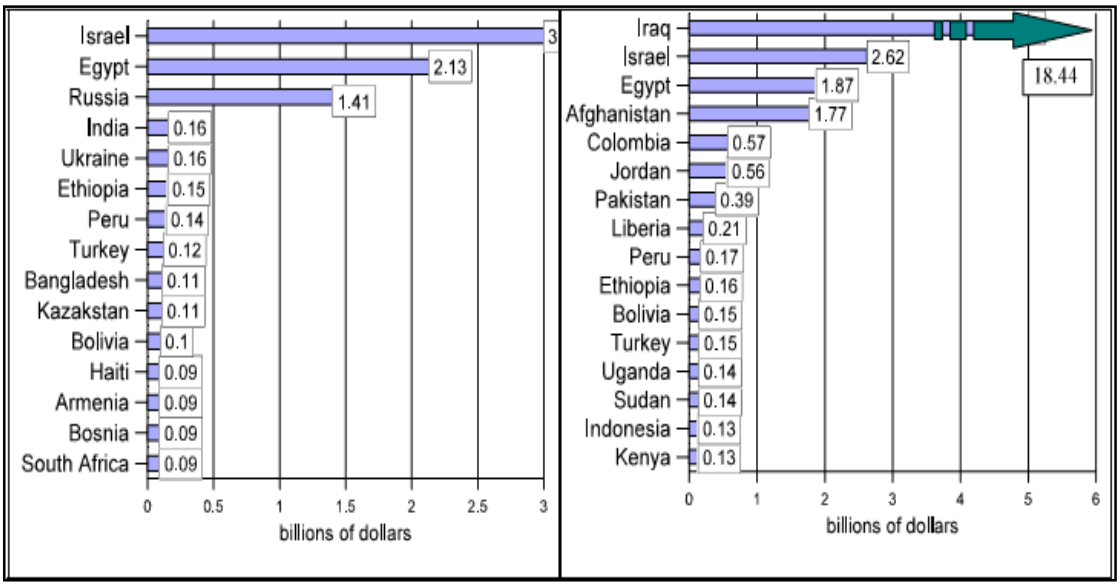
These programs account for roughly 31% of total aid since 2001. A third element of assistance, humanitarian aid, largely implemented through USAID and international organizations, represents about 4% of total aid since 2001. The fourth main component of the aid program is counter-narcotics, implemented largely by the State Department in conjunction with DOD, USAID, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. It accounts for about 9% of total aid since 2001. Lately US is changing its aid strategy and promoting the 'Afghanization' of assistance, directing assistance as much as feasible through Afghan entities, public and private.

A closer look at the USAID figures reveals a shift in the recipient countries over the past decade. The impact of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent use of foreign aid to support other nations threatened by terrorism or helping the U.S. combat the global threat can be clearly seen in the country-aid allocations for FY2004. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, and Indonesia are key partners in the war on terrorism. The Middle East has for many years received the bulk of U.S. foreign assistance. Economic aid to the region's top two recipients, Israel and Egypt, declined since the late 1990s and since September 11, South Asia has emerged as region of growing concentrated levels of U.S. assistance, rising from a 4% share ten years ago to 17% in FY2004. In Afghanistan, USAID contributes to infrastructure, agriculture, public healthcare, supports a number of education efforts and also addresses elements of democracy and public administration, apart from funding programs assisting women and girls.

Figure 4.12

Top Foreign Aid Recipients in

FY 1994 *FY 2004*

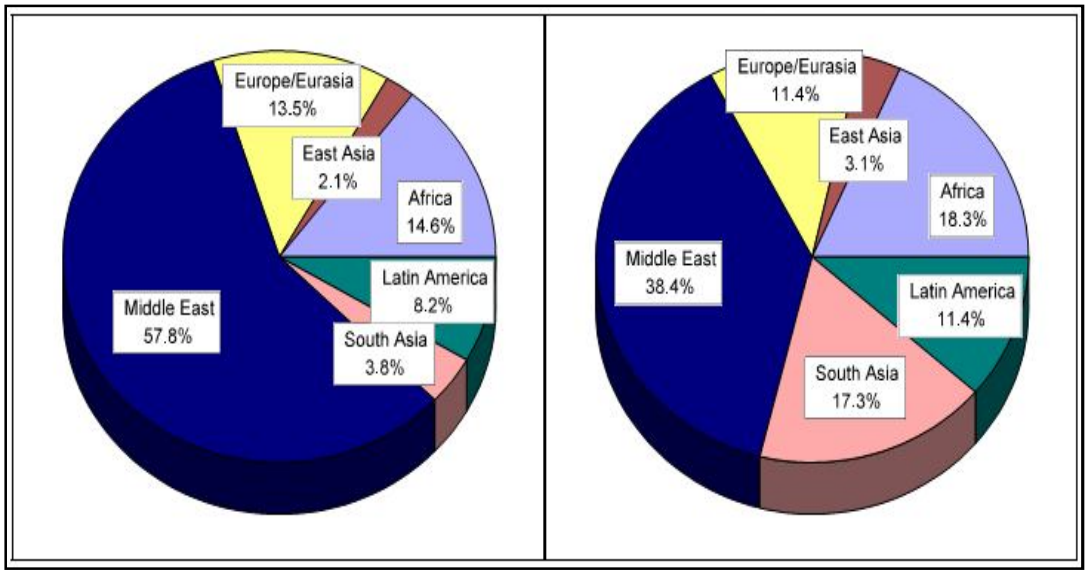


Source: USAID and the Department of State

Figure 4.13

Regional Distribution of Aid

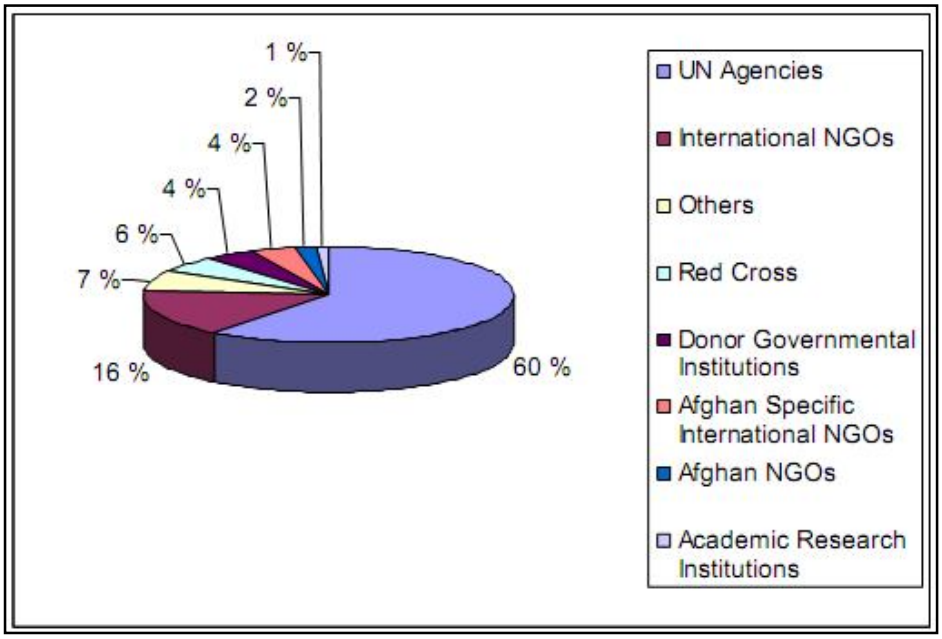
FY1994 *FY2004*



Source: USAID and the Department of State

Figure 4.14

Aid Disbursement per Implementing Agency

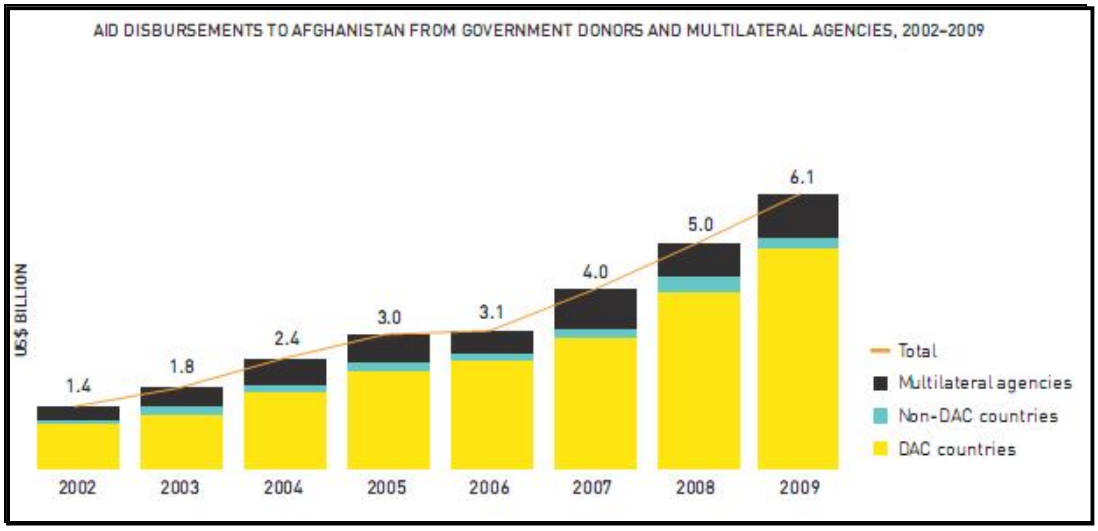


Source: AACA, November, 2002

Apart from donor countries, Non-Governmental Organizations and multilateral agencies are the main implementers of aid programmes. Looking at the overall picture of distribution of the 1.5 billion US dollars pledged for Afghanistan at the Tokyo conference (Figure 4.14), the UN agencies emerge as the single largest recipient. International NGOs come in second place, while only 2 % of the aid is channelled through Afghan NGOs. These figures from the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA) are, however, not fully reliable as they only reflect what donors report having contributed to these different implementers, not what has actually been implemented. More interestingly, though, with a few exceptions the UN agencies implement all their programmes through NGOs, as do now various Ministries. That consequently makes the NGO sector the single largest implementer of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan today, with an estimated total disbursement close to the 60 % that the UN agencies are reportedly implementing.

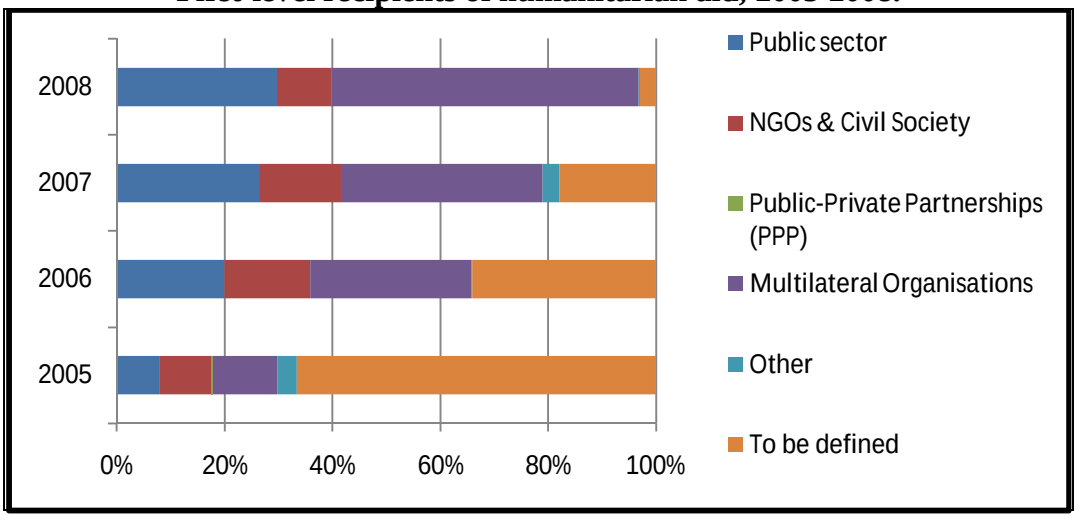
Figure 4.15

Aid Disbursements to Afghanistan



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC and Afghanistan DAD data

Figure 4.16
First-level recipients of humanitarian aid, 2005-2008.



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC (constant 2008 prices) data.

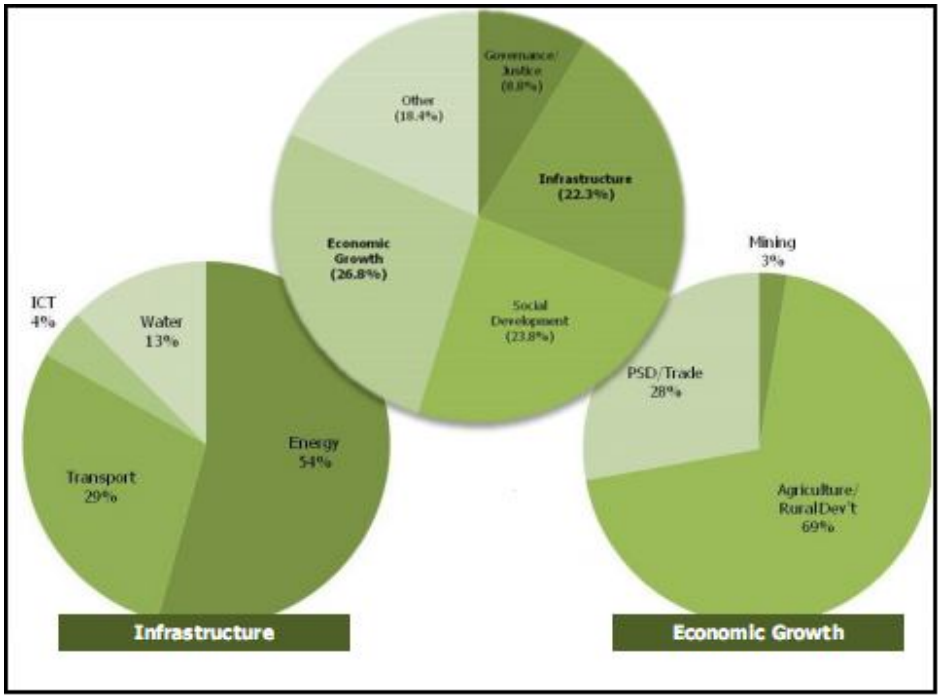
The first level recipients of humanitarian aid are multilateral organizations, public sector, NGOs and civil society among others, as shown in the figure above (Figure 4.16). Local NGOs like Afghan Peace Association, Afghan Women's Mission, Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, Rehabilitation Agency for the Development for Development of Afghanistan, Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children of Afghanistan and several others are also working at the grass root level to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

4.4 Sectoral Allocation of Aid

The analysis of data for sectoral distribution for aid shows that the sectoral allocation of aid to Afghanistan is top-heavy with an emphasis on security. One quarter of all aid to Afghanistan has been allocated to technical assistance – which is intended to build government capacity – yet much of such assistance has been wasteful, donor-driven and of limited impact**.** According to the data available from the Ministry of Finance's Donor Assistance Database, just under half of the total non-security assistance for Afghanistan went towards economic growth and infrastructure development.

Figure 4.17

Sectoral Breakdown of Assistance to Afghanistan, 2002-2009

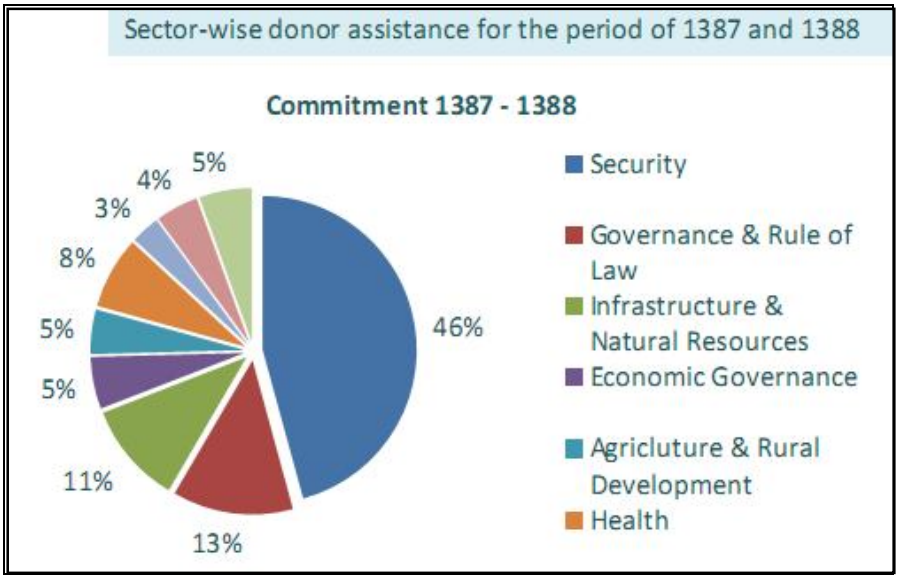


Source: Ministry of Finance, Development Assistance Database, 2010

Records of the Ministry of Finance indicate that out of the total disbursed ODA over 45% of aid assistance has been committed for security sector. Infrastructure has received 15% of donors' funding, and both Agriculture & Rural Development and Governance have received 9% of the resources. Other sectors such as Education, Health, Economic Governance, and Social Protection have jointly received around 22% of aid assistance. The unclassified proportion represents the amount of aid spent on cross cutting programs such as gender, counter narcotics, environment protection, and anti corruption. This indicates that due to large spending in security sector, less attention has been given to other priority sectors of the ANDS.

Figure 4.18

Sector-wise donor assistance (2008-2009)

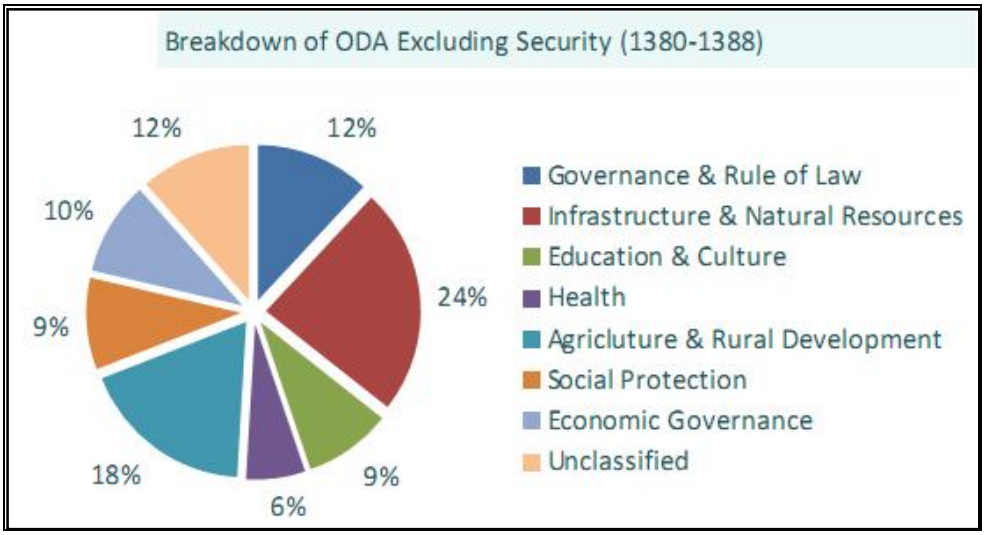


Source: Afghan Ministry of Finance

Considering only pure development assistance in the years 2002-2009, excluding assistance for security sector, a different picture emerges. A major part of the total development assistance was invested in infrastructure and agriculture and rural development sectors. The Governance and Rule of Law sectors have received 12% of the total assistance followed by Economic Governance and Social Protection with 10% each. Health and Education, the two important sectors, have received comparatively the least assistance.

Figure 4.19

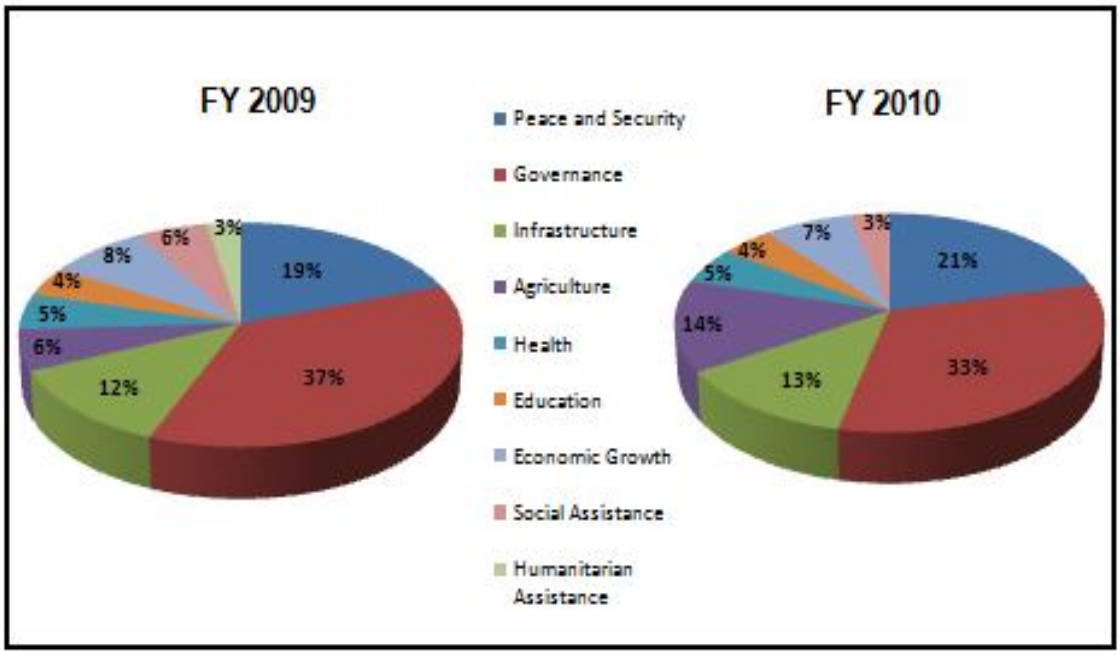
Breakdown of ODA Excluding Security (2002-2009)



Source: Afghan Ministry of Finance

Figure 4.20

Afghanistan Sectoral Allocations FY 09 and FY 10



Source: Based on USAID statistics, 2010

USAID, Afghanistan's largest donor supports a number of efforts to stimulate growth of the Afghan economy and rehabilitate the population. The sectoral allocations for the financial years 2009 and 2010 (Figure 4.20) portray that governance and peace and security get the bulk of the US Assistance, followed by infrastructure and agriculture. Humanitarian assistance is relegated to about 3 percent. U.S. funds address a number of humanitarian situations in Afghanistan, most stemming from the years of war that preceded the U.S. intervention as well as the insurgency that has followed.

The Afghan Ministry of Finance in its Predictability estimates of total funding, had allocated a bulk of the ODA to security followed by governance and public administration and human rights. Infrastructure (energy and transport) along with agriculture, health and education were the next biggest recipients of assistance (Table 4.4). Although there is not a separate allocation for women-oriented aid, due to its nature, gender remains a cross-cutting stream for assistance. Funding in the sectors of security, human rights, justice, urban and rural development, information and communication technology, education, health, social protection- all contribute to improving the condition of women.

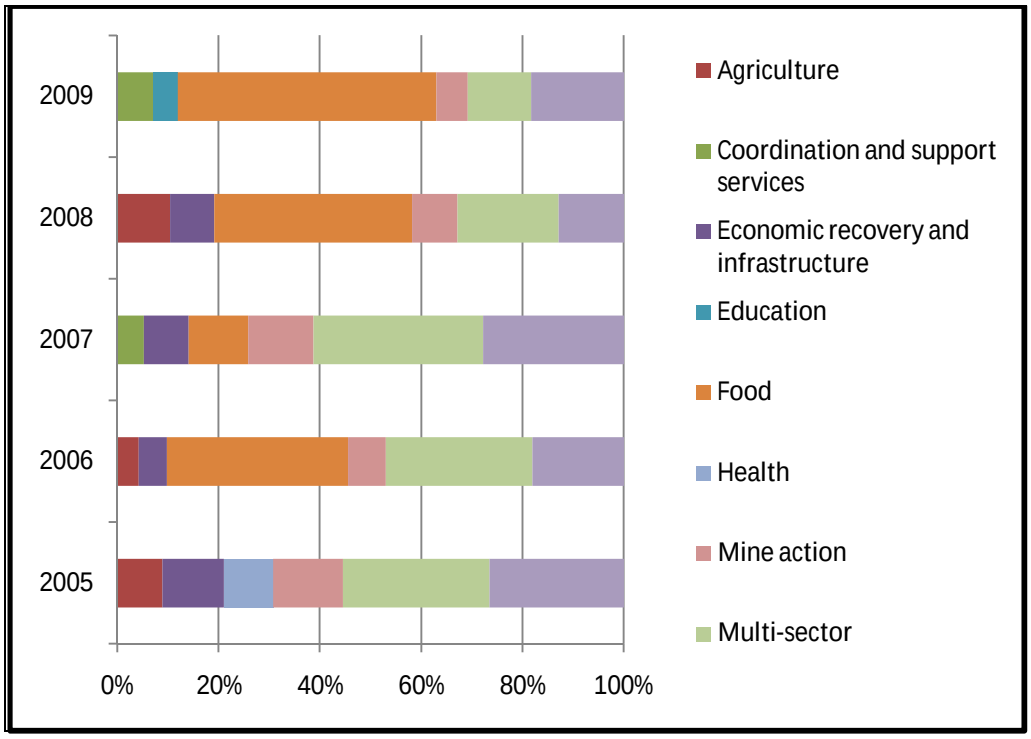
Table 4.4

Predictability of ODA for Afghanistan (2009-2013) Figures in US$ Million

S.No.		Description	Annual Breakdown				Grand Total
			1388	1389	1390	1391	
			2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	
1		Total funding envelope	6,643.66	1,686.77	1,008.37	878.08	10,216.87
2		Sectoral Allocation of the above					
	A	Security	2,262.59	87.74	69.56	67.71	2,487.61
	B	Governance & Public Administration Reform & Human Rights	803.36	257.88	242.04	229.70	1,532.98
	C	Justice and Rule of Law	28.46	56.49	17.32	17.07	119.32
	D	Religious Affairs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	E	Energy	730.07	139.49	72.50	39.50	981.55
	F	Transport	799.91	46.79	46.79	98.79	992.27
	G	Urban Development	66.49	69.77	67.00	0.00	203.26
	H	Mining	26.01	11.04	5.28	3.28	45.61
	I	Information & Communications Technology	30.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.65
	J	Water	152.72	145.96	22.50	22.50	343.68
	K	Education	229.98	173.74	147.43	107.10	658.24
	L	Culture, Media & Youth	11.97	7.14	2.42	1.61	23.15
	M	Health & Nutrition	326.87	268.39	100.87	97.20	793.32
	N	Agriculture and Rural Development	584.91	223.76	79.68	68.54	956.89
	O	Social Protection	92.81	32.75	8.20	8.00	141.75
	P	Refugees, Returnees & IDPS	45.74	5.64	5.16	5.16	61.70
	Q	Private Sector Development & Trade	148.78	74.20	54.21	50.63	327.82
	R	Unclassified	302.34	86.01	67.41	61.30	517.07

Source: Afghan Ministry of Finance

Figure 4.21
Humanitarian aid sectors 2005-2009



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data

A scrutiny of the disaggregated data for sectoral distribution of international aid through the period 2002-2005 to 2006-2009 (GHA, 2010) reveals that humanitarian assistance comprises a relatively smaller portion of the total aid received. Of the aid reported to the OECD DAC, there has been a clear shift in emphasis away from humanitarian aid towards spending on sector-allocable aid, notably aid directed towards social infrastructure and services, of which the largest share is for activities aimed at building the capacity of government and civil society.

4.5 Spatial Distribution of Aid

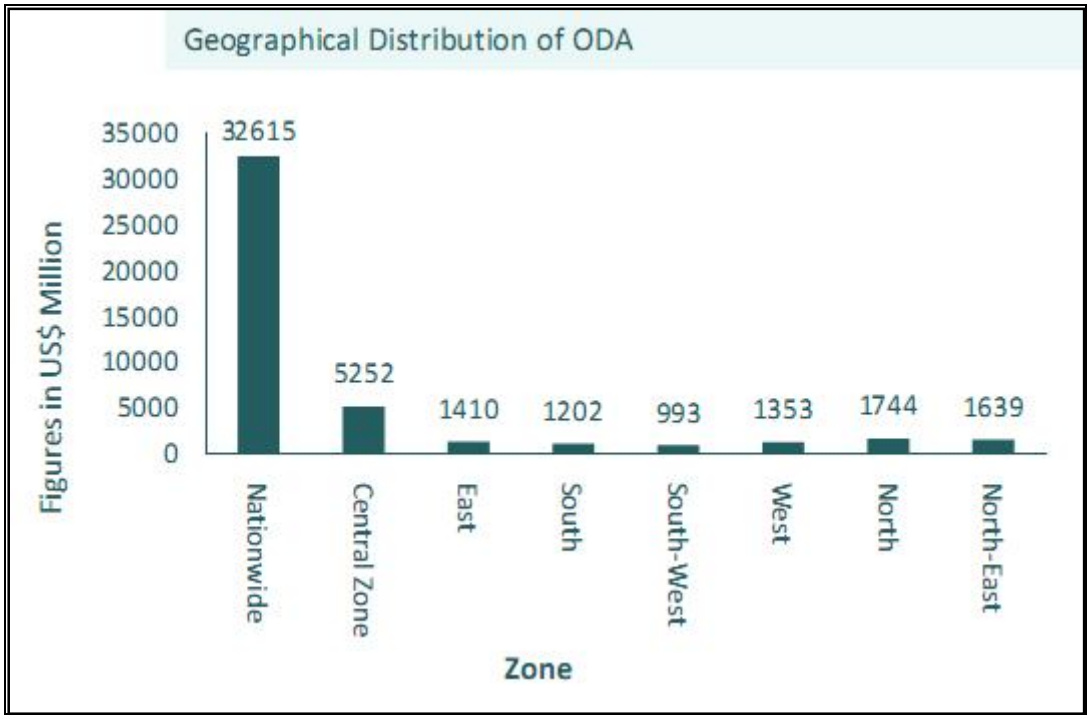
As far as the geographical allocation of aid in Afghanistan is concerned, the government of Afghanistan does not have a very clear picture due to lack of information. Although DAD provides the platform for tracking the geographical location of assistance, the quality of information in this regard is very poor.

As shown in the figure (Figure 4.22) the central, north and north-east regions get the most aid geographically. This spatial disparity in the distribution of ODA reflects that the South-west and south zone is relatively less attractive to the donor countries- with southern Afghanistan receiving USD 1202 million and South-western Afghanistan receiving USD 993 million compared to USD 5252 million received by the Central zone alone.

The available information from DAD shows that around 66% of overall aid has been invested in activities with national impact, and the remaining has been allocated to fund various projects across difference sectors in all provinces of Afghanistan. The nationwide approach does not give a clear indication of how much aid assistance has gone to which province. Aid is centralized and top-heavy, focusing on Kabul or other urban centres. As a result the majority of Afghans who live in rural areas have experienced only minimal social and economic progress. The preparation of provincial development plans is a positive first step towards more attention to local development needs, though plans vary considerably in quality and feasibility.

Figure 4.22

Geographical Distribution of ODA



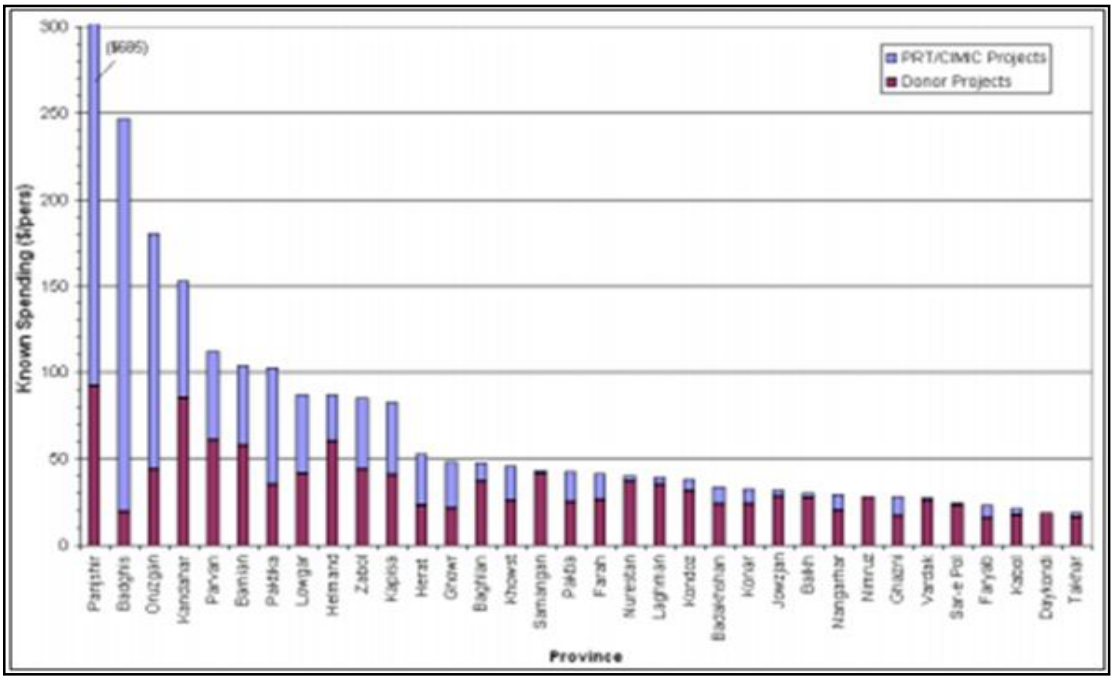
Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Finance

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have allocated about US$ 2 billion (this includes the assistance through Commanders Emergency Response Program – CERP) in various provinces to fund small-scale and quick impact development projects. Most of the projects that the PRTs implement are planned and discussed at the grass roots level with community elders, and do not involve views of the central government. However, disparities are reflected in the spending of PRTs, which is represented in the figure below (Figure 4.23). In terms of total completed, on-going and planned PRT spending, Uruzgan and Kandahar each received $150 per person; Helmand, Paktika and Zabul were allocated over $75 per person, whilst Faryab, Daikundi and Takhar receive less than $30 per person (Waldman 2008). Although the PRTs have actively participated in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and implemented development and humanitarian projects in some of the most difficult and remote areas, there is a perception among Afghan people that most of the projects were not aligned with the government priorities and plans, and have not delivered sustainable results. The data also reflect the fact that PRTs, being nation-led, have widely varying levels of funding. It is presently assumed that humanitarian assistance

is rather unevenly distributed, with activities predominantly confined to urban and to Northern and Central areas. This perception is based on the fact that a majority of NGOs are working out of the largest cities and with a concentration of assistance providers in the Northern, North-Western and Central parts of the country. This pattern seems to have emerged over recent years as more of the assistance was channeled in through the North.

Figure 4.23

Completed, ongoing, planned and funded PRT spending per capita, per province

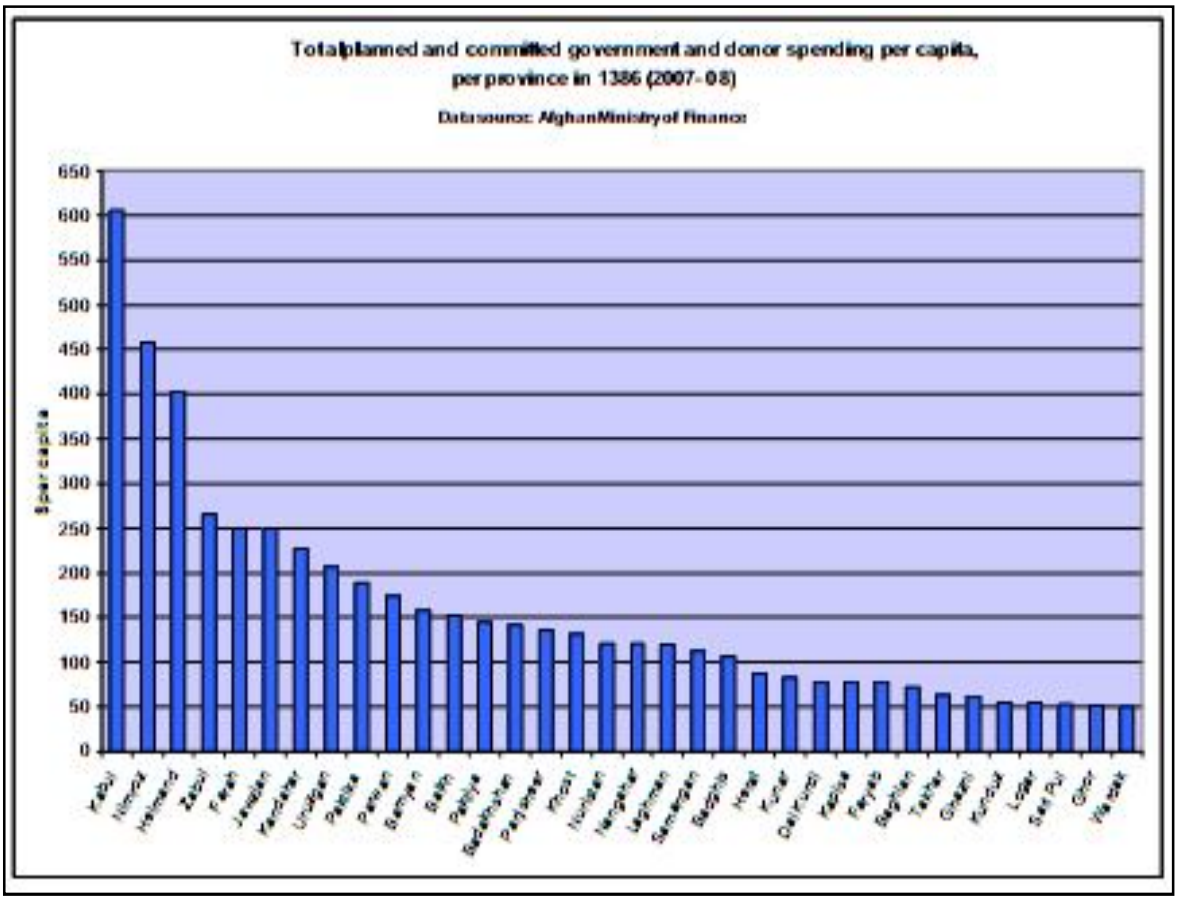


Source: Waldman 2008

Geographical inequities are also illustrated in the figure below, which shows the total of planned Afghan government spending and recorded donor commitments, per capita, per province, for the Afghan year 2007-2008. The figures are based on Afghan Ministry of Finance data showing the provincial breakdown of the combined core and external budgets, which refers respectively to funds, which are channeled through the Afghan treasury, and those which are spent by donors outside the government. The figures show a high level of funding goes to Kabul, where planned spending per person is over $600. To some extent this is to be expected, given the presence of government ministries and other agencies, but it also reflects excessive centralisation.

Figure 4.24

Total Planned and committed government and donor spending per capita per province in 1386 (2007-08)



Source: Afghan Ministry of Finance

Whilst the explanation for some of the provincial disparities is not immediately apparent and may reflect social, economic and political factors, the data show that spending is greater where the insurgency is strongest and where there is a greater international military presence. The most insecure provinces of Nimroz, Helmand, Zabul, Kandahar and Uruzgan are allocated more than $200 per person, whereas as many other provinces are due less than half of this amount, and others, such as Sari Pul or Takhar, are allocated less than one third (Afghan Ministry of Finance, 2008). The figures reveal other significant disparities, not directly related to the insurgency in the south- Panjshir, province, for example is allocated $685 per person. Notably, provinces which have experienced deterioration in security, such as Ghazni, Logar and Wardak are among the lowest recipients of funding. This approach is not only inequitable but dangerously short-sighted. Insurgent and criminal activity is more likely to spread to areas where there is persistent poverty; the disparities in aid

are widely regarded as illegitimate or unjust, which undermines confidence in the state; and the disparities also create perverse incentives, as insecurity is perceived as attracting more aid. Whilst there may be legitimate reasons for donors to provide development assistance to provinces where their troops are deployed, this should not be at the expense of other areas. Promoting development in the south and south-east is essential but, as has been seen over the last few years, if other provinces are neglected then insecurity could spread.

The significant disparities in the geographical distribution of aid is due to a range of factors, one of the most important being that aid is being used to achieve military or political objectives. A number of major donors direct a disproportionate share of their funds to the southern provinces where the insurgency is strongest; if it were a state, Helmand alone would be the world's fifth largest recipient of funds from USAID (USAID, Afghanistan Budget Review, 2010). The per capita disbursements in 2010 by USAID reflect a spatial pattern similar to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the government spending, with Kabul and Helmand provinces attracting a majority of the aid (Map 4.1). DFID allocates one-fifth of its Afghanistan budget to Helmand, and Canada allocates over 25% of its aid budget to Kandahar (Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration: Making Aid More Effective By 2010, OECD, 2008).

What needs to be addressed in earnest are the questions whether all parts of Afghanistan are equally in need of assistance, and what type of assistance is most required. Arguably, this relates to the fact that there are still no proper national needs and vulnerability assessment to guide aid prioritisation and allocation. Some data collection on national vulnerability has, taken place though, combining some variables (landmines/UXO, health, food and accessibility) which are regarded as fairly adequate. While this certainly does not present a complete picture of the present situation, the map indicates that except for the Eastern areas the various vulnerability levels are almost equally distributed throughout the country. This suggests that people in almost all parts of Afghanistan are in need of assistance, though without specifying which type of assistance each district might be more in need of. There is thus a need to provide assistance fairly evenly to all regions, but with special attention to areas ranged at the upper end of the vulnerability scale.

In the vulnerability mapping of the districts of Afghanistan undertaken by UNAMA in collaboration with AIMS, the combined indicators of Food vulnerability (percentage of district population with food insecurity), health (relative access to primary health care) and settlements affected by landmines/UXO were used. The spatial variation in vulnerability can be noticed in the map below (Map 4.2). The districts of the provinces of Baghlan, Ghor, Helmand, and Nimruz stand out as the most vulnerable areas.

Relating the vulnerability of the region- assessed through food insecurity, access to primary health care, settlements affected by landmine/UXO and the number of internally displaced people in the provinces (Map 4.3) to the data for aid flow, a pattern can be discerned spatially. The aid seems to be channeled into the most vulnerable areas of Afghanistan. However, it remains to be seen if this is effective in addressing the vulnerability of the place and the people.

4.6 Aid Effectiveness

In the context of the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness', aid is most effective when it supports a country-owned approach to development; aid is less effective when countries feel that aid policies and approaches are driven by donors that provide assistance (Survey on Monitoring The Paris Declaration: Making Aid More Effective by 2010, OECD, 2008). While aid has undoubtedly contributed to progress in Afghanistan, a large proportion of aid has been prescriptive and supply-driven, rather than indigenous and responding to Afghan needs. It has been heavily influenced by the political and military objectives of donors, especially the imperative to win so called 'hearts and minds' and 'saving the women'. It has tended to reflect expectations in donor countries, and what western electorates would consider reconstruction and development achievements, rather than what Afghan communities want and need. Projects have too often sought to impose a preconceived idea of progress, rather than nurture, support and expand capabilities, according to Afghan preferences. An important measure of effectiveness of aid is progress in social and economic indicators, as reflected in the Millennium Development Goals. These indicators show that whilst progress has been made, there is still much to be achieved. A detailed assessment of the socio-economic scenario of the Afghan people would reveal the improvement made thus far.

4.7 Socio-Economic Profile

The Millennium Development Goals can serve as a tool to advance human development. The detailed, time-bound indicators for each of the MDGs allow for measuring progress in a systematic fashion toward key aspects of human development. Each of the MDGs for Afghanistan, especially those pertaining to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and enhancing security are directly related to the development of women.

Currently, significant data gaps do not allow for the full examination of relationships between gender and population variables. The total population of Afghanistan estimated at 23.6 million in 2005, composed of 22.1 million settled, and1.5 million nomadic populations. Of the settled population, 10.8 million (48.8%) were female and 11.3 million (51.2%) were male, thus making the sex ratio of Afghanistan unfavourable to women at 105 males to 100 females. The sex ratios for 5-year age groups show that in the age group 0-4 years, there are more females than males. The natural sex ratio at birth is approximately 1,007 males per 1000 females. However, more males than females die in infancy. In the age group 5-24 years, the larger number of males than females may indicate that more females are dying in this age group. In the age group 25-44 years, the larger number of females than males is likely to be due to higher male casualties during the war; in the age group 45 years and above, there are more males than females, indicating that men live longer than women, which is contrary to global trends (Afghanistan Index, Brookings Institute, 2011).

Afghanistan's has a high percentage of children in the population due to a high total fertility rate of 6.3 (UNICEF Best Estimates, 2006). Such high fertility combined with illiteracy, poverty, low levels of knowledge on health, and absence of female health care providers and facilities put Afghan women at high risk of mortality. In cultures where male-preference is pervasive, competition for limited resources results in serious disadvantage of females, particularly girls. A high proportion of children and old persons lead to scarcity of resources in poorer families. The girls and women of the family suffer this scarcity the most. This further worsens their situation.

Recent data are not available on economic activity for women and men in Afghanistan. The 1990 data show that only 38.2% of females were economically

active in the country. During the same year, the proportion of males who were economically active was 88.7% (Baseline Statistics on Gender, 2005). The majority of women in Afghanistan are involved only in unpaid household work. The male population therefore largely bears the economic burden of age dependency in terms of their better access to participation in the economy. According to Zalesne (Medica Mondiale, Women, Peace and Security In Afghanistan, Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Five Years On: Post-Bonn Gains And Gaps, January 2007) because of the long drawn war, there are also an estimated one million widows in Afghanistan. These widows are relatively young, with an average age of only 35 years. Ninety four percent of them are unable to read and write. Around 90% of Afghan widows have children, and many of them are in a great difficulty in supporting their children (Ministry of Education, Planning Department, June 2007). This further multiplies their insecurity.

Assessing the total settled population in Afghanistan spatially, it can be discerned that Kabul has the highest density of population as observed in the satellite image of Afghanistan (Map 4.4). Being the capital and one of the most urbanized centres it houses most of the offices, embassies and agencies in Afghanistan.

The sex disaggregated population data at the province level shows more males than females in 23 of the 34 provinces of the country. The male population only slightly exceeds the female population in the remaining 11 provinces. The higher number of males in the 23 provinces may have been due to higher female mortality rates attributable to many factors including poor health, weak nutrition, violence against women and economic difficulties. By internationally accepted standards, Afghan women are severely disadvantaged and vulnerable. Efforts have been made to integrate women into the development process through various programmes, gender focussed assistance and initiatives, an exhaustive analysis of which be taken up in the subsequent section.

4.8 Women and Aid in Afghanistan

There is paucity of data on the aid that is directed for the women of Afghanistan. Although Afghan women have attracted a lot of attention and assistance, data with the exact figures are not available. Information therefore has been culled out from varied sources including Creditor Reporting System (CRS) for bilateral and multilateral ODA for women's organizations; donor countries' reports on

the initiatives taken for women; surveys and secondary literature on gender assistance in Afghanistan.

Table 4.5

Total Settled population of Afghanistan by provinces and Sex (2005) in '000

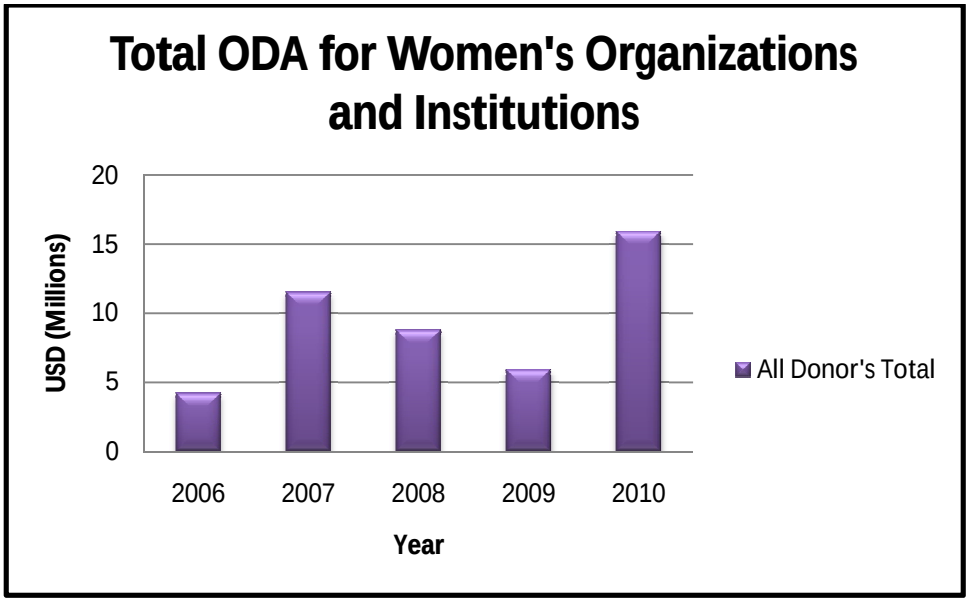
Provinces	Total		Female		Male	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Kabul	3,071.6	13.9	1,485.3	6.7	1,586.3	7.2
Kapisa	374.5	1.7	185.5	0.8	189.0	0.9
Parwan	560.8	2.5	277.1	1.3	283.7	1.3
Wardak	506.3	2.3	247.9	1.1	258.4	1.2
Logar	332.4	1.5	163.3	0.7	169.1	0.8
Ghazni	1,040.1	4.7	508.6	2.3	531.5	2.4
Paktika	369.1	1.7	179.7	0.8	189.4	0.9
Paktya	467.5	2.1	228.5	1.0	239.0	1.1
Khost	487.4	2.2	237.8	1.1	249.6	1.1
Nangarhar	1,261.9	5.7	616.1	2.8	645.8	2.9
Kunar	381.9	1.7	186.4	0.8	195.5	0.9
Laghman	378.1	1.7	184.4	0.8	193.7	0.9
Nooristan	125.7	0.6	61.6	0.3	64.1	0.3
Badakshan	805.5	3.6	395.1	1.8	410.4	1.9
Takhar	827.5	3.7	405.5	1.8	422.0	1.9
Baghlan	762.5	3.5	371.7	1.7	390.8	1.8
Kunduz	833.3	3.8	409.3	1.9	424.0	1.9
Samangan	327.7	1.5	159.9	0.7	167.8	0.8
Balkh	1,073.0	4.9	524.2	2.4	548.8	2.5
Jawzjan	452.0	2.0	222.0	1.0	230.0	1.0
Sar-i-pul	472.7	2.1	230.7	1.0	242.0	1.1
Faryab	840.4	3.8	411.5	1.9	428.9	1.9
Badghis	420.4	1.9	205.5	0.9	214.9	1.0
Heart	1,544.8	7.0	762.3	3.4	782.5	3.5
Farah	428.8	1.9	208.9	0.9	219.9	1.0
Nimroz	138.5	0.6	67.7	0.3	70.8	0.3
Helmand	782.1	3.5	380.6	1.7	401.5	1.8
Kandahar	990.1	4.5	482.3	2.2	507.8	2.3
Zabul	257.6	1.2	125.5	0.6	132.1	0.6
Urozgan	297.2	1.3	144.2	0.7	153.0	0.7
Ghor	585.9	2.7	286.6	1.3	299.3	1.4
Bamyan	379.2	1.7	187.0	0.8	192.2	0.9
Panjsher	130.4	0.6	63.7	0.3	66.7	0.3
Daykundi	391.0	1.8	190.2	0.9	200.8	0.9
Total	**22,097.9**	**100.0**	**10,796.6**	**48.9**	**11,301.3**	**51.1**

Source: CSO, Kabul Statistical Yearbook, 2006

The CRS data reveals that total ODA for Women's organization has increased over time (2006-2010). A country level analysis reveals that certain donor countries have emphasized on women-related aid more than the others. The Nordic countries stand out along with Germany in this regard, representing an increase in the total aid to Women's organizations during the period 2006-2010. Although several other DAC countries like Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK and US also contribute to it, the trend of the volume of trade tends to differ as is seen in the figures (Figure 4.25, Figure 4.26).

Figure 4.25

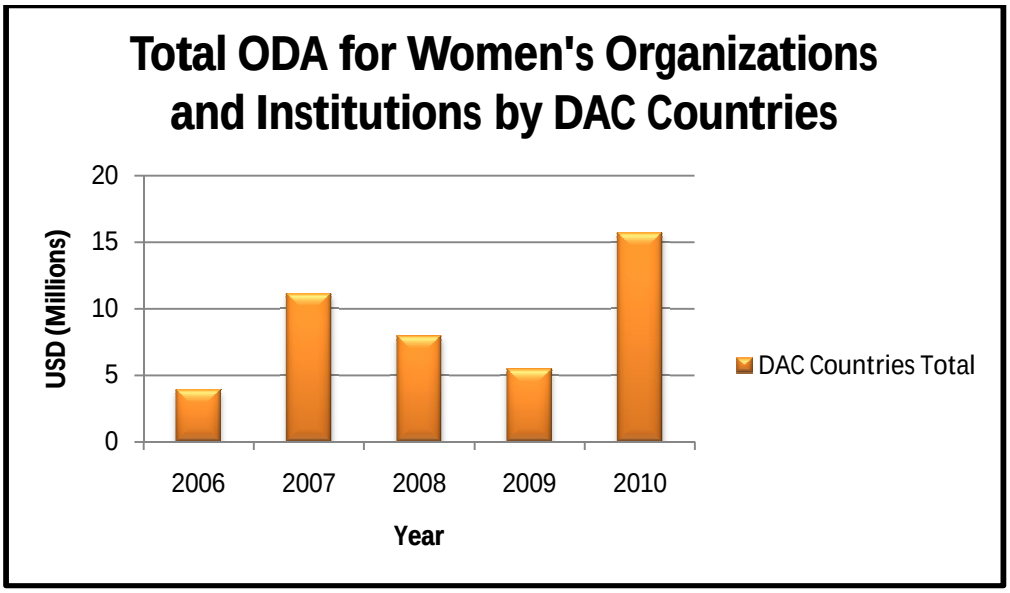
Total ODA for Women's Organizations and Institutions, 2006-2010



Source: Created based on OECD Stat Export Data

Figure 4.26

Total ODA for Women's Organizations and Institutions by DAC Countries

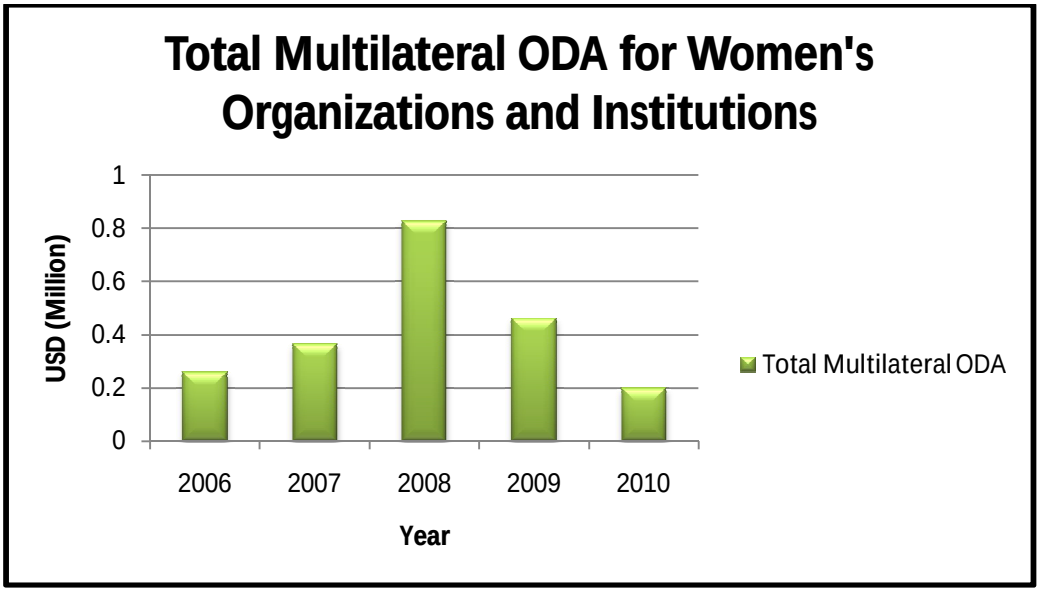


Source: Created based on OECD Stat Export Data

The multilateral ODA data illustrates that in the year 2008 Women's institutions and Organizations in Afghanistan received the highest amount of aid (US$ 0.828142 million). UNDP and UNICEF were the only multilateral agencies specifically providing assistance to this sector.

Figure 4.27

Total Multilateral ODA for Women's Organizations and Institutions



Source: Created based on OECD Stat Export Data

4.8.1 Initiatives for Women

Although much assistance is meant to ultimately benefit Afghans of both genders, USAID, among others, often directs funding to programmes specifically assisting Afghan women and girls—most recently, requiring that at least $175 million in total FY2010 funding from Economic Support Fund (ESF) and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE) accounts be used for this purpose. Of this, $20 million was to be used for capacity building for Afghan women-led NGOs**,** $25 million for the programmes of such NGOs, and $15 million be used to train women investigators, police officers, judges, and social workers to respond to crimes of violence against women (Tarnoff,2010). Among these efforts is a USAID rule of law project that attempts to raise awareness of women's rights by conducting public forums and through discussion in the media. USAID supports the introduction of legal rights education to women audiences and legal aid through legal service centres. Another project provides financial support to NGOs working to improve the lives of women and girls and seeks to strengthen their policy advocacy capacities. U.S. assistance is also supporting the establishment of a Women's Leadership Development Institute to train women for leadership roles. USAID supports a number of education efforts- technical expertise has been provided to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education to build management capacities; the

women's dorm at the University of Kabul has been rehabilitated; the American University of Afghanistan and the International School of Kabul have been established; literacy programs are being implemented nationwide.

The Nordic countries have a stronger focus on gender issues, as can be considered from their ODA towards women's organizations and institutions. Bauck et al. (2011) confirm that many donors especially in Kabul see the Nordic countries as leaders in addressing gender issues. The Gender Review Report is jointly undertaken by NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) and Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) (Bauck et al. 2011). In regard to policy dialogue, Nordic countries have raised gender issues in some high-level coordination arenas, such as the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCBM), the governing body with strategic coordination around the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) (Bauck et al., 2011). Bauck et al. (2011) note that especially the Norwegian and Swedish embassies seem to have a high level of development funds that have gender as a principal or significant objective. The Joint Nordic Gender Action Initiative forms a good foundation for more concerted effort. The Initiative defines four thematic areas where targeted activities should be prioritized: 1) women's political empowerment, 2) women's economic empowerment, 3) sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and 4) women and security with a special emphasis on UNSCR 1325 and 1820, and gender based violence.

Denmark contributes support for The Elimination of Violence Against Women Trust Fund, established in 2007. The fund offers grants to national NGOs and their projects for reducing violence against Afghan women and supports women's shelters in Afghanistan. Denmark has also supported the micro-credit program, MISFA (Microfinance Investment Support Facility in Afghanistan) that has awarded more than 400,000 loans, 70% of the receivers being women (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Defence, 2008). Finland is funding Marie Stopes International, an organization working for the reduction of maternal and infant mortality in Afghanistan. The organization is the one of the key actors in the area of reproductive health, and offers services such as family planning, sterilization, vaccinations and laboratory tests. In 2010-2011 Finland supported the organization with 400 000 € per year; for the period 2012-2014 the allocated budget is 500 000 € annually. The Embassy of Finland in Kabul has

an annual budget of approximately 500 000 € to support small-scale development projects, and roughly one third of these funds are spent on projects aiming at improvements in the conditions of women and children (Mäkinen 2010). In June 2011 Afghanistan and Finland signed an agreement on cooperation in implementing UNSCR 1325 and other UN resolutions concerning women, peace and security (Maki-Rakola, 2011).The development projects supported by Iceland have included seminars for midwifes and birth attendants, support for legal aid and assistance for persons who are jailed or accused, and an NGO project that aims at developing childcare for orphans and fatherless children (Bauck and Strand, 2009). In 2001, the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) was established as part of the country's official development assistance policy and women were encouraged to apply for positions in it. Icelandic feminists in particular have criticized the involvement of ICRU in military assignments, which makes the unit a masculine space. Norway is the main Nordic donor for the different programs of UN Women. Norway also supports the CEDAW project of UN Women[1] and like Denmark, contributes to the EVAW Trust Fund and AIHCR. The Norwegian Peace-building Centre (Noref) has financed a qualitative mapping study of the Norwegian capacities to combat sexualized and gender-based violence in war and conflict situations, including an up-to-date list of relevant Norwegian actors and agencies in the field (Solhjell 2010). Sweden supports UN Women, the EVAW Trust Fund and AIHRC. Swedish funds are also allocated to UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality programs. The goals that UNICEF is striving for are that 1.8 million girls will have opportunity for education and literacy rate among women aged 15-49 years will be improved. (Bauck et al., 2011). UNIFEM's (now UN Women) Livelihood Development for Self-Employment and Job Creation project was supported with €170 000 annually for the years 2009-2011. EUPOL Afghanistan is the police mission of European Union, headed by Mr. Karl Ake Roghe from Sweden. EUPOL contributes inter alia to the training of Afghan police forces and prosecutors, and gender mainstreaming and human rights perspective are recognized as strategic objectives to achieve the mission's goals.

[1]CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) project implemented by UN Women is the programme related to gender-based violence. The aim of the project is to assist the Afghan government to prepare its first report to the CEDAW and to create capacities for reporting to international human rights treaties in general (Bauck et al. 2011, 35)

In the development policy of the Nordic countries gender is a cross-cutting consideration, and since 2009 Nordic embassies in Kabul have been developing a Joint Gender Action Initiative in order to strengthen their efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights. Still all Nordic donors face the challenge of ensuring that resources are equitably distributed between men and women in all development programs.

India is supporting invaluable work in Afghanistan. Since 2001, India has contributed more than $1.3 billion in development aid. Through its aid efforts, India is feeding millions of Afghan schoolchildren, helping to provide power to the citizens of Kabul, and ensuring that thousands of Afghans receive access to quality health care around the country. In collaboration with United States, India assists programmes in agricultural development and women's empowerment. India has supported women's empowerment in Afghanistan by funding the creation of a women's vocational training centre in Kabul. US$1 million has been provided to an Indian non-governmental organization to empower Afghan women to achieve their full economic potential through employment and income-generating activities and developing the organization's institutional capacity to sustain this work. An initiative by the government of India has encouraged war widows and poor women of Afghanistan to take to various means of livelihood like garment making, food and fruits processing rebuild their lives. The Baagay Khazana Women's Vocational Training Centre was created at Baagay-e-Zanana in Kabul by the NGO Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which was entrusted with the work by New Delhi. Many women have set up their own micro enterprises with facilitation from SEWA.

There are several agencies- local and international- that work specifically for Afghan Women. These agencies are Afghan Women's Mission (USA), Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, Afghan Women's Network, Afghan Gender Cafe ,Afghanistan Women Council, Afghanistan Women's Education Centre, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, Feminist Majority Foundation (USA), Global Fund for Women (USA), Medica Mondiale (Germany), Refugee Women in Development (USA), Womankind Worldwide (UK), Women for Afghan Women (USA), FemAid (France), Help Afghanistan Women (USA), Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan, PARWAZ, Voice of Women Organization, Shuhada, Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan (USA), Kabultec (USA), Institute for Economic Empowerment of

Women, Initiative to Educate Afghan Women (USA), Afghanistan Midwifery Project (USA) and Noori Foundation.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) aims to work in the priority areas of health, education, legal protection and economic empowerment. It monitors women's development programmes throughout the country and helps create employment and business opportunities for women. Due to lack of state funds, the MOWA is being financed by the United Nations Development Programme. According to the US State Department, the United States is spending $2.5 million for the functioning of Women's Resource Centres in 14 provinces. Other international organizations and agencies like the Japanese International Co operation Agency and the German Technical Co operation have also funded some centres. The Microsoft Company, Gateway and America on Line donate computer equipment and impart technical assistance and training to the Ministry. Hence the MOWA is less of a state institution and is described as 'a large NGO'. These agencies and institutions work on a several aspects to improve the lives of the women of Afghanistan. For the purpose of this research certain social indicators like education, health, involvement in public and economic life are taken into consideration.

4.9 Impact of Assistance on Afghan Women

A look at the social indicators for Afghan men and women reflects their deplorable condition (Tables 4.6, 4.7, 4.8). Although over time (1965, 1975, 1985, 2007), certain facets have a shown a marginal improvement, no significant progress can be discerned, especially in the case of women. A composite index used globally to measure advancements in the life of women is the GDI or Gender Development Index. The GDI is a composite of indices from the human development index on (a) a long and healthy life; (b) knowledge; and (c) a decent standard of living – adjusted to account for inequalities between women and men. In 2002, it was 0.300 in Afghanistan (Afghanistan NHDR 2004), compared to 0.471 to 0.738 in the other five countries of South Asia. The GDI in Afghanistan is also smaller than its human development index in 2002 which stood at 0.346. This means that there is both low level of human development and high gender inequality in the country.

Table 4.6

Social Indicators: Afghanistan, 1965 and 1975

Social indicators, Afghanistan, 1965 and 1975

Population and Vital Statistics	1965	1975
Total population (thous.)	11,115	14,038
Urban population (percentage of total)	9	13
Population growth rate (%)		
Total	n.a.†	2.4
Urban	n.a.	5.9
Life expectancy at birth (yrs)	35	37
Population age structure (%)		
0–14 yrs	43	45
15–64 yrs	55	53
65 and above	3	3
Age dependency (%)	83.2	89.6
Crude birth rate (per 1,000)	54	54
Crude death rate (per 1,000)	29	29
Total fertility rate	8.0	8.0
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000)	n.a.	190
Child death rate (per 1,000)	39	35

Food, Health, and Nutrition	1965	1975
Index for food production per capita (1979–81 = 100)	102	102
Per capita supply of		
Calories (per day)	2,203	2,206
Proteins (grams per day)	68	69
Pop. per physician (in thous.)	15.8	n.a.
Pop. per nurse (in thous.)	24.4	15.1
Pop. per hosp. bed (in thous.)	n.a.	n.a.
Access to safe water (% of population)		
Total	n.a.	6
Urban	n.a.	20
Rural	n.a.	3

Labor Force	1965	1975
Total labor force (in thousands)	3,733	4,569*
Female (%)	6	8
Agriculture (%)	69	64
Industry (%)	11	13
Services (%)	20	23
Particip. rate (%):		
Total	31	30
Male	56	54
Female	4	5

Education	1965	1975
Enrollment rates		
Primary:		
Total	16	26
Male	26	44
Female	5	8
Secondary:		
Total	2	8
Male	1	2
Female	53	42
Pupil–teacher ratio		
Primary	53	42
Secondary	22	12
Pupils reaching grade six (%)	n.a.	50

Source: Moghadam , 1994

Table 4.7

Social Indicators: Afghanistan, 1985

Social indicators, Afghanistan, c. 1985

Population Statistics	
Male	8,170,000
Female	7,700,000
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.6
Urban growth rate	6.1
% pop. urban	19
Sex ratio:	
Females per 100 males	95
Population age structure (%)	
0–14 yrs	46
15–64 yrs	52
65+	2
Life expectancy at birth (yrs)	
Male	37
Female	36
Crude birth rate (per 1,000)	49
Crude death rate (per 1,000)	26
Total fertility rate	7.4
Age dependency (%)	93
Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)	300
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	690

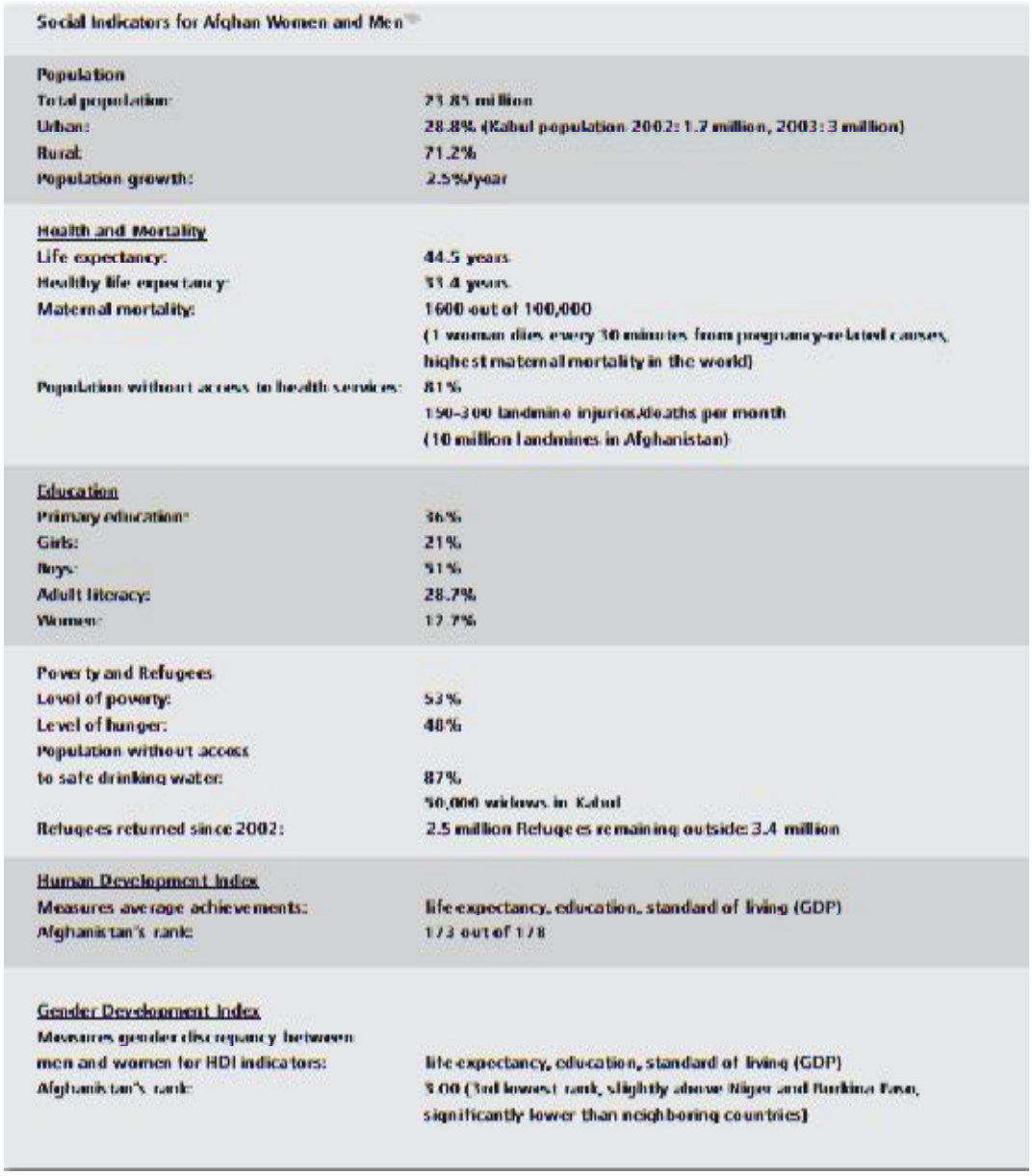
Data on Health	
Births attended by trained health personnel (%)	
1978	5
1987 estimate	5.5
Percent of population with access to health services	
Total	29
Urban	80
Rural	17
Percent of population with access to safe water	21
Daily calorie supply (as percentage of requirements)	94
Population per physician	13,000
Population per nurse	9000
Population per hospital bed	3,700
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
tuberculosis	20.5
diphtheria/tetanus	18.2
polio	18.2
measles	19.3

Literacy and Education	
Adult literacy (%)	
Male	39
Female	8
Primary enrollment rates	
Total percentage	18
%Male	27
% Female	14
Secondary enrollment rates	
Total percentage	8
% Male	11
% Female	5
Higher education (no., m + f)	15,319*
Female	7,133†
Drop-out rate:	
Percentage of grade 1 enrollment not not completing primary school	37
Percentage of pupils reaching grade six	25

Source: Moghadam , 1994

Table 4.8

Social Indicators for Afghan Men and Women, 2007



Social Indicators for Afghan Women and Men	
Population	
Total population:	23.85 million
Urban:	28.8% (Kabul population 2002: 1.7 million, 2003: 3 million)
Rural:	71.2%
Population growth:	2.5%/year
Health and Mortality	
Life expectancy:	44.5 years
Healthy life expectancy:	33.4 years
Maternal mortality:	1600 out of 100,000
	(1 woman dies every 30 minutes from pregnancy-related causes, highest maternal mortality in the world)
Population without access to health services:	81%
	150-300 landmine injuries/deaths per month
	(10 million landmines in Afghanistan)
Education	
Primary education:	46%
Girls:	21%
Boys:	91%
Adult literacy:	28.7%
Women:	12.7%
Poverty and Refugees	
Level of poverty:	53%
Level of hunger:	48%
Population without access to safe drinking water:	87%
	50,000 widows in Kabul
Refugees returned since 2002:	2.5 million Refugees remaining outside: 3.4 million
Human Development Index	
Measures average achievements:	life expectancy, education, standard of living (GDP)
Afghanistan's rank:	173 out of 178
Gender Development Index	
Measures gender discrepancy between men and women for HDI indicators:	life expectancy, education, standard of living (GDP)
Afghanistan's rank:	100 (3rd lowest rank, slightly above Niger and Burkina Faso, significantly lower than neighboring countries)

Source: UNIFEM Factsheet, 2007

4.9.1 Women and Healthcare

Basic indicators on health do not reveal psychosocial and gender dynamics of health care, which are captured best in ethnographies. Afghanistan has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world. In 2002, life expectancy at birth was 44 years for Afghan Females and 45 years for Afghan males (Afghanistan NHDR 2004). Life expectancy further declined after 2002: it was estimated by the UN-Population Division at 42 for both males and females in 2004 and 44 years for males and 43 years for females in

2006 (Afghanistan NHDR 2007) (Table 4.9). The life expectancy for women in Afghanistan deviates from world trends and shows deterioration over time, indicating that the healthcare initiatives for women are probably not well directed.

Table 4.9

Life Expectancy for Men and Women in Afghanistan

Life Expectancy

	2004	2006
Men	42	44
Women	42	43

Source: NHDR, 2007

Afghanistan has a very high IMR, estimated at 140 per 1,000 live births in 2003 and 135 per 1,000 live births in 2007. Sex disaggregated data on IMRs are needed for gender analysis of infant mortality because sex differentials in infant mortality may be a factor in the lower life expectancy of women compared to men in Afghanistan.

Women in Afghanistan face many barriers to accessing health care. Not only does their restricted mobility inhibit their visiting health facilities, the treatment of women by male doctors is largely considered unacceptable. The fifth MDG is concerning maternal health which is in urgent need of attention. Afghanistan's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) (Map 4.5) is estimated at 1600 per 100,000 live births. Kabul had an MMR of 400 per 100,000, and the remote rural district of Badakhshan an MMR of 6,500 per 100,000 live births, indicating a large urban-rural disparity. The disparity in the number of women assisted by skilled health personnel in urban and rural areas is also vast (Map 4.7). While 52 % of mothers in urban areas are assisted by skilled personnel, only 9 % in rural areas are. Childbirth related deaths are a direct result of the young age of marriage, overall poor health, frequency of child birth as well as poor accessibility to gynecological and obstetrical surveys. The gender gap in education also has severe health consequences. Few women in Afghanistan receive antenatal care during pregnancy. In 2003, only 16% of pregnant women received antenatal care (UNICEF Best Estimates, 2006). Reproductive health and family planning programmes have not made significant inroads in Afghanistan, especially in the rural and nomadic areas.

Table 4.10

MMR, TFR and Births attended by Skilled Health Personnel by Province

Maternal Mortality Ratio, Total fertility Rate and births attended by skilled health personnel in Afghanistan by province				
Rank of provinces by MMR	Province	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births* (2002)	Total fertility rate** (2003)	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)* (2003)
1	Badgis	2,300	5.4	11.6
2	Ghor	2,300	7.3	9.3
3	Takhar	2,300	6.0	0.7
4	Badakshan	2,200	6.0	1.5
5	Faryab	2,100	5.3	2.1
6	Sari Pul	2,100	5.6	0.4
7	Zabul	2,100	6.0	0.9
8	Nuristan	2,100	5.6	1.4
9	Kunar	2,100	7.9	3.1
10	Baghlan	2,100	6.5	5.5
11	Uruzgan-Daikunde***	2,000	6.3	5.7
12	Parwan-Panjshir***	2,000	6.7	3.7
13	Paktika	2,000	7.4	4.6
14	Samangan	1,900	7.0	28.9
15	Bamyan	1,900	5.8	7.6
16	Paktya	1,800	6.5	8.9
17	Helmand	1,800	7.0	1.6
18	Jawzjan	1,800	5.3	9.3
19	Khost	1,800	6.8	17.8
20	Wardak	1,800	5.5	10.8
21	Balkh	1,800	6.2	7.6
22	Kunduz	1,800	6.4	5.8
23	Ghazni	1,700	5.2	7.2
24	Farah	1,600	7.0	12.0
25	Kapisa	1,600	5.4	12.2
26	Nimroz	1,600	6.7	7.1
27	Laghman	1,200	7.9	2.6
28	Logar	1,200	6.2	8.7
29	Kandahar	1,100	7.0	16.0
30	Nangarhar	1,100	6.5	22.2
31	Herat	900	5.6	24.0
32	Kabul	700	6.0	45.5
National		**1,600**	**6.3**	**14.3**

Source: UNICEF Best Estimates Fact Sheet

Due to the abysmal health condition of the Afghan population, it is a sector that has received a large proportion of international assistance. The Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan, supported by donors has tried to expand health services throughout the country, including rural communities, and has vastly expanded access to primary health care services and significantly reduced child mortality. Between 2002 and 2007, annual clinic visits rose from just over 100,000 to more than 700,000; deliveries in clinics increased more than five-fold to 5,000 a month, and the percentage of clinics with female health workers went from 21 percent to 83 percent (UNICEF Best Estimates Fact Sheet, 2007).

Perhaps the best indicator is the decline in infant and under-five mortality by 22 percent and 26 percent respectively. This implies that the health of infant and under-five girls has also shown a remarkable improvement. Some of the assistance is designed to improve health infrastructure and others, particularly the many Special Forces medical outposts, are designed to provide care to civilians in insecure areas. Along with USAID, the EC has financed health-related initiatives in Afghanistan as part of Multi-annual Indicative program. Agencies like Abbott Fund emphasize on improving the lives of Afghan women through partnership with Direct Relief International and the Afghan Institute of Learning that has clinics serving rural areas, providing health services, staffed by Afghan women. It focuses on empowering women by training midwives and healthcare providers. Thus, although a major leap in the health indicators of Afghan women is not noticed, smaller steps in this direction indicate definite improvements.

4.9.2 Women and Education

Education for girls has always been contested terrain in Afghanistan. Women have been especially discriminated against in traditional Afghan society and special efforts need to be made to redress this. Because of the positive outcomes of investing in female education - for households, communities, and national development, as well as for gender equality - it makes considerable sense to design education and training programs to benefit women and girls.

In 1965 a group from the small Afghan intelligentsia formed the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Among its demands was primary education for all children in their mother tongue. That same year, six women activists formed the Democratic Organization of Afghan Women (DOAW), whose main objectives were to eliminate female illiteracy, forced marriages, and the bride price. As a result of DOAW and PDPA activities, women won the right to vote, and in the 1970s four DOAW members were elected to Parliament. In the years before the Saur Revolution, the DOAW managed to win the legal right of women to study abroad and to seek employment. The PDPA's rationale for pursuing the rural literacy campaign with some zeal was that all previous reformers had made literacy a matter of choice; male guardians had chosen not to allow their girls to be educated; thus nearly all Afghan women (96%) were illiterate. During the 198Os, international aid workers apparently saw no problem with the huge disparity between boys' and girls' access to schooling

and the seclusion of Afghan women versus the unrestricted mobility of Afghan men. During this time, primary and secondary school enrolment of girls increased steadily from 5% in 1965 to 8% in 1975 to 14% in 1987 - but remained very low. The rates for female attendance at secondary school increased from 1% in 1965 to 2% in 1975 to 5% in 1987.

As for the assistance that this sector has drawn since, USAID's contribution is worth noting. It has supported the construction of more than 600 schools, trained thousands of teachers and printed millions of textbooks. Other donors have promoted education for women and girls, by advocating access to good schools, as well as creating opportunities for informal education for out-of-school children in Afghanistan. Afghan Women's Educational Centre is one such agency, committed to promoting human rights and gender equality, while working towards the abolishment of any kind of discrimination and violence against women and children, through raising awareness and advocacy, social service delivery, capacity building, self-sufficiency and sustainable development initiatives. It is yet to be assessed how these initiatives have impacted Afghan women.

Enrollment in urban areas is considerably higher than that in rural areas, and there is almost a 1:1 ratio of girls and boys attending primary school in urban areas. Although the reasons for the greater level of attendance of girls in urban areas may be due to variations in cultural factors, it probably stems from greater access as well. Distance is often referred to as the most common reason for keeping girls from going to school. The disparity in the number of boys in school compared to girls continues to be narrowed—an issue of concern that needs focused attention and energy. Zabul (1 %), Girls still face significant obstacles that prevent them from accessing education, including restricted movement, a shortage of female teachers, poor facilities, competing demands on girls' time and the lack of value placed on female education. Such hurdles are more common in rural than urban areas. Provinces in the South and South-east continue to exhibit particularly low levels of enrollment for girls and boys.Uruzgan (1%), Helmand (6%) and Paktika (9%) in the South and South-east have the lowest levels of enrollment. Since the number of attacks on schools, teachers, and students rose considerably in 2006, insecurity has become an increasingly formidable challenge to accessing education.

Government seems committed to increase school enrollment with a focus on expanding the attendance rate of girls, while increasing simultaneously both access to

and the quality of education. While girls' access to education has increased (Figure 4.28), particularly in urban areas, additional energy and resources seem important for improving access to education for girls in rural areas. Enrollment rates for women at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels are almost half that of men–41.8 % for females and 73.7 % for males. Only 23.5 % of the population 15 and older can read and write. The female to male literacy ratio is 0.4 for the entire population. The overall literacy rate for females was 18%, compared to 36% for males (Afghan Index, Brookings Institute, 2011). Female literacy is much lower than for males in all provinces. The female literacy rate is less than 10% in 11 provinces: Logar, Ghor, Badghis, Khost, Sari Pul, Kandahar,Laghman, Hilmand, Paktika, Uruzgan and Zabul (Table 4.12; Map 4.8).

In 2005, the overall youth literacy rate (the literacy rate of 15-24 years old persons) in Afghanistan was 31.3%. The sex-disaggregated figures at the rural-urban level show (Figure 4.29) that the youth literacy rate was very low (19.6%) for rural females and extremely low (about 6%) for both females and males in the nomadic population (NRVA, 2005).

The net enrolment ratio in primary education was low for both girls and boys, but comparatively much lower for girls. This is a factor that perpetuates gender inequality and the low status of women in Afghan society.

Table 4.11

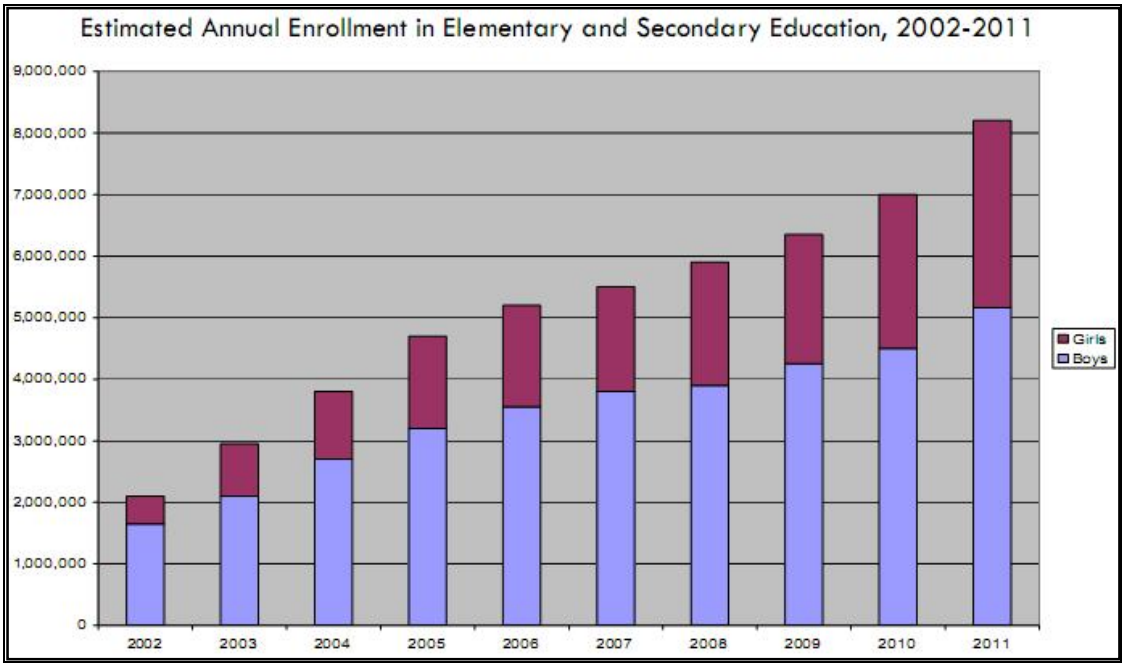
Primary and Secondary Education

Primary/Secondary Education		
	2007	2008
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	9,062	10,998
All Girls	1,337	
Co-ed	4,325	
NUMBER OF TEACHERS	147,641	157,244
Women	~40,000	
SINCE APRIL 2006*:		
Schools Razed/Burned Down	238	
Schools closed due to severe threats	650+	
Students and Teachers killed by violence	290	
*Thru March 2009		

Source: Afghanistan Index, Brookings Institute

Figure 4.28

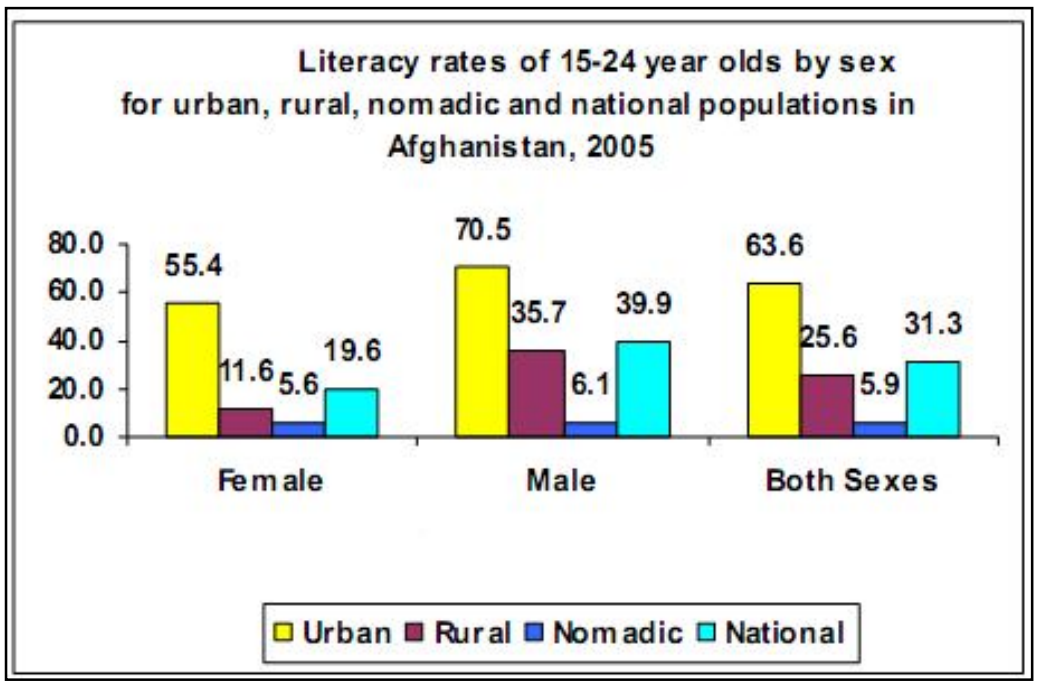
Estimated Annual Enrollment in Elementary and Secondary Education, 2002-2011



Source: Afghanistan Index, Brookings Institute

Figure 4.29

Youth Literacy Rates by sex for Urban, Rural, Nomadic and National Populations, 2005



Source: NRVA, 2005

Table 4.12

Overall literacy rate by Province and by sex, 2005

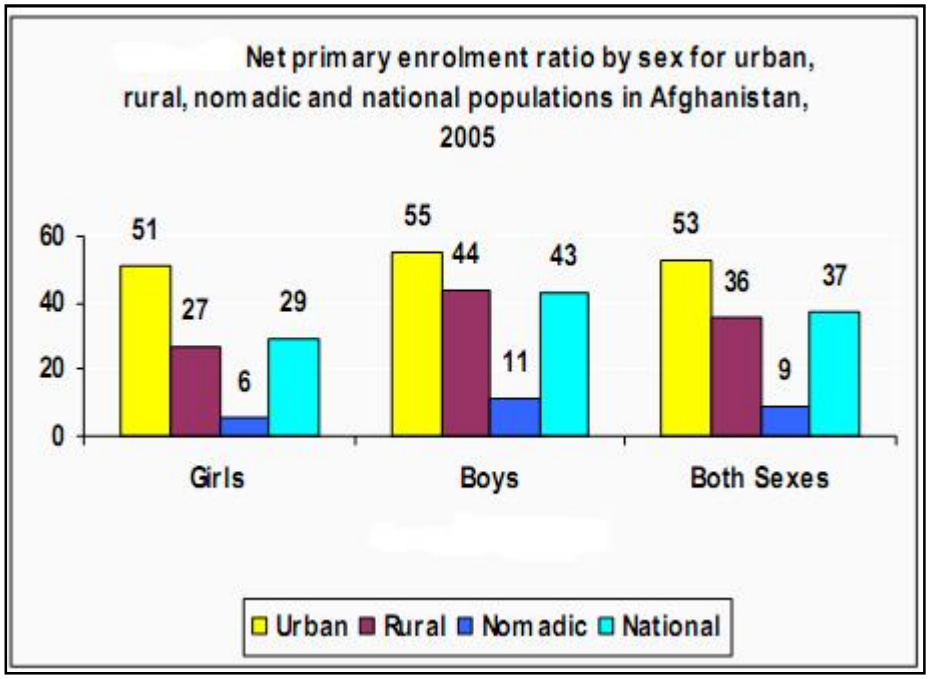
Overall literacy rate (%) for population aged 6 years and above in by province and by sex in Afghanistan, 2005			
Province	**Female**	**Male**	**Both sexes**
Kabul	48	66	58
Balkh	32	54	44
Hirat	28	43	36
Paktya	26	42	35
Kunduz	24	40	33
Kapisa	23	53	39
Badakhshan	22	38	31
Faryab	22	31	27
Ghazni	21	48	35
Jawzjan	21	40	31
Panjsher	20	43	33
Parwan	20	51	37
Nuristan	19	31	25
Daykundi	18	38	28
Kunarha	18	47	32
Nangarhar	15	41	29
Farah	14	27	21
Baghlan	12	29	21
Bamyan	12	41	29
Nimroz	11	30	22
Samangan	10	28	19
Takhar	10	21	16
Wardak	10	38	25
Logar	9	31	21
Ghor	8	28	19
Badghis	7	14	11
Khost	7	44	28
Sari Pul	6	18	12
Kandahar	5	26	16
Laghman	5	22	14
Hilmand	1	8	5
Paktika	0	4	2
Uruzgan	0	10	5
Zabul	0	1	1
National	**18**	**36**	**28**

Source: NRVA, 2005

The gap in net enrolment ratio between girls and boys is more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas. In 2005, the net enrolment ratio for rural girls was 27% compared to 44% for rural boys (NRVA, 2005). In the nomadic areas, the ratio was extremely low for both girls (6%) and boys (11%) as depicted in the following figure (Figure 4.30).

Figure 4.30

Net Primary Enrolment Ratio by sex for Urban, Rural, Nomadic and National Populations, 2005



Source: NRVA, 2005

Gross secondary enrolment ratios in Afghanistan are low for both girls and boys, but much lower for girls. The gross tertiary enrolment ratio for Afghanistan was negligible for females and 2% for males in 2004. In 2006, the ratio of girls to boys in tertiary (college/university) level education was 0.27 in Afghanistan.

According to the Ministry of Education, there were a total of 128,400 school teachers in general education in the country in 2005. Of these, 28.1% were female. However, the proportion of female school teachers varies by province. While nearly 64% of school teachers were female in Kabul, the proportion was less than 5% in Kunar, Paktika, Khost and Uruzgan provinces. In 2006, 15.3% of the 1,982 teachers in the colleges/universities in Afghanistan were female. The proportion of female teachers was zero in Pakita, Takhar and Khost Universities, while it was nearly negligible in Baghlan, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Alberoni Universities. Very few girls

in Afghanistan attend technical and vocational schools. In 2005, a total of 3,559 students attended technical schools but only 1.4% were girls (NRVA, 2005). The proportion of students in colleges/universities is important for gender equality because higher education equips women to participate in better paid employment and command decision making positions.

4.9.3 Women and the Economy

Women contribute to the economic and human resource "wealth" of nations in two crucial ways. First, through their productive activities, which, in many developing countries, contribute significantly to the food supply, the large informal sector, service and farm labour forces, and, in some, to the export manufacturing labour force. Second, through women's education, which can lead to lower fertility, better family health, reduced infant and child mortality, higher formal labour force participation, and greater economic growth.

Women in rural Afghanistan contribute most of their labour time in unpaid reproductive family activities such as cooking, cleaning and child care. Poor women work more on the family farm than middle class and more affluent women. Women in the eastern, central, northern and western parts of the country from non-Pashtun backgrounds also work more than women in the Pashtun areas in the South due to socio-cultural differences. They are engaged in light agricultural work such as planting, weeding, protecting crops from animals, harvesting and processing food. In Nuristan province, it is claimed that women contribute 90% of total labour time in agriculture compared to only 10% by men (Baseline Statistics on Gender, 2007). Some women in various parts of the country, including the south, help their husbands and male relatives in the cultivation, harvesting and processing of opium poppy. They also work in the home-based informal economy in activities such as embroidery, carpet weaving and tailoring and thereby contribute to income generation in the household. Although the informal sector accounted for 80 to 90 percent of economic activities in the country, women's work within and outside of their homes has remained largely unremunerated (Afghanistan HDR, 2007).

In 1990, 38.2% of females, compared to 88.7% of males were economically active in Afghanistan. There is also a large discrepancy in the estimated earned income between females ($478) and males ($1428) (Baseline Statistics on Gender, 2005). Women's limited access to education further inhibits their productivity and

ability to participate more widely in the economy. Cultural constraints on women's movement, as well as security concerns, also limit women's access to work outside of the home.

According to NRVA 2005, female headed households comprise slightly less than 2% of the households (1.8% of the households in rural and nomadic areas and 2.4% of the households in urban areas). Although the percentage of female-headed households is small, the absolute number is still large. A significant number of female-headed households do not have any able-earning member and the women themselves have no sustainable income, making them highly vulnerable to economic shocks.

The Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) noted that "perhaps the small participation of women (in business in Afghanistan, which is about 5%) is part of tradition, but it might be related to the property rights in land and a subsequent inability to mortgage in order to get additional funding for business expansion." The Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF) in Kabul is actively engaged in the promotion of women in business.

Due to the initiatives taken and assistance channelled in for the purpose, women are becoming increasingly visible in all sectors, including commerce, communications, technology, engineering, media, public works, mines, industry, security, defence and many others. Women represent around 30 percent of agricultural workers, are engaged in livestock, micro enterprises, and home industries but have limited access to capital, information, technology and markets.

4.9.4 Women and Public Life

Progress has been noted in women's participation in public life, but they still constitute a minority and are often marginalised in policy and decision-making. A wide range of assistance programs address the elements of democracy and government administration.

At the United Nations peace negotiations held in Germany in November 2001, the 1964 constitution of Afghanistan was revived. It gave the women of Afghanistan the rights to vote in elections, serve in the government and be elected to the parliament. As per the 2004 Constitution, 68 seats in the lower house are reserved for women. In the upper house (Meshrano Jirga or House of Elders) there are 102 members, the Constitution specifies that 50% of the 34 presidential appointees in the

upper house must be women. In 2007, women held 68 (27.3%) of the total seats in the lower house and 23 (22.5%) of the total seats in the upper house of the National Assembly. Although this is an enormous achievement, it is still below the minimum globally prescribed baseline of 30%. The long term national goal is 50% representation of women in both lower and upper houses of the National Assembly. The proportion of women who stood as candidates for the national parliament and provincial councils are also indicators of the empowerment of women in politics. In 2005, 11.7% of the candidates for the lower house of parliament were women. In the provincial council, their proportion was 7.5% (ADB, 2005). This shows that women are far behind men in terms of participation in national and provincial level politics.

Table 4.13

Proportion of Women as members of National Assembly in 2007 and Proportion of Female and Male Candidates in the National Election in 2005

Proportion of Women as Members of the National Assembly, 2007			
National Assembly	Women		Total number of seats
	Number	%	
Lower House (Wolesi Jirga)	68	27.3	249
Upper House (Meshrano Jirga)	23	22.5	102

Proportion of Female and Male Candidates in the National Election in 2005				
House/Council	Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%
Lower House of Parliament	317	11.7	2387	88.3
Provincial Council	211	7.5	2590	92.5

Source: ADB, 2005

The shura is an informal body for decision-making and dispute resolution on a range of economic, political and sometimes social issues. Like most traditional Afghan institutions, it is usually comprised of male elders and landowners. Reflecting women's consistent exclusion from direct representation and leadership roles, men are responsible for upholding the collective values of the "community". According to Cortright and Persinger (2010) limitations on women's political participation are seen as a much larger problem in respondents' local communities than at the national level. The gains made by Afghan women are significant, given the degree of oppression they emerged from in late 2001. But progress has been uneven and has yet to dramatically improve the overall status and role of Afghan women. In the political

sphere, women have increased their representation at each stage of the political process. However, these gains have only increased the presence, not the power, of women. They have not yet enabled women to encourage moderation and democratic norms, deliver critical services, and help protect the rights of minorities—the very acts that will help to stabilize Afghanistan.

It is important to know the share of women and men in decision making positions because women and men may have different perspectives and priorities. The proportion of women and men appointed in decision making positions between September 2005 and September 2006 is shown in the table below (Table 4.14). The proportion of women appointed were only 9%, much less than the international benchmark of at least 30% women in policy and decision making positions.

Table 4.14

Regular Government Employees by Ministries and by sex, excluding Police and Army

Regular government employees by ministries and departments by sex, excluding police and army personnel, 2006				
Ministries and Departments	Female		Male	
	Number	%	Number	%
Ministry of Women's Affairs	415	67	200	33
Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled	3118	56	2499	44
Ministry of Education	37861	25	115261	75
Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission	57	23	187	77
Ministry of Public Health	2084	22	7278	78
Banks	420	21	1536	79
Administration of Anti Corruption and Bribery	16	21	62	73
Ministry of Communication	291	19	1206	81
Ministry of Higher Education	565	19	2467	81
Ministry of Urban Development	121	18	538	82
Attorney General's Office	460	18	2120	82
Afghan Red Crescent Society	119	16	604	84
Ministry of Economy	71	15	411	85
Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	309	14	1862	86
Central Statistics Office	78	14	471	86
Academy of Science	39	13	266	87
Ministry of Mines and Industries	251	12	1901	88
Ministry of Defense	46	12	352	88
Ministry of Commerce	264	11	2053	89

Source: CSO, Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2007

The gender balance in the different provinces varies greatly depending on the ethnic, religious and cultural fabric. The Bamyan Province (the main area of Hazaras) at the centre of the country is arguably the most gender-equal one, and the only one having a female governor. At the community level, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) has introduced Community Development Councils (CDC) with elected representatives. In the NSP there is a minimum baseline for 30% women in CDCs, but in 2007 only nine of 34 provinces met the baseline – even when the elections of CDCs had a relatively high participation of women.

The number of women in the police service is very small, comprising only 0.4 percent of the total number of police personnel. Of the total military personnel, only 259 (0.6%) were women, including 122 sergeants and 137 ordinary soldiers (UNICEF Provincial Fact Sheet, 2007). According to the Supreme Court, there were 73 (4.7%) female Judges and 1,474(95.3%) male Judges in Afghanistan as of July 2007 (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15

Proportion of women and men as Judges, Attorneys and Prosecutors, 2007

Proportion of women and men as judges, attorneys, and prosecutors in Afghanistan.					
Position	Female		Male		Total
	No	%	No	%	No
Judges*	73	4.7	1,474	95.3	1,547
Attorneys**	76	6.1	1,165	93.9	1,241
Prosecutors**	35	6.4	511	93.6	546

Source: Supreme Court Files, Afghanistan, 2007

The Afghan media has developed considerably, and has helped highlight women's rights issues. Radio programmes help educate women, and a number of NGOs use radio to get their message across and educate women on important gender issues.

Media, especially radio, has helped overcome physical and geographical barriers to literacy. As in other sectors, women lag behind men in participation in the press and media sector. In April 2007, there were 881 staff members in the government press sector, of whom only 208 (23.0%) were females. There are fewer women in the private press/media sector (Baseline Statistics on Gender, 2007).

Women's low participation in the press and media sector contributes to inadequate coverage and dissemination of knowledge and information on women's issues and rights. Hence, women's decision-making has been based only on the limited information and understanding of the issues that they acquired in the various forms of media. Finland gives support to Afghan Women's Network (AWN). The Women Journalists in Finland has realized a training project for Afghan female journalists.

In many ways, conditions for women have improved and they are beginning to compete with men for government jobs. In a short period of time, the ground has been prepared for women's participation in social institutions. Yet with all this progress, fundamental problems remain: powerful, violent forces continue to attack the Afghan women's movement and isolate high- profile politicians.

4.9.5 Women and Security

According to NAPWA, "For women, security means being free from intimidation, threats, and violence in both the public and domestic spheres of life, allowing them to freely exercise their rights, and pursue activities that will develop their capacities and lead a full and satisfying life". Threats against school girls, burning of schools and kidnappings and killings of teachers and students by anti-government forces as well as Violence against women (VAW) are causing a great deal of insecurity among women and girls in the country. The threats have also been disrupting the delivery of services in the areas of health, education and income generation, and the effective participation of women in both the political and social spheres. Displacement of people is also a form of insecurity. Displacement within the country is generally caused by two factors: (1) insecurity due to 'fear' of violence and actual violence by armed groups, and (2) insecurity due to "want" of basic needs, such as, food, water, clothing, health, and shelter. Women and girls suffer more, in terms of their basic needs, such as food, shelter, health, education, and others, before, during and after their displacement.

Violence against women is one of the main security problems for women in Afghanistan. VAW cases are related to physical, sexual and psychological violence. Current data on violence against women are mainly from the MOWA and the AIHRC. Table 4.16 presents cases received and assisted by MOWA in 2005 to 2006.The top three reported cases of VAW are: beating (47.4%), forced marriages(36.1%), and

husband not giving economic support (4.7%), which comprised almost 90% of all reported VAW cases.

Table 4.16

VAW in Afghanistan

VAW in Afghanistan, cases registered in the Legal Department of MOWA, 2005 to 2006		
Reported Cases of VAW	Registered Cases	
	No.	%
Beating	1011	47.4
Forced marriage	769	36.1
Husband not giving economic support	100	4.7
Murder	87	4.1
Violence, improper behavior (*Khoshonat*)	69	3.2
Rape	33	1.5
Abduction	24	1.1
Women's property taken away by husband's relatives	20	0.9
Girls' exchange	10	0.5
Women selling/girls' trafficking	5	0.2
Theft accusation on women	3	0.1
Heritage (property) not received from natal home	2	0.1
Total	**2,133**	**100.0**

Source: MOWA, Legal Department, 2007

More than 450 cases of VAW were documented by UNAMA's Human Rights Officers between January 2006 and September 2007 in six regions of Afghanistan; North, North East, West, Central Highlands, Central, and East. Although UNAMA has Human Rights offices in South and South East, they have not been able to document any cases of violence against women (Violence against Women Primary Database, 2007). The reason for this could be that women are unable, generally, to leave their homes and do not have access to the human rights offices or any other institutions. Women continue to experience violence and threats of violence at home and in public spaces. There is still a general lack of awareness of women's rights and inequality remains a huge issue for the Government of Afghanistan to overcome.

Violence against women in Afghanistan must first be viewed as part of a larger landscape that has been shaped by Afghan history. Violence against women and girls in Afghanistan is gender based and pervasive. The prevalence of gender based violence in the society results from, among other factors, pre-existing cultural roles which allow the abuse of women, a tribal structure that largely commodifies women, and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. Conflict in Afghanistan has had a

disproportionately negative impact on women. Afghan women have borne the brunt of the violence and remain subjected to practices that reflect gender biases.

In Afghanistan, many refuse to acknowledge violence against women as an issue. In addition, women -and men- have different definitions of what constitutes violence. Domestic violence is viewed by women as being within the realm of normal gender relations and not assumed to be an abuse of women's human rights. Women who recognize violence against them are still not likely to change or address it. Such women recognize the added challenge this presents to gender relations, which could in turn provoke additional violence (Afghan Women's Network, 2009).

Displacement is also an aspect of human insecurity. During the decades of civil war in Afghanistan, it is said that up to 6 million Afghans became refugees, especially in Pakistan and Iran. Data disaggregated by sex are available only for the assisted returned refugees (Table 4.17). The proportion of females among assisted refugees (47.2%) is slightly less than that of the males (52.8%). Interventions for returnees, including programmes on health, education, shelter, legal services and economic support, take into account the different needs of women and men while addressing the situation.

Land mines cause a great deal of insecurity in Afghanistan, one of the most heavily landmined countries in the world. According to the United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), landmines and UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) not only threaten Afghans with death or dismemberment, but also rob farmers of their livelihoods and impede reconstruction. Half of the victims of landmines and UXOs in Afghanistan are under the age of 18 years, about 90% are males. Women and girls in rural areas remain within the household compound/farm for cultural reasons. In spite of this, females comprised around 10% of landmine and UXO victims (Table 4.18, Table 4.19).

A major step in addressing women security has been the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that was unanimously adopted by Security Council members on October 31st, 2000. The Resolution recognizes that women and children constitute the majority of victims of armed conflicts that women and girls are affected by conflict differently from men and boys and that women have a role to play and a right to participate in all levels of a peace building process. Resolution 1325 calls attention to the consequences of war on women's lives - including sexualized violence, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the prevalence of landmines

and among others, the displacement of women and girls as refugees and internally displaced. The resolution emphasizes the responsibility to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, in particular from rape and other forms of sexualized violence.

Table 4.17

Assisted Returned Refugees by sex, 2002-2006

Assisted returned refugees from March 2002 to December 2006, by sex					
Year	Female		Male		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2002	855,278	46.6	979,259	53.4	1,834,537
2003	214,334	45.1	261,305	54.9	475,639
2004	364,915	47.9	396,207	52.1	761,122
2005	253,956	49.4	260,134	50.6	514,090
2006	69,567	49.8	70,237	50.2	139,804
Total	**1,758,050**	**47.2**	**1,967,142**	**52.8**	**3,725,192**

Source: UNAMA, 2007

Table 4.18

Number of People injured by landmines and UXOs, 2005-2006

Number of people injured in Afghanistan by landmines and UXOs				
Sex	2005		2006	
	No.	%	No.	%
Female	71	9.2	68	11.0
Male	698	90.5	549	89.0
Unknown	2	0.3	0	0.0
Total	**771**	**100.0**	**617**	**100.0**

Source: UNMACA File, 2007

Table 4.19

Number of People killed by landmines and UXOs, 2005-2006

Number of people killed in Afghanistan by landmines and UXOs				
Sex	2005		2006	
	No.	%	No.	%
Female	13	8.1	11	9.5
Male	146	91.3	105	90.5
Unknown	1	0.6	0	0.0
Total	**160**	**100.0**	**116**	**100.0**

Source: UNMACA File, 2007

Afghanistan presents a particularly challenging environment for the implementation of Resolution 1325. UNSCR 1325 reaffirmed the value of the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts by stressing the need for their equal participation in the peace negotiations to make certain that concerns regarding women's interests are sufficiently addressed. This would ensure inclusive social justice for women so that their protection, welfare and rights are not sidelined in a political compromise.

4.10 Women and Aid – A feminist geopolitical view

Feminist geopolitics deals with the space of women, whether it is at the national, the domestic, the private or the body. Despite constitutionally mandated gender equality, Afghan women's lives are still influenced more by the notion of complementarities between male and female roles than by equality. Although political space has been created for women in parliament, the question remains as to how this space is being used (Zahedi, 2011). Differences of ethnicity, region, socioeconomic status, education, and residence -urban or rural- are significant. Overall, women's lives centre on family and household, which are seen as their main areas of activity. The private-public dichotomy remains obvious in the case of the Afghan woman.

Vague notions of cultural relativism sometimes underlie many of the concepts of respect for cultural traditions. Many cultural relativists also question the need for development or modern education, especially for rural or tribal peoples. But development should be viewed as a more holistic process of change and betterment. Use and expansion of women's productive capacities is a necessary condition for social and economic progress. In extending education to Afghan women and girls, and in integrating them in the development process more generally, a long-term perspective builds on what exists, including women's networks and the existing human resources base.

Feminist geopolitics studies networks that are essential for channelling aid that adequately target Afghan women. Formal women's groups are rare outside the towns. Women's networks exist, however, based on extended family relationships. These networks can and should be utilized; training should always emphasize the sharing of knowledge within this network system, so that by training one woman in the community - probably an older, respected, and more mobile woman - information can be spread to the younger women who cannot be reached directly. These networks

could form the nucleus of women's associations and later could perhaps develop into more formal organizations. Older, post menopausal women, who have more mobility and freedom and are highly respected within their communities, are key women through whom to work at the community level. These women should be encouraged to share new knowledge and skills with their female relatives and neighbours. In the health sector, traditional birth attendants should be identified and offered further training. There can be no effective planning and programme formulation in Afghanistan without a gender perspective, and no reconstruction or national development without the human development of women. Working for and with Afghan women at the grass-roots level requires female staff members in NGOs operating in Afghanistan and employing local women may be challenging (Bauck et al. 2011).

Gender segregation - purdah - and the demand for women to be accompanied by a male relative- mahram – were important elements in Taliban's enforcement of the religious law, Sharia. Despite these restrictions, a number of NGOs managed to establish innovative projects where different mahram arrangements were utilised to enhance women's influence. Abirafeh (2009) mentions that the women would pay men to be their mahram and this offered them a sense of empowerment and freedom. The burqa, although perceived as a constraint on women's free movement is considered by some to be a symbol of their own private space which allows them mobility that western garments do not. Long-term refugee experience, particularly in Iran, caused wide-ranging changes in the perception of relationship between the sexes, and provides a resource for more gender sensitive programming. Thus a more careful analysis of gender relationship, Afghan values and changes caused by migration, could warrant a more constructive engagement with the provision of humanitarian assistance.

A great deal of data supports the argument that the development impact of women's productive activities is heightened where they generate income under female control. Income under women's control is most often spent for children's nutrition and the family's 'basic human needs'. Given the pervasiveness of the purdah institution in the Afghan society, home-based microenterprise or cottage industries could provide appropriate employment opportunities, since work can be structured in such a way as to be done by women in their own homes. Viewed from a feminist

geopolitical perspective, working from the private confines of the home, in this case, is liberating rather than constraining for the Afghan woman.

Although the Constitution of Afghanistan guarantees equal rights to women and men before the law, women have a weaker legal position in both rural and urban areas. As there is no representation of women in the local shuras/jirgas, women rarely get justice from such systems, which are male-dominated and heavily influenced by patriarchal local traditions. Hence, outcomes of these traditional legal processes can be detrimental to women and girls. One such tradition is *baad* -the marriage of a woman from the offender's family to the victim's close relative to settle a dispute. Although practiced rarely, is still regarded as a violation of Afghanistan's laws, Sharia and human rights principles and depicts the play of body politics where a woman's body is traded to settle a feud.

Although women and girls constitute nearly one half of the country's population, they can remain invisible in statistics. This is because data collection instruments and analytical capacities are not gender sensitive. Gender sensitive statistics allow for a systematic understanding of differences in the life situations and needs of women and men. They are essential for monitoring changes in the lives of women and men and for the formulation of appropriate policies, plans and measures that directly address the core of people's difficulties.

Since much of the feminist geopolitical analysis in the Afghan context deals with female rights, and the oppression of women, it is worth revisiting the concept of gender, which is a generic term that refers both to men and women. The UN thesaurus defines gender as the relationship between women and men based on socially defined roles assigned to one sex or another. Operational usage in the international assistance community has, however, emphasized access to women as target group rather than the methods to access the relationship between the two genders. A shift to an emphasis on gender may have less conflict potential, while opening up opportunities for building constructively on the way gender relations are structured in the Afghan context. To implement gender-sensitive programs successfully, there is a need to involve domestic actors, and it is crucial to interface with local communities in ways that involve both genders.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Afghanistan has had a brutal past, but its history portrays the strength of the Afghan people who have repelled invaders for centuries. Modern warfare, however, has shattered this strength of their spirit and decades of incessant conflict have contributed to the suffering of millions of Afghans. As is the case with most conflict-torn areas, the women have been victims- both directly and indirectly. However, describing the situation for women in Afghanistan through the lens of past and present conflict runs the risk of hiding the production of unequal gender relations through the complex web of conflict, religion, custom and poverty.

Throughout the history of Afghanistan, Afghan women have faced seemingly endless threats to their survival. Today, Afghan women in and outside Afghanistan continue to express their resilience and resistance while walking a careful line between their demands for progress, respect for tradition, and the threats of backlash. All of the available information points to a complicated picture for Afghan women, that has been explored through a feminist geopolitical perspective.

This research was undertaken with multiple objectives. These included assessing the aid that is channelled into Afghanistan- temporally and spatially and investigating into who the major donors are and their motives behind providing assistance to Afghanistan. Another purpose of the study was to analyze the sectoral allocations of the aid received especially humanitarian aid. An examination of the aid directed towards women and its impacts on the lives of Afghan women was also taken up along with a feminist geopolitical critique to understand the perceptions and lives of the women of Afghanistan.

5.1 International Aid in Afghanistan

Afghanistan attracts a large amount of aid- being the fourth largest recipient of international humanitarian aid in the world. The volume of aid to Afghanistan has considerably increased in the last decade, from US$ 17.1 million in 2000 to US$ 394.7 million in 2009, making this country prominent on the aid map. While analyzing the aid data, United States tops the list of the largest donors, contributing one-third of all aid since 2002 (Waldman, 2008). Other major donors are Japan, the

UK, European Commission, the World Bank, Germany and Canada. The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden also make substantial contributions. Given the historical involvement with Afghanistan, the contribution of Russia is minimal. Countries such as Turkey and Australia are also becoming increasingly engaged in providing development assistance.

A geopolitical rationale can be discerned in the aid-related engagements in Afghanistan. While aid and politics have a long and complex history in Afghanistan, the current politicisation of humanitarian assistance seems the pursuit of domestic and foreign policies of the key donor states. In decades of crisis in Afghanistan, the principle of impartiality has been pushed back from the agenda and political considerations of donor states has determined the purpose, extent and type of humanitarian assistance, rather than just human needs. Being strategically located in south-central Asia- Afghanistan forms a corridor between the countries of Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia. It is no more considered a 'buffer' as it once was, but another version of the Great Game still seems to be on. The neighbouring countries like India have increased the volume of help offered. United States remains the largest donor and the political reasons are not hard to find. A hold over Afghanistan would geostrategically position US in the midst of West Asia, South Asia, Russia and form a corridor with China, besides giving an access to and managing the resources of the region. A closer look at the USAID figures reveals a shift in the recipient countries over the past decade. The impact of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent use of foreign aid to support other nations threatened by terrorism or helping the U.S. combat the global threat can be clearly seen in the country-aid allocations for FY2004. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, and Indonesia are key partners in the war on terrorism and since September 11, South Asia has emerged as region of growing concentrated levels of U.S. assistance, rising from a 4% share ten years ago to 17% in FY2004**.** The 'War on Terror' terrorized the already impoverished population of the country. The rationale of 'saving the women' and winning the 'hearts and minds' of the people were put forth by the Bush Administration to justify the 2001 invasion. Temporally, it can be noticed that the volume of aid, especially from US has escalated manifold comprising a bulk (43.4%) of total ODA to Afghanistan in 2008. In certain cases like the Indian share of aid to Afghanistan, countering a neighbour like Pakistan can be fathomed as one of the motives behind the assistance offered. The social relations and connections

of the past are also underlying reasons for international assistance where "material dominance and subordination are transformed into gestures of generosity and gratitude" (Goodhand, 2002). Humanitarian concerns and helping the deprived population are of course important aspects of aid that is channelled to Afghanistan, for it shows some of the worst development indicators and ranks in the bottom rung of the HDR rankings. However, the fact cannot be ignored that assistance is the most effective way to influence policy of a country.

Apart from donor countries, Non-Governmental Organizations and multilateral agencies are the main implementers of aid programmes. That consequently makes the NGO sector the single largest implementer of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan today, with an estimated total disbursement close to the 60 % that the UN agencies are reportedly implementing (GHA, 2010).

A spatial analysis of the aid that is routed to Afghanistan shows that there is a disparity in the distribution of aid within Afghanistan. DAD provides the platform for tracking the geographical location of assistance, the quality of information in this regard is very poor. Aid is centralised and focuses primarily on Kabul and other urban centres, thereby widening the ever- expanding gap between urban and rural Afghanistan. As a result the majority of Afghans who live in rural areas have experienced only minimal social and economic progress. In terms of total completed, on-going and planned PRT spending, Uruzgan and Kandahar each received $150 per person; Helmand, Paktika and Zabul were allocated over $75 per person, whilst Faryab, Daikundi and Takhar receive less than $30 per person (ISAF, May 2007). It is thus presently assumed that humanitarian assistance is rather unevenly distributed, with activities predominantly confined to urban and to Northern and Central areas. This perception is based on the fact that a majority of NGOs are working out of the largest cities and with a concentration of assistance providers in the Northern, North-Western and Central parts of the country. This pattern seems to have emerged over recent years as more of the assistance was channeled in through the North. Whilst the explanation for some of the provincial disparities is not immediately apparent and may reflect social, economic and political factors, the data show that spending is greater where the insurgency is strongest and where there is a greater international military presence. The most insecure provinces of Nimroz, Helmand, Zabul, Kandahar and Uruzgan are allocated more than $200 per person, whereas as many other provinces are due less than half of this amount, and others, such as Sari Pul or

Takhar, are allocated less than one third (Afghan Ministry of Finance, 2008). Notably, provinces which have experienced deterioration in security, such as Ghazni, Logar and Wardak are among the lowest recipients of funding. This approach is not only inequitable but dangerously short-sighted. The disparities in aid are widely regarded as illegitimate or unjust, which undermines confidence in the state; and the disparities also create perverse incentives, as insecurity is perceived as attracting more aid. Whilst there may be legitimate reasons for donors to provide development assistance to provinces where their troops are deployed, this should not be at the expense of other areas. What needs to be addressed in earnest are the questions whether all parts of Afghanistan are equally in need of assistance, and what type of assistance is most required.

The analysis of data for sectoral distribution for aid shows that the sectoral allocation of aid to Afghanistan is top-heavy with an emphasis on security. One quarter of all aid to Afghanistan has been allocated to technical assistance. Records of the Ministry of Finance indicate that out of the total disbursed ODA over 45% of aid assistance has been committed for security sector. Infrastructure has received 15% of donors' funding, and both Agriculture & Rural Development and Governance have received 9% of the resources. Other sectors such as Education, Health, Economic Governance, and Social Protection have jointly received around 22% of aid assistance. The unclassified proportion represents the amount of aid spent on cross cutting programs such as gender, counter narcotics, environment protection, and anti corruption. Considering only pure development assistance in the years 2002-2009, excluding assistance for security sector, a different picture emerges. A major part of the total development assistance was invested in infrastructure and agriculture and rural development sectors. The Governance and Rule of Law sectors have received 12% of the total assistance followed by Economic Governance and Social Protection with 10% each. Health and Education, the two important sectors, have received comparatively the least assistance.

A scrutiny of the disaggregated data for sectoral distribution of international aid through the period 2002-2005 to 2006-2009 reveals that humanitarian assistance comprises a relatively smaller portion of the total aid received. Of the aid reported to the OECD DAC, there has been a clear shift in emphasis away from humanitarian aid towards spending on sector-allocable aid, notably aid directed towards social

infrastructure and services, of which the largest share is for activities aimed at building the capacity of government and civil society.

In Afghanistan, according to a report published by Waldman (2008), far too much aid has been prescriptive and driven by donor priority rather than responsive to evident Afghan needs and preferences. There is an aid shortfall of $10 billion as donors have delivered only $15 billion of a total of $25 billion pledged to rebuild Afghanistan. A staggering 40% of total $15 billion aid spent so far – that's 6 billion dollars - returned to the donor countries in corporate profits and consultants' salaries. In addition, foreign aid came with strings: over half of all aid to Afghanistan is "tied", meaning donors often require procurement of services or resources from their own countries. There is widespread corruption and absolute lack of transparency in the disbursement of funds. The West is not alone responsible for the failure to deliver promised aid. India has so far disbursed only a third of its aid commitment for 2002-2008. India has disbursed only 22% of its $942.03 million aid pledge for 2002-2011 while China has fulfilled only 28% of its aid pledge of $145.5 million for the same period.

5.2 Women-oriented Aid in Afghanistan

As a result of Taliban's draconian laws regarding women, the women of Afghanistan sparked unprecedented amount of international reaction. Given the lack of other policy instruments, humanitarian assistance has thus become the primary, if not the only tool to fight gender 'discrimination' in the country. As a result, massive politicisation in the form of ill-informed conditionalities by donors and aid agencies has ensued.

A country level analysis reveals that certain donor countries have emphasized on women-related aid more than the others. The Nordic countries stand out along with Germany in this regard, representing an increase in the total aid to Women's organizations during the period 2006-2010. Although several other DAC countries like Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK and US also contribute to it, the trend of the volume of trade tends to differ. In 2009, US provided approximately $153 million in assistance to Afghan women and pledged to provide over $175 million in assistance to women in 2010. The multilateral ODA data illustrates that in the year 2008 Women's institutions and Organizations in Afghanistan received the highest amount of aid (US$ 0.828142 million). UNDP and

UNICEF were the only multilateral agencies specifically providing assistance to this sector. Since 2001, India has contributed more than $1.3 billion in development aid. India has supported women's empowerment in Afghanistan by funding the creation of a women's vocational training centre in Kabul.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) aims to work in the priority areas of health, education, legal protection and economic empowerment. It monitors women's development programmes throughout the country and helps create employment and business opportunities for women. A look at the social indicators for Afghan men and women reflects their deplorable conditions. Although over the last two decades, certain facets have a shown a marginal improvement, no significant progress can be discerned, especially in the case of women. GDI in Afghanistan is also smaller than its human development index in 2002 which stood at 0.346. This means that there is both low level of human development and high gender inequality in the country.

Due to the abysmal health condition of the Afghan population, it is a sector that has received a large proportion of international assistance. As a result, although a major leap in the health indicators of Afghan women is not noticed, smaller steps in this direction indicate definite improvements. Because of the positive outcomes of investing in female education - for households, communities, and national development, as well as for gender equality - it makes considerable sense to design education and training programs to benefit women and girls. Education for girls has drawn significant assistance, but the results are not very well defined and seem to be have more prominent affects in the urban areas rather than the rural. Although the reasons for the greater level of attendance of girls in urban areas may be due to variations in cultural factors, it probably stems from greater access as well. Distance is often referred to as the most common reason for keeping girls from going to school. Girls still face significant obstacles that prevent them from accessing education, including restricted movement, a shortage of female teachers, poor facilities, competing demands on girls' time and the lack of value placed on female education. Such hurdles are more common in rural than urban areas. Provinces in the South and South-east continue to exhibit particularly low levels of enrollment for girls and boys. The net enrolment ratio in primary education was low for both girls and boys, but comparatively much lower for girls. This is a factor that perpetuates gender inequality and the low status of women in Afghan society. Gross secondary enrolment ratios in

Afghanistan are low for both girls and boys, but much lower for girls. The gross tertiary enrolment ratio for Afghanistan was negligible for females and 2% for males in 2004.

Women are being supported in their economic endeavours through aid but any significant improvement is yet to be monitored. In 1990, 38.2% of females, compared to 88.7% of males were economically active in Afghanistan. There is also a large discrepancy in the estimated earned income between females ($478) and males ($1428) (Baseline Statistics on Gender, 2005). Women's limited access to education further inhibits their productivity and ability to participate more widely in the economy. Cultural constraints on women's movement, as well as security concerns, also limit women's access to work outside of the home. Working from home in small scale or cottage industry could be promoted to empower women, where they could be economically productive and independent. Use and expansion of women's productive capacities is a necessary condition for social and economic progress. In extending education to Afghan women and girls, and in integrating them in the development process more generally, a long-term perspective builds on what exists, including women's networks and the existing human resources base. Due to the initiatives taken and assistance channelled in for the purpose, women are becoming increasingly visible in all sectors, including commerce, communications, technology, engineering, media, public works, mines, industry, security, defence and many others. Progress has also been noted in women's participation in public life, but they still constitute a minority and are often marginalised in policy and decision-making. But progress has been uneven and has yet to dramatically improve the overall status and role of Afghan women. In the political sphere, women have increased their representation at each stage of the political process. However, these gains have only increased the presence, not the power, of women. Although political space has been created for women in parliament, the question remains as to how this space is being used (Zahedi, 2011). They have not yet enabled women to encourage moderation and democratic norms, deliver critical services, and help protect the rights of minorities—the very acts that will help to stabilize Afghanistan. In many ways, conditions for women have improved. Yet with all this progress, fundamental problems remain: powerful, violent forces continue to attack the Afghan women's movement and isolate high- profile politicians.

Insecurity is one of the gravest problems faced by Afghan women. Rape, domestic violence, forced marriage- are few instances of it. A major step in addressing women security has been the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Resolution recognizes that women and children constitute the majority of victims of armed conflicts that women and girls are affected by conflict differently from men and boys and that women have a role to play and a right to participate in all levels of a peace building process. The resolution emphasizes the responsibility to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, in particular from rape and other forms of sexualized violence. This would ensure inclusive social justice for women so that their protection, welfare and rights are not sidelined in a political compromise.

A more careful analysis of gender relationship, Afghan values and changes caused by migration, could warrant a more constructive engagement with the provision of humanitarian assistance. Since much of the feminist geopolitical analysis in the Afghan context deals with female rights, and the oppression of women, it is worth revisiting the concept of gender, which is a generic term that refers both to men and women. Operational usage in the international assistance community has, however, emphasized access to women as target group rather than the methods to access the relationship between the two genders. A shift to an emphasis on gender may have less conflict potential, while opening up opportunities for building constructively on the way gender relations are structured in the Afghan context. To implement gender-sensitive programs successfully, there is a need to involve domestic actors, and it is crucial to interface with local communities in ways that involve both genders.

5.3 A Feminist Geopolitics Critique

In retaliation to the September 11 attacks, US along with its allies launched an offensive against Afghanistan on 7 October, 2001. With this began another bloody phase in the history of the Afghan people. The ‘liberation’ of women became a justification for the 2001 US invasion. Bush Administration seemed to exploit Afghanistan for its own objectives, often painting a “distorted portrait of absolutely helpless Afghan women buried alive in their burqas, brutalized by unquenchably savage Afghan men” (Heath and Zahedi, 2010). The common theme running throughout this trope of “unveiling” is the reduction of Afghan women’s agency to

their conformity to popular U.S. notions of feminist liberation. The infliction of violence against women's bodies, in the form of assault, rape, and murder, is clearly the most visible manifestation of misogyny. Women in Afghanistan were subjected to structural violence long before, as well as during, the Taliban regime. The liberation of Afghan women from the burqa implicitly rely on the voyeuristic Orientalism of a promise to uncover women's bodies. The rhetoric is inundated with contradictory images of survivor/victim, empowerment/vulnerability, dependent aid/independent change (Rostami-Povey, 2007).The events of 9/11 positioned the war on terrorism as a conflict between good and evil, with Americans as reluctant warriors forced to confront a cruel and treacherous enemy. In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, women's issues have become highly contested and politicized, yet there is a dearth of research and analysis on the formulation, intent, implementation, and effects of gender-focused aid.

The Taliban ironically drew world attention to the situation in Afghanistan. Prior to the fall of Kabul in September 1996, Afghanistan was hardly a part of the international community's agenda. Since 2001 Afghanistan has gone from being an abandoned state, to being the latest destination on the international aid map. Over 200 international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations have set up operations in Afghanistan and targeted assistance to Afghan women appears high on most of their checklists. With this enthusiasm, programmes failed to integrate a contextualized understanding of Afghan women—and in fact forgot to consult Afghan women at all. This focus on women came with controversy—and without context (Abirafeh, 2009). There is a major disconnect between the aid that focuses on women and the perception of the Afghan women towards this aid. Their culture and lifestyle were not taken into account while designing gender-specific programmes. Conservative cultural like the tradition of segregation, known locally as purdah were not taken into account. It may be summarised as a keeping separate of the worlds of men and women, and maintaining symbolic shelter for women. According to this code, men assume roles in the public sphere, with women generally assigned domestic roles in the private sphere. The practice of female seclusion varies with age, education, class, wealth, and ethnicity and between urban and rural areas. As argued by feminist scholars, the burqa's symbolism of women's oppression, effectively garnered U.S. and international support for the local victims of ''terrorism'' in Afghanistan, namely women. The violence and suffering of Afghan

women under the Taliban provided the visual empathy necessary for enacting the ‘‘saving women’’ trope to further legitimize the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan (Nagar, 2006). This enacted a politics of violence from above by way of bombing and discursively invoking the saving women trope.

Rhetoric that focuses on “saving” and “liberating” women in Afghanistan implies that Afghan women need to be saved, that they cannot save themselves. Despite daily tragedies, Afghan women know how to struggle for their rights. Afghan women have always been exercising agency-despite the aid apparatus’ inability to recognize it as such. The aid apparatus is equipped to provide technical solutions, although such inputs are less likely to achieve transformation. It is more important to understand how Afghan women-and different groups of Afghan women-define transformation and what it is they hope to see transformed.

The Taliban persecuted women for the violation of its rules, but women courageously and imaginatively resisted those restrictive social norms. Women of diverse ethnic and religious groups worked together, through their secret schools. In their own way and according to their own culture, religion and ethnicity, they have been resisting the social control that the family and community try to impose on them. The covering a woman wears outside the house (whether a burqa or chadari) extends the claims she makes to privacy as she moves outside her domestic space, while it also signals her adherence to Islam, in Afghan thought. There are some ways that women negotiate gender and sometimes find themselves in positions of domination, able to exercise power within the family as well as the community. During the Taliban rule, some women broke one historical norm by complying with another, following the institution of mahram and chhadari by hiring men in their community to play the role of mahram. The cooperation between men and women enabled them to use these institutions as ‘gender masks’ and display submission of women to men in public (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Wearing a chhadari allowed women some mobility and freedom. Despite terrible conditions of life under the Taliban, Afghan women found a space where they could exercise autonomy and agency. In this way they broke the pre-defined spaces of confinement.

Afghan women have struggled and negotiated the various fluctuations in their social status throughout history, using long-established mechanisms to achieve gains on their own terms. An Afghan feminism—perhaps not labelled as such—has a long history in Afghanistan (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Afghan feminism seeks firstly to

distance itself from a Western feminist model (Moghadam, 1993;1994). A feminist geopolitics aims to trace the connections between geographic and political locations, exposing investments in the dominant geopolitical rhetoric, in the pursuit of a more accountable and embodied geopolitics that contests the wisdom of violence targeted at innocent civilians, wherever they may be (Hyndman, 2005).

Afghanistan's political history highlights the sporadic efforts made to empower women in an attempt to create a sense of nationhood. This is essential to explore because the political and powerful nature of tribal dictates in the Afghan countryside, and the oppositional ruling parties and elite are instrumental in determining the scope of women's lives. Women in Afghanistan are not an isolated institution; their fate is entwined with and determined by historical, political, social, economic and religious forces. In addition to a range of internal tensions, outside or international political forces have impacted Afghanistan in significant ways. The history of Afghan women has broadly shaped the varied aspects touching their lives- their family, education, socio-economic relations, religion, tribe affiliations and their political aspirations.

In the context of conflict and post war experience, it is not unusual for generalizations and stereotypes to prevail. As a result, the aid apparatus often comes armed with preconceived notions and facile analyses that do little to accommodate local realities. Unfortunately, in the case of Afghanistan, aid programs were designed and instituted before gender analyses could be thoroughly conducted. As a result, these aid programs have been unable to adequately integrate women—and men—in their efforts. A report to this effect states that Afghan "women have traditionally been viewed as a target group distinct from the socio-political, economic and cultural context, and humanitarian and development programmes are often based on unfounded assumptions and preconceptions" (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit 2005)

Afghan women have long-established mechanisms by which they have achieved gains in the past. Projecting images of Afghan women as victims may serve a strategic purpose; however, this strategy reveals little about women's realities and serves only to dislocate them as historical and political actors. At the local level, the perceptions and aspirations of the Afghan women and men should be taken into account. Afghan women and men recognize that they face a great challenge in

articulating their own definition of progress in the face of strong international agendas. Many women argue that their cause has been manipulated for political reasons, and external pressures to fast-track gender equality would foment a backlash. The world focussed on the image of Afghan women as victims as opposed to a focus on women's agency. This approach facilitates the creation of technical solutions to a political problem, clearly designating space for the aid intervention as the only alternative for women (Abirafeh, 2009). As a result, interventions assume that gender relations and power are a zero-sum game, and that interventions for women should offer no alternatives for men. Literature suggests that Afghan women do not find their situation to be different from the men. Their lives are affected by the same economic, political and social forces, although the needs and demands of the women vary. This needs to be taken into account while conceiving an aid programme.

Several aid programmes were not adequately engineered. There were US aid funds that were designated for education of Afghan girls and excluded boys. During the Taliban period, the lack of education for boys drove many Afghan families to resort to the only recourse available – the madrassas, centres for indoctrination and recruiting grounds for child soldiers. The men were often left out of aid programmes. They needed work too and the frustration of unemployment would be violently unleashed onto their women who were given the opportunity to work through women-specific programmes. Women may suffer further when gender-focused interventions fail to take gender issues into account, focusing only on women. Men's perceptions that they are neglected could result in a backlash for women. Social change and transformation are not simply introduced by aid interventions, but are longer-term processes operating at a structural level to address gender inequalities—on women's own terms. Such processes are contextual and local. The aid apparatus lacks a robust understanding of gender in the Afghan context.

A feminist geopolitics perspective is more effective in understanding Afghan women. It defines gender relations in terms of greater equality and also in terms of their own understanding of concepts of community- which is treated like a separate domain. Afghan women's and men's perception of women's liberation is a world apart from that of the invading forces (Rostami-Povey, 2007). The western perception

of women's liberation and democracy advocates that Afghan women and men should simply abandon the repressive practices of their culture and adopt the 'superior' western culture. The more they are nudged to live by western models, the more they hang on to the traditional gender roles. "It has never been gender mainstreaming," an Afghan human rights activist explained in Abirafeh's (2009) interviews. "It is gender segregation, just highlighting the differences between men and women. Dividing them, not bringing them together". Most mainstreaming approaches to women's development have not been based on analyses of the overall reality of women's lives. The programmatic separation of men and women thus reflects a Western-oriented individualistic approach. Feminist geopolitics addresses these issues and aims to disconnect from the imperial agenda and incorporate the views of Afghan women, to make international assistance more inclusive and effective.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

A Feminist Geopolitical Perspective

Chapter 3

Women in Afghanistan

Chapter 4

Aid in Afghanistan

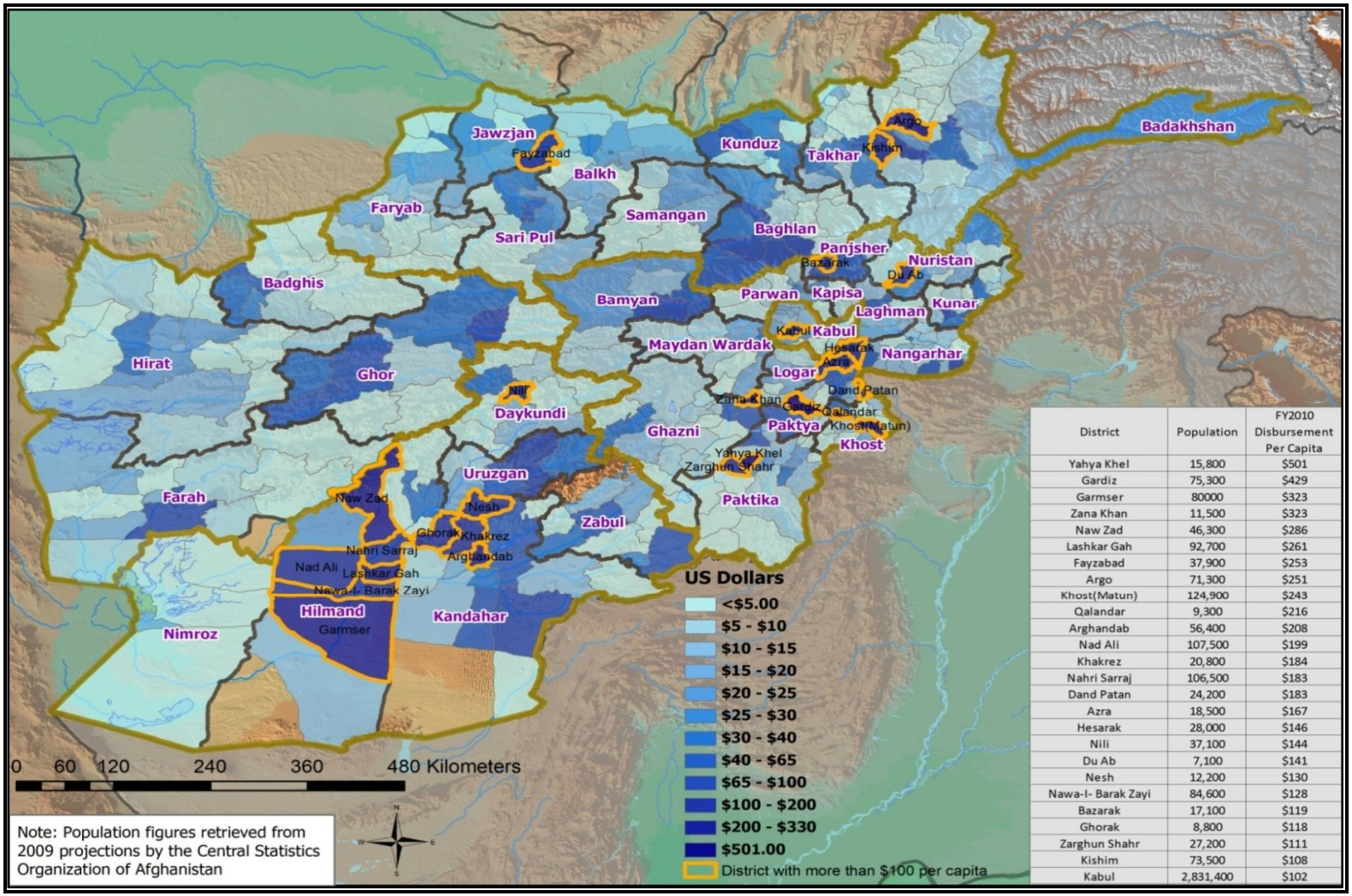
Chapter 5

Conclusion

References

Map 4.1

Estimated Disbursements per Capita, 2010

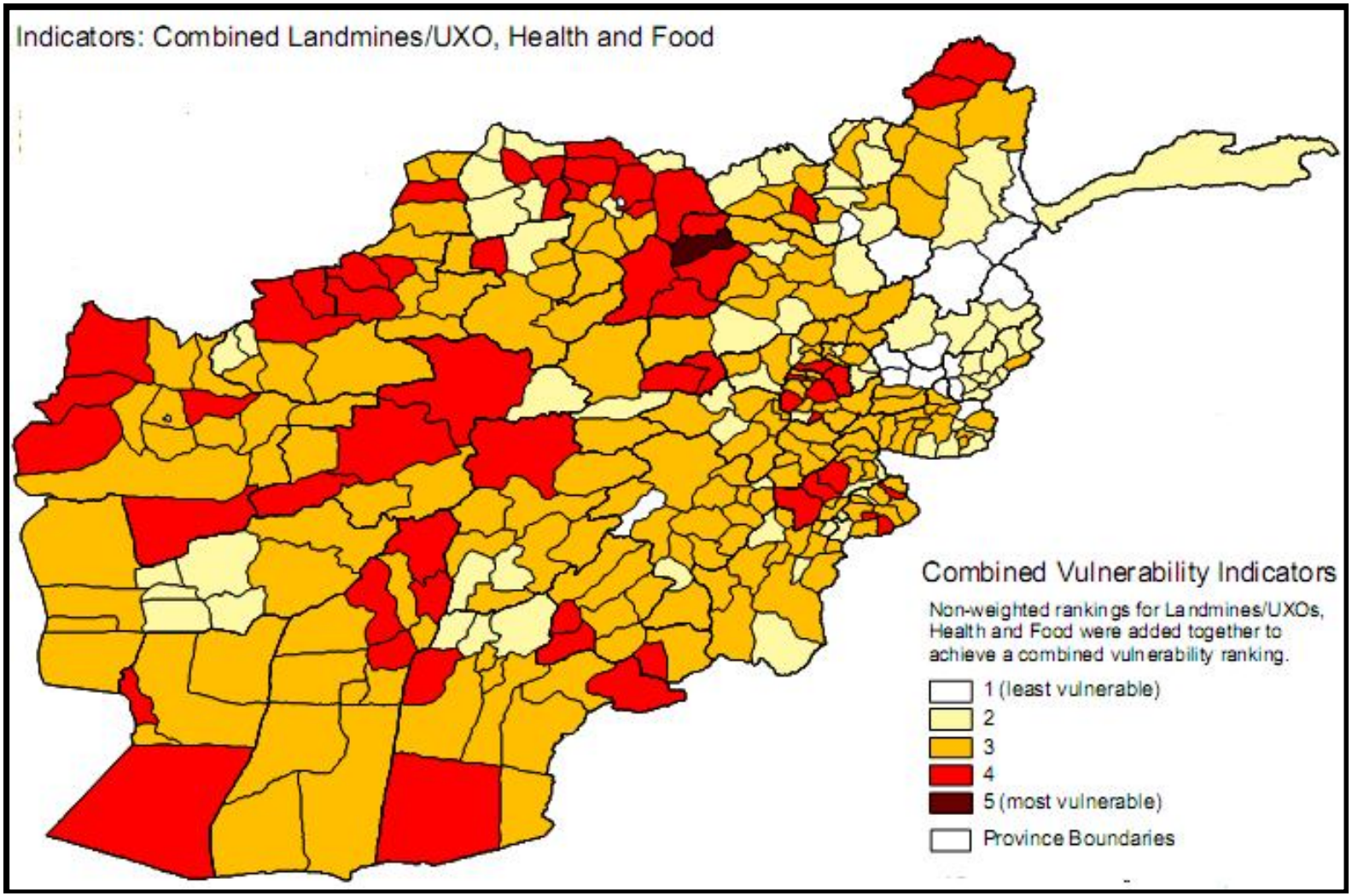


District	Population	FY2010 Disbursement Per Capita
Yahya Khel	15,800	$501
Gardiz	75,300	$429
Garmser	80000	$323
Zana Khan	11,500	$323
Naw Zad	46,300	$286
Lashkar Gah	92,700	$261
Fayzabad	37,900	$253
Argo	71,300	$251
Khost(Matun)	124,900	$243
Qalandar	9,300	$216
Arghandab	56,400	$208
Nad Ali	107,500	$199
Khakrez	20,800	$184
Nahri Sarraj	106,500	$183
Dand Patan	24,200	$183
Azra	18,500	$167
Hesarak	28,000	$146
Nili	37,100	$144
Du Ab	7,100	$141
Nesh	12,200	$130
Nawa-I- Barak Zayi	84,600	$128
Bazarak	17,100	$119
Ghorak	8,800	$118
Zarghun Shahr	27,200	$111
Kishim	73,500	$108
Kabul	2,831,400	$102

Source: USAID, Afghanistan Budget Review, 2011

Map 4.2

Afghanistan District Vulnerability Mapping: Combined Indicators

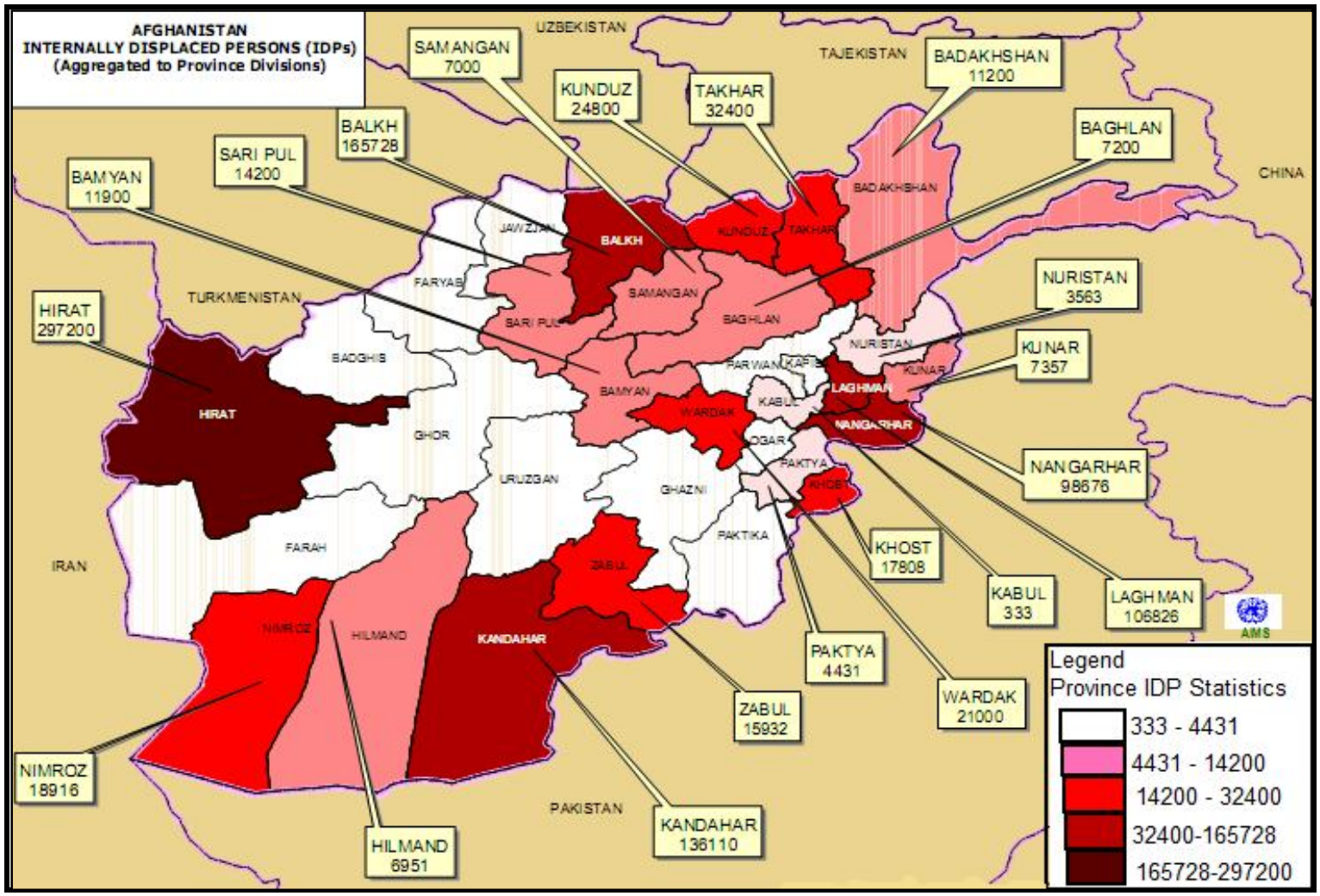


Source: AIMS

Map 4.3

Internally Displaced People,

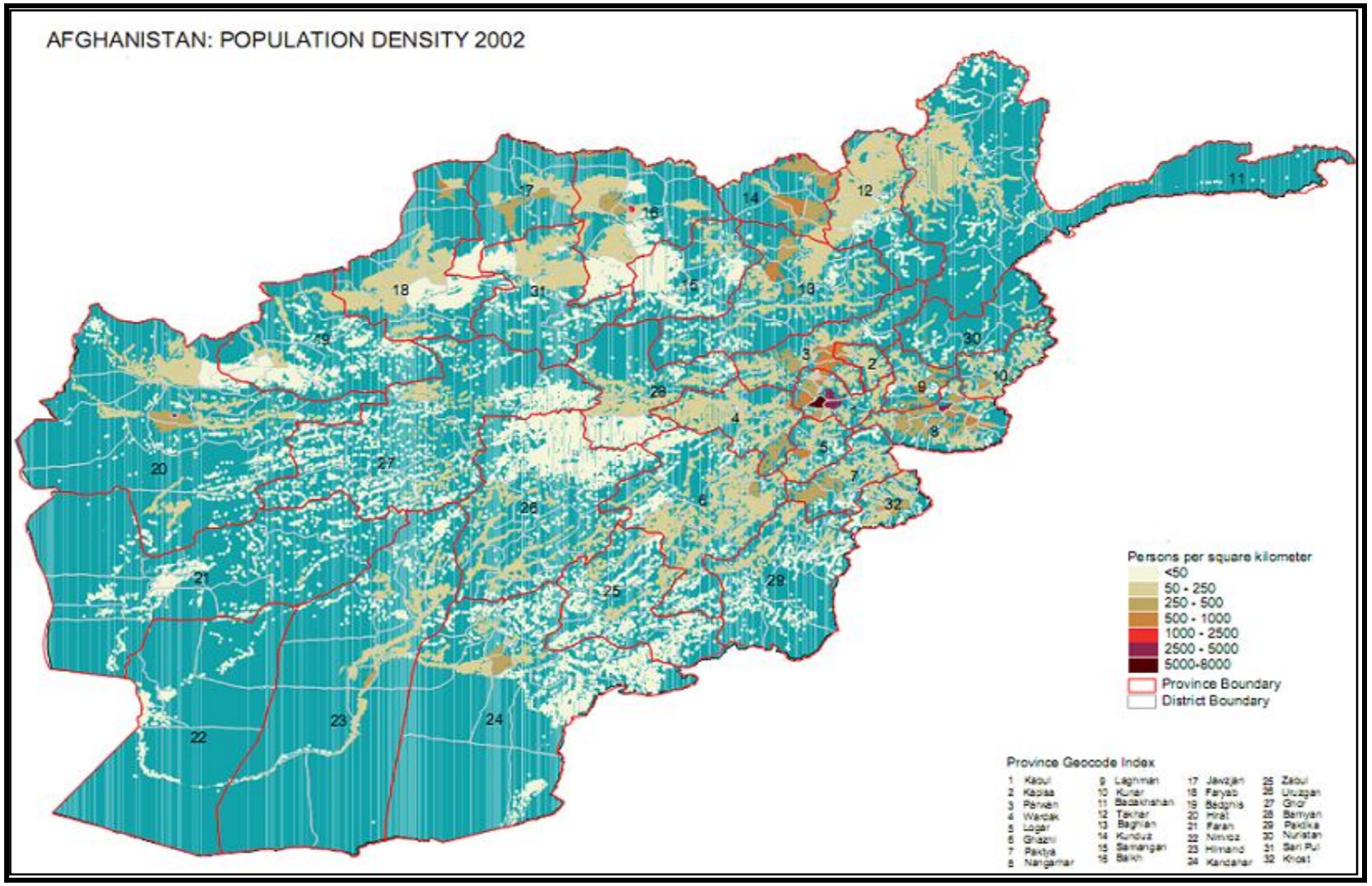
Afghanistan, 2002



Source: AIMS

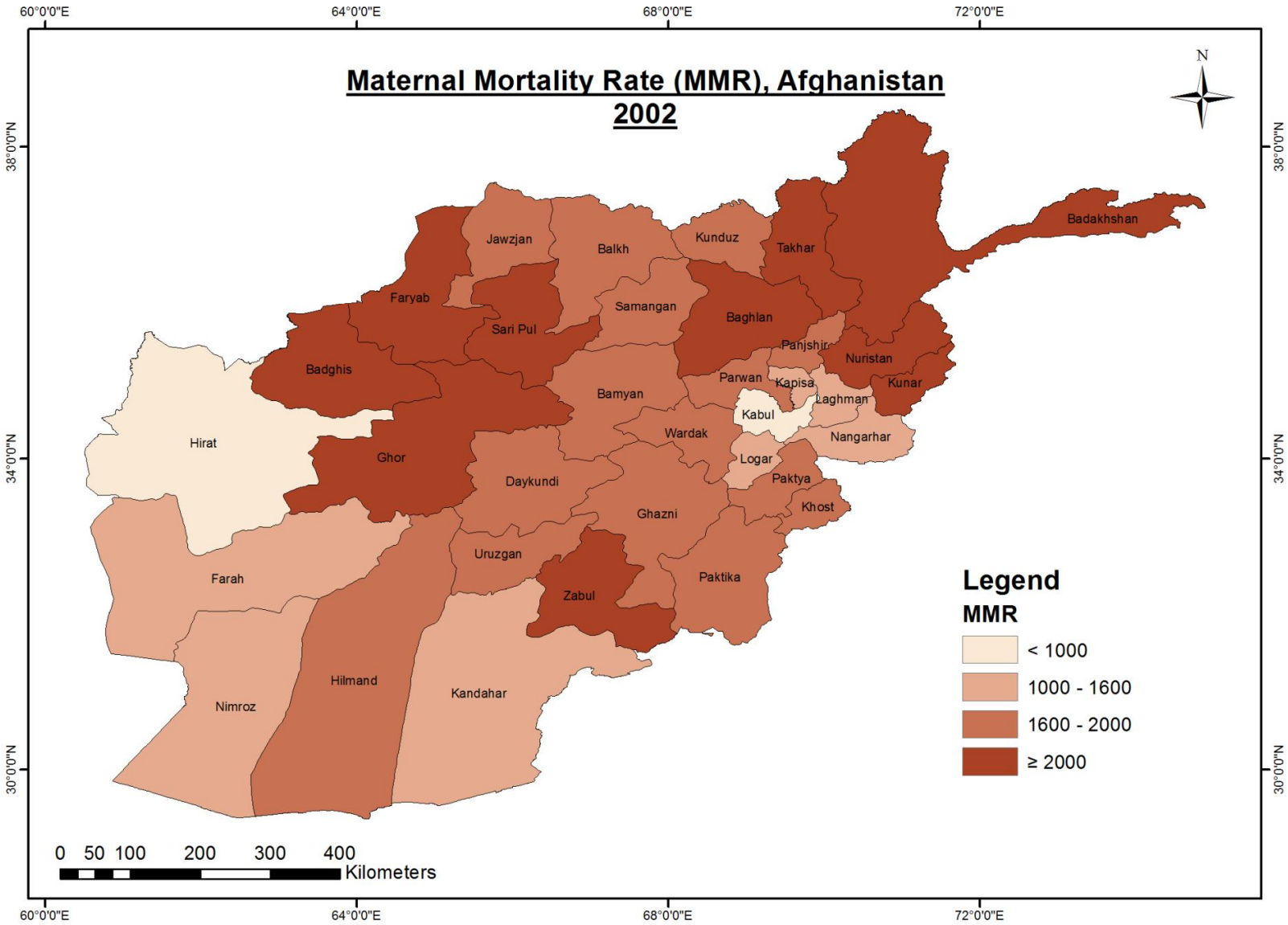
Map 4.4

Afghanistan Population Density, 2002

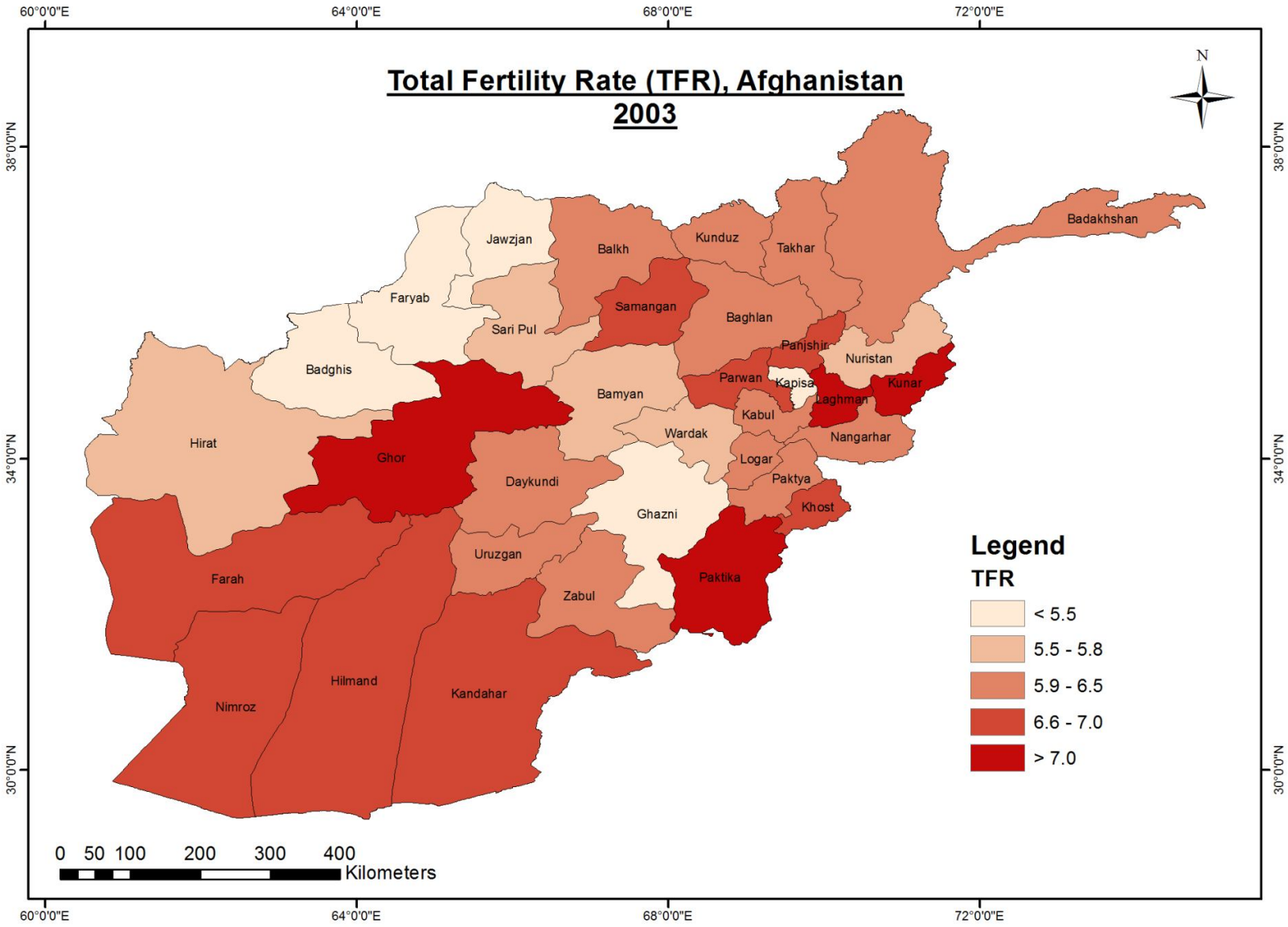


Source: AIMS

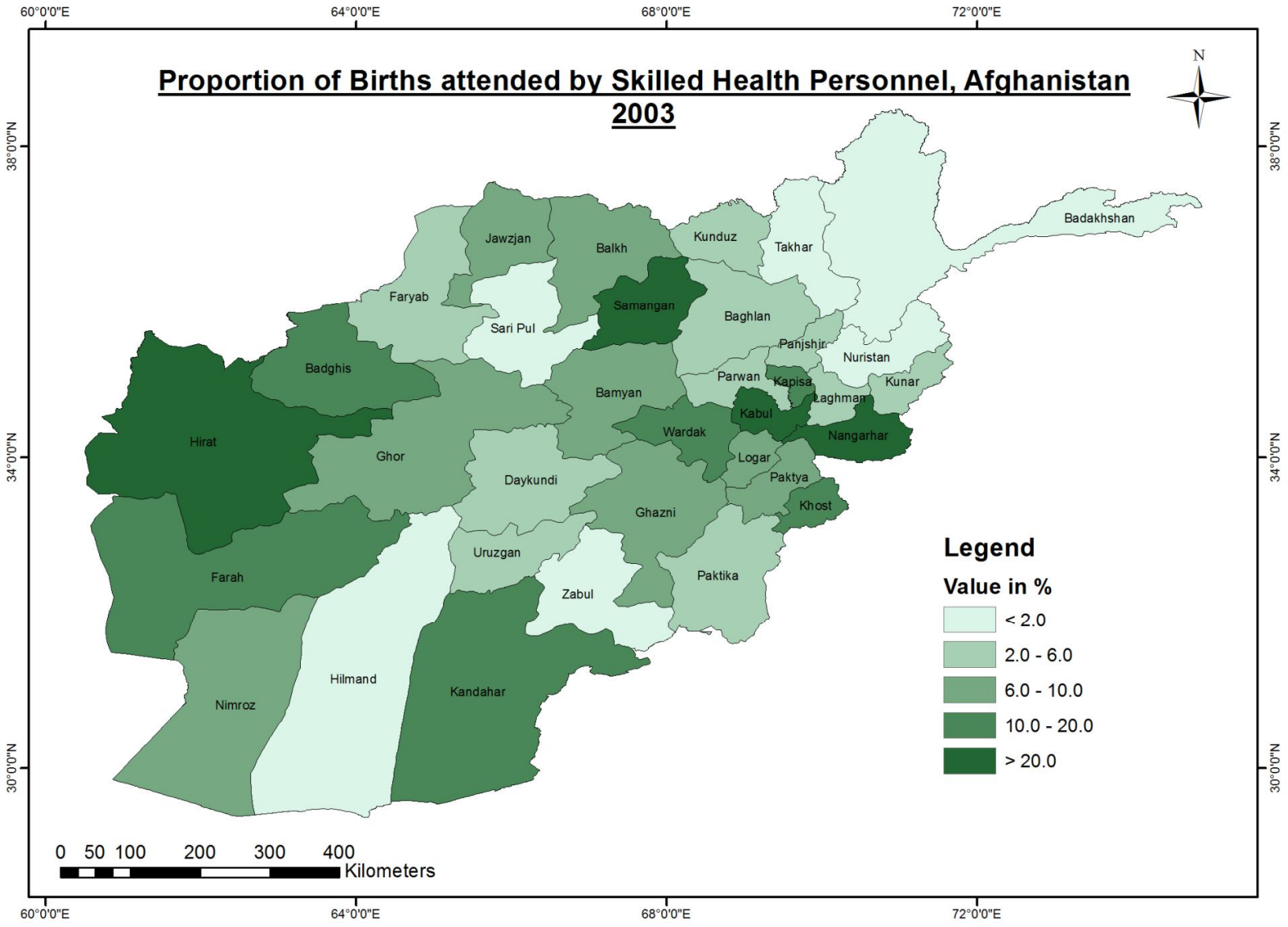
Map 4.5


Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Afghanistan
2002
N
60°0'0"E
64°0'0"E
68°0'0"E
72°0'0"E
38°0'0"N
34°0'0"N
30°0'0"N
Badakhshan
Takhar
Kunduz
Jawzjan
Balkh
Faryab
Samangan
Baghlan
Sari Pul
Panjshir
Nuristan
Badghis
Parwan
Kapisa
Kunar
Bamyan
Laghman
Kabul
Wardak
Nangarhar
Hirat
Ghor
Logar
Daykundi
Paktya
Khost
Ghazni
Uruzgan
Paktika
Farah
Zabul
Hilmand
Nimroz
Kandahar
Legend
MMR
< 1000
1000 - 1600
1600 - 2000
≥ 2000
0 50 100 200 300 400
Kilometers

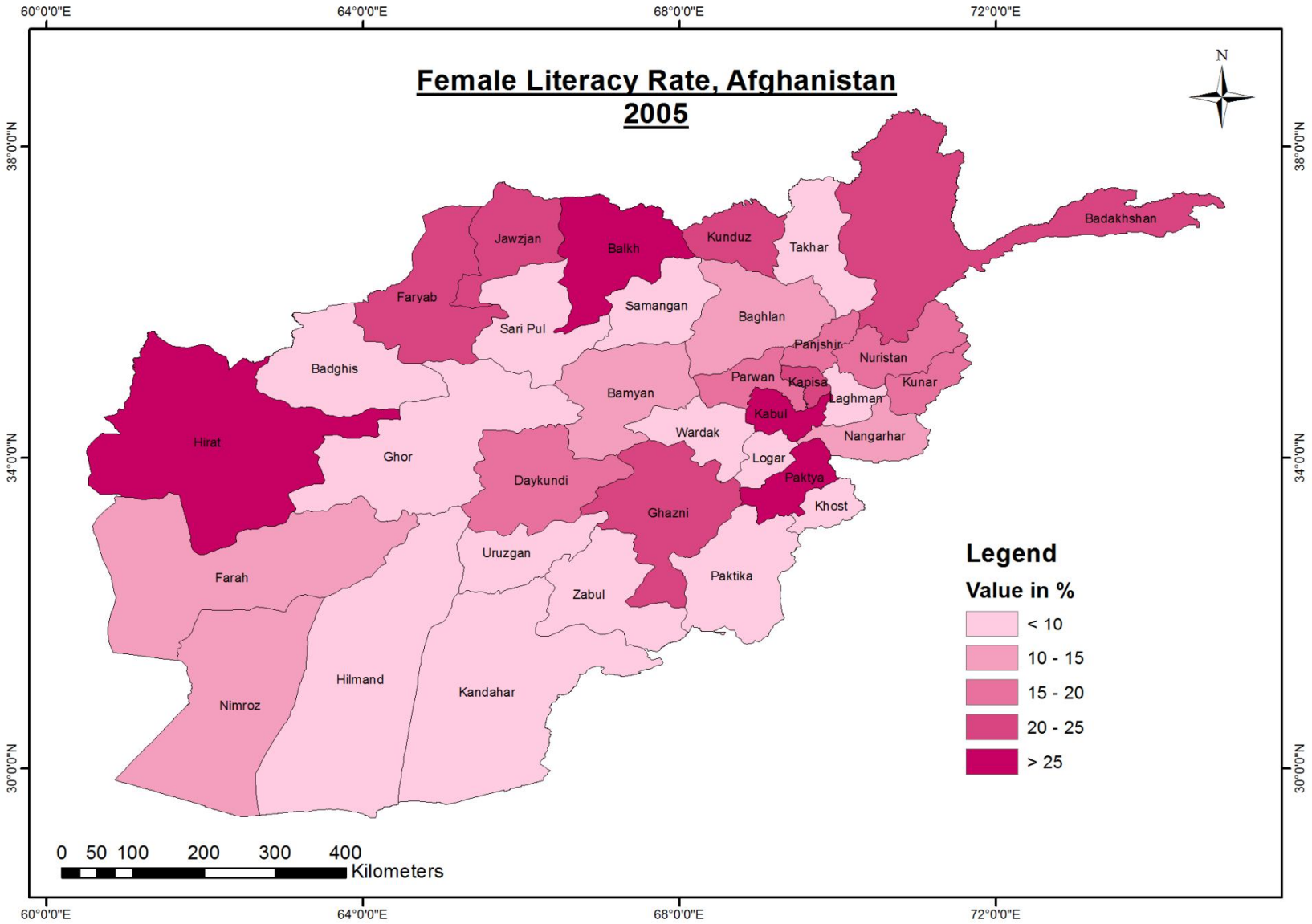
Map 4.6


Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Afghanistan
2003
N
60°0'0"E
64°0'0"E
68°0'0"E
72°0'0"E
38°0'0"N
34°0'0"N
30°0'0"N
Badakhshan
Jawzjan
Balkh
Kunduz
Takhar
Faryab
Samangan
Baghlan
Sari Pul
Panjshir
Nuristan
Badghis
Parwan
Kapisa
Kunar
Bamyan
Laghman
Kabul
Wardak
Hirat
Nangarhar
Ghor
Logar
Daykundi
Paktya
Ghazni
Khost
Uruzgan
Farah
Paktika
Zabul
Nimroz
Hilmand
Kandahar
Legend
TFR
< 5.5
5.5 - 5.8
5.9 - 6.5
6.6 - 7.0
> 7.0
0 50 100 200 300 400
Kilometers

Map 4.7


Proportion of Births attended by Skilled Health Personnel, Afghanistan 2003
N
60°0'0"E
64°0'0"E
68°0'0"E
72°0'0"E
38°0'0"N
34°0'0"N
30°0'0"N
Badakhshan
Jawzjan
Balkh
Kunduz
Takhar
Faryab
Samangan
Sari Pul
Baghlan
Panjshir
Nuristan
Badghis
Parwan
Kapisa
Kunar
Bamyan
Laghman
Kabul
Wardak
Nangarhar
Hirat
Ghor
Logar
Daykundi
Paktya
Khost
Ghazni
Uruzgan
Paktika
Farah
Zabul
Hilmand
Nimroz
Kandahar
Legend
Value in %
< 2.0
2.0 - 6.0
6.0 - 10.0
10.0 - 20.0
> 20.0
0 50 100 200 300 400
Kilometers

Map 4.8


Female Literacy Rate, Afghanistan
2005
N
60°0'0"E
64°0'0"E
68°0'0"E
72°0'0"E
38°0'0"N
34°0'0"N
30°0'0"N
Badakhshan
Takhar
Kunduz
Jawzjan
Balkh
Faryab
Sari Pul
Samangan
Baghlan
Panjshir
Nuristan
Kunar
Laghman
Parwan
Kapisa
Kabul
Nangarhar
Badghis
Bamyan
Wardak
Logar
Paktya
Khost
Hirat
Ghor
Daykundi
Ghazni
Uruzgan
Zabul
Paktika
Farah
Nimroz
Hilmand
Kandahar
Legend
Value in %
< 10
10 - 15
15 - 20
20 - 25
> 25
0 50 100 200 300 400
Kilometers