

# Humanising Educational Programme for the Empowerment of Women Harmonious Society in Afghanistan

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**Abstract:** Education is a challenge for most of people in Afghanistan especially for women who have been going through many ups and downs during past years. Women are experiencing many obstacles such as poverty, beliefs, culture, war and many more in order to be educated and their productive for the society. The year 2001 (pos era of Taliban regime) paved the way and opened a new chapter of education for most of people in Afghanistan especially women. Although, huge amount of money has been spent but still the result is not as expected. Currently, women are not playing an utilizable rule in terms of productivity for the society and most of them are burden on their husbands or parents. The purpose of this paper is to probe the bottlenecks and barriers that prevent educational empowerment of women in Afghanistan. This paper adapts the design & system thinking approach. The paper contribution is a conceptual and validated business model, in the form of BMC and VPCs, and as well conceptual humanising education programmes with digital platforms (digital teaching). The business model will help women to use their knowledge, skills, and value for innovative and national productivity towards sustaining society.

**Keywords:** Humanising Education, Empowerment, Women Productivity, BMC, VPC, and Sustainability.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As we may know that education plays an enormous rule in everyone's life. Education is very necessary to build and improve personality, develop confidence, create value for the society and get success in our lives. General wellbeing of the society greatly depends on quality education. Knowledgeable societies are generally characterized with the ability to create, share and use knowledge for the sole purpose of improving the general wellbeing of the people as well as making it possible for the nation to prosper (Kefela, 2010).

The relationship between education and development of the society is absolute and not dubious (ZOLFAGHARI, 2015). So, seeking knowledge is an obligation for all people because it is the power to enable us to make much advancement in all aspects of life. Learning procedure helps women to enhance their skills, to be creative, to know their rights, and to bring positive impact for the society. Women education will help the society to improve the economy and reduce poverty. Unfortunately, women in Afghanistan are struggling with many obstacles to gain knowledge. Illiteracy is the biggest problem for women in Afghanistan, followed by unemployment. Lack of education causes unemployment for women all over Afghanistan. A survey that was conducted by Asia foundation among women in Afghanistan from 2016 to 2017 found out that their most significant challenge is illiteracy or lack of quality education, which is 40.9% (Azeem, 2018).

During past years, there is an impressive increase in number of educated male 66 percent rather than female 37 percent but maybe quality of education is not guaranteed because teachers often find it difficult to provide quality education with a lack of supplies and resources, low salaries and being understaffed (Wilson, 2018). Parents and maybe government paid less attention on girl's education. UNICEF reports that 3.7 million school-age children are out of school—60% of them girls (Azeem, 2018). Other problems like poverty, beliefs, culture, war, domestic violence, forced marriage and lack of

rights stops them from going to schools or universities. Girls usually compel to leave school, because to help at home, they are married, they get pregnant, school is out of reach of them or due to the worry of safety and reputations parents have about their daughters (Mashwani, 2017). It is a serious problem for the future of Afghanistan and needs to be prioritised in order to solve or at least minimise.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Education is everyone's right but many people still do not have the opportunity to learn especially girls. Education is a very powerful force to overcome our life and society problems. Every problem in a society is connected to each other. For example, lack of education causes unemployment and unemployment causes poverty. Illiteracy is the mother of all issues as it gives birth to many other issues like poverty, unemployment, child labor, female feticide, population burst and many more (Singh, 2015). Amongst the biggest challenges that women are facing in Afghanistan ranked as illiteracy or lack of education 41%, unemployment 27%, domestic violence 19%, forced marriage 13%, lack of rights 12%, and poverty 11% (Azeem, 2018).

Illiteracy is the main factor for unemployment, poverty, and social illness among people especially women in Afghanistan. A survey that conducted by Asia foundation among women in Afghanistan by 2016-17 and found out that their most significant challenge is illiteracy or lack of education (40.9%). Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, currently estimated at about 31% of the population – above 15 years of age. The UNDP estimates female literacy at about 31.7% of adults. UNICEF reports that 3.7 million school-age children are out of school—60% of them girls. According to the 2016–17 Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, the national unemployment level currently stands at about 24%, and more than 54.5% of the population lives below the poverty line on less than a dollar a day (Azeem, 2018).

Women are considered as consumer members of a family, burdening on their parents and husbands. There are many factors that make education very difficult for women in Afghanistan. The major obstacles faced by the women are insecurity, poverty, norms, early marriage, harassments, lack of family support and encouragement, lack of qualified female staffs, son's education priority, distance from home to school, being the 'wrong' gender and so on. As Swami Vivekananda said, "It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing". So, it is very essential for governments to focus on women education for a balanced society and sustainable development in the future.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

Undoubtedly, education is the key to success but unfortunately many societies are suffering for not being able to learn. Afghanistan is among these societies, which are experiencing literacy (lack of education) as their main problem for women. The objective of this paper is to find out the main obstacles and problems that hamper women to education. Meanwhile, this paper will propose a business case and business model options with key activities and programmes to help women in enhancing their knowledge, abilities, skills, and values towards developing a sustainable and harmonious society.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

Design and system thinking will be used as the methodology for this paper. This includes literature review, interviews and environmental mapping tools to probe the problems and to find desirable solutions for our research population, those women who are not educationally empowered in Afghanistan. Business model canvas, value proposition canvas are used in order to use business model for this programme. In here, we will be focusing more on solutions that bring desirable outcomes for women in Afghanistan.

## **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Education background in Afghanistan***

After establishment of Afghanistan as a country until the time of King Amanullah Khan (1919), Afghan women have been kept within the walls of the house. That, there was no concept of female schools and most of the time religious education was provided inside of the home (Mashwani, 2017). During Amanullah Khan's kingdom, girl's education and Afghanistan modernization program began (Bamik, 2018). Unfortunately with the fall of his government, the female education also began its downfall. The boy's school continued to be open but girls' schools were closed. By the era of

Sardar Mohammad Daud Khans' (1960s), the situation changed and girls were able to go to school. Since 1960, women education was facing ups and downs until Taliban regime 1996. During Taliban regime, female education stopped completely and girls were not allowed to go to school (Mashwani, 2017).

After the fall of Taliban and with the establishment of new governments, the main focus has been given to education. However, the female education is still missing the momentum and flow. Due to internal conflicts and bad security, the delivery system of supplies to schools, enrolment, monitoring and school supervision is hampered badly. The customs, which are against female education, further backing the challenges for women. Early marriage is another serious issue that hampers female education. The overall shortage of teachers and the serious need for female teachers along with a shortage of physical structure are the factors that hinder female attendance at schools, especially in the rural areas (Mashwani, 2017).

Several issues exist related to gender in Afghanistan from 2001 until the present as Afghan women still do not have basic rights, education facilities, cultural barriers that prohibit female from several activities and actions, violation of customs and culture against women's rights such as Jirga (councils of male elders), early child and forced marriages, and selling or exchanging of daughters. It should be mentioned that these issues related to gender do not exist only from 2001 but it covers a long history, which includes civil wars, conflicts, and invasions, which affects present Afghan society (Yigit & Diyarbakirlioglu, 2017).

The need for greater access to education for women is highlighted in The Asia Foundation's findings in its "Survey of the Afghan People" from 2006 to 2009, in which lack of education was consistently ranked as the biggest problem that women are facing (Ayubi, 2010). Education is an issue related to the gender in Afghanistan. Girls' access to education has improved in cities, but progress has been limited in rural areas. In the past fifteen years the number of girls going to school is still not high as it was in the first years when the Taliban were overthrown. Years of conflict and war have over affected women's opportunities for education, training, and economic development. This, in turn, has made it even more difficult for women to advance in all areas of life in Afghanistan (Yigit & Diyarbakirlioglu, 2017).

While the Taliban has not been extinguished from Afghanistan, significant improvements have been made in the lives of women since they were ousted from power. To begin, women's legal protections and political participation have increased (Odell, 2016). As of 2012, women constituted 27 percent of the seats in the lower house of Parliament, and in 2010 parliamentary elections, 40 percent of voters were women. Greater freedom for women is reflected in education enrollment as well. Under the Taliban, the number of girls attending school was close to zero, while in 2010, 37 percent of the seven million schoolchildren were girls. Although, many girls enrolled to schools and universities but in most of institutions and organizations women were still not visible.

#### ***Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4)***

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, SDG4 is dedicated to education. Higher education is mentioned in target 4.3 of SDG4, which aims to "By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy". So, our program ensures that most of female youth and a substantial proportion of women achieve literacy. Higher education also forms an important part of other goals related to poverty (SDG1); health and well being (SDG3); gender equality (SDG5) governance; decent work and economic growth (SDG8); responsible consumption and production (SDG12); climate change (SDG13); and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16) ("Higher Education," 2019). The SGD4, which has a purpose to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It offers an opportunity for the global higher education community to evaluate how universities contribute, to step up and demonstrate that building a sustainable future depends on both knowledge creation and collaboration (Egron, Eva and Polak, 2017).

#### ***How Poor Countries Used Technology***

Technology is a quick solution for developing countries for their major problems. Technology enables developing countries to have great access to information and tools and use to benefit the education and economics. Firstly, technology unlocks educational boundaries that support online learning from different locations. Technology is the tool that enables women to access to different resources. Internet simplifies for women to attend free classes through their devices, collect free information, request or send material to other people and many more available options. After getting familiar, women will be able to discover content and materials by themselves to continue their independent or individual studies. Most of women in cities and rural areas have limited access to education. It is very difficult for them to attend educational centers

due to many issues that have been mentioned early. Many of educational centers are facing limited resources and poor quality staffs. So, technology enables them to attend universities, organizations, educational centers and institutes, which are offering online literacy and educational programs in a virtual environment with verified certificates and high quality educational systems. Technology enhances contribution between women and their instructors by simplifying communication. Ghana recently started its first interactive, distance-learning project, Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (MGCubed,) with the support of the British Department for International Development in Ghana, reported Ghana Web. This program uses new technology to provide access to education impossible before now (Nelson, 2014).

Besides facilitating education, technology creates jobs. It is very obvious that technology increases job opportunities all over the world especially third world countries. For example, in Mexico, a government-supported project called MexicoFIRST has seen the formation of collaboration between local companies and global IT firms to help train skilled workers in the IT industry. It is expected to provide high-paying jobs for 30,000 people by the time the program finishes in 2013 (Woodman & Long, 2014). Moreover, technology enables women to establish their own domestic or external digital marketplaces with high connectivity and online payment. So, it is not worry for them if not allowed to go out of their houses. They can run their own e-commerce marketplace business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-customer (B2C) with online transaction using technology. For example, companies are helping expand economic opportunities to a broader segment of the population by making affordable and easier money transaction in South Africa. One of these online transaction providers is Yoco that develop innovative technology solutions to make payment easier for merchants and customers in South Africa. Yoco builds tools and services to help small businesses in South Africa accept payments and manage their business (Moed, 2018).

### ***Humanizing Education***

A humanizing education relies on the pedagogy of educators to influence, navigate, and coexist within the sociopolitical context and practices of teacher leaders, students, administration, and community members (Law, 2015). Educator's pedagogy has a great impact on humanizing education in a society. Our educational program needs to have expert staffs that are well educated and should be able to address our women problems with proper solutions. Every society needs to humanize education in order to change socially and sustainable development. In order to humanize education among women, this program should enable them to address their educational and financial problems for taking equal part in the society.

In the current digital world, technology has affected education in many aspects accelerated the learning process. In many countries, the success rate of education is highly related to use of technology. Technology and education integration aims to develop into women with the knowledge, skill, values, and be able to bring prosperity for themselves and the society.

## **6. BUSINESS MODEL**

### ***Business Model Canvas (BMC)***

BMC is a great tool to structure our business model in a structured and uncomplicated way. This canvas helps us to know about the customers we serve, what value will we offer them through what channels, our cost structure and how our program (business) makes money. We are going to discuss our step-by-step business model with its value proposition.

### ***Customer Segment***

Women, students, universities, schools, donors, government of Afghanistan are our customer segment. These are our community customers that we are aiming to offer service. These customers are cooperating between each other to get the value for the society, which is helping our literacy program for women. So, getting the right customers will lead our program to success.

### ***Value Proposition***

Value proposition is our most focused part of this project because what we are going to do is to get value. Our target is to enhance women's knowledge for a harmonious society in Afghanistan. A society that women should be able to take equal part as men in government, economics, education, and other positive changes. As we may know that education is free in Afghanistan except private schools and universities. So, the first value that we should provide for women is free education. This free education will comprise literacy programs like getting familiar with technology and to use it for improving their knowledge, communication with other women, lectures and working from home. Literacy programs will enhance their knowledge by attending physical or digital classes to improve their productivity by creating job

opportunities. The program will help them to solve their financial problems and help each other in order to play an enormous role in the society and achieve their rights. Our value proposition will be explained in Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) table.

### ***Key Partners***

This is a comprehensive programme that needs many partners to take part in order to get the expected outcome. This programme will be organized and led by International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). With the cooperation of IIUM, Afghanistan government is also the main partner to pave the way for this programme. Ministries of education, higher education and women affairs are partners, which are expected to play the main role by providing educational centers, facilitating the literacy programme and collaborating in curriculum for this programme. We hope that other volunteered governments, IIUM alumni, and organizations take part in advisements, funding and digital teaching for the success of this programme.

### ***Key Activities***

Our key activities for this programme will be humanising educational programmes, which include literacy projects, online methods of teaching and communication, research, innovations, and possible solutions for the barriers that hamper women to learn. Our focus is to empower women through quality education to realize their contribute and potential role in transformation of the society.

### ***Key Resources***

Our resources are staff knowledge, technology, government of Afghanistan and obviously people or governments who are cooperating us financially.

### ***Customer Relationship***

Connection is very important for this programme and needs different channel to be connected with our customers (women) and partners (programme organizers). Luckily, technology simplifies our communication anywhere at anytime. We have different options to pave communicate among programme organizers, staffs and women like, Face-to-face communication, online and community building. There are many effective, cheap and easy tools in the market that enable us to communicate online.

### ***Channels***

Our channel is our communication and awareness tools among our customer segments for our product and services. To deliver our value to our customers, we will do it physically, online (website and application), mosque (Masjid) and publications. The Mosque administration can play significant role in this regard because they have knowledge about the status of the families in the society. So, it is easy for the programme organisers to find the eligible women for this programme (Hamid et al., 2013). Many women are not allowed to gather in other places (outside home) unless with a family member. So, mosque is a holy place for people and they will allow women to gather for educational activities. Ahmad Dahlan et el. (2016) further described that the prophet's Mosque was seen as the ultimate center for the Muslim community where key activities including social, economy, political, and educational were conducted. Technology (our online channel) plays a significant role for the success of this programme. There are many available technology services in the market like mobile computing and cloud computing that can be used to ease learning process. Mobile computing is referred to a variety of devices that allow people to access data and information from where ever they are (Saleh, Ma-key, Ahmad Dahlan, & Osman, 2013). Cloud computing has been used in different educational institutes in different ways. Documents have been created and stored in computers (servers), which are accessible by other users not only on their networks but can be accessed by other computers outside the network (ita & Manglani, 2017). So, mobile computing and cloud computing are tools that ease communication, resource sharing and digital learning in this programme.

### ***Cost Structure***

After defining our key activities, key resources and key partnership for this programme, we need to incur costs for books, computers, Internet, related stationaries, website and application development, transportation, electricity, governmental tax and so on. So, these costs will be collected from donors, government of Afghanistan, IIUM and program revenue streams.

**Revenue Structure**









Revenue is the amount of money that is brought to the company through various activities like services and product sales. We may not have products to sell but our revenue stream for this programme mostly will be from government of Afghanistan, International Islamic University Malaysia, obligatory payment (zakat), investment, publications and maybe few more in the future.

**7. THE VALIDATED BMC AND VPC**

We have designed the Business Modal Canvas (BMC) in the context of educational empowerment of women in Afghanistan by IIUM. After the data collection and analyse, the research finding was organised to a validated BMC, which is shown in Figure1. Participants from organiser side (IIUM) have been selected for interview to validate our BMC and customer segment side (women in Afghanistan) to find out their idea about such programmes. IIUM got different clubs who are responsible for different activities which two of them are Center for Community Engagement and Service (CENSERVE) and Center for Information Technology Advancement (CITA). CENSERVE is responsible for educational programmes for small communities in or outside campus. CITA is responsible for further extension to the functions of Kulliyah of Information and Communication Technology (KICT) and providing complete range of educational courses in KICT. CITA recognizes the need of continuing education and professional development programmes in IT not only for students but also corporate employees, adult professionals, and the general public.

Women (students) who have been interviewed for this educational programme, would like to acquire necessary literacy, basic skills of technology and equal educational opportunities as men to live a comfortable life. Additionally, they are looking for programmes to help them find employment. Our validated BMC shows our customer segment’s needs and also give future vision about education empowerment of women in Afghanistan.

**The Business Model Canvas**

<p><b>Key Partners</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-IIUM</li> <li>-Government of Afghanistan</li> <li>-Other governments</li> <li>-Organisations</li> <li>-Minitries of higher education and women affairs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Activities</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To provide education for women</li> <li>-To make women productive</li> <li>-Research, solution &amp; Innovation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Value Proposition</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Free education for women</li> <li>-Literacy programs for enhancing women knowledge.</li> <li>-Educated and productive women</li> <li>-Solving financial problems</li> <li>-Helping ummah</li> </ul>	<p><b>Customer Relationships</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Online Communication</li> <li>-Face-to-face communication</li> <li>-Community building</li> </ul>	<p><b>Customer Segments</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Society</li> <li>-Students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unversities</li> <li>➤ Schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Donors</li> <li>-Lecturers</li> <li>-Government of Afghanistan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Resources</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bussinessmen</li> <li>-Staff knowledge</li> <li>-Technology</li> <li>-Government of Afghanistan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Channels</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Physically</li> <li>-Website and Apps</li> <li>-Masjid</li> <li>-Publications</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cost Structur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cost of buildings</li> <li>-Cost of books, computers, Internet and other related stationaries.</li> <li>-Cost of electricity</li> <li>-Website development</li> <li>-Cost of transportation</li> <li>-Governmental tax</li> <li>-Staff salary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Revenue Streams</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Investemnt</li> <li>-Governments</li> <li>-Publications</li> </ul>	

**Figure 1: Validated BMC of the programme**

After conducting interview, we came out to validate the value proposition canvas (VPC). Our product (Humanising Educational Programme for the Empowerment of Women Harmonious Society in Afghanistan) by IIUM with the programme gains creators and pain relievers for our customer segment.

Value Proposition				Customer Segment		
Customers	Product & services	Gain creators	Pain relievers	Customer job(s)	Gains	Pains
<b>Students (Women in Afghanistan)</b>	IIUM Literacy Program	-Universities and schools -Educational programs -Educational centers	-Expert staffs -Technology -Investment -Research -Innovation	-Learn knowledge -Attend education centers -Use technology	-Positive changes -Bright future -Harmonious society -Educated society -Awareness of new technologies	-Lack of knowledge -Unemployment -Poverty -Lack of rights -Unbalanced society
<b>Government of Afghanistan</b>	IIUM Literacy Program	-Universities and schools -Educational programs -Educational centers -MOHE	-Modern programs -Entrepreneurship Technology Investment	-Develop educational methods and policies. -Provide curriculum with IIUM. -Facilitate and cooperate for literacy program	Developed economy Developed country Educated & productive society Positive changes Educated nation	-Lack of knowledge -Cannot offer enough job -Poverty -Unbalanced society -No sustainable development
<b>Donors</b>	IIUM Literacy Program	-Benefits women -Solve financial problems -Helping <u>ummah</u>	-Investment -Islamic profit from banks or businesses	-Give money (charity, zakat) -Make impact on the society changes	Wealthy society	Waste of money
<b>Lecturers</b>	IIUM Literacy Program	-More educated people -Competitive lecturers -Harmonious society	-Online materials Multiple -Communication channel -Modern programs	-Teach -Prepare materials -Research and publications	-Educated society -Bright future -Harmonious society -Educated society	-Lack of knowledge -Unbalanced society -Lack of teaching materials

Figure 2: Validated VPC of the programme

## 8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Education plays an enormous role in everyone's life to build and improve personality, develop confidence, create continuous value for the society and get success. Unfortunately, it is a challenge for most of people in Afghanistan especially for women who have been going through many ups and downs during the past years. According to our literature review, the biggest problem among women in Afghanistan is lack of literacy. Poverty, unemployment, child labor, female feticide, and population burst originate from illiteracy. To develop a sustainable harmonious society, there must be a substantial increase in the number of women who have relevant knowledge, skills, and human values for entrepreneurship, employments, and decent jobs to take equal part in education, economy and so on. In this paper, BMC and VPC have been used for analysing complex problems with the proper activities with the value proposition.

Implementing such programmes usually takes long time and may face to many challenges in Afghanistan society especially rural places. The contribution of this paper includes formulating a conceptual and validated business model, in the form of BMC and VPCs, and as well as conceptual programmes with digital platforms for digital and face2face education. For the future work, this conceptual business model will be translated into real implementation by preparing a business plan, with a project and change management plan for this programme.

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