

**PROVIDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION  
THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED  
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF TWO  
PROVINCES IN AFGHANISTAN**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Education at the Faculty of  
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts (M.A.)**



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*“Education for all  
All for Education”*

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## ABSTRACT

Afghanistan has traditionally faced educational decline, despite the country's enormous academic potential. Throughout the history of modern education in the country, the primary areas of underdevelopment have been education quality, access, gender equality in education, school infrastructure, teacher development, national curriculum, and developing a responsive school system. At the same time, plans have been made to improve access to education and meet the needs of everyone. Aside from the general education system, two programs, community-based education and accelerated learning, have been created to help provide access to education in remote regions and to people over the age of enrolling in the public education system.

The current study investigated the quality and accessibility of community-based education programs. This study focuses on three main areas: (1) the quality of education for community-based education envisioned by the program's policy, (2) the extent to which the community-based education program is effective in providing access to education in rural and remote areas, and (3) factors that impacted the quality of education in actual community-based education classes after the policy was implemented.

This study applied a qualitative research methodology to investigate quality and access in a community-based education program. The primary data collection approach was semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, community leaders, and implementing organizations. Thematic analysis was used to search for repeating patterns in the study data.

The study's findings demonstrated that: (1) community-based education policy visioned a high quality of education given the urgency and makeshift arrangement of community-based education program. It was also found that community-based education provided enhanced access to education in rural and remote covering almost every rural and remote community under the community-based education program. (2) Regarding access to education and policy effectiveness, the study found that factors like reduced distance, gender-appropriate classes, and community support increased access to education. On the other hand, factors such as lack of infrastructure, families not allowing children sometimes, and cultural barriers (for girls) hindered access to community-based education programs. Overall, the community-based education program project has been viewed as a successful alternative to education in rural and remote locations. (3) While the policy stated that the community-based education program would provide high-quality education, the classrooms still required adequate attention regarding class facilities and instructors' competence. These two factors negatively impacted the quality of community-based education program. Better cooperation and coordination, supervision, and teacher training were identified as factors contributing to quality in community-based education classes. Teacher competence and adequate learning and teaching facilities are two areas the study recommends for improvement in this program.

The current research is critical for bridging the gap between communities and government agencies. Similarly, the study informs policymakers about the policy's strengths and weaknesses. This study gives insights into policy change and recommendations from this program's communities to develop further and enrich community-based education. Finally, the study proposed additional empirical research into community-based education programs.

**Keywords:** *education, access, Afghanistan, community, policy, quality of education, rural*

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July 07, 2023, Depok

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shah Kayen' with a stylized flourish above the name.

Hazrat Shah Kayen

## **ABBREVIATION**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALP	Accelerating Learning Program
ARG	Adult Reading Groups
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBC	Community-based Classes
CBE	Community-based Education
EFA	Education for All
IP	Implementing Partners
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PACE-A Afghanistan	Partnership for Advancing Community-based Education in Afghanistan
UNESCO Organization	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter One gives us an overview of the study. It briefly highlights the policy and introduces a community-based education program. It also slightly touches on the education issue, particularly modern education in Afghanistan. Moreover, the study aims, objectives, questions, and significance are also elaborated to give a clear avenue to the study and provide a complete structure behind the study's motives.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Afghanistan is the connecting path between South and Central Asia, but it needs a competent and responsible education system for its citizens. Decades of war could be one of the significant reasons for impeding the country's education development. After establishing the Islamic Republic government of Afghanistan in 2001, hopes arose for developing and providing equal access to education. One of the pathways for rebuilding education in the country was Community-Based Education (CBE) as a form of nonformal education. CBE program was initiated by The Partnership for Advancing Community-Based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) in 2006, which was a five-year USAID-funded program to increase educational options for children, particularly girls, in Afghanistan, where traditional government schools are unavailable. Community-Based Classes (CBC), including Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP), aim to ensure that underserved children, particularly adolescent

girls, have access to education. Despite several ups and downs, the CBE continued to educate girls and those previously unable to access it.

In Afghanistan, Community-Based Education has a long history, dating back to the 1970s, when the government established Dehati (village) schools in remote areas with low population density. Since then, national and international organizations have stepped forward to help and aid vulnerable groups, girls, and nomadic peoples to receive similar educational possibilities (MoE, 2018). When international forces overthrew the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001 and established an interim government, Community-Based Education resurfaced as a cutting-edge response to the growing inaccessibility of education for rural, distant, and neglected groups.

The new government had numerous educational obstacles, as the Taliban's regime denied providing equal access to education for both male and female students in their first regime (Hirschkind & Mahmood, 2002). On the other hand, regions conflicted around the country received little or no attention in terms of education. Most rural areas needed proper school buildings in every town, making it difficult for most rural girls and boys to commute kilometers to attend school. Similarly, females thought attending school was like entering a new world of realities and chances. Still, the journey was fraught with challenges, such as verbal and physical threats from insurgent groups. Another significant difficulty for the ministry was providing learning opportunities for people who had missed school or were now too old to attend; in plain words, males and females who had an interest in education but were

overage to get enrolled in schools. Finally, for the newly established government, taking every measure was the only option to decrease the illiteracy rate in the country.

According to the Afghan Ministry of Education (2018), statistics, 4.2 million children are out of school, and 60% are Afghan girls. On the other hand, 68% of the teachers do not meet the minimum requirement (teacher training college graduation or 14<sup>th</sup> graduate) set for teaching by the Ministry of Education to be considered qualified teachers. Similarly, there are still no buildings at half of the 12,421 schools nationwide. Given the geography, gender, rural-urban inequities, insecurity, low-quality education, and administrative restrictions, the ministry struggled to overcome these obstacles. For this reason, the Afghan Ministry of Education must look for alternative pathways to provide access to education for out-of-school children (MoE., 2018) by establishing a community-based education program.

Before formalizing the CBE program under a unified policy, the Partnership for Advancing Community-Based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) initiated the CBE program in Afghanistan. According to Guyot (2007), the partnership was a collaboration among several international non-governmental organizations to provide access to the population, particularly girls and women, to attend school in areas where the Afghan Ministry of Education schools are unavailable.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education established a new Community-Based Education policy to address educational concerns nationwide in collaboration with its international partners and allies. The policy was developed to fulfill Afghanistan's

commitment to education for all, as stated in Article 43 of the 2004 constitution and Article 4 of the 2008 Education Law. CBE policy came as part of the National Education Strategic Plan III (2017-2021) (MoE, 2018) to address the most pressing challenge of access to education in rural areas for the Afghan government. The distance between villages and communities in rural areas makes it difficult for boys and girls to attend school. As a result, the only way forward was to adopt Community-Based Education as an alternative schooling option for learners in remote areas.

CBE mainly improves access to education, defined by the Ministry of Education as an outreach school/class. It is created in remote and rural areas collaborating with communities, facilitating partners, or the Ministry of Education and the community. The policy document has three main aims. The policy targets sparsely populated areas (villages) where: (a) there is no gender-appropriate public school for children; (b) Children have to walk more than three kilometers to get to a public school; and (c) a sizable portion of children missed out on formal education, have passed the age of enrollment, and need accelerated learning opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2018). Developing an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for children and youth who have missed the opportunity to attend conventional school is a critical component of the CBE method. The age set by the policy is 15 years old for children who have missed formal education opportunities.

According to the Ministry of Education (2018), Community-Based Education (CBE) is an alternative pathway to education and outreach programs in underserved areas, part of Afghanistan's formal education system. After the PACE-A project was developed in collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and the United States International Development Agency (USAID), before this, CBE was primarily supported by international NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, and the like (Kirk & Winthrop, 2008).

Later, the Afghan Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and other international NGOs collaborated to maintain the initiative. It was created so that the community offered a learning environment, PACE-A provided educational resources to learners, and the Afghan Ministry of Education enabled teacher training for those who would teach in this program. The curriculum was the same as in official Afghan schools across the country. According to Burde et al. (2013), the enrolment rate in overall formal schools has improved by 42 percent, indicating that CBE has shown to be an effective program in helping girls and boys in rural and remote areas gain enhanced access to education. Although the policy for CBE follows national standard practices for education set by the Afghan government and is evaluated and monitored according to UNICEF's process, the majority of CBE learners complain about the poor quality of teaching and infrequent monitoring and evaluation of CBE programs in their communities (UNICEF, 2020). Another issue the CBE program needs to

address is the cultural barrier to women's access to education, which appears to be increasing rather than decreasing (Kayen, 2022).

The available literature on the CBE program is minimal (Burde et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2020; MoE, 2018; Guyot, 2007; Buckland, 2005; Kirk & Winthrop, 2008), primarily reports of international NGOs that strongly support and implement CBE policy throughout the country. In this regard, no evidence of policy being implemented successfully or bringing marginalized boys and girls back to education in underserved areas. It is also essential to learn more about monitoring and evaluating CBE in Afghanistan and the quality of education. Therefore, the current policy study will fill the knowledge gap by investigating CBE in providing access and quality education to learners, particularly girls in remote or rural settings in Afghanistan.

## **1.2 Research Questions:**

In this study, the main research questions are as follows:

1. What is the intended quality of education envisioned by the CBE policy?
2. How effective is the policy in providing access to education in remote areas distant from formal public schools?
3. What factors impacted the quality of education in CBE classes?

### **1.3 Research Objectives:**

Third-world countries consider the makeshift education arrangement such as CBE and other initiatives necessary. In the Afghan context, CBE was formalized through a policy intended to establish CBE classes, transform students into a general education system after enabling the nearby public school in the community, and provide quality education to both boys and girls. On the other hand, quality education formed the base of Community-Based Education classes. Still, teacher qualification and experience, alongside students complaining about lack of quality and standard in CBE classes, took this initiative under question regarding providing quality education. The study also connects policy intentions with realities from the ground regarding providing quality education to learners in rural areas. In this regard, this study intends to:

1. Investigate Community-Based Education policy intended quality of education visioned for education in rural and remote areas.
2. Analyze the policy's effectiveness in providing education access in rural and remote areas.
3. Find the factors that impacted the quality of education in Community-Based Education classes either positively or negatively.

#### **1.4 Research Significance:**

Since the arrival of international organizations in the nation following the U.S led intervention in 2001, Community-Based Education has been in use. Boys and girls have difficulty accessing education because of ongoing conflicts, inadequate school infrastructure, far-off locations, and other cultural and societal impediments. Two evaluations of the policy document were conducted in 2014 and 2018 for improvement, improved integration, and the provision of education in rural and isolated locations. The quality, equality, and effectiveness of Community-Based Education still need to be discovered, although increasing enrolment in most communities. The study is vital for bridging the gap between communities and government bodies. Furthermore, the policy has been revised once since its implementation. The current study provides policy decision-makers with insights and recommendations highlighting the policy's strengths and weaknesses. Two other areas of concern are the obstacles to access and deficiencies in the standard of instruction in the Community-Based Education class. As a result of this study, the above two areas of concern would be identified, which is critical for both communities and government authorities to address.

In conclusion, the aforementioned provides an understanding of the background of the current thesis project. Thoroughly describing what community-based education program is and together with an overview of education in the country. Similarly, this section also provides the main research questions, aims, the

significance of the study, and objectives. It also highlighted how important this study is and what makes it worthwhile for this research project.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORITICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This section of the thesis primarily highlights two dimensions. First, it reviews the literature on education in Afghanistan, community-based education, and access to education. On the other hand, this chapter discusses some theories and studies on the quality of education, equality and equity in education, and access to education in rural and remote areas. This section provides a solid foundation for the study in terms of previous studies and literature available in this area.

#### **2.1 Review of Literature**

Government sources are Afghanistan's earliest writing on education (Baiza, 2013). They were mostly modern education/school constitutions, rules, and regulations regarding the affairs of modern education. In the 1980s, academic writing emerged, focusing on modern education in Afghanistan. One of these first articles comes from Haq, presenting an account of the education system in Afghanistan, published in international encyclopedias (Postlethwait, 1988). This work represented the overall image of education in Afghanistan, the structure, geographical location, ethnicities, and others. Shorish (1998) describes the history of education in Afghanistan from 1903-1988. Later, Ekanayake (2004) puts the impact of war in the country on education. The main focus of this book is concerns regarding the country's political instability and conflicts and how education in the country would contribute to uniting the Afghan society and bringing peace.

Additionally, there have been ample publications by NGOs in Afghanistan related to education. UNESCO has worked in Afghanistan's education sector for the longest time of any NGO, starting in the early post-Second World War years (1948–9). A brief descriptive overview of modern education in Afghanistan from 1903 to the second-to-last year of the Taliban's administration in 1999 is given in Samady's (2001) account of education in Afghanistan under the title of *Education and Afghan Society in the Twentieth Century* published by UNESCO in 2001 (Baiza, 2013)

The Ph.D. thesis by Afghan and Swedish researchers Karlsson and Mansory (2007) is one of the most recent scholarly investigations on education in Afghanistan at Stockholm University in Sweden. The case study in the thesis examines how children, especially girls, participated in traditional and contemporary educational institutions in two villages in post-Taliban Afghanistan (2002–7). The study aimed to circulate the meaning of education in Afghanistan. It also provides a broad picture of the history of modern education in the country.

### ***2.1.1 The History of Education in Afghanistan***

Before the 20th century, Afghan children and young people received traditional education at home, in mosques, religious Madrasas, and through informal internships and on-the-job training. Modern education in Afghanistan started in the early 1900s and developed in the 1920s after independence in 1919. Due to political, social, and cultural reasons, the pace of educational development gradually became modern. The first significant development of public and higher education occurred in the 1960s

and 1970s. It was placed in the framework of political, social, and economic reforms (Samady, 2013).

By the late 1970s, Afghanistan had a productive educational system with more than a million primary, secondary, and higher education students, 20% of whom were female (Samady, 2013). Afghanistan's social and economic infrastructure, including its educational system, was severely damaged by the 1978 coup, the war of resistance, and conflicts fueled by ideology, ethnicity, and other conflicts in the final two decades of the 20th century.

Baiza (2013) provides a historical tour of education in Afghanistan, dividing it into periods of the rise of modern education in Afghanistan (1901-1919), modernizing education (1919-1929), politics of ethnicities, and selective education (1929-1978), migration, war and education (1978-1992), fragmenting education (1992-2001), and finally the rebuilding and developing modern education (2001-2023). Baiza (2013) thoughtfully shares concerns regarding the focus of empirical studies on ethnographic, historical, and political expansions, only leaving behind education in Afghanistan.

### ***2.1.2 Access to Education in Afghanistan***

Access to education has remained a fundamental issue in Afghanistan, particularly for Afghan girls. It has led to more significant gender disparity in the country's education system (Shayan, 2015). With international support for twenty years, and several national strategies, policies, and plans, Afghanistan found it hard to

provide a safe environment of equal and equitable access to not only education but every sector (Samar et al., 2014; Deo, 2014; Roof, 2015). Studies have often produced various reasons for barricading access to education in Afghanistan. The following paragraphs will shed light on the basis collected from studies.

A variety of reasons have been found for women's access to education. For instance, Kissane (2012) talks about how religious and communal beliefs and traditions have diverted women's access to education and argues that Islam as the state religion needs to be invoked as a catalyst for promoting girls' education and right in the country. The study voices "Logistical and Ideological challenges," which are regarded as forceful factors behind girls' lack of access to education. The challenges in this study have been divided into physical and personal safety, structural and geographical obstacles, and different interpretations of Islam promoting or suppressing Afghan women.

Kavazanjian (2010) finds several reasons behind the poor enrollment rates of girls in education. Traditions, the threat of terrorism, and costs are the three main reasons found in this study as slowing down access to education in Afghanistan. While also arguing for the imbalance between supply and demand that barricades women's access to education in Afghanistan. Weak achievement and low access to education in rural Afghanistan, particularly for girls, depends on parents' teaching, attention to family language, and other community and ethnic factors. If responded to them, they contribute to better school attainment for girls (Guimbert et al., 2008).

Mashwani (2017) systematically reviewed available literature on women's education in Afghanistan, focusing on the obstacles to their access to education. The study concluded that traditional and religious barriers, early marriage and social norms, security, and poverty as the central reasons for girls' lack of access to education in Afghanistan. Lack of female teachers and support are also identified as reasons. Mashwani (2017) argued that females cannot attend school in Afghanistan because of these obstacles.

From the above studies, access to education in Afghanistan has always been challenging for females. At the same time, the factors behind it have been numerous, as identified by the studies ranging from social to class and system levels. At the same time, the above studies have also considered areas to improve access to education, primarily for females.

### ***2.1.3 Education and Conflict***

Education in conflict is nowadays a severe issue in most conflict-affected societies. It also comprises a broad category of educational research by individuals and organizations engaged in these communities under armed conflict. Afghanistan has been the center of recent wars that have hampered access to and quality of education nationally. Here, some studies related to education and conflict have been brought to understand better and clarify the issue.

Davies (2005) investigates two essential areas of evaluation: education's impact on peace and education's impact on conflict, arguing that these areas sometimes

receive different evaluation types. Davies' work uses complexity theory to uncover the linkages between education and competition and to lobby for 'complex-adaptive schools,' which would use conflict to engage students in constructing peaceful communities (Paulson et al., 2007).

Similarly, Pherali (2011) shed light on how numerous deficiencies in the education system contributed to the 'ideology-led' collective insurgence, and, as a result, schools became a key battlefield of the violent conflict. The study drew on qualitative interviews with educational stakeholders. Lin (2012) presents comparative standpoints on peace education in war and post-conflict countries. The argument is that the comparative perspective contributes positively to peace education in conflict and post-conflict societies.

On the other hand, Novelli (2016) examines current research on the relationship between education and inequality in conflict-affected environments. This provides an alternative understanding of education under conflict. Burde et al. (2017) study an integrated and detailed evaluation of theory and research on education in crisis programs and involvements as international organizations implement them in areas of armed conflict.

In Afghanistan, most Afghans under 15 are affected by violence and persistent poverty, making up about half of the country's population (UNICEF, 2019). They frequently have limited access to healthcare, education, and knowledge of their rights. Buckland (2005) also considers the quality of education; despite the need for more

data on the topic, it is commonly believed to be as crucial as, if not more so, access difficulties in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. This study finds some critical areas at risk, including civic authority and civil administration, politicization of education, rivalry for natural resources, and ethnic and religious identity. Likewise, providing and assisting primary education catalyzes governments to shift away from extreme conflicts in the early phases (Barakat et al., 2013; Smith, 2010). Nicolai (2009) presents initiatives that help educational authorities that support them as they seize the chances for improvement that arise during times of war and early recovery, such as providing peace education.

Education receives adverse effects because of continued war and conflict. Pherali and Sahar (2018) found that deteriorating security conditions, poor governance, and pervasive corruption are intertwined with education in Afghanistan. They provide violent extremism and conflicts as hijackers of education in the country. Utsumi's (2022) study discovers a considerable decline in the rise in educational access as conflict spillover effects grew, particularly among girls, while this decline can be mitigated by community members' independent financial support for education.

#### ***2.1.4 Community-Based Education Policy***

According to the policy document, Community-Based Education schools aim to provide access to quality primary education (grades 1-9) for girls and boys in remote and marginalized rural and semi-urban areas. This includes *Kochis* (Nomad) and

minorities, where access to existing Ministry of Education facilities is impractical due to distance or the children are older than the policy permits, and they cannot join formal Ministry of Education (MoE) schools” (MoE, 2018, p.10). The CBE policy document was updated and revised from 2012 to 2018 to connect CBE with MoE strategies, improve coordination, institutionalize best practices, and improve sustainability, equity, cost-effectiveness, and scalability, among other things, according to the Afghan Ministry of Education (2018).

After the policy was developed, it enlisted three scenarios for taking the CBE classes into the formal education system: 1. A new MoE primary school opens in the community, 2. The village's outreach program or satellite school, connected to an MoE hub school, continues, and 3. The CBE class adjourns for grades 1-3, and children are moved to the closest hub school (Rasmussen & Kelly, 2016). Three hundred twenty-nine thousand students were transferred to the existing MoE schools by 2017. After fulfilling the abovementioned criteria, the CBE class would integrate into the formal education system.

Burde et al. (2013) observed a dramatic gain of 42% in enrollment in the first five years of the CBE, but the objective needed to be completed because Afghanistan's population is diverse. Several rural villages are still required to connect to the CBE's school hub. Arooje and Burrridge (2021) focused on the higher population living in rural areas under extreme poverty. Therefore, CBE classes give this population hope for education as they did not have any particular access to formal or general education schools operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of

Education. Adkin (2014) explores the current difficulties facing progressive education while also attempting to present a clear picture of Afghanistan's public education past. This is in part because it is challenging to collect such statistics, particularly in rural areas and regions that have experienced conflict.

To offer approaches to advance toward universal enrollment and completion, Guimbert et al. (2008) conducted a study to analyze the factors that influence enrollment. They also give a succinct review of Afghanistan's educational system. Overall, the research shows that merely increasing supply will probably not result in a rise in enrollment. The study supports the significance of demand factors such as parental education, family language, and additional local and ethnic elements.

The available literature on the CBE program is minimal (Burde et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2020; MoE, 2018; Guyot, 2007; Buckland, 2005; Kirk & Winthrop, 2008), primarily reports of international NGOs that strongly support and implement CBE policy throughout the country. In addition, there is no evidence of policy being implemented successfully or bringing marginalized boys and girls back to education in underserved areas. Little has been found regarding the increase in enrollment through CBE (Burde et al., 2012) in Afghanistan. Therefore, the current policy study will fill the knowledge gap by investigating Community-Based Education in providing access to learners in remote or rural settings in Afghanistan.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.2.1 Equality in Education***

Equality signifies providing everyone with the same or equal resources (Schmelkes, 2020). In education, equality has been viewed as sharing educational resources more equally or fairly (Lynch, 2000). Researchers mainly focus their research on exploring the positives and negatives of academic programs in favor of bringing about socioeconomic equality (Breen et al., 1999; Clancy, 2001; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Euriat & Thelot, 1995; Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993).

Achieving equality in education according to Lynch & Baker (2005), “equality in education can only be achieved if we recognize the deeply integrated relationship that exists between education and the economic, political, socio-cultural and affective systems in society” (p.132). They also define equality as the equality of conditions, and people need to be equal in the central state of their lives (Lynch & Baker, 2005). On the other hand, Halliman (1988) talks about a norm of fairness controlling the struggle for society’s resources as equal access to education resources while addressing four areas critical to equality in education, namely the status of attainment, school effects, school organizations, and school and classroom practices (p. 265)

There are two main ways in which education is deeply ingrained in societal and economic systems. On the one hand, having the financial means to take full advantage of the opportunities that education can provide is typically necessary for access to and successful involvement in school. In contrast, schools and colleges have

a significant role in the selection and stratification of workers, mediating life opportunities within the economy (Lynch & Baker, 2005). Because education is such a potent predictor of life chances and plays a significant role in influencing the education one receives, economic equality and educational equality cannot be conceptualized independently.

Trani et al. (2012) put an education and capability approach taking a broader view of equality in education. The study follows the capability approach, which goes far beyond human capital theory and the human rights approach. The study aimed to investigate education access for students with disabilities. Everyone has the freedom of choice to education, well-nourishment, well-sheltered, and freedom to move around as the capability framework entails in its concept of freedom (Sen, 1982). In this regard, education equality entails equal opportunities to study as one of the "substantive freedoms," or the ability to choose a life that a person has reason to value (Sen, 1992).

### ***2.2.2 Quality and Equity in Education***

Equity in education has also been defined as "Equity as comprising equal treatment for all races, equal educational opportunities, and educational adequacy" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 07), "Equity is partly as the quality of being just and fair and partly as the process of supplying the underlying principles as to why a system is fair" (Smith & Gorard, 2006, p. 46). While Unterhalter (2009) argues about the coordination of equity in education from three areas; equity from below (people and

movement), equity from above (governing bodies of education), and equity from the middle (ideas, time, money, and skills). According to Unterhalter (2009), each of these three areas must come together to increase capabilities in education.

Beeby (1990), through his model, provided three levels for quality of education; quality of classroom, quality of education for economic goals of the community, and quality of education in the broader social realm. While Hawes & Stephens (1990) interprets three strands for quality of education; efficiently attaining set goals related to human and environmental needs and conditions, something more about human excellence and better. On the other hand, a wide range of studies talk about various components of educational quality. According to Barret et al. (2006), these components are effectiveness, efficiency, equality, relevance, and sustainability. These components add to each other and affect each other in the broader sense of quality of education (Welch, 2000).

The first use of the term "equity" was in connection with the need established by many countries in 1990 to combine equity and quality in providing education in each country. Since 2004, many countries have rolled their sleeves to promote equitable education. The study conceptualizes this term in two ways: On the one hand, those normative references confirm that the principles of quality and equity are inextricably linked. This conception of equity is founded on two principles: quality education for all citizens, to develop of the individual, social, intellectual, cultural, and emotional capacities to the greatest extent possible, always within a framework of

effective equality of opportunity, and the collective effort of the entire education community in caring for the diversity of students (Jurado de los Santos et al., 2020)

Beteille et al. (2020) highlight key areas still fragile in education for all and access to education in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Quality and equity are two critical requirements for any school or education system. In order to bring high-quality and equity to education, policies need to encompass voices from teachers, parents, and communities to pave the way forward for success in education (Gouisbond & Neil, 2004). Ainscow and Miles (2008) also stress the role of communities and families in implementing Education for All (EFA). This includes the quality and equity of education. For Afghanistan to practicalize and bring about Education for All (EFA) by 2020, several questions regarding teachers' quality, curriculum development, providing access to girls' education, and the likes need to be addressed (Adele, 2008).

Studies have found that teachers and schools have impacts on equity. Teachers and schools are most important for underprivileged and initially low-achieving students (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997). This implies that schools that are effective in terms of quality may also be effective in reducing learning disparities among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Kyriakides et al., 2020). Almost all effectiveness studies, however, measure school effectiveness about the quality dimension (Sammons, 2010), and thus a methodology to measure schools' impact on promoting equity has yet to be developed (Kelly, 2012; Nachbauer & Kyriakides,

2020). Similarly, Effective schools can encourage students' learning based on fundamental knowledge about quality education, but they may need help to make a remarkable impact on socially disadvantaged students (Kyriakides, 2007).

### ***2.2.3 Access to Education in Rural and Remote Areas***

One of the most effective means economically and socially disadvantaged children and adults can escape poverty and fully participate in society is education, a liberating and fundamental human right (UNESCO, 2023). Everyone must have access to education to realize its transformative potential and achieve global milestones fully. However, a gap exists between rural and urban areas regarding education accessibility (Gardiner, 2008; Zhang & Xue, 2015; Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003; Moulton, 2001). Despite their promise, rural areas still need help, and education reflects poverty and underdevelopment. It makes the case that educational excellence in rural areas will be attained once significant social and economic progress exists. Until then, the educational options available in rural areas will restrict people's ability to live long, healthy, and productive lives and learn and experience freedom, dignity, and self-respect.

Similar is the case of Afghanistan, an imbalance of education equality, equity, and quality gaps complete and comprehensive access to it (Pherali & Sahar, 2018; Jones, 2008; Samady, 2001; Kayazanijan, 2010; Rubin & Rudeforth, 2016). These studies provide glimpses of the inequality treatment of education provision in rural

and urban areas. Rural Afghanistan has immense potential while, in the meantime, being unable to access equal and quality educational treatment.

For this study, the equality and quality approach and access to education in rural and remote areas make it relevant. On practical grounds, the study uses community voices to criticize & put their findings and point of view on the CBE program. The study's theoretical foundation is based on equality of education, quality, and equity. Furthermore, it will also elaborate on access to education in rural and remote areas. Equality and access to education are explored in the policy document while putting communities' and stakeholders' views to examine the policy implementation, access to education, and quality of education. The result of this research is communicated to the relevant stakeholders and policymakers to improve the procedure, the quality of education, and equal access to it.

In short, chapter two gives an overview of the exciting areas of education in terms of previous studies and theories associated with it. Afghanistan has a long tradition of education, both Islamic and modern which relates to understanding community-based education more comprehensively. In this regard, significant studies and theories reviewed here make this study grounded in solid foundations and provide a clear guide to situate the current research study.

## **CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter put forward methodological interventions adopted for this study. Chapter three includes primary data collection tools, research design, data analysis, study participants, and ethical considerations. Alongside that, the use of research assistants to gain first-hand data from the ground is also shared in this chapter.

### **3.1 Research Approach**

Qualitative education research is often interpreted as documenting details regarding daily events from the viewpoints of people who are part of these events and those who witness them but are outside of them. According to Erickson (2012), qualitative research focuses on finding things that could bring about change since it emphasizes *qualitas*, not *quantitas*. Creswell (1997) defines qualitative research as exploring a social and human problem. The research creates an overall picture, analyzes words, and reports in detail, and the study comes to be in a natural setting. Before looking at the many qualitative traditions, it is necessary to find some common ground given the variety of perspectives on qualitative research. Qualitative research is challenging because it requires extensive fieldwork, the collection of words and images, inductive data analysis while focusing on participant perspectives, and persuasive language while documenting the process in writing.

Given the above explanations on qualitative research, the present study uses a qualitative inquiry approach to investigate the implementation of Community-Based

Education policy in terms of providing access and quality education. The study intends to create a holistic understanding and bring in the participant's viewpoints on the issue of Community-Based Education. The qualitative research methodology aligns with this study's primary focus and aim. The main focus of the study is on unveiling the effectiveness of Community-Based Education classes in providing access to learners far from formal public schools, who lacks gender appropriate school, or are over-age for being enrolled in formal public schools, and encompassing ground realities through interviews to connect policy aims and its actual implementation.

### **3.2 Methods of Data Collections**

Two data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, and governmental documents study, comprise the primary data collection sources. The following section gives ample elaboration on both these sources of data collection.

The study collected data from the field by employing two research assistants. The research assistants were mainly hired based on a list of responsibilities they had to undertake to collect the research data. The research assistants were especially undergraduates, with each one of them having three to four years of experience in data collection and data transcription. Two broad categories of duties for research assistants were considered in this study. First, the research assistants collected data from the community-based education classrooms, the community where the class functions, and the implementing agencies. Secondly, the research assistants

transcribed the collected into Ms. Word. Each province under the study received one research assistant. Another important consideration during recruiting the research assistants was their data collection experience in local communities where community-based education programs operate. The work of research assistants contributed to getting accurate data from the CBE communities and classes.

After hiring the research assistants, online sessions through Google Meet were conducted to train the assistants about data collection, interview protocol, and interview instructions. As both were closely connected with research and field data collection, their previous work and data collection were appreciated and trusted by the employer, which also had a positive reliability factor for this study.

### ***3.2.1 Interviews***

In qualitative research, interviews are conducted when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their responses (Creswell, 2012). Discussions are used in qualitative research to investigate the meanings of central themes in their subjects' worlds. The primary goal of interviewing is comprehending what interviewees say (McNamara, 1999). During interviews, open-ended questions are typically asked to elicit impartial responses, whereas closed-ended questions may force participants to respond in a specific manner (Creswell, 2012; McNamara, 1999).

Similarly, the interview describes the individual's assumptions about the current situation (Ary et al., 2018, p.438). Furthermore, Creswell (2012) contends that an

interview allows the researcher to obtain detailed information that cannot be obtained through observation. In this regard, the interviewer-interviewee relationship is critical to the success of the research interview; the interviewer creates a trusting environment with the interviewee/s, guiding the interviewee/s through a set of topics or questions to be discussed in depth.

According to John W. Creswell (2012), three interview design formats can be developed to obtain thick, rich data using a qualitative investigational perspective. There are three types of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). First, structured interviews are pre-planned and standardized, with questions asked the same way to each participant. Second, unstructured interviews are more flexible and open-ended, with no predetermined questions. Third, semi-structured interviews are a hybrid of structured and unstructured interviews in which the interviewer has a set of questions but can also ask follow-up questions based on the participants' responses. Proper knowledge about the study's respondents is critical if the researcher wants to build trust with the interviewees. Background research on the respondents, their field of work, level of education, and organizational and cultural context is critical to the interviewing process. Approaching respondents without prior knowledge of their background can result in several issues that can undermine the effectiveness of the interviewing process and result in mistrust or misunderstanding, especially if the problem under investigation is relatively sensitive.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews in this study to better understand the Community-Based Education program's quality, access, and implementation. Since the study connects policy intentions to the realities from the ground, it is deemed essential to situate the discussion in an easy and natural flow and provide enough time for the participant to feel relaxed and reveal their understanding and meaning of the research phenomenon. In this study, the interviews were conducted with the following participants. The number of participants from each category is given in parentheses:

1. **Community Leaders (2):** to find data on CBE implementation in their communities regarding providing access and quality of education.
2. **Students (6):** Find data on the overall quality of education and student access as promised by the CBE policy document.
3. **Teachers (4):** to explore teaching strategies applied in CBE classes and the quality of teachers
4. **Implementing Partners (2):** to connect policy and implementation of CBE in rural communities
5. **Officials of the Ministry of Education Afghanistan:** to find their concerns, and data on the CBE integration into general education, rise or downfall in enrollment rates. Unfortunately, the current official

from the Ministry of Education did not appear for the interview.

However, the research assistants approached them three times.

### ***3.2.1 Governmental Documents Study***

Document analysis refers to the process of studying or evaluating documents, whether they are printed or electronic (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis calls for data to be analyzed and interpreted to extract meaning, gain insight, and create empirical knowledge, similar to other analytical techniques in qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; see also Rapley, 2007). On the other hand, documents are referred to as "social facts" by Atkinson and Coffey (1997) because they are created, disseminated, and utilized in socially organized ways (p. 47). Document analysis is a popular method in various social sciences and the arts. Essentially, it means taking a systematic approach to understanding and interpreting documents. Here, the study approaches CBE policy to better explore the policy of Community-Based Education in terms of access to education, quality education, equality in education, and the like.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

On the part of data analysis, a systematic approach of document analysis and thematic analysis of the data gathered for the study sites. Braun and Clark (2012) used six phases of thematic analysis to analyze the data and produce the final report for the data collected from study sites. The thematic analysis is systematic research to identify, organize, and offer insights (Braun & Clark, 2012) or find patterns of meaning that the researcher report generated themes from a set of data (Lochmiller,

2021). On the other hand, the thematic analysis provides more accessibility and flexibility (Braun & Clark, 2012) to intervene in the data and spend time there to see and feel how the participants viewed and felt. Finally, produce a set of generated themes or concepts.

Terry et al. (2017) present a systematic way of dealing with qualitative data. *1. Familiarizing Yourself with the Data:* This is the first step, where data collected from the study participants would be reviewed and read to familiarize the self with the data. *2. Generating Initial Codes:* At this phase of the study, initial code assigning provides a clear picture of the collected data and helps categorize the responses. It will make the process of searching for themes later. *3. Searching for Themes:* This comes when codes are already assigned or generated. Based on the collected data and the categories of codes, the researcher will look after themes from the data. *4. Reviewing Potential Themes:* After the researcher has identified the potential themes, a review of these themes would merge some themes, and if needed, go back to the codes to find out more themes for a better description of the study. *5. Defining and Naming Themes:* Before finalizing the report, definitions and naming of the themes would be labeled according to the findings *6. They are producing the Report.* In the end, the final report would be prepared with all the relevant themes regarding the study.

In the case of the present study, the researcher analyzed the data collected from the study participants using the six steps above, as the data comes from different

participants with different education levels and backgrounds. The initial stage was to familiarize myself with the data and get a holistic picture. The data had broken down into repeated patterns found in the participants' answers to provide initial codes. Later, the codes were turned into themes contributing to the issues of quality and access in Community-Based Education program. At the final stage, these themes were reviewed, named, and added to the final report.

### **3.4 Research Ethics**

Research ethics are essential for scientific integrity, human rights and dignity, and science-society partnership. These principles ensure that study participants' involvement is voluntary, informed, and safe. According to Wellington (2000), ethical consideration refers to moral conduct for guiding that is part of a group or a profession—understanding the importance and need of ethical consideration for any researcher and research activity. As an education researcher, the responsibility lies in research participants, beneficiaries, areas of knowledge, and fellow researchers (Govil, 2013). The need for consideration of ethical issues, according to Gajjar (2013), helps enhance the study aim, avoids fabrication and promotes truth, brings accountability, trust, and joint respect, receives support for research from the public, and empowers moral and social values.

This study also considers the value of research ethics and accepts ethics in research as crucial elements for promoting the study's integrity, credibility, and reliability. Here, the following ethical principles are taken into consideration:

- Honesty: The researcher values honesty and strives for honest scientific communication. The data report, results, and procedures have not been falsified or misinterpreted. There is no intention or aim for the deception of any involved party or individual.
- Integrity: The integrity of this work is based on the requirement, and no act of insincerity or inconsistency of thought and action has been strived for.
- Respect for intellectual property: Every source has received proper citations and references. Proper acknowledgment and credit are given where credit is needed.
- Confidentiality: Respondents' identities and whereabouts are kept private, and their responses are only used for study purposes.
- Non-discrimination: No form of discrimination against any race, sex, ethnicity, or other

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

Chapter four consists of findings and discussions. The results come from CBE policy analysis and interviews with CBE stakeholders. In the part of the discussion, the findings are compared, evaluated, criticized, and assessed in light of scholarly debate and theories of quality, equality, and equity of education. The discussion part provides a comprehensive understanding of the community-based education program findings.

#### **Findings**

The key findings in this thesis section originate from two data sources. First, the document (Community-Based Education Policy) is extensively examined to determine the explanation of educational quality according to the policy document and the provision of quality education that the Community-Based Education Policy intends to provide to every class. The second source comes from structured interviews with students, instructors, implementing partners, and Ministry of Education officials to connect the quality of education in the policy with the real-world status of education once it has been implemented. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the data, as mentioned in the data analysis section. First, the thesis findings answer the first research question from the policy of CBE; later, the remaining two research questions are answered due to the findings from the interviews with study participants.

#### **4.1 The Intended Quality of Education in CBE Policy**

Three aspects of community-based education policy are examined in this findings section. They are pertinent to the study's first research question. Specifically, the policy's goal is CBE as a standard package and access to education through CBE classes. These three components will be discussed in detail in the following section.

##### ***4.1.1 Goal of Community- Based Education Policy***

The CBE policy paper intends to provide access to "quality education" through cost-effective, fairness, sustainability, and scalability strategies. While the policy document has been reviewed and revised several times (introduced in 2008, revised in 2012, and 2018) in order to fill gaps and bring best practices together, as well as provide a single standard, the final revision of this policy emphasizes quality education (Ministry of Education, 2018). The deficiencies identified in the policy papers are divided into four categories (1). CBE strategy is not aligned with overall Ministry of Education strategies (2). CBE services lack sustainability, equity, cost-effectiveness, and scalability (3). Coordination problems in service delivery (4). There is a scarcity of evidence-based best practices. These four components connect to the broader quality of education visioned for CBE.

The policy paper states that "uniform standards are required in CBE delivery models, both in terms of quality and cost, which are aligned with what the MoE can deliver." The MoE must prioritize CBE delivery models' sustainability and quality standards in its supervisory functions. Many Community-based Classes are created for efficiency and high-quality education in rural areas (Ministry of Education, 2018,

p. 06). As the policy clearly outlines the gap in quality education, the policy's objective was to deliver high-quality education in rural areas. In summary, the policy document's primary purpose is to give access to high-quality education in rural and distant areas.

#### ***4.1.2 Community-based Education as a Standard Package***

The policy and general management of community-based education are thought to establish a standard package and cost range for CBE. At the same time, the focus remains on three areas: access, quality, and management. According to the policy statement, an excellent CBE class includes teacher training and development, a suitable learning environment, adequate teaching and learning materials kits, and more robust classroom management via continuous monitoring and assessment (Ministry of Education, 2018). The policy promises and aspires to deliver equitable and high-quality education while ensuring the availability and quality of the components above in a cost-effective and long-term way.

Quality, access, and equity in educational services through CBE have been prioritized, and the policy's emphasis remains on ensuring that every partner in the CBE's running, implementation, and provision adheres to maintaining high-quality education provision at the lowest possible cost. The policy visions for education include the quality of teachers, the quality of learning and teaching materials, the quality of the learning environment, and the quality of management. Once secured, these CBE areas will provide quality education.

#### ***4.1.3 Access to Education Through Establishment of Community-based Education Class***

The policy guidelines specify two options for creating a CBE class in rural and distant regions. First, consider the community's desire for educational services. Second, educational services are limited by distance. The community that feels the need for a school should submit a written request to the Ministry of Education. In contrast, the community is responsible for maintaining the learning area where the class would be held. This category has not been fully specified in how, where, and by what means the CBE class would open in that specific community requesting the CBE class. However, the policy places a premium on the submitted request in conformity with Ministry of Education policies and plans. Second, the policy paper defines the distance constraint as 3 kilometers from a child's home, except for girls considering local customs and harassment against girls. A CBE class will be opened in a community based on these two categories.

The first category aims to make the community feel responsible for protecting educational facilities or schools and getting community support for long-term CBE classes. The second group is primarily concerned with removing all barriers to education. At the same time, special consideration is given to females or girls to improve access to education in their community and overcome challenges such as local customs, harassment, distance, and so on.

Finally, the policy statement emphasizes expanding access to education through improvised CBE arrangements while emphasizing the quality of education cost-effectively and sustainably. This is what the Community-based Education policy promises or intends to promise. However, because it was first developed and implemented in 2008 and later revised twice in 2012 and 2018, its implementation, the intent of quality education, and increased access have not been studied in rural areas. In this context, interviews with teachers, students, implementing partners, and Ministry of Education officials provide insights into the real-world scenario following policy implementation.

The data gathered through interviews with CBE stakeholders, including teachers and students, is presented after a thematic analysis of the interview answers. For the thematic analysis, the researcher followed Terry et al. (2017) six steps procedure.

As the study involved several participants with various educational backgrounds and roles in community-based Education classes, it was necessary to first go through the collected data and get familiarized with it. This was in raw data received as notes and interview transcripts. It also helped to understand the data and create a general image entirely. On the other hand, it allowed the researcher to have a possible recognition of the codes which was assigned in the later stage of the analysis. Moreover, recognizing the codes provided a clear understanding of the initial codes assigned and helped easily find the repeated themes in the data.

After that, the number of codes was more significant, so the researcher applied data reduction where assigned codes were reviewed again to narrow down and combine them into possible categories. These categories were the initial themes generated from the codes. The themes were also put into possible categories to reduce the number of themes. At first, the number of themes was eight, but later it was reduced to five possible themes. At the final stage, the themes were reviewed, and I went to the codes once more to cross-check with the themes. The final themes were considered in the part of the report shared in this section of the findings.

The data was collected from two eastern provinces; First, these two provinces had a considerable number of CBE classes, and on the other hand, these provinces lacked access to education in various rural and remote parts of the state. Second, the central locations of data were the farthest from the cities of these provinces. One of the non-governmental organizations had been implementing and financially supporting community-based education classes in these two provinces. As the implementing partner, this organization was also under the coverage of this research. This organization was considered the implementing partner of the community-based education program in this study.

On the part of the participants, the students were all sixth graders in the final grade of completing the community-based education class. Since the community-based education classes are until sixth grade, students would be integrated into the Ministry of Education, a nearby hub school, after completing that grade. Teachers in

the study also held different levels of educational backgrounds. At the same time, most were only high school graduates and local community residents where these classes were running.

Another category of participants was community leaders who were the leaders in the affairs of the community and provided guidance and solution to communal problems and matters. The community-based education program is also under their monitoring, and they provide learning space for this community-based education program. They have an active role in the community-based education program.

Implementing partners came to a supportive and donating agency to cooperate and facilitate learning for out-of-reach students in rural areas. Their main activity in Implementing partners (IP) was to provide learning and teaching materials, staff salaries, and organize training for teachers. Ministry of Education officials in this study were contacted for interviews regarding the ministry's role and integration of community-based education classes into the general education system. However, unfortunately, nobody responded to the interview request. After the whole process of the thematic analysis, the final themes of the study are as follows:



**Figure 1** Access to education through CBE classes and its quality of education.

## **4.2 The Effectiveness of CBE in Providing Access to Education in Remote Areas**

This part belongs to the second research question of this study. Mainly two findings are presented in this section—first, access to education, and second, the success of community-based education programs.

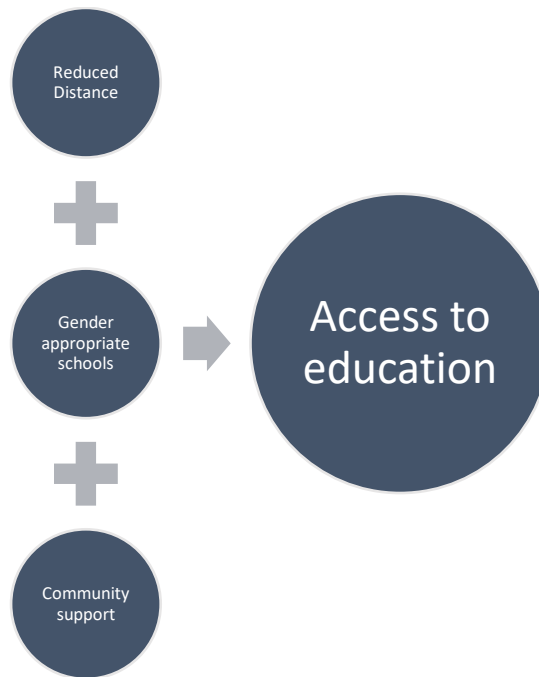
### ***4.2.1 Access to Education***

This part of the findings is mainly in response to the second research question of this study. Access to education with the help of community-based education programs could be divided into two categories. First, factors that enhance access to education in rural and remote areas of Afghanistan. Second, factors that reduce access to education in rural and remote areas of Afghanistan. These two categories were generated after the analysis of the data. Since struggles to equalize educational opportunities and increase access to education through every mean possible has been carried out in Afghanistan, there have been factors or barriers that have been reducing

or preventing access to education in many Afghan communities, as found in this study. The following section gives detailed elaboration on these two areas.

*a. Factors Enhancing Access to Education in Rural and Remote Areas with the Help of Community-based Education Program*

Education has remained at low capacity and standard in rural Afghanistan. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to increase access to education for Afghan boys and girls. One of the initiatives was a community-based education program. This program helped bring marginalized boys and girls in rural areas who mainly belong to low-income family's access to education. By the local communities, CBE has been considered a platform for giving their children a chance to receive education until sixth grade in nearby homes or at-home communities. CBE is the primary source of access to education in rural Afghanistan, while the following factors are considered essential to enhance access to education.



*Figure 2 factors enhancing access to education in remote Afghanistan*

**Figure 2** Showcases three factors that have helped girls and boys in rural communities access education. Reduction in distance from home to learning space, the opening of gender-appropriate schools, and community support for opening CBE classes have been identified as the important elements contributing positively to enhancing access to education.

*Reduced Distance:* One of the critical factors found in this study is distance. Families in remote areas always worry about the safety and security of their children going to school far away from their local community or home. Three study participants, teachers, students, and community leaders, shared views about distance’s role in bringing boys and girls into the learning space. The community leader: “Shah Gul” (Pseudonym) (56 yrs delivered his remarks about community-based education

enhancing access to education. “Most families agreed to allow their girls and boys to access education after they learned about the CBE in their community...” Similar thoughts were shared by both students and teachers participating in this study. Initially, families did not allow participant students to get an education due to safety and security, as more significant concern about their children’s safety drew their attention. Teachers also had a similar view about the reduced distance between school and home effectively bringing girls and boys back to education. The teacher also considered it important to have found recruitment near their homes.

*Gender-appropriate schools:* In the Afghan community, gender-appropriate learning spaces have been a point of immense family consideration. The Islamic Republic government of Afghanistan also struggled to provide gender-appropriate schools for girls and boys. The main hurdle in front of providing gender-appropriate schools for the former Islamic Republic government was a lack of logistics, sufficient finance, and infrastructure. The government faced challenges finding donors and providing an adequate budget to equalize male and female schools’ infrastructure. While the system of co-education for both genders until high school has not been feasible due to the Afghan community's diverse and robust cultural norms. Three of the study participants, namely the community leaders, teachers, and implementing partners for both study locations, highlighted gender-appropriate schools. According to the staff member of an implementing partner organization:

“Community-based education class runs until sixth grade and follows the regulations of Ministry of Education in terms of gender appropriate schools, but due to lack of finance, logistic and infrastructure, we have built the school in one space with only separate classes for boys and generals.”

A staff member of the implementing organization (40 yrs, Nangarhar Province)

On the part of the community, the study also asked the community leaders about access to education, and gender-appropriate schools were one of the main reasons behind increased access to education for girls. Most of the families have the belief that girls and boys should go to segregated schools. In this regard, the schools need to be appropriate regarding gender, at least after the elementary level, according to the community leaders’ part of this study. One of the community leaders from Nangarhar province, who had been leading the community for more than ten years, and was involved in community-based education for the past seven years, delivered his remarks:

“Our community strongly believes in education, but their concern concerns gender-appropriate schools. They are fine if boys and girls study in one class until elementary level, but after that, if they cannot find an appropriate (in terms of gender) school, they would not allow their girl to attend school.”

Community leader (60, Nangarhar)

Based on the findings from the study participants, gender-appropriate schools are a significant factor leading to increased access to education in the Afghan community, like reduced distance, but more important than community support.

*Community Support:* The final factor that possibly increased access to education, as pointed out by the study participants, is community support. “...Communal support behind educational projects makes it more successful and helps the community realize

the opportunities education brings for their children in that particular community,” according to a staff member from implementing organization (40, Nangarhar). The role of community has been given primary importance in community-based education programs in terms of receiving support from the community and providing support to communities through hiring teachers from local communities where the community-based education program runs. According to the two community leaders interviewed in this study, community-based education was a channel of mutual support. While hiring teachers, community leaders were involved and consulted to identify potential candidates to fill in the teaching positions for community-based education program.

On the other hand, both the implementing partners and community leaders agreed on community involvement and support for community-based education classes. This support mainly came as providing learning space, informing families of the opening of community-based education program, and identifying potential teachers for the classes. Later, the community continued to show support by going door to door to help families allow their children to join community-based education classes. This continues to help bring as many children as possible to this program.

***b. Factors Hindering Access to Education Through Community-based Education Program in Remote Areas:***

The community-based education program also has barriers that hinder access to education in rural and remote areas. The data from the community-based education programs location in this study identified some factors hindering access to education

in these communities. These include families not allowing children to attend community-based education, lack of school buildings, and cultural barriers.

*Families not allowing children to attend community-based education programs:* This has been the most apparent reason to barricade access to community-based education programs, as the study found. There have been various reasons behind families not allowing children to attend community-based education program. Poverty is one of the dominant reasons forcing families to go against sending their children to school; instead, they send them to work at an early age, according to community leaders. It could also be the reason behind increased child labor in Afghanistan. A community leader from a community-based education location in Nangarhar shares his thoughts:

“We always try to convince families to allow children to attend community-based education program, but sometimes we fail since they bring their financial problems as the reason. They say we cannot support our family financially, and our children also need to work.”

Community leader (60, Nangarhar)

Most families have financial problems taking care of their children's education since many families struggle to meet the basic needs of food and shelter. Thus, they send their children to work early instead of going to school.

*Lack of school buildings:* Another reason behind possibly reducing access to education through community-based education programs is school buildings or infrastructure. According to the students, teachers, community leaders, and implementing partners in both study locations, “no school buildings are available.” The students are sitting on bare grounds; the only shelters are tents. Heat and rain

affect their learning, and community-based education classes are mostly off during extreme heat and heavy rain. This has forced some of the students to leave community-based education classes. Due to the lack of school buildings, not all the students in one community can attend the community-based education class.

*Culture Barriers:* Culture as a barrier only exists for girls, not hindering boys from accessing community-based education classes. During an interview with a community leader from Laghman province who was an indigenous of the community where this program operates. He shared his thoughts as follows:

“Community-based education programs brought most of the girls to get education nearby their house, but still several girls continue to face restriction in our community for getting education. Some families consider education only for boys and household chores for girls. They think girls will eventually marry, so it is worthless to allow her to get an education.”

A community leader (55, Laghman)

On the other hand, in some families, age is also considered necessary for girls in education. They allow girls to get elementary education, but after puberty, they no longer allow her to get an education. It has become a cultural norm in rural communities where families strictly follow community leaders' arguments. On the other hand, boys have no such kind of restriction to education either in community-based education programs or general education schools in rural communities; the only barrier is poverty or security, which made families decide to prevent children from receiving education.

#### ***4.2.2 Is Community-based Education Program Successful?***

Community-based education program provide an alternative pathway to education based on the needs of these communities and the provision of special consideration to these classes. Community-based education has been regarded as a successful approach to education by communities. A teacher from Laghman province said:

“I think a community-based education program is successful because our students have regular classes with all the learning materials given to them so they can study more effectively. We also get training; this program has been running for over 8 years without significant issues. Most of the students have been successfully integrated into the general education system. This makes the community-based education program a successful one”.

A teacher of community-based education (30, Laghman)

Community leaders are the backbone of community-based education program. They have been given utmost consideration when this program opens in rural communities. They also view this community-based education program as a successful one. The reason for the success of a community-based education program lies in better cooperation and coordination among the three involved parties; the Ministry of Education, implementing organization, and the community. This three-dimensional cooperation makes community-based education programs run effectively in rural communities and gives the community an equal chance of monitoring and supervision.

Implementing organizations also have an equal share of support in the community-based education program. They also see this program as successful in bringing rural boys and girls close to education. One of the staff members from

implementing organization from Nangarhar highlights the success of this program “Community-based education program came at the right time for rural boys and girls. The program has been running for the past 13 years, making it successful, with thousands of students integrated into the general education system.”

#### **4.3 Factors Impacted the Quality of Education in CBE Class**

In this part, the study’s third research question has been answered. The policy document prepared for community-based education programs promises high-quality education as the study analyzed while the community findings differ. On the one hand, students’ thoughts regarding the quality of education in community-based education classes are positive. On the positive side, all students in this study from Laghman province put teachers’ quality, provision of learning and teaching materials, and monitoring and evaluations from the community-based education class make CBE a good quality.

These areas are considered necessary by the students. According to one student from a community-based education class in Laghman (grade six CBE, Laghman), “Our teachers here are very knowledgeable and use different teaching methods to help us learn easily and quickly...”. A teacher of this same class shared similar thoughts:

I have more than five years of teaching experience, but I joined a community-based education program two years ago. This program is different from general education because we can get professional development training, learn new teaching methodologies, and use the available resources effectively.

Community-based education class teacher (34, Laghman)

On the contrary, in Nangarhar province, students negatively shared their thoughts about community-based education class quality. The same areas mentioned by the students from Laghman were reported in Nangarhar to be lacking and undermine the quality of education in the community-based education class.

According to the students interviewed from Nangarhar province, teacher quality was a concern. One of the students in the sixth grade of a community-based education class said, “Our teachers here are high school graduates only, and they do not have any specialization or have completed university degrees...” Since most of the teachers in community-based education program come from the local community, higher education does not play a role in the selection process.

The community leaders from both research sites put forward a different perspective. Initially, they compared community-based education classes to general education class. They highlighted the success of community-based education to be higher than public school or general education approach. They considered a community-based education program a practical approach that effectively enhances students’ participation and provides them with better education opportunities. One community leader from Laghman province puts his ideas: “Community-based education program is beneficial and effective. I would say it successfully provides access and quality education in our community. In comparison, our students are better than general education classes.”

Since community-based education provides access to education in local communities and international non-government organizations financially and logistically support them, the community considers them better in quality than general education classes, financed, supported, and fall under the Ministry of Education.

One reason for the quality of education in CBE is that three-dimensional cooperation and coordination among the community, Ministry of Education, and implementing organization makes the community-based education program unique compared to general education classes in terms of quality education. According to the community leader from Nangarhar:

We have excellent cooperation and coordination with Ministry and the non-governmental organization which works here. We attend to the needs of students and the class on time, and better monitoring and evaluation occur from the Ministry of Education and the community.

Community leader (60, Nangarhar)

On the part of implementing partnering organization, the quality of education in community-based education programs relied on several aspects such as regular training of teachers, supervision of the program through professionals, using the national curriculum, and following the Ministry of Education policy for community-based education program. This organization which works in both Laghman and Nangarhar provinces implementing community-based education, was very confident regarding the quality of education of this program. According staff member of the implementing organization who worked in a community-based

education program for around three years put his thoughts regarding the quality of education as follows:

We ensure every aspect of the community-based education program in order to align with the quality of education requirements of the Ministry of Education. We provide teacher training and funding support. We are confident about the supervision, national curriculum implementation, and policy of community-based education.

A staff member of implementing organization (40, Laghman)

#### ***4.3.1 Improvements Needed in CBE Classes***

Although the participants see community-based education as an excellent alternative approach to education, some areas still need improvement. These improvements will be presented here in breakdowns of participants. According to teachers in both provinces' community-based education program, this program needs to improve and provide education after the sixth grade until high school and give its teaching staff more opportunities to receive higher education and professional training. They consider community-based education running smoothly until sixth grade. However, after that, students find it hard to integrate into general education since they do not have a nearby gender-appropriate school to continue their education. As a result, most of them leave school after completing the sixth or final grade of community-based education.

Similarly, they accept that their education level is low compared to the teachers of public schools. However, they also revealed that they receive more training than public school teachers. They are enthusiastic about getting a higher

education and providing professional growth opportunities. One of the community-based education program teachers from Laghman said:

We are glad to have been given this opportunity to teach in a community-based education program and have regular training about new teaching methodologies. However, we want higher education and more training in classroom management, pedagogies, and others.

Community-based education teacher (29, Laghman)

Furthermore, students interviewed in this study from Laghman and Nangarhar provinces shared their views about improvements in community-based education programs. They considered school buildings and higher grades two aspects in which community-based education program needs improvement and lead to even better program quality. The lack of proper school buildings makes it hard for them to learn comfortably in sweltering and cold weather conditions. Whereas they are delighted with the community-based education program, and they want this program to continue to high school. One student from Nangarhar province shares her thoughts: “Our class here is perfect. We learn many new things but cannot attend our class during rain because we do not have rooms to sit in.”

Similarly, community leaders in both research locations shared things similar to what teachers and students shared regarding improvement in community-based education program. School buildings and higher grades are the essential improvements needed to make community-based education more successful, along with public awareness to raise participation in community-based education program. A community leader for Nangarhar shared his concern on the part of school buildings: “Community-based education program is very successful in our

community, but we require school infrastructure to help our children learn in a comfortable environment.”

Public awareness was also considered necessary by the community leaders. They were concerned about families who did not actively allow their children to participate in community-based education programs. According to these community leaders, some families still give importance to their children's education. Therefore, they require programs, campaigns, and similar agendas to raise participation in community-based education programs.

The implementing partners also shared their concerns about improvements in community-based education programs. Three highlighted by the implementing partners were more teacher training, better supervision, and better application of Ministry of Education standards. According to one of the staff members of the implementing organization

“To bring wholistic improvements, community-based education programs need to give more training of professional development to the teachers, mobilize on-time supervision, and carry out community-based education program by the standards of Ministry of Education.”

Implementing organization staff members (40, Laghman)

#### ***4.3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation of the CBE Program***

Monitoring and Evaluation of community-based education program, which is also regarded as supervision, is an important aspect behind the success of this program. This has been carried out by the Ministry of Education and the

community together. Implementing organization has no role in the process of supervision of the community-based education program. Their main scope of work is to provide financial support and arrange training for teachers.

Ministry of Education has a unit for community-based education. According to teachers and students in both research locations, two times every month, a team from the Directorate of Education in Laghman and Nangarhar visits these community-based education program classes. They mainly observe the learning and teaching process and daily attendance of community-based education classes. On rare occasions, this team talks with students and teachers to hear their problems in the learning and teaching process.

On the part of the community, the community leaders are responsible for taking care of the study spaces and resolving any issues that might arise in these classes. The community leaders do this with the help of school councils created in the location of community-based education programs. The teachers, head teachers, and community leaders are in charge of these school councils.

In conclusion, the study findings shared above presented five main areas related to community-based education program found as a result of the thematic analysis of data gathered from study participants in Laghman and Nangarhar provinces. These five areas are related to the three research questions of the study. The findings from document analysis are also presented in this chapter. The following chapter will present a thorough discussion of the findings.

## **Discussion**

This thesis's discussion is a critical and open-ended section following the findings section. It interprets, assesses, and contextualizes the findings concerning community-based education. It also highlights the research's significance, limits, and implications. Furthermore, the discussion part elaborates on previous sections' concepts and suggests the next moves. The discussion will follow the same sequence as the findings above.

### **4.1. Intended Quality of the CBE Program**

The goal of community-based education policy is to provide access to education through cost-effective, fairness, sustainability, and scalability strategies, as stated in the policy document (Ministry of Education, 2008). It is one of the ways for the policy documents to address issues of fairness in education. According to Bøyum (2014), every educational policy is made on the assumption of fairness, whether it is clearly stated or not. However, here it has been stated clearly in the policy document, particularly in its goal to provide quality education through fairness which is meant to be fair in every aspect to provide access to education in rural and remote areas.

Another means to provide quality education comes in the form of cost-effectiveness. Levin (1988) states, "Cost-effectiveness analysis refers to the consideration of decision alternatives in which both their costs and consequences are systematically taken into account." (p.51). in terms of the cost of a community-based education program, the policy seems to be running without significant issues since

international non-governmental organizations fund these programs. However, in talks with these organizations, they also face budget cuts, making it hard to maintain regular funding. Funding has not been significant in preventing access to education or hampering the quality of education in community-based education programs.

Sustainability is one of the success points for a community-based education program; since its initial start in 2008, it has been running smoothly until today. Burde et al. (2016) believe community-based education is effective and sustainable. It has been turned into a cutting-edge tool for the Afghan Ministry of Education to deal with the issue of access to education in remote and conflict-affected areas. Much has not changed since the study of Burde et al. (2016); community-based education still operates progressively and attains to the needs of children in rural and remote areas. However, the main question is why community-based education program has not been brought under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. A student can be moved into the general education system only after completing the sixth grade. There is also a possibility that after sixth grade, the ministry could change the class to an elementary or secondary school, which has also been the request of the community. The findings from Rasmussen & Kelly (2016) also confirm that most boys and all girls below the grade of five and six left schools when community-based education class was integrated into a school more than 3 kilometers from the village.

An excellent community-based education, according to the policy document, consists: of teacher development, a suitable learning environment, adequate teaching

and learning materials, and class management with supervision. Two of the first have been problematic on the grounds of community-based education. Although they received training from the implementing organization, teachers had a low level of education qualification; since most of them were from local to the community, their residence and community were given priority in contrast to their educational qualification. Similarly, students, teachers, and community leaders complained about the lack of school buildings. This means the learning environment has not met the standard of a suitable learning environment mentioned in the policy. Learning space has a significant impact on students learning; Wilson\* & Fowler (2010) and Asiyai (2014) found that uncomfortable learning space hamper students' motivation and active class participation. While here, rain and extreme heat also brought closure to community-based education classes.

Furthermore, as the policy states, the quality of education in community-based education programs is "high-quality education," while the community-based education class reports it as good quality. First, let us discuss what quality education is. Sayed (1997) argues that the concept of quality is vague and emphasizes that the values behind any educational framework make the basis of quality. Similarly, Bunting (1993) put the quality of education as the bottom line of values and goals that support an education activity. A more holistic understanding of the quality of education is provided by Beeby (1966) through three dimensions of quality; 1. Classroom quality 2. The economic goal of a community 3. Broader social criteria.

The final two levels are considered the external quality of education (Hawes & Stephens, 1990). The Beeby (1966), three levels are related to the quality of education in developing countries.

The matter of quality of education has been of concern at every level of education in Afghanistan, not only primary or secondary (Jackson, 2011; Arooje & Burrige, 2021; Roof, 2015). As community-based education classes are only available in rural areas where the formal education system is lacking, the quality and overseeing the quality might be daunting. However, the study found that the community, teachers, students, and implementing organizations are very much pleased with the quality of education. With the lack of a suitable learning environment and low level of teacher qualification, there might be issues in ensuring the quality of education. While the study participants (community leaders, teachers, and students) shared, monthly supervision by the community and Ministry of Education made them ensure the quality of education. In contrast, the implementing organization raises the point of better cooperation and coordination and regular teacher training as important points behind ensuring quality education in community-based education classes.

#### **4. 2 Access to Education with the Help of CBE**

The issue of access to education with the help of community-based education program lies at the center of this initiative. Two things are of importance when it comes to access to education. The role of community and continued access to

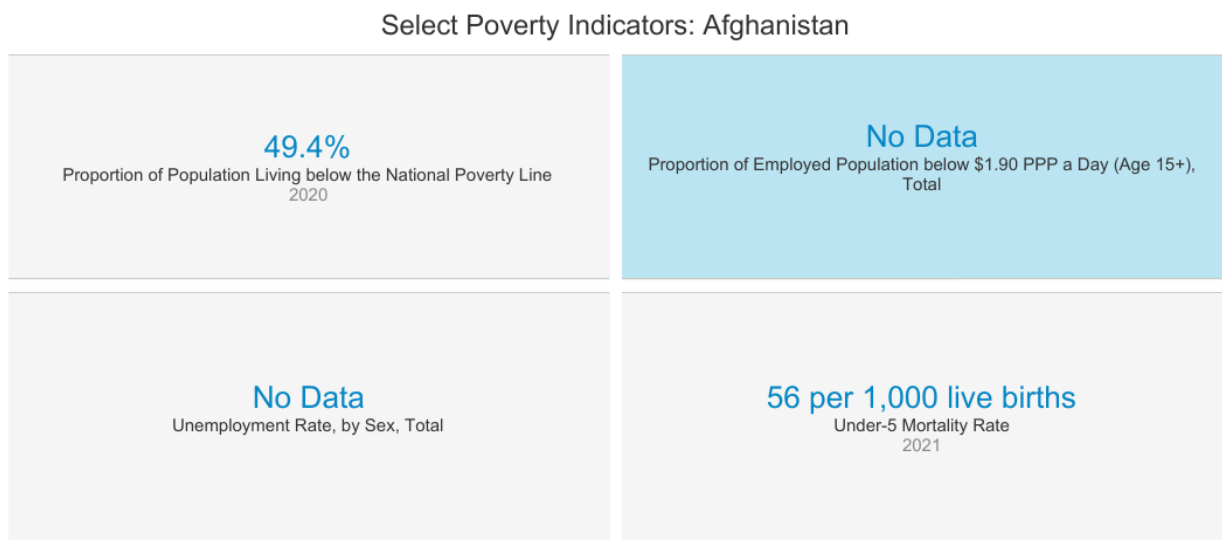
education. This could help provide more sustainable education in rural and remote areas. On the part of community engagement and its role, several international organizations are running Adult Reading Groups (ARGs). It provides parents with activities to support their children's learning at home and poster publishing and pinning on the walls in villages with the importance of education in Islam and the Quran (Burde et al., 2016). This works as public awareness and has been effective only in rural areas.

On the part of sustainability, the program is also found to be going well, but mainly after completion of community-based education programs, getting into general public school remains a challenge for boys and girls because of distance, as found by Rasmussen & Kelly (2016), the reasons behind why the integration fails after the CBE program completion are unknown until now.

The primary data from the research sites yielded the success of community-based education program in providing access to education in the reduced distance and gender-appropriate classes and the role of the community. These are the enhancer and providers of access to education in the study locations. Distance has been a point of consideration for schooling in Afghan rural communities. Parents are often worried about the safety and security of their children if they go to school far away. According to He and Giuliano (2018), location is the first important thing for parents when choosing a school for their children; even quality comes second. Community-

based education is a good approach for rural families, helping them access education nearby their houses.

Although community-based education has been proven to provide ultimate access to education, some hurdles still make the delivery of this program problematic for some students. One of these hurdles is family restriction. One of the reasons is poverty; instead of school, these children are used in household activities (girls) and child labor (boys). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recent estimates of poverty in Afghanistan:



Source: Asian Development Bank. Basic Statistics 2023 (April 2023)

**Figure 3** Asian Development Bank, Basic Statistics of 2023

The above estimates show that 49.4% of the Afghan population lives under the national line of poverty, most of which are in rural areas. With the current situation in Afghanistan, as the Taliban are in charge and international recognition and assistance are minimal, this could worsen.

Culture or traditional way of life is also a point of consideration barricading girls' access to education. Some families under the community-based education program still see girls' education through the lens of tradition. According to Jamal (2015), parents will not bring their daughters to school without female teachers. On the other hand, many parents are concerned that if their daughters attend school, they will become alienated from traditional lifestyles and values. Even they might not make good wives and mothers, according to some families (UNESCO, 2012).

Even with community-based education at the door of their house, families still believe in not allowing girls to education. This is one of the main reasons behind gender inequality in education in Afghanistan, sadly. Shayan (2015) sees the problem in the restrictive structure of society. He argues for social change. However, this requires time and general public awareness with the help of national and international parties and Islamic scholars to intervene. In short, the policy has been good enough to educate boys and girls in rural and remote areas. While addressing the cultural issue of girls' education has remained.

#### **4.3 Improvements in Community-based Education Program**

A suitable learning environment, more teacher training, better coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders, and turning community-based education classes into secondary schools were the improvement needed to make community-based education even better, as found by this study. The learning environment mainly affects student participation in class and impacts the quality of education. This has

been the concern of students, teachers, and the community. Arguably, ensuring a suitable learning space could increase student attraction, and families would also see community-based education classes as a proper learning place.

Since local community teachers mostly take part in teaching students in community-based education programs, their educational level is not in contrast to teachers in the general education system. Studies (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Pelayo & Brewer, 2009) have shown the relation and impact of teacher quality on the quality of education, students' achievements, and equality of education. Elaborating on community-based education program for teachers' low educational attainment is vital. However, they have a regular methodology, pedagogy, and class management training through the implementing organization. However, higher education in a specialized field improves their teaching realm and provides a better command of the subject matter.

Another area of improvement in the study is to turn community-based education class into a school with higher grades after sixth grade. This could be considered a request from the community to the governing bodies of community-based education programs. Since, it is out of the scope of current community-based education policy. After a student completes a community-based education program, the policy aims to integrate him/her into the general education system. The policy does not specify whether to keep the students after sixth grade or take the grades level higher in the same community-based education class. Only completion of this CBE

class is the target. It could be a possible consideration for the future community-based education program to turn every class after sixth grade into a public school. After planning and budget allocation, if feasible. Still, community-based education program serves as a makeshift arrangement and a way out in a time of need for education in rural communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation of community-based education programs are two-dimensional. Community supervision and Ministry of Education supervision. The community's role in protecting and maintaining education projects is run through a school council. The community leader heads them. It has been a very effective way of giving communities the responsibility to oversee the education progress and programs in their community.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education's supervision created a space of confidence as the community realized that the community-based education program is not left alone to the community. A good point about the supervision from the Ministry of Education is that it takes place twice every month. In contrast, little has been known about the quality, reports, and team of supervision. The quality of evaluation and monitoring matters to a greater extent. It ensures smooth and according to the standard operation of community-based education. However, the study failed to get data from the Ministry of Education as the research assistants were not allowed to interview the officials responsible for community-based education.

In sum, community-based education effectively and successfully brings rural children into education. While the quality of education, teachers' qualifications, learning environment, and integration into the general education system remain concerns as a result of this study. On the part of the success of this program, studies (Burde et al., 2016; Arooje & Burrige, 2021; Brehm, 2019; Burde, 2014; Sopko, 2020) have also shown that Community-based education program is a success in rural Afghanistan. Although access to education and increased enrollment in CBE is enlightening, the cultural barrier remains in front of community-based education for girls in some areas). Ensuring high-quality education as envisioned by this program's policy remains constrained in teachers' qualifications and conformable learning environment, two areas that directly impact students' achievements and quality of education in general. In short, the policy has effectively provided access to education but somehow could not fulfill the standards of quality and teachers' development set after actual application.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The current study explored the intended quality of education of the CBE policy, the effectiveness of the CBE program in providing access to education, and the factors that impacted the quality of education in community-based education classes. The study was conducted in two provinces of Afghanistan with the most significant number of community-based education classes, namely Laghman and Nangarhar. The study has attained the following aims:

(1). The community-based education policy has been developed to provide high-quality education. Since rural and remote areas in Afghanistan are hard to connect to leading general schools, CBE intends to facilitate high-quality education, as this study finds.

(2). The study found that community-based education program is an effective strategy and makeshift arrangement in closing the gap of lack of access to education in rural areas of Afghanistan. Some main areas enhanced access to education through community-based education program. These include reduced distance, gender-appropriate classes, and community support from this program. Also, cultural barriers and a lack of a proper learning environment challenged community-based education programs. The challenge brought a hurdle in providing full access to education for every child in rural communities.

(3). In a developing country like Afghanistan, the quality of education has been a concern every time educational policies are sketched out. External and internal levels issues hampering the smooth delivery of quality education. Similar was the case of community-based education. The uncomfortable learning environment challenges students' and teachers' lack of higher levels of educational qualification and specializations. Similarly, issues of cooperation and coordination among the community, the Ministry of Education, and implementing organizations also highlighted the uncertainty of high-quality education. Regarding the quality of education, it could be concluded that community-based education policy and its application have fallen short of providing access to high-quality education as the vision in the policy.

Furthermore, the study resulted in improvements in some areas of community-based education that enhance access to this program and positively contribute to the quality of education. School buildings, turning community-based education program into schools, standard monitoring and evaluations, cooperation, and coordination among the stakeholders bring improvements into community-based education program.

The studies investigated two issues associated with community-based education, access, and quality, with three main aims of the study as mentioned in earlier paragraphs. The study also connected these issues with policy perspectives. It is essential to understand that Afghanistan's community-based education

approach is a bridge to enhance access and equality of education for all. One of the issues that can be argued here is that closing the gender gap has been paramount for community-based education program, as the policy document states. However, the policy has not been successful in equalizing access to education with the help of community-based education classes.

Furthermore, the CBE policy goal for providing quality education has been set as education of high quality given the nature, emergency arrangement, and support from international organizations. At the same time, the rural and remote areas of the country are hard to find and recruit competent teachers. It can be emphasized that the policy needs to focus on bringing in more competent teachers, such as teachers from urban areas with higher qualifications. In short, access increased, but the quality and closing of the gender gap remains for the CBE program.

In short, community-based education needs further improvements to bring better fruitful outcomes and meet the standards and practices applicable in rural and remote communities of Afghanistan. Afghanistan, as a conflict-affected country, needs peace and resolution education. Even community-based education program proved to work under armed conflict. However, CBE is still the only alternative pathway to education, and these rural communities need quality, equal, and equitable education like the general education system. A possible solution for the Ministry of Education could be building or turning community-based education

classes into a school or public school. This will help the general education system grow and accessible and rural areas the same as it is available in urban areas. Otherwise, continuing makeshift arrangements for education cannot be carried out by the Ministry of Education without the help of international non-governmental organizations. At the same time, the model of a community-based education program can be kept for the future, which might prove effective in times of need or emergency.

## **5.2 Recommendations & Limitations**

The study presents two sets of recommendations. First, the recommendation for community-based education policy revision. Second, the recommendation for future research studies on community-based education. These areas are critical to unearth more about this program through empirical studies, and better policy management and application take place for the further success of community-based education.

### ***5.2.1 Policy Recommendations:***

The community-based education policy needs further revision and development. The following suggestions will help policy see its position and find alternative ways to eliminate the possible issues.

1. Policy needs to give more importance to social realities, traditional norms, and community awareness. This would help in the longer run and sustainability of community-based education.

2. Policy needs to incorporate or give roles to community actors such as community leaders, Imams, and other known personalities to help minimize the effect of negative culture on educational access, particularly for Afghan girls.
3. Community-based education policy needs to bring in evidence-based best practices from similar programs in other countries to better see through areas of critical importance for access, quality education, cooperation, and coordination.
4. As the current country is controlled by the Taliban now, the community-based education future and sustainability and integration into general education are unknown. There is a need for clear guidelines and policy revisions to understand the situation better and cater to the needs of rural children.

### ***5.2.2 Further study recommendation:***

Several areas in community-based education programs need further empirical evidence. Conducting more qualitative and quantitative studies on issues in community-based education programs is better.

1. Students' achievements and performance is one of the crucial aspects of community-based education program success. Studies in nature of either qualitative or quantitative needs to examine or explore this area. In order to find out the actual performance of students and compare and contrast it with the students from the general education system.
2. The issue of access to community-based education still needs to be further elaborated in other remote and rural provinces and communities of

Afghanistan. It is vital for researchers in education and organization working for education in Afghanistan to find the lack of access and its reasons.

3. Teacher quality in community-based education classes remains unexplored regarding qualification and professional development. Empirical evidence must include the teacher's education and preparation for community-based education classes.
4. Future studies must cover several provinces and community-based education classrooms for a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

### ***5.2.3 Study Limitations:***

During this project, the study encountered some limitations. First, during data collection, the research assistants tried to locate and interview officials from the Ministry of Education. However, unfortunately, no Taliban regime members representing either community-based education or the Ministry of Education agreed to participate in this study. If officials from the Ministry of Education had participated in the study, it would have given it an additional point of view. On the other hand, direct observation from community-based education classes is required. Because the study employed research assistants, it could not obtain timely observations of both participants and the classroom setting. Aside from that, due to accessibility, the study was confined to only two provinces where community-based education programs are implemented; however, for a more thorough understanding of access and quality, the study might be expanded to include numerous provinces.

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## APPANDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Protocol sample

#### 1. Interview Guideline for Community Leader

##### Greetings!

I intend to conduct a qualitative case study of Afghanistan's community-based education system. I am an MA Education student in my final semester at Indonesian International Islamic University. **The study aims** to examine community-based education in Afghanistan in terms of educational quality and accessibility for students living in rural areas. The study gathers information from the regions of the Community-Based Education program and focuses on the policy document. The present study interviews community leaders, teachers, students, implementing partners (non-governmental organizations involved in Community-based Education), and Afghan Ministry of Education Officials to learn their possible opinions on the introduction of CBE classes, quality of education, and accessibility to these classes. **The primary purpose** of this interview is to get participants' views on the quality of education and how accessible it is for students of both genders to enroll in classes.

Your participation in this study is highly Appreciated.

Thank you,  
Hazrat Shah Kayen  
Researcher

**Ethical consideration:** The information given during this interview will only ever be utilized to support the research thesis. The respondents' identities and their Community-Based Education classes would remain confidential.

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##### Demographic information:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  Male  Female Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Participating as:

Community Leader

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**Qualitative interview introduction**

*Length:* 45-60 minutes

*Primary goal:* Investigate the implementation of Community-Based Education policy in terms of providing access to education in rural and remote areas. Find the factors that impacted the quality of education in Community-Based Education classes either in positive sense or in negative sense.

**Verbal Consent of the Participant:**

Would you like to participate in this interview?

- Verbal Consent was obtained from the study participant
- Verbal Consent was NOT obtained from the study participant

Would you like to record this interview session?

- Verbal Consent was obtained from the study participant
- Verbal Consent was NOT obtained from the study participant

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**Background Information:**

Overview: Invite the interviewee to talk about themselves briefly: General background information.

1. What is your highest educational qualification?

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2. How long have you been working as the community leader?

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3. How long has been the Community-Based Education classes running in your community?

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1. For how long have you been involved in the Community-Based Education program? (Probe questions regarding their experience, number of Community-Based Education classes, and community response to these classes....)

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2. Do you see Community-Based Education as an excellent alternative to general education in Afghanistan? If yes, why? If not, why?

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3. How is the quality of education in Community-Based Education Classes in your community? (Ask about teachers' education, experience, curriculum, students' participation, monitoring, and evaluation....)

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4. What do you think improves or disimproves the quality of education in Community-Based Education in your community?

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5. Do you think the Ministry of Education and other organizations provide enough attention and learning/teaching material to the Community-based Education classes? Please elaborate on your answer with examples.

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6. How easily can students enroll or access a Community-Based Education program?

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7. Is there any barrier that prevents students from receiving education through the Community-Based Education program?

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8. Do you think the Community-Based Education program successfully provides access to education in rural areas? If yes, what made it successful? If no, what made it unsuccessful?

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9. Are there any other concerns or points you would like to share regarding the quality and accessibility of the Community-Based Education program in your community?

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**Appendix 2: filled interview protocol in original language**

1. For how long have you been involved in the Community-Based Education program? (Probe questions regarding their experience, number of Community-Based Education classes, and community response to these classes....)

د کله نه چې صلاک شوی - سم ددی پخوونځي لږه وړاندي  
 لږم پدې پخوونځي مورځه خپل "د اول ټي ټکر شپږم کورنۍ  
 دوی دنفوز لرو - اووم هتف هم لرو خو هغه حکومت بند کړی

2. Do you see Community-Based Education as an excellent alternative to general education in Afghanistan? If yes, why? If not, why?

هو دیر سینه اقدام دی -  
 که ددی برکاتای پخوونځي زموږ پدې تعلیم خپلې د دولتې ملتونو  
 د کله دولتې ملتونو نشته نو زما ملتیت موږ پدې سینه جانش ددی  
 زموږ لپاره ددی پخوونځي د زینس وورای

3. How is the quality of education in Community-Based Education Classes in your community? (Ask about teachers' education, experience, curriculum, students' participation, monitoring, and evaluation....)

الحمد لله دلته هر ټم دیر سینه ددی زموږ استادانې  
 سینه با استوارده دی هره ټکر لری د زینس مشهور  
 ی نشته ده هر اتلک په کافی اندازه زده کوونکي لرو هم اناس  
 هم ز نور او وقتا به وقت هم دولتې او هم د موسسې  
 قلک د هیت د دول ددی

4. What do you think improves or disimproves the quality of education in Community-Based Education in your community?

یاد لوی ملتیت جوړ سنی - لیسې دوی جوړی سولی  
 لسانس استادان پکې ول او بودم ددی زیات سنی