



Unveiling the Post-2021 Realities within Women's Protection Centres in Afghanistan: Navigating Challenges Amidst Socio-Political Shifts

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Abstract

This research investigates the unexpected closure of Women's Protection Centres (WPCs) and the departure of civil society following the 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. It delves into the post-2021 realities of women's situations and the need for support in WPCs, exploring their establishment, challenges, and eventual closures within the broader context of gender-based violence (GBV) and human rights.

Building upon prior research, this study enhances our understanding of the resilience and obstacles faced by vulnerable women who resided in the shelters. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research integrates semi-structured interviews with 20 representatives from, NGOs, donors, Ministry of Women's Affairs, residents of the shelters and current WPCs.

Utilizing feminist critical theory, the research examines power dynamics, intersectional identities, and patriarchal structures within WPCs. This approach enriches understanding by revealing how these systemic factors impact vulnerable women's experiences and futures. By prioritizing the voices and lived experiences of women in the shelters, this research highlights unique challenges and advocates for policies that support their empowerment and rights.

Qualitative data analysis through thematic coding reveals key themes, further analyzed using NVivo. The findings offer a profound understanding of the current state of WPCs in Afghanistan and underscore the critical need for continued support and intervention to protect women's rights in this turbulent context.

Keywords: Power dynamic, Gender-based violence (GBV), Feminist critical theory, Qualitative approach, Unheard voices

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