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# **CULTURAL NARRATIVES**

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## The Struggles and Resilience of Women as Primary Earners in *The Breadwinner* (2017) Directed by Nora Twomey

Dyah Sukma Fatarani  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to identify women as the primary breadwinners depicted in the 2017 film *The Breadwinner*, directed by Nora Twomey. This research analyses the role of women as the main breadwinner in *The Breadwinner* (2017), the challenges faced by women in this role, and the representation of gender equality issues in the film. This researcher employs a feminist theoretical framework to analyse the data. This research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology. The data for this study are drawn from the film *The Breadwinner* (2017), comprising sentences, dialogues and scenes that are pertinent to the research topic. The findings indicate that women in this context assume the role of both family leaders and livelihood seekers. They face significant challenges, including the necessity to conceal their gender in order to secure their primary source of income, resisting social norms, and demonstrating courage in the face of risks. The film also reflects issues pertaining to gender equality, such as restricted access to education, employment discrimination, and limited mobility. The study emphasizes the importance of female empowerment. Parvana's determination to provide for her family and her defiance against social norms serve as an inspiration. It showcases the positive impact that empowered women can have on their families and communities.

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### INTRODUCTION

Despite the great advances in human rights and the growing movement in support of gender equality, the reality is that many societies struggle with unequal equality. Women around the world face limitations in their ability to obtain education, create jobs and participate in society at large (Taiwo, 2019). These restrictions stem from patriarchal systems that prioritize men and relegate women to assigned roles. The economic impact of this inequality cannot be denied, as society loses the energy and talent of half the population. In addition, Iñiguez-Berrozpe et al. (2019) explain that limited access to education perpetuates cycles of weakness and hinders women's ability to break free from social constraints and participate in their communities. The fight for gender equality is not a moral imperative. This is a matter of economic and social progress for all.

The global problem of gender inequality manifests itself in many ways and is often linked to factors such as poverty, conflict and cultural norms. In some regions, girls are denied access to education, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating a vicious cycle of

\*CONTACT: [a320190065@student.ums.ac.id](mailto:a320190065@student.ums.ac.id)

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disadvantage. Even in developing countries, women can face pay gaps, occupational segregation and job insecurity (Borrowman & Klasen, 2019). These inequalities affect the lives of individual women, their families and their communities. Addressing this problem requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on educating girls, eliminating discrimination in the workplace, and promoting equal participation in political and social life. By promoting a global dialogue on gender equality and working to dismantle the structures that continue to produce inequality, we can pave the way for equality and justice for all.

Suripto et al. (2020) explains that the role of women in the world of work and family has been significantly shaped by social transformations and prevailing social paradigms. An increasing number of women are assuming the role of primary income earners within the family unit, thereby introducing a novel dynamic into the traditional family structure. The role of women as the primary breadwinners has contributed to an increase in financial independence among their families (Drago et al., 2004). The possession of an independent source of income enables women to exert greater control over financial decisions and to reduce their reliance on others. This phenomenon demonstrates that women have a greater range of employment opportunities and that their role is becoming increasingly significant in meeting the financial needs of the household (Olu-Owolabi et al., 2020).

The phenomenon of women as the primary source of income is a cause for concern for director Nora Twomey. As the director of the film *The Breadwinner*, adapted from the novel by Deborah Ellis, she has demonstrated her concern through her film work. In the film *The Breadwinner*, director Nora Twomey not only presents an inspiring narrative about a young woman who becomes the primary financial provider for her family but also elucidates the challenges and difficulties faced by women who assume this role.

*The Breadwinner* is an animated film produced by Cartoon Saloon and released in 2017. The film was directed by Nora Twomey and adapted from the novel of the same name by Deborah Ellis. The narrative revolves around Parvana, a young girl who assumes the role of a man to provide for her family after her father is arrested by the police. *The Breadwinner* presents an emotionally charged narrative of a young girl striving to achieve justice and freedom in a society marred by injustice and conflict. The film offers a poignant portrayal of women's role as the vital force sustaining a complex and challenging society. It underscores the significance of dismantling gender barriers to ensure equality and justice for all individuals, irrespective of gender. *The Breadwinner* is a movie that has also been used in several studies, there are three studies that have discussed this. The first belongs to Kurniati and Tisnawijaya (2022) which discusses the relationship between gender discrimination and religious identity that affects the perspective of women in the social context of the film. The second research has been conducted by Aghmuni et.al (2020) who examines that the film "The Breadwinner" has a function as propaganda, where he finds that there is a form of propaganda in incorporating the ideas of feminism into the context of middle eastern culture. Finally, Darta and Kristina (2018), using the theory of Sara Mills, focused on discussing how the image of men and women through the level of word choice, sentences and discourse. Looking at the existing research, it can be seen that the objectives of previous studies with

this research have different research objectives. In addition, this research focuses on how women are portrayed as breadwinners in a cultural context that does not allow women to be the main breadwinners in the family.

This study examines the film *The Breadwinner* to investigate the complex and multifaceted role of women as the primary source of income for their families. The research demonstrates how Parvana, the protagonist, assumes the role of breadwinner following her father's imprisonment. The film portrays the immense burden and resourcefulness required of women in such circumstances through Parvana's journey. We witness her struggle to disguise herself as a boy to navigate a world that severely restricts women's mobility and economic participation. This act of defiance highlights the societal limitations placed upon women and the lengths they must go to in order to support their families.

*The Breadwinner* serves as a powerful lens through which to examine broader issues of gender inequality in Afghanistan. The film depicts the limited access to education faced by girls, a reality that restricts women's future opportunities and reinforces their dependence on male family members. Additionally, the research highlights employment discrimination against women under Taliban rule. Parvana's act of disguise becomes symbolic of the systemic barriers women face in the workforce. By exploring these struggles, the study underscores the urgent need for social and political reforms that promote gender equality and empower women to fully participate in Afghan society.

Although the representation of women in the workforce has been a subject of interest in various academic studies, the portrayal of women as the main breadwinners in film, especially in the context of the film *Breadwinner*, may not have been widely explored. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature. This research problem is further elaborated into several research questions such as, what are the roles of women as the main earners in the movie *The Breadwinner* (2017), how is the struggle as the main earner in the movie *The Breadwinner* (2017), and why is gender equality a major issue in the movie *The Breadwinner* (2017).

## METHOD

This type of research is a literary study was conducted by researchers using qualitative research methods (Moleong, 2018). The object used in this research is the movie *The Breadwinner* (2017) directed by Nora Twomey. In this study, researchers used two types of data, namely text and images. Text data consists of characters, sentences, narratives, and dialog in the film. There are two data sources, namely primary data sources used in this research the movie *The Breadwinner*, directed by Nora Twomey, and secondary data sources from this research are taken from data that supports primary sources such as previous research, and several articles related to the object. In collecting data, researchers watched the movie *The Breadwinner* repeatedly and understood the movie, identified movie data and sources relevant to the research topic, and made notes on the data found. Next, researchers analyze the data that has been found using several stages, namely identifying, classifying, analyzing, and conclusion.

In analyzing the research, liberal feminism is applied to find out the women representation and discrimination. Liberal feminism, Tong (2018) explains that its emphasis on individual

rights and equality of opportunity, provides a valuable framework for analyzing the portrayal of female breadwinners in *The Breadwinner*. In the context of the film, Parvana's journey as a breadwinner exemplifies the challenges and opportunities faced by women in a patriarchal society. Her act of disguising herself as a boy to earn an income highlights the restrictions placed on women's mobility and economic participation. However, Parvana's resourcefulness and determination also demonstrate the potential for women to break free from traditional gender roles and contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This analysis of "The Breadwinner" (2017) explores the film's portrayal of a young woman named Parvana who takes on responsibility of both breadwinner and leader for her family. We delve into Parvana's courageous fight against the strict social norms imposed by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Through her journey, the film sheds light on the significant gender inequality issues faced by women in this society, highlighting themes of limited access to education, employment discrimination, and restricted movement.

### Parvana as The Breadwinner and Leader in *The Breadwinner Movie* (2017)

The animated film *The Breadwinner* presents a compelling representation of women transcending conventional gender norms. In the context of adversity, the family unit is dependent on the resourcefulness and fortitude of the woman, particularly Parvana, the young protagonist. In assuming the role of the primary breadwinner, Parvana assumes a responsibility that is typically associated with men in patriarchal societies. Her unwavering dedication ensures the survival of her family as she ventures out to earn a living.

The responsibilities of the breadwinner role undertaken by Parvana extend far beyond the mere generation of income. The film places emphasis on the multifaceted nature of this role. The film depicts Parvana negotiating the constraints imposed on women, particularly those pertaining to mobility and economic involvement. She employs a cunning ruse to gain access to the marketplace, a domain typically inaccessible to women under the Taliban's rule, by disguising herself as a boy. This act serves to illustrate the considerable ingenuity and courage that women must possess in order to fulfil the role of breadwinner in such a restrictive environment. Moreover, Parvana assumes the responsibility of ensuring her family's basic necessities are met. She assumes responsibility for procuring foodstuffs, venturing out to the market to purchase vital supplies. The film portrays her bearing a considerable burden, both literally and figuratively, as she returns home with buckets of water, a task traditionally associated with women but also symbolic of the weight of responsibility she bears.

In addition to ensuring the material well-being of her family, Parvana assumes the role of the emotional anchor of the household. As the primary caregiver, Parvana endeavors to instill hope and foster resilience in her loved ones. In the face of her father's disappearance, she reassures her family that she will find him and reunite them. This unwavering optimism and determination serve as a source of strength for her mother, sister, and younger brother. Through Parvana's leadership, the film underscores the emotional and psychological strength that women bring to their families, even in the most challenging circumstances.

In *The Breadwinner*, Parvana becomes the symbol of resourcefulness as she assumes the considerable responsibility of becoming the family's primary breadwinner. In contrast to the conventional male breadwinner, who may be employed in a single position, Parvana exhibits remarkable resilience and adaptability by assuming a range of responsibilities to ensure the family's financial stability. The film underscores the imperative for women to demonstrate resourcefulness and creativity in a social context that constrains their opportunities.

In the face of a lack of resources and limited options, Parvana demonstrates remarkable resourcefulness and entrepreneurial spirit. We observe her negotiating the vibrant marketplace, selling items that her family no longer requires, including her own attire. This action not only exemplifies her readiness to make compromises but also illustrates her entrepreneurial drive. Moreover, Parvana capitalises on her education, a privilege that is often denied to girls under Taliban rule. By offering reading and writing lessons, she utilises her abilities to generate a distinctive source of income. This act emphasises the value of education for girls, even in a context where it is sought to be controlled.

Nevertheless, Parvana's ingenuity extends beyond the conventional scope of traditional roles. The film depicts Parvana challenging the prevailing social norms by assuming roles that are typically reserved for men. Furthermore, the film depicts Parvana courageously undertaking physically demanding tasks, including the lifting of heavy goods for transport and the role of a coolie, which entails the hauling of sand. These scenes powerfully illustrate the considerable challenges women face in a patriarchal society, where they are often expected to bear the burden of survival and family provision. Parvana challenges the assumption that men are the sole providers of physical labour, demonstrating the strength and determination of women who are compelled to deviate from traditional gender roles. Her willingness to undertake these arduous tasks emphasises the significant responsibility she bears as the family's primary source of income.

### **Parvana's Fight Against Social Norms**

The film *"The Breadwinner"* presents a powerful portrayal of resilience in the face of oppression, where the young protagonist, Parvana, symbolizes the fight for fundamental liberties. In Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, women are compelled to take drastic measures in order to navigate the harsh realities of a society that severely limits their movement and participation in public life. The journey undertaken by Parvana as the breadwinner is inextricably linked to a profound act of defiance, namely the decision to disguise herself as a boy.

Such a transformation necessitates considerable self-sacrifice. Parvana willingly sacrifices her identity, cutting her hair short and adopting the attire of a man. She assumes the name Atish, which symbolizes the shedding of her feminine identity in order to blend in with the male-dominated world. This act of disguise serves to illustrate the significant limitations placed on women in Afghan society. The external environment, a domain wherein one could secure a livelihood and enhance the family's welfare, is starkly constrained for women. The transformation of Parvana serves to illustrate the profound injustice and the considerable obstacles that women are compelled to overcome in order to survive and discharge their fundamental responsibilities.

However, Parvana's transformation is not merely a matter of mere survival. The assumption of a male identity can be viewed as a form of resistance against the oppressive regime. By venturing out into the world as Atish, Parvana challenges the rigid gender

norms imposed by the Taliban. Her courage and resourcefulness serve as a powerful symbol of resilience in the face of adversity. The film emphasises the strength and determination of women who refuse to be silenced or confined by societal limitations. Parvana's transformation not only secures her family's survival but also becomes a statement of defiance against a system that seeks to control women's lives.

The film "The Breadwinner" portrays a stark socio-political reality, namely a society crippled by the oppressive rule of the Taliban. In this context, women are denied the basic rights and freedoms that are considered to be inherent to human dignity. In this context, Parvana represents a symbol of defiance, refusing to be constrained by the limitations imposed upon her. The film depicts a world in which women are prohibited from engaging in gainful employment, pursuing an education, or even venturing outside their homes without the accompaniment of a male escort. Such restrictions result in the marginalisation and disempowerment of women.

Nevertheless, Parvana is determined not to be constrained by these restrictions. She displays considerable fortitude in confronting the rigid social conventions that prescribe the role of women in Afghan society. The film underscores the constraining nature of these norms, illustrating how they impede women's capacity to contribute to their families and engage in public life. Parvana's defiance is evidenced by her decision to disguise herself as a boy. This act is not merely a means of survival; rather, it is an act of deliberate rebellion against a system that seeks to silence and control women.

However, Parvana persists in her resolve despite the considerable pressure she is under and the ever-present threat of discovery. She sets out on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. By assuming the identity of a male, she effectively renounces the limitations imposed upon her by societal expectations. The film depicts Parvana venturing out into the world, a domain that was previously inaccessible to her as a woman. This act of defiance extends beyond personal gain; it becomes a statement of solidarity with all women who are silenced and oppressed. Parvana's struggle to earn a living and contribute to her family serves as a powerful message about the importance of challenging social norms and fighting for equality.

The film "The Breadwinner" forces the viewer to confront the harsh realities of life under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The young protagonist, Parvana, exemplifies the exceptional fortitude and resilience required to persevere in the face of such injustices. As the family's primary source of income, Parvana faces considerable challenges, but arguably none more significant than the inherent risks associated with her decision to disguise herself as a boy.

The transformation of Parvana into Atish serves as an exemplar of her courage. She undergoes a significant physical transformation, including the cutting of her hair and the adoption of men's clothing. Nevertheless, the true gravity of her decision lies in the potential consequences. The film underscores the perils of discovery in a society where women are strictly prohibited from venturing outside the home unaccompanied and participating in the workforce. The consequences of violating these regulations could be grave, endangering the wellbeing of Parvana and her entire family. The pervasive concern of being discovered pervades the film, engendering a sense of unease and underscoring the precariousness of Parvana's circumstances.

Notwithstanding the considerable risks involved, Parvana evinces an unfaltering resolve

to provide for her family. Driven by love and a sense of responsibility, she chooses to venture into the unknown. The film portrays her navigating the bustling marketplace, striking bargains with shopkeepers, and performing manual labour. Each of these actions is a testament to her courage and resourcefulness. Parvana's willingness to take such calculated risks underlines the desperate situation faced by many Afghan women under Taliban rule. Her journey becomes a powerful symbol of the strength and resilience required to survive under relentless oppression.

### **Gender Inequality Under Taliban Rule in *The Breadwinner***

The film "The Breadwinner" provides a powerful insight into the impact of gender inequality in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. One of the most conspicuous issues is the markedly restricted access to education for women. This limitation extends beyond the mere denial of educational opportunities for girls; it has a significant and far-reaching impact on their lives, impeding their capacity to contribute meaningfully to society.

A deliberate policy was implemented under Taliban leadership with the explicit intention of excluding women from formal education. The Taliban shut down schools and denied women the right to education, thereby preventing them from developing their skills. This act of oppression effectively silenced a generation of women, depriving them of the tools and knowledge necessary to build a better future for themselves and their families. The film underscores the profound desire for education that many women, like Parvana, possess. We observe instances of Parvana clandestinely acquiring knowledge from her elder sister, which serves to illustrate the intellectual curiosity that is suppressed by the weight of oppression.

The lack of education has a considerable impact on women's economic opportunities. The lack of access to skills development and qualifications results in constrained opportunities for women to earn a livelihood. This further entrenches their dependence on men and reinforces the patriarchal structure of Afghan society. The film *The Breadwinner* underscores the crucial role of education in empowering women and promoting gender equality. Parvana's resourcefulness and determination are remarkable, but they are also a testament to the limitations imposed by a lack of formal education. Her story serves as a powerful call for action, highlighting the importance of dismantling barriers to education and ensuring equal access to knowledge for all.

The film "The Breadwinner" presents a detailed and compelling portrayal of the economic challenges confronting women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. The film draws attention to the glaring employment discrimination that constrained women's involvement in the labour market, thereby establishing a system of economic marginalisation. This policy had a significant and far-reaching impact on Afghan society, impeding economic growth and stifling the potential of half the population.

The Taliban leadership effectively confined women to a narrow and predefined set of roles within the household. The bustling marketplace, a space typically associated with economic activity, was effectively rendered off-limits. The opportunity to pursue professional endeavours was effectively denied to women, thereby precluding their contribution of skills and talents to the formal economy. The film underscores this stark dichotomy through the character of Parvana. In order to gain access to the marketplace and engage in economic activity, she is forced to disguise herself as a boy. This act of defiance serves to highlight the absurdity of the restrictions placed on women and the economic potential that is stifled by such discriminatory policies.

The Taliban's policy of excluding women from the workforce had a cascading effect that extended beyond the individual women themselves. This served to reinforce a rigid social structure that perpetuated gender inequality. Men were regarded as the primary providers, while women were confined to domestic responsibilities. This inflexible system not only suppressed women's economic opportunities but also constrained the overall economic potential of Afghan society. "The Breadwinner" offers a compelling critique of this system, illustrating the fortitude and ingenuity of women compelled to pursue alternative means of sustaining their families despite encountering significant obstacles. Parvana's journey serves as a testament to resilience in the face of adversity and a demand for a more just future where women can fully engage in the workforce and contribute to the economic advancement of their nation.

The film depicts a society where women are effectively confined to their homes, unable to venture outside without the accompaniment of a male escort. This seemingly straightforward limitation has a significant impact on their lives, limiting their capacity to engage fully in societal activities and contribute to its advancement.

The Taliban's regulations on women's movement result in a sense of isolation and disempowerment. The fundamental right to engage in commercial activities, social interactions and educational pursuits is revoked for women. The film places particular emphasis on this reality through the character of Parvana's mother. The lack of freedom to venture outside the home results in a growing dependence on others, particularly Parvana, to meet even the most basic needs. This enforced isolation restricts women's opportunities for social interaction, thereby hindering their ability to participate in community activities and advocate for their rights.

Moreover, the restrictions on mobility have a considerable economic consequence. The formal workforce largely excludes women, as they are unable to access workplaces without restriction. This not only diminishes their own economic prospects but also impedes the broader economic advancement of Afghan society. The Taliban's regulations effectively preclude women from contributing their skills and talents to the workforce, thereby denying them access to a vital sector that drives growth and prosperity. The film "The Breadwinner" illustrates this point by depicting Parvana's resourcefulness. She is only able to navigate the outside world and participate in economic activity by disguising herself as a boy. Her journey highlights the potential that is wasted due to restrictions on women's movement and the importance of mobility as a key factor in achieving gender equality. The film serves as a compelling argument for change, advocating for a future where women can move freely and contribute meaningfully to society.

## Discussion

The Taliban's important role in shaping the culture of Afghanistan, especially the lives of women, has affected several sectors. Noury and Speciale (2016) states exposure to the Taliban occupation while of school age reduces a woman's probability of completing basic education by about two percentage points, with larger effects in Pashtun districts and rural areas. Graham (2023) also states that the Taliban's application of strict Sharia Law in Afghanistan has led to the complete reversion of women's rights as a public good, resulting in structural injustice. In addition, Kallini (2021) states the Taliban's theocratic regime in Afghanistan deprived women of essential rights and imposed restrictions on their

participation in society. Focus on the movie that was used Darta and Kristina (2018) explain that *The Breadwinner* portrays women as both an object of man domination and as a subject able to speak out her mind and independently decide in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. In short, this research is as a lens to examine the hardships faced by Afghan women under Taliban rule and their persistent strength in the face of oppression. .

The analysis revealed two key roles played by the main breadwinner woman in the film *The Breadwinner*. Firstly, the main breadwinner woman assumes the role of family leader. In her capacity as the principal breadwinner in her family unit, Parvana bore the responsibility of providing familial leadership. She is compelled to work assiduously in order to procure the financial resources necessary to sustain her family. Additionally, Parvana bears the responsibility of procuring sustenance for her family, as she is the sole individual with the capacity to venture to the market to obtain foodstuffs for her household. In her capacity as the family's primary breadwinner, Parvana endeavors to offer her family both support and hope. She strives to persuade her family that she can successfully locate her father and reunite them. Secondly, as the primary source of income, Parvana assumes the role of provider. Subsequent to her disguising herself as a male, Parvana is able to leave the house freely to pursue gainful employment and thereby meet the needs of her family. Parvana is capable of undertaking a variety of roles and responsibilities. She engages in commercial activities, such as selling merchandise in the market and offering fashionable attire that she no longer requires for sale. Furthermore, Parvana's proficiency in reading and writing enabled her to establish a tutoring service, where she instructed others in these skills. Furthermore, Parvana is capable of undertaking tasks typically associated with men. She is able to lift heavy items and place them into trucks, and also works as a coolie, transporting sand.

Moreover, the findings revealed the challenges faced by the primary breadwinner in the film *The Breadwinner*. The protagonist faces three significant challenges: assuming the identity of a male, resisting the constraints of social norms, and mustering the courage to confront risks. The initial challenge faced by the primary breadwinner is her decision to disguise herself as a man. In Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule, women were forbidden from appearing in public and from leaving their homes without a male escort. This resulted in Parvana, the primary breadwinner in her family, having to overcome significant challenges by disguising herself as a man in order to secure employment and provide for her family. The second challenge faced by women in this role is to challenge and resist the prevailing social norms. The Taliban leadership established social norms that discriminated against women's rights. These norms prohibited women from attending school, working, and leaving the house without a male escort. If a woman was seen outside the house without assistance, she would be punished according to Taliban regulations. However, this did not deter Parvana from pursuing her goals. She challenged the limitations imposed on women's roles by social norms. The third challenge faced by the main breadwinner woman is the courage to confront risks. As the primary breadwinner, Parvana demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, risking her safety to survive under the oppressive Taliban regime in Afghanistan. She made the bold decision to disguise herself as a man named Atish, a move that carried significant risks.

The film "The Breadwinner" provides a compelling illustration of the challenging circumstances faced by women in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, particularly in terms of the significant restrictions imposed upon them. The film illustrates three significant

obstacles to gender equality: limited access to education, discriminatory practices in the workplace, and restricted mobility. The film's initial focus is on the overt denial of educational opportunities for women. As a consequence of the Taliban's leadership, girls were effectively denied access to education, which had a detrimental impact on their right to learn and develop. This act of oppression had a detrimental impact on the intellectual potential of an entire generation, effectively limiting their future opportunities. Secondly, the film depicts the stark reality of job discrimination. Women were deliberately excluded from the workforce. Employment opportunities, which are a means of achieving economic independence, were exclusively available to men. This reinforced the existing social structure that afforded males a greater degree of privilege and confined women to traditional domestic roles.

Furthermore, *The Breadwinner* elucidates the limitations imposed upon women's mobility. They were effectively confined to their homes, unable to venture outside without the accompaniment of a male escort. This lack of mobility impeded their capacity to engage with society and contribute meaningfully. The film effectively illustrates how this restriction constrained economic and social advancement in Afghanistan. By elucidating these challenges, "*The Breadwinner*" becomes a compelling critique of gender inequality under the Taliban regime. The film serves as a call to action, advocating for a future where women can access education, pursue careers, and move freely within society.

## CONCLUSION

In *The Breadwinner*, the film emphasises the role of the primary female breadwinner as both the leader of the family and the provider. As the family's primary breadwinner, Parvana assumes the responsibility of securing a livelihood and providing for her family. She offers her family hope and encouragement, conveying her belief in her ability to provide for them and her determination to find her missing father. The film illustrates the significance of livelihood in Parvana's life, as she works assiduously as the primary breadwinner for her family. She engages in commercial activities at the market, provides educational services, and even assumes roles that have traditionally been associated with men.

The main female breadwinner in *The Breadwinner* must overcome significant challenges, including disguising herself as a man, challenging social norms, and demonstrating courage in the face of risks. In order to pursue her livelihood, Parvana assumes the role of a man, as women in Afghanistan during the Taliban era were prohibited from leaving their homes and engaging in gainful employment. By assuming this disguise, she is able to leave her home and engage in remunerative activities. Furthermore, the film depicts the struggle against social norms, as women were prohibited from pursuing employment, receiving an education, or leaving their homes. Parvana challenges these norms to demonstrate that women can contribute to society. Furthermore, her courage in confronting risks is evident as she assumes the persona of a man named Atish. However, this decision endangers her life and the lives of her family, as it exposes her to the threat of danger. Despite the risks, Parvana remains courageous in her pursuit of providing for her family.

The issue of gender inequality is adeptly portrayed in *The Breadwinner* through the utilisation of thematic elements such as constrained access to education, discriminatory practices in the domain of employment, and the curtailment of personal mobility. The

Taliban's leadership in Afghanistan resulted in the denial of women's access to education, which in turn deprived them of opportunities to learn, develop their skills and secure better financial prospects. Furthermore, the film draws attention to the issue of employment discrimination, whereby women were prohibited from engaging in paid work, whereas men were permitted to participate in the labour market. This restricted the roles of women in the economy, preventing them from actively contributing to economic activities. Additionally, women were subject to considerable limitations on their freedom of movement, requiring a male companion to accompany them outside the home. Violations of these regulations resulted in penalties according to Taliban regulations.

However, future research can further explore this topic by incorporating diverse perspectives. One avenue could be to analyze documentaries or films created by Afghan women filmmakers, providing a more nuanced understanding of their experiences. Additionally, delving into the experiences of women who lived under Taliban rule before and after the events depicted in the film could offer valuable insights into the long-term social and economic impact on their lives.

### Authors Information

Dyah Sukma Fatarani, English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Student, enjoy watching movies and reading novel, a320190065@student.ums.ac.id

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