

The rise of the Taliban to the government in Afghanistan: assessment of internal and external factors

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Abstract:

The arrival of the Taliban in August 2021 has significantly affected Afghanistan's governance, particularly in terms of service delivery for the betterment of the community at large and engaging stakeholders from different institutions in the decision-making process. This paper aims to analyse the governance of the Taliban, their role and policies towards internal and external factors, including regional relations and bilateral trade with China and Central Asia, geo-strategic significance, the role of public administration and women's rights in Afghanistan. Data was collected from 27 people, including government officials and common people. Snowball and purposive sampling techniques are used for research. The framework for the study is Braun and Clarke, which is for thematic analysis in six phases. Major themes from the survey highlighted that the Taliban's goal is to establish peace and smooth administrative running of its institutions. The key stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, and individuals interested in Afghan governance and international relations, play a crucial role in the issue of Afghanistan as a country and society. They have realised that the internal ethnic strife and external forces are considerable factors contributing to the destruction of Afghan society. These stakeholders are actively working for peace and stability in the country.

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1. Introduction

Afghanistan has a harsh history of internal and external strife and is home to several ethnic groups, primarily Pashtuns and Tajiks. Pashtuns are the impetus for Afghanistan's internal and external stability. After the soviet-invasion Afghanistan was mired in conflict potential, invasion, militancy, and civil war for more than decades. Resultantly, one and a half million people lost their lives, and the six million population was compelled to migrate (Soherwordi, 2012). In the last decade of the 20th century, we witnessed the rise of religious insurgents by the name of the Taliban, which was a by-product of the corruption and injustices of the Mujahideen that came in the wake of the Russian invasion. After the 9/11 attack, Osama bin Laden, mastermind of Al-Qaeda, was blown away in a US operation in north-western Pakistan. Conversely, resistance aggravated in the Pashtun-influenced north-southern region after the declaration of President Barack Obama's statement that "justice had been consummated". He pledged to withdraw troops steadily due to budget deficit and financial constraints (Raees, 2010), but the troops' exit exterminated investment. The United States withdrew its troops from Afghanistan on February 29, 2020, after two decades. Taliban are brethren of the Pashtun-ethnic group living in Afghanistan. High-ranking Taliban leaders, including Mollah Muhammad Omar Akhund and senior members, belong to the Hotak tribe of Ghilzai. The roots of the Taliban are found in anti-Soviet agitation, and their ideology is influenced by the Deobandi school of thought (Johnson & Mason, 2007).

In Pakistan, the Pashtun community in the south-west of the country was against the presence of Western forces. The US reign in Afghanistan was divided into two main poles: North and south. One of the powerful resistance forces in the North is also called the Northern Alliance. North always supported United States troops and NATO forces as a defensive shield against the Taliban. The United States policymakers have coined the term "*AfPak*" for Pakistan and Afghanistan, which depicts one nation -one state has been fighting against terror. Rivals of the Taliban, like the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), are getting benefits to create instability, scaling up of drugs and arms weapons, nuclear security threads, and potency of atomic weapons getting into the hand of the terrorist group can have a direct impact on Central Asia, Caucasus and Pakistan (Karaca & Özkurt, 2015; Idrees et al., 2020). The World Bank and United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Program, carry out aid programs to provide health services. The enrolment rate of boys and girls at the primary level has been increasing. Higher Education Minister Nida Muhammad Nadim said the Taliban Government is in favour of giving education to girls, but inclusivity of gender violates the principles of Islam (Butt, 2023). Without the inclusion of gender, especially in education, the Taliban government cannot sustain itself to be supported and recognised by the world. Taliban are generating public revenue from collecting taxes from the drug industry, usher and zakat from farmers, and the mining industry, which is not supposed to meet the expenditure and two-thirds of the population needs financial assistance (Rahimi, 2023; Khan & Durrani, 2024). Six million people in Afghanistan are at the brink of risk, and 23.739 million people need humanitarian help as early as possible. Seventy

per cent of the population lives in rural areas where agriculture and livestock are unsafe due to climate shocks (Khara, 2022).

This research study is conducted to highlight the governance practice of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The study investigates more internal factors as compared to external factors such as Humanitarian crises (food insecurity and access to health care services), economic instability (financial crunch and poverty), women's rights, including access to employment and education, freedom of speech, and governance structure under Taliban regime. The study aims to put forward the solution and recommendation to the critical stakeholders of the Afghan government, international organisations, and non-state actors for effective governance, policy-making, and bilateral relations with regional and global countries.

2. Literature review

Extensive research work has been done on the US forces in Afghanistan. Several gaps exist in the literature, but the principal gap is the evaluation of internal and external factors in Afghanistan after the rise of the Taliban in 2021. This part of the paper reviews the available literature covering different aspects of the issue at focus.

The United States and Taliban agreement was signed by Deputy Leader of the Taliban Abdul Ghani Bradar, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and Zalmay Khalilzad—United States, Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation—on Feb 29, 2020, held in Doha (Qazi, 2020). As per the terms of the agreement, the United States acceded to withdraw their troops, including NATO and alliance forces, within 135 days. The agreement between the United States and the Taliban is to bring sustainable peace and social cohesion in Afghanistan and to reduce violence about human rights. The Taliban showed their grave concern that Afghan soil could never be used by either the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or another militant group against attack on US Forces and their allied members, respectively (O'Hanlon & Riedel, 2011).

In the regime of former President George W Bush, the Virginia Military Institute invoked the American's patron saint of nation-building, George Marshall, to rebuild the physical infrastructure and democratic institution of Afghanistan (Lawrence, 2011). The United States has expended \$137 billion for reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, but the future remains uncertain (Tariq et al., 2020).

President Joe Biden became the third president to accede to war in Afghanistan. Biden acknowledged vigorous worldwide Salafi jihadists, namely Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Hayat al-Sam in Syria, and so on. Taliban has control over 34 provinces and 345 districts. Taliban emphasised through diplomatic channels that people in Afghanistan are safe and sound (Ayalon & Amiel, 2022). On 6th August 2021, the Taliban took control of the first province named Nimroz. In the speech on 16 August, Biden said, "I do not

regret my decision to end American armed hostilities in Afghanistan” (Kiely & Farley, 2021). The cost incurred in the Afghan war from 2001 to 2019 was \$2.313 trillion. During this war, 2300 American soldiers were killed and 20,660 wounded, respectively. It will have fierce consequences on the governance system, humanitarian issues, socio-economic crises, and regional momentum (Brenner & Wallin, 2021).

The post-withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan will create threats as well as opportunities. Biden administration has commenced the first diplomatic initiative to aggravate the Afghan peace process. At the Geneva Conference 2020, international donors from 66 countries and 32 international organisations endorsed financial assistance on humanitarian grounds in Afghanistan. They showed dedication to the disbursement of \$3.3B (Tariq et al., 2021). President Joe Biden’s verdict was to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan, and he served as vice president in Obama’s administration. Former Pakistani ambassador to the United States Hussain Haqqani stated that he always admits to Joe Biden’s statement that “*our war with al Qaeda, not with Taliban.*”

In June 2021, a report leaked by the United States (US) Intelligence Service forecast that the Ghani government would crumple within 90 days after the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan. According to the New Line Institute (a Washington-based think-tank), the Taliban have met their expenses by selling drugs, smuggling, and collecting tax from farmers. According to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the annual budget of the Afghan government was \$2.2 billion in the financial year of 2017-2018. In September 2021, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, emphasised working with the interim government of Afghanistan to foster socioeconomic development. Chinese leader Xi-Jinping urged the international community to hold up Afghanistan (Valijonovich, 2022). In 2003, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) controlled the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and initiated the mission to shield Kabul and its surrounding areas. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops grew from 5000 to 65 k soldiers from 42 nations comprising 28 states from NATO (Maqbool, 2022).

Notably, Revenue collection was aggravated after the Taliban came into power. A significant portion of tax revenue comes from border and non-tax resources rather than traditional tax revenue. Regarding the Taliban government, 97% of civil servants received their salaries. Surprisingly, women were reimbursed more frequently than men (Sherzad, 2023). The consequences of the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan include the decline in external economic and security assistance. The U.S. and international community assistance was elegantly turned down (Dobbins et al., 2019).

Madiha Afzal discussed the Taliban’s curtailment of civil society, which cannot be negated in any regard (Afzal & Pita, 2022). After the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, Biden says Washington will pursue support for Afghan security forces and the peace process. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tells the United States forces will help Afghans who worked

with different engagements in Afghanistan. Biden said that the withdrawal of armed forces from Afghanistan was due to U.S. security concerns. After the death of Osama bin Laden, militant group al-Qaida has extirpated in Iraq and Afghanistan. He argued that the threat of terrorism has changed towards a global trend. The country must combat with new technology, not with billions of soldiers (Waheed et al., 2023).

3. Theoretical framework and methodology

Many seminal scholars, including Jean Piaget and Jerome Burner, have interpreted the theory of constructivism. It is an approach in which governance practices are constructed through the engagement of stakeholders, interaction, and an individual's perception, reflecting the constructivist view. Taliban must negotiate and engage with international organisations to gain legitimacy and recognition. Primarily, it examines the social structures, norms, identity, and their role in the country.

This research paper uses qualitative methodology. The authors collected data through an in-depth interview of 27 key people, comprised of Government officials (n=06), stakeholders of different organisations (n=06), and local people (n=15). The sample size of this research paper is n=27. Snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques are both used for this research paper.

The interview was conducted through a semi-structured questionnaire. The interview was conducted in English. Further, it was translated into Pashtun or Persian language where necessary. Clarke & Braun (2017) use six phases of thematic analysis in this research study. Initially, the authors read and reviewed the data in breadth and depth for familiarisation. In the next phase, the transcript coding was concluded through Microsoft Excel, and themes were developed as an outcome of the coding. After naming and interpreting the theme, the final analysis is regarded as follows.

4. Findings

The findings below are taken from the primary data collection. The data was collected through interviews.

4.1. Future of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's geo-strategic location has essential significance for regional security. Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia. It is enriched with natural resources, including iron ore, natural gas, talc, Sulphur, lithium, and more. Due to the fragile economy, everything relies on the level of international aid to develop Afghanistan and appease the socio-economic crises. Afghanistan has always been a home of crises due to political instability over the reign of the Afghan government as well as Taliban tenure till now.

During an interview, in response to a question on the future of Afghanistan, a participant responded:

Instability can be overcome by inclusivity and getting all the stakeholders on board. Taliban will face difficulty in political stability until they do not allow political leaders from different ethnic backgrounds to have meaningful roles. (Personal communication, December 2023)

During the interview phase, participants responded to a question about the transborder terrorist groups between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Both sides can resolve the menace; otherwise, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have security concerns due to the easy movement of weapons and militants across their porous borders, and anti-Pakistan militants like TTP may threaten the main concern regarding Pakistan's national security is not supported by Afghanistan (Personal communication, October 2023).

Similarly, another participant responded:

The long period of barbarianism and ferocity has taken freedom of expression from the citizens. Under such a perception, people tend to act more cautiously. This takes hold of many post-conflict and massive issues, including disarmament, political conflicts, and illegal drug trade (Cannabis Indica). Illegitimate armed groups and drug trade across Afghanistan become a threat to regional security. The Taliban's strict enforcement of law and order may contribute to a sense of safety, particularly in regions historically plagued by conflict, because stability is a crucial component for any nation's progress (Personal communication, November 2024)

The insurgent groups, including Salafi jihadists, create challenges concerning hindering the socio-economic development of the country (Jalali, 2006).

The economy is the backbone of every state because a fragile economy leads to weakened social development and menace, respectively. The more the state's economic situation is consolidated, the more it will connect the path of prosperity and well-being of society. After the Taliban took over the government in Afghanistan in Aug 2021, the economy is getting weak day by day. When the Taliban took over the country, the entire state was propelled into economic and political crises that led to economic fragility. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stopped, and unemployment and poverty were aggravated. At the same time, the per capita income and yield diminished, and food insecurity and widespread detriment resulted from political crises that began in August 2021. 95% of households have been facing food insecurity, and 82 % of Afghan Families have been deprived of their wages since 2021, resulting in one

in five engaged in child labour. More than 770,000 boys and about 300,000 girls are involved in child labour (Rahimia, 2022). During the interview, one participant from an organisation responded: Education is the backbone of economic development and societal progress. He emphasised that Restricting women is a violation of women's rights. Women play a vital role in a country's development. Restriction of the Taliban is very unfortunate. Taliban's war against women was particularly appalling (Personal communication, January 2024).

After taking over Afghanistan, the Taliban announced that they would not prohibit women's education but gradually repudiated their stances on education and forbid girls' education beyond the primary level. With time, the dreams of millions of Afghan girls will be fragmented (Achakzai, 2023).

Ahmad Masood, the leader of the national resistance front of Afghanistan and son of former anti-Soviet and anti-Taliban Afghan military commander Ahmad Shah Masood, erected defiance against the Taliban in Panjshir valley but thwarted it. They discussed overpower sharing between the Taliban and the Afghan military commander in January 2022 (Mehdi, 2022). The country (Afghanistan) has an affluence of agriculture where opium production has escalated under the Taliban control. It could be the source of revenue, according to agricultural capacity. Moreover, bilateral trade and relations have been carried out with Iran and Pakistan, but till now, the Taliban has not formally been recognised by any country in the world. Millions of Afghans are testimony that humanitarian crises have been aggravating due to the freezing of Afghanistan's financial assets by Biden's administration. Pakistani authorities are still silent because they depend on Western financial aid (International Monetary Fund). They do not want to offend by recognising Afghanistan. However, Pakistan has retained an immense careful stance on recognition, but in the past, Pakistan recognised the rule of the Taliban and emphasised UAE and Saudia Arabia for recognition (Hussain, 2022). He emphasised that the primary hurdle confronting the Taliban government lies in the international arena—specifically, the recognition challenge. If resolved, this obstacle could pave the way for smoother governance and improved diplomatic relations. International recognition is crucial for gaining legitimacy and accessing essential resources, aid, and diplomatic support. (Personal communication, October 2023).

Gender discrimination, tribal economy, pristine punishment, and medieval diplomacy became the insignia of the Taliban's rule (Amnesty International, 2022). After the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has hung up Afghanistan's Special Drawing Right (SDR) asset, which is around \$440 million. The United States has seized a \$ 9.2 billion reserve at a federal reserve bank owned by Afghanistan (Noor, 2021). The rest of Afghan citizens have been living below the poverty line because of the fragile government, impediment of financial aid, drought, and food insecurity have pushed millions underneath it. The United Nations (UN) development program created a special trust fund and an emergency aid scheme to abet the vulnerable Afghans. More than half the population of Afghanistan, approximately 20 million, has been affected by food insecurity, which is an

immensely catastrophic situation. On humanitarian grounds, the World Bank transferring \$280 million to Afghanistan's reconstruction trust fund for the neediest Afghans has been a grand gesture of humanity from developed countries (2022).

4.2. Public administration in Afghanistan

Public administration is a significant factor in a country's socioeconomic development. For better service delivery among citizens, we need to improve public administration. However, public administration in Afghanistan still faces many obstacles that cannot be ignored to ensure good governance. A respondent during an interview session showed his dissatisfaction and mentioned:

The Taliban lacks experience governing a modern state. They need an eminent Public Administrator to ensure effective service delivery. This cannot be effective without engaging other stakeholders from different ethnic backgrounds (Personal communication, March 2024).

Governance is the capacity of government to make and implement policy, in other words, to steer the society. Challenges are usually regarded as rampant corruption, lack of professionalism and strategic planning, and poor governance (Yusufzada & Xia, 2019). Another response expressed his gratitude about the rule of the Taliban, particularly towards financial security, and he mentioned:

Yes, to my knowledge, corruption is a crime and a sin. As a citizen, I was taken from me by monetary evasion/bribes during the reign of the US. Nobody could travel in a day with their expensive ornaments. It was so scary to be defined. Now, after the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the situation has improved to some extent (Personal communication, January 2024).

The government in Afghanistan has been facing a plethora of problems and challenges, such as illiteracy, extreme poverty, food insecurity, security threats, lack of strategic planning, and so on, which have become an impediment to the way of local governance (Blunt et al., 2015; Malik et al., 2023). To a question of effective administration, a participant from an organisation stated:

Effective public administration is the prerequisite for sustainable development in Afghanistan. Good governance needs to be improved due to the cause of failure in four sectors: lack of financial and human resources, lack of cohesive institutions, minor rule of law, and rampant financial corruption. Sharing his view about the Taliban's government in Afghanistan, he mentioned that "the presence of Taliban is more efficient for the governance of Afghanistan as they can bring efficiency and effective to again Afghanistan back on the path of

prosperity. The most important constituent is the Taliban's Government, which can be perceived as a stabilising force in various aspects of governance, fostering security, stability, infrastructure development, anti-corruption measures, and adherence to a legal framework" (Personal communication, January 2024).

Taliban can face challenges in the governance system when there is no consensus and inclusivity of all stakeholders, whether they belong to any ethnicity. Having no consensus with stakeholders can give volumetric to the Taliban government. Resultantly, it may create robust challenges. Their strict interpretation of Islamic law may encounter resistance from segments of the population, and addressing the needs of a complex society poses governance hurdles. Governance involves consensus building, the rule of law, and accountability as building principles, but the sad reality of Afghanistan is that it does not even have a constitution under the IEA. These are the main challenges for good governance in Afghanistan (Guinn & Straussman, 2016).

One of the biggest challenges in Afghanistan is corruption, which hamper the socio-economic development. Bribes are a severe issue in the administrative system. It is challenging to solve problems without giving bribes and becoming part of the culture. Although the government tried to curb corruption, no good results have been found. To achieve robust public administration in Afghanistan, we need to strengthen the parliamentarian, decentralisation of power, social integration, implementation of E-governance, women empowerment and citizen access to information, appease corruption, and transparent mechanisms in public institutions (Bahman, 2013).

4.3. Regional relations of the Taliban government

4.3.1. Relations with China

China is the most significant economic block, and due to its geopolitical and economic interests, China has good relations with Afghanistan. Afghanistan has an untapped liquidity reserve, including copper, lithium, gemstones, gold, and hydrocarbons. According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, the country has more than \$1 trillion of untapped mineral resources and metals (Hussein & Haddad, 2021).

Conversely, the primary concern is improving coordination and fraternising with law enforcement agencies to appease the risk. Continuing instability creates a threat to China's security policy. Notably, China has commenced a multi-million-dollar project signed by a Chinese firm to strengthen the ties between countries. Chinese companies are actively participating in the reconstruction and revamping of the infrastructure. China's metallurgical group decided to invest \$4 billion in Afghanistan over five years, and they promised to construct railway tracks and a 400-megawatt power plant for the country's prosperity.

Afghanistan's exports to China have been rapidly aggravating over some time. The Chinese government has exempted tariffs on 278 commodities for sustainable economic development (Huasheng & Kuchins, 2012).

China and Central Asia have common interests in terms of trade. China imports most of its resources from Central Asia. They are reluctant to use their resources; if they are supposed to use them resultantly, they will be depleted. Reserves like natural gas and oil, especially Kazakhstan, are the biggest importers of Central Asia to China. Likewise, other Central Asian countries are contributing to socio-economic resources. They export metals and minerals like chromium, zinc, and titanium to China. It depicts that they are immensely exporting to progress and smoothly meet the socio-economic challenges regarding gross national product (GNP) uplifts. Conversely, the economy will boom rapidly. Central Asia also imports consumer goods like tech equipment, machinery, and construction services because they have expertise in infrastructure development for good governance and effective service delivery.

4.3.2. Relations with Pakistan

Afghanistan and Pakistan share a border known as the Durand line. Durand line always became a prominent issue because Afghanistan needed to accept it as an international border as they are always averse to it. After all, the Durand line was valid for 100 years from the date of signing in 1893 (Taye & Ahmed, 2021). There was a huge trust deficit between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the demarcation of the Durand line. Consequently, that is a significant issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Concerning this problem, Afghanistan resists membership in the US. Afterwards, we saw many challenges and territorial conflicts, especially during Musharraf's tenure. Pakistan had only one option: either to support the Taliban or resist the US. Sharing his views on this subject, according to a participant:

In a military dictatorship, we do not expect any democratic aspirations and practices from Pakistan. Now, the situation has changed. We should compromise and move forward for socio-economic interest because Afghanistan is the gateway to central Asia for trade and energy initiatives. Afghanistan and Pakistan can have advantages in amplifying their relations and the economy. Trust could be built by adopting a holistic approach consisting of all the stakeholders of both countries' people-to-people ties. Fostering educational and cultural exchanges between the two nations can contribute to mutual understanding. The Taliban and Pakistan require open dialogue, diplomatic efforts, and a commitment to mutual understanding. Clear communication, respect for sovereignty, and collaboration on shared interests can contribute to a more constructive relationship (Personal communication, May 2024).

Pakistan always strives to keep a good relationship with Afghanistan for cross-border trade because Pakistan imports goods and raw materials to other countries through Afghan borders. Regarding the same culture, linguistics, and ethnic people residing in Pakistan, they have the same values, norms, behavioural patterns, and the exact language named *Pashtu*. When the

Taliban came into power after the withdrawal of America, close to 1.7 million Afghani moved out to Pakistan with no visa. It depicts that all entered Pakistan illegally, but Pakistan supported them in every regard and facilitated them, a gesture of good diplomacy and effective service delivery (Hussain, 2023). A key informant mentioned:

Good diplomacy for both countries. In the past, we have seen many issues where diplomacy played a vital role in resolving issues between states. As Afghanistan just got free from the US hold and is now being governed by the Taliban without any proper foreign policies, it should first develop a sound and robust foreign policy to deal with other countries (Personal communication, December 2024).

4.3.3. Relation with Central Asia

Pannier (2023) emphasised that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) gives enormous amounts of money to Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, both countries, to build power transmission for economic development and back again on the path of prosperity and well-being. In this regard, Dustlik Bridge successfully connects Afghanistan with Uzbekistan, showing the testimony of exceptional relations. Connects The Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) assailed Uzbekistan from Afghanistan. They were not in favour of having collaborative development in the country. Thereby, A rocket was fired near Termez (Southern region), but no casualties were found (Pannier, 2023).

There are 195 countries in the world, of which 44 are landlocked, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Armenia, and Tajikistan. Significantly, Ethiopia is the world's largest populated land-locked country, and Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country. The geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan is different for specific reasons, and it depends on Pakistan. Firstly, land-locked countries are always dependent on their neighbours. Nepal is a land-locked country dependent on the Indian market for import and export because it does not have a sea route for trade, and Kolkata port is the centre of access between countries. The leading cause behind economic instability is over-dependency on other countries. The most imperative thing is to disburse revenue into high transportation costs, giving the rest of the amount from export to coastal countries and high import and export cost revenue to coastal countries. That is why land-locked countries are relatively unstable (Bhatnagar & Shahab Ahmed, 2021).

4.4. Women's rights

In Afghanistan, women have been struggling for their rights for over three decades, but they are exploited and abused due to ethnic and religious reasons. Some groups during their tenure have been notorious due to injustice, asymmetric treatment, and seizing hold of their fundamental rights (Amnesty International, 2017). Under the Taliban regime, women have

been facing constraints. They are prohibited from going to school, which is, unfortunately, for the progress of society and the biggest hurdle to socio-economic development. A participant during an interview session mentioned:

No one can deny that Afghanistan under the Taliban had one of the worst human rights records in the world. The regime systematically repressed all sectors of the population and denied even the most essential individual rights. Moreover, it is a draconian practice that is neither in tandem with international law and human rights nor supported by the teachings of Islam. The presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan raises concerns about human rights and inclusivity in governance. While they may bring some, their strict interpretation of Islamic law and past actions pose significant challenges. However, an imperative factor is that the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law could provide a moral compass for some Afghans and create a sense of unity around shared values. (Personal communication, October 2023).

Ultimately, it will have to hurt the upbringing and fostering of progeny. Taliban did not allow them to work and participate in economic activities that cannot be negated. Women cannot take part in politics for representation of women's community and cannot be allowed to speak publicly. Women are not allowed to go outside. If they want to visit outside, they must be accompanied by a male relative. In a nutshell, they had no independence to do whatever they wanted. Women abide by the rules and regulations made by the Taliban's government. Women have always been treated unjustly and oppressively whether the tenure is of monarch, soviet invader, or mujahedeen. Taliban brought this oppression to an extreme level (Shah, 2005). Women are not allowed to walk alone and go outside in the market. It is necessary to take someone as a caretaker. During the soviet war especially, women are being tortured brutally by the soviet army to get information regarding mujahedeen. Article 22 of Afghanistan's constitution depicts that men and women of Afghanistan have equal rights and duties. Unfortunately, women's rights are restricted as they are not allowed to be part of political groups and have no freedom to do employment and go public. He said that:

In the Taliban regime, there is a restriction on movements. Women are not allowed to leave their homes without a male chaperone. They impose restrictions on women and minorities, especially in women's education. These practices are not justifiable at all. Everyone has their fundamental human and natural rights. Imposing restrictions on women and minorities by the Taliban raises concerns about human rights and inclusivity. Such limitations can hinder social progress and international relationships, prompting scrutiny and calls for respect for individual freedoms. It will lead to the downfall of Afghanistan. Women should be allowed to play their roles in the country's development. Women should be allowed, like men, to work, study, do jobs, etc., and play their

upbeat and energetic roles. Restrictions on women and minorities have raised significant human rights concerns (Personal communication, October 2023).

It could be revamped by constitutional and political development, which are imperative measures to be taken by the government to empower women. For socio-economic development in Afghanistan, we need to overcome and reduce absolute poverty, especially in the rural areas of Afghanistan are usually regarded as follows: Charkh district, Tagab district, Sayyad district, Dand district, and Dawlat Abad district, where we need to empower women as well as men but focus should be on girls to empower through education either verbal or non-verbal after the assassination of Habibullah Khan in Laghman district on 20 February 1919. His son Amanullah Khan was king of Afghanistan till 1929, after his father's assassination. The first agenda was to modernise, complete independence, freedom, and self-autonomy. He said that The Taliban has been known to restrict freedom of speech and expression, which could stifle dissent and limit the flow of information (Personal communication, March 2024).

Ahmed (2003) indicated that Amanullah Khan made the first constitution of Afghanistan in 1923, which is a social contract between the government and citizens of Afghanistan. All citizens are bound to abide by the constitution and introduced political reforms for an egalitarian society. He emphasised and propagated the importance of girl's education. He mentioned that "we should not neglect girls in any regard. Taliban should solve this matter, and they need to remove the ban on women's getting education for cognitive development as well as the country's development. I believe that every individual, no matter what their race, colour, ethnicity, religion, or gender is. They deserve education" (Personal communication, 2024). How they can play a pivotal role in nation-building. In the early 1920s, Amanullah Khan's sister Kobra established an institution, Anjuman- Himayat-e Niswan, for girls to become the best version of society. With her mother, Soraya pioneered the magazine named 'Ershad-I-Niswan (Guidance for Women), which was indeed a source of enthusiasm and motivation for those who wanted to become seminal scholars, political activists, social scientists, veteran mentors, and so on. Her sister established a maternal hospital for women on humanitarian grounds. Now, governments should look back on their past and learn how they treated their women.

5. Conclusion and suggestion

With the drawl of the United States and the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan, it becomes an opportunity as well as a challenge. The United States had tools of fear-mongering and coercive force to control and steer the people of Afghanistan. Consequently, the rest of the people from Afghanistan migrated to neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Central Asia. Conflict potential, militancy, political instability, nontraditional security threats, income shocks, and economic factors led people to migrate. Financial stability and peace, developed infrastructure, proper access to healthcare facilities, employment opportunities, and educational opportunities come in the ambit of the pull factor. After the arrival of the Taliban

in Afghanistan, United Nations agencies have been working to provide sustainable development; they spent \$137 billion for reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, but they still have room for improvement for socioeconomic development and good foreign relations through deliberation.

During an interview, the respondent suggested that it is imperative to mention it here. Whatever Afghanistan's political system is, the Taliban's future is very bright when they engage all stakeholders in the decision-making process. A policy or decision could not be effective without the consent of minorities and different ethnic groups. Capacity building of different institutions and reforms is much needed in the 21st century; otherwise, it would be difficult to sustain and survive.

Afghanistan's bureaucracy emphasised that the government should establish a separate institution for women. There should be a proper seat in the House of People or Wolesi Jirga for adequate representation of women as per Islam's obligation. Especially in rural areas of Afghanistan, including Dand district, Tagab district, and Sayyad district, women should be more empowered through Information and communication technology (ICT) and access to proper education facilities.

Respondents suggested that unemployment and high rates of poverty are occurring in Afghanistan, and they are one of the biggest challenges for the Taliban government. We can overcome them by giving vocational training to youth, including males and females, different income support programs with conditions from the government, education for all genders, and small microfinance, including interest-free loans.

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