

KINNAIRD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, LAHORE



**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN UNDER THE TALIBAN 2.0
REGIME: IMPACT ON STATE AND SOCIETY (1996-2021)**



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APPA

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AI	Amnesty International
ASC	Alpha Suffrage Club
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNW	United Nations Women
USA	United States of America
WOT	War on Terror
WB	World Bank
WWA	Women Welfare Association

ABSTRACT

The gendered Afghan society through the lenses of liberal feminism is explored. It discusses feminist activists roles to liberate women in Afghanistan during different periods i.e. waves of feminism. The detailed historic review emphasizes infliction of oppression in afghan society. Furthermore, the rights of Afghan women under different constitutions of Afghanistan are talked over. The privileged era for Afghan Women during American stationing and the start of bleak age after their de stationing is discussed. This brings to second takeover of Taliban. The challenges with the takeover of this extremist regime are witnessed to be of severity. The hindrances in women progression are seen in various forms; ban on education, domestic violence, and restriction on movements, restriction on employment, strict dress codes and lack of property rights Nevertheless, the present engagement of afghan activists cannot be put aside. The active participation and the role of women in various cities of Afghanistan at various platforms is detailed. Therefore women engagement is seen despite the Taliban threat.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked, multi ethnic nation in south-central Asia. Over the course of its more than 5,000-year history, Afghanistan has absorbed components from many different cultures, particularly those of Iran and India. Afghanistan since a long time has been a war torn region. War crimes and other significant human rights abuses were still being committed with impunity by parties to the Afghan conflict in addition to other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Under Taliban leadership, the meagre advancements gained in increasing women's rights were abruptly undone. The Taliban severely restricted people's rights to free speech and assembly. Women and girls have essentially been excluded from Afghani social sphere in the year after the Taliban assumed control of the country. Taliban take over in 1990s had been hard for women – oppression. The Taliban first gained fame in 1994, and they seized control of Kabul in 1996. At first, it was believed that the Taliban would bring stability to the nation. However, due to its incorrect understanding of Islamic law, it swiftly established a severe and oppressive order. As soon as the Taliban seized power in Kabul, the assault on women's status started. The Taliban effectively closed the world of work to Afghan women. In 2001, United States provided aid to Afghan people and later Congress realized the need for international assistance for Afghan women under the Act introduced by the U.S senator, known as “Afghan Women and Child Relief Act”. The same year, 9/11 attack by the Al-Qaeda forced United States to invade Afghanistan to fight an essential self-defense war. This invasion by United States in 2001 overthrew the Taliban regime and the Hamid Karzai was appointed as the chairman of Interim Afghan Administration and later served as the first elected president of Afghanistan.

The 2001 defeat of the Taliban liberated all Afghans from cruel government as the Talibans were forcefully governing the state. They didn't govern the state in institutionalized way rather employed coercive policies to control the population. They employ Repressive State Apparatuses in accordance with Althusser's concept, such as Repressive State Policies and institutions to establish their supremacy and hegemony. In 2001, Gender equality became the main focus as Feminism expanded in scope. The process of resolving gender inequality progressed, the requirement to acknowledge the inherent injustice that women experience in male-dominated societies became a need to be recognized. Feminism was the center of focus after the demise of Taliban government in 2001. These challenges faced by women under the Taliban regime are well encapsulated under the feminist theory. Feminism is the idea that women should have complete

social, economic, and political equality. Feminism is prevalent in every country and is represented by numerous organizations that work to advance the rights and interests of women. Feminism believes that women and men should be given equal opportunity in education, the workforce, and politics, challenging the idea that women exist solely to subordinate men. Under feminism, women have the same innate rationality as males.

Afghan women received a wide range of rights under the post-Taliban constitution in 2004. It encouraged the social political rights, liberty and freedom of citizens and also highlighted the importance of fundamental rights including but not restricted to right to education, freedom of speech, right to life and right to form political associations. The waves of feminism backed up empowerment of Afghan women. The post-Taliban political era provided social and economic prosperity that considerably enhanced their socioeconomic situation. The post-Taliban rule built 3,135 functional health facilities, giving 87 percent of Afghans access to a healthcare facility within two hours distance by 2018. Women played a vital role in sustaining the Afghan's economy. It was analyzed by a UNDP report that, Afghan women make up 20 percent work force of a nation, further stressing upon the fact that stopping them from working may reduce household spending by \$500 million alone. (Restrictions on women's employment can reduce Afghanistan's GDP by an additional 5 percent, UNDP report finds , 2021). Education was seen as the wonderful example of Afghan's revival. By 2020, women made up 21 percent of Afghan government officials, alongside these women were at top management positions. (Felbab, 2020)

In 2021, the Taliban arrived at the gates of Kabul invading Afghanistan's capital of Kabul on August 15, 2021, and seizing power once again. The Taliban originally made hollow claims that women would be free to "enjoy their rights under Sharia law," including the freedom to work and pursue an education, but as time went by, women and girls started to vanish from the public sphere. 14 million Afghan women and girls lost their right to attend higher education, their ability to work, and their freedom of speech. The Taliban, militias, and criminal violence has intensified, making road travel increasingly dangerous. There were no medical services available to women during the Taliban years. The status of Afghan women, who profited the most from the post-2001 order, would likely get worst, according to many credible sources.

Furthermore, the modes of feminism that prevailed in Afghanistan from 2001 till 2021, before the Taliban government came to power, are no longer in practice. The current state of affairs for women and girls in Afghanistan makes immediate reform unlikely. There are no positions of power or the cabinet held by women. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was disbanded by the

administration, which ultimately prevented women from holding elective office. This makes the fate of Afghan women and their rights are extremely uncertain. Women and girls in Afghanistan have experienced some degree of freedom over the past 20 years, and they are now calling for more of it.

The Afghan girls and young women today, 20 years later, have grown up viewing the Taliban era as a gloomy memory from their mother's past rather than a vicious cycle that may rob them of their future. Under the Taliban, Afghan women having virtually no access to the work world are forced to come out of their houses and to ask for their divine rights which they are deprived of. This time the waves of feminism had an impact on the response of women towards the rigid Taliban regime. The hope this time had intensity and it showed up in form of fiery protests. Women took on the Taliban differently as years of advancement in female's rights and gender equality had been undone in a few short months, infuriated women. The women representative groups were named differently now, too. The group led by Ramzia Abdekhil, an Afghani female rights activist was named "powerful women". This group started off with a demonstration in September 2022, immediately after Taliban take over these protesters demanded for "bread, work and freedom". Into a slogan, they called onto August 15 as black day" an account of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan government in 2021. The protest was brought down by the Taliban but they regrouped and set out against the extremist regime again. Women presently fear that under the rule of the Taliban, the liberties they had cherished over the preceding 20 years would be lost. These women representatives have been striving since and have gain international attention. The foreign aid has been backed and with this, the Biden administration in January 6, 2022, made Rina Amiri to hold the position of Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights. (Rina Amiri Named US Special Envoy for Afghan Women, 2021)

1.1 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in evaluation of conditions of Afghani women with the arrival of Taliban regime in 2021. There further has been built a comparison between Taliban 2.0 and Taliban 1.0. With this, the research also deliberates on the implications of the Taliban regime on women within the state and outside of it. It will also make some pragmatic suggestions for regional and global community to device policies regarding Taliban government for gender-inclusive and sustainable development of Afghanistan.

1.2 Purpose and Design

1.2.1 Aims and Objective of the Study

- To examine the status of women in Afghanistan before the Taliban regime i.e. up until August 2021.
- To elaborate the challenges and struggles of women during the Taliban regime.
- To enlist the obstacles and restrictions women face in Taliban regime with respect to their active contribution and participation in the social and political paradigms of society.
- To analyze the prospects of women's progress and socio-economic and political status under the Taliban regime.

1.2.2 Research Question

- What has been the status of women in Afghanistan before the Taliban regime i.e. up until August 2021?
- What challenges and struggles did the Afghani women face during the Taliban regime?
- What are the likely obstacles and restrictions women face in Taliban regime with respect to their active contribution and participation in the social and political paradigms of society?
- How can the prospects of women's progress and socio-economic and political status under the Taliban be analyzed?

1.3 Literature Review

The authors John J. Schulz and Linda Schulz in "*The Darkest of Ages: Afghan Women Under the Taliban*" puts an emphasis on The Taliban as they have possibly implemented the greatest systemic suppression of women in history since coming to power in Afghanistan in September 1996. Young thugs with guns and whips sometimes conduct arbitrary, instantaneous whipping, ritual punishments, and other penalties under the guise of Islam. It focuses on the Special rules against women leaving them poor, terrified, lacking access to decent medical treatment or educational possibilities, and more emotionally and physically sick. Authors further investigate a growing body of data from accounts from Afghanistan and Pakistan and also shows how the Taliban misrepresents the actual beliefs of Islam, partly out of ignorance and partly due to their misguided perception of women. (John J. Schulz, 1999)

The author Rosemarie Skaine in the book *“The Women of Afghanistan Under the Taliban”* explains that the Afghan population as a whole suffered under the Taliban’s control, women in particular had to endure horrific difficulties. They were confined in privacy, denied access to fundamental human rights, and had to wear veils. By addressing the religion, nationality alongside revolts of Afghan women and situating them within their gender-political and religious-political roles, this further highlights the mistreatment, incarceration, and murder and provides a framework for their rehabilitation. This book also analyzes the strong and touching interviews with Afghan women recorded and translated by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, along with a brief overview of the Afghan women’s fight and an outline of the battle between the Afghans and the Taliban. (Skaine, 2007)

In the book *“The impact of US intervention on Afghan Women Rights”* by Sonali Kolhalkart puts an emphasis on news reports about how the Taliban government treated women in the middle of the 1990s, the women of Afghanistan came to the attention of the world. Western feminism quickly started bringing attention to the “victims of merciless gender apartheid,” as they put it. Under the Taliban, Afghan women suffered for many years, being restricted to their houses or, when outside, the customary burqa. It further highlights their denial of access to healthcare, education, and the fundamental right to support oneself. Further stating that Because of America’s Swot, the “War on Terror”, Afghan women are receiving more attention than ever before. One rationale the US has claimed for attacking the Taliban is their mistreatment of Afghan women. (Kolhalkart, 2002)

The author Anastasia Telesetsky in *“In the Shadows and Behind the Veil: Women in Afghanistan under the Taliban Rule”* illustrates that in Afghanistan’s Kabul, Herat, and other Talibancontrolled regions, women are not required to peruse the classified advertising. Since the Taliban issued orders prohibiting women from working outside the house in late September 1996, no one will hire them. It further highlights that The Taliban pledged to pay civil officials, teachers and bakers, their salary if they stayed at home and avoided the media. Further highlighting new future that places Afghanistan under the Taliban’s moral code as enforced by the Ministry of the Vice and Promotion of Virtue, there are prohibitions on white socks, shoes that scream, and ankles protruding. It also highlights that in order to avoid attracting attention from or exciting males, women stroll around like shadows while wearing head-to-toe nylon covers and soft-soled slippers, though putting the Islamic shariah law into practicality. (Telesetsky, 1998)

In the article “*UN agencies recommitment to women, girls in Afghanistan one year after Taliban takeover*”, it is detailed that Afghan governmental structure included all male cabinet along with a no Ministry of Women’s Affairs, office. The article analyzes and assesses the situation in Afghanistan, most prominently that of the women, one year after Taliban takeover. There has been a discriminatory scenario as the women have been excluded from all the aspects of liberal life. (“UN agencies recommitment to women, girls in Afghanistan one year after Taliban takeover, 2022)

In the article, “*One Year under The Taliban Rule: Situation of Women and Girls In Afghanistan*” the author, Dr. Ewelina U. Ochab says that with the beginning of Taliban era, the Taliban’s promised that women rights will be protected and that they would be able to “exercise their rights within Sharia law”. The article emphasizes that the international community need to fight against the de facto regime of Afghanistan to ensure a secure future of women in Afghanistan. (Ochab, 2022)

With an emphasis on government and NGO rehabilitation initiatives, in this “*A progress report on women’s education in post-Taliban Afghanistan*”, Hayat Alvi-Aziz analyses the relative advancements and significant losses in the education of the Afghan women from the fall of the Taliban rule to the present. It is suggested that these initiatives priorities the needs of women and girls over the goals of the state and NGOs. The population’s female members are most severely impacted by the problems caused by recent rounds of violence. The current security situations provide significant obstacles to post-conflict rehabilitation and rebuilding just as the education sector was beginning to make cautious headway, with some girls’ schools being completed and operational. Further emphasizing that in this atmosphere, Afghan women fight against misogynistic and ferociously militant groups that have jeopardized any areas of progress in the nation’s reconstruction. As a result, ensuring security and changing governmental and NGO policies are necessary prerequisites for women to pursue higher education. (Alvi-Aziz, 2008)

The article, “*Afghan Women and the Taliban 2.0*” by Huma Baqai stresses upon the fact that Under Taliban 2.0, AFGHAN women are once more subjected to oppression and marginalization. Many women worry that the Taliban 2.0 may reinstate the forced invisibility they endured for five years, from 1996 to 2001. Further highlights that the Taliban assert that their prohibitions on girls and

women working and attending school are “temporary” and solely in place to guarantee their safety in all employment and educational settings. Alongside that, the article also analyzes that if the Taliban’s want to join the world community as a civilized group, they should give their women rightful rights in both form and content. The right to work and the right to an education come first. (Baqai, 2022)

The article “*The fate of women’s right in Afghanistan*” by John R. and Vanda Felbab emphasizes that the fate of Afghani women is solely left in hands of Taliban and Afghan government. The US Taliban negotiations was a commitment to also protect the women rights. The articles says that this is also the current subject dialogue in the intra Afghan talks. By far, there has been witnessed an absence of women representation in the Taliban’s governmental structures as well as the political offices. And Taliban are stubborn to any suggestions that include women. This shows the marginalization of the extremist government. (Felbab, 2020)

Horia Mosadiq in article “*Women’s rights under threat in Taliban-run Afghanistan*” states the issue of suppression of Women’s rights under Taliban regime in Afghanistan. _ also mentions the issues of gender discrimination against women under the rule of Taliban especially in the education field where women aren’t given the basic right to get an education. Author also defined the hypocrisy of the Taliban regarding Women’s rights and how they took a u turn on their promises regarding Women’s rights. Author has comparatively taken in consideration the rights of women in rural areas and in urban areas and how in constitution they are different and much far from the reality. This article draws conclusion from the fact that even though international community has raised voices for the education and employment of Afghan women yet there is still much more that is needed to be done and Afghan women in their struggle for attaining basic rights like these still have a long way to go. This article takes an innovative approach in its explanation of the ongoing situation of women in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime as it incorporates the international and domestic elements that contribute to such circumstances. The comprehensive analysis of the Taliban run regime and the hollow promises of the western powers that have been explained in detail in this article can be termed as strengths of the study whereas the unexplored historical context could be the weakness of this article. (Mosadiq, 2022)

CHAPTER-2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

Liberal feminism emphasizes the value of women's individual freedom and choice in the areas of education, politics, and the workplace. By reducing social and legal impediments to women's involvement in public life and encouraging equal access to possibilities for men and women, this strategy aims to promote gender equality. In order to advance gender equality, liberal feminism also emphasizes the significance of societal and legal reforms, such as equal wages for equal work, anti-discrimination legislation, and gender-neutral legal terminologies. Instead of achieving gender equality through isolated acts of opposition or rebellion, the objective is structural transformation.

Liberal feminists have fought for a variety of causes, such as equal pay, reproductive freedom, and the right to work and it continues to be a significant and powerful strategy for achieving gender equality, notably in the area of legal and political reform. Additionally, in order to advance gender equality, liberal feminism also emphasizes the significance of societal and legal reforms, such as equal wages for equal work, anti-discrimination legislation, and gender-neutral legal terminologies. Liberal feminism becomes the part of our research, an account of arrival of Bush administration in the post 9/11 era

2.2. Feminism in IR

The feminism theoretical framework contends the issue of female inferiority to males addressing how it came about, how and why it is maintained, how it can be altered and what life would've been without it. The expansion of feminism into theoretical, philosophical discourse is known as feminist theory. It seeks to comprehend how gender disparity functions. (Odhiambo, 2022)

Feminism aims to analyze the reasons why there appeared to have been so limited women in positions of prominence and how this affected the way that international relations were organized. An interpretation of international relations that places gender as the primary object of attention is called a "gendered" reading once this is acknowledged. At its foundation, feminism joins to confront international relations to consider how historically male dominance and the marginalization of feminist issues, viewpoints, and attributes have shaped the field. Feminist thought has questioned women's almost total exclusion from traditional International Relations theory and practice from the beginning. This exclusion is evident in the exclusion of women from

decision-making as well as in the presumption that women's daily lives are unaffected by or unimportant to foreign affairs. The critique of gender as culturally imposed identities and as a strong governing rationale is another way to understand feminist contributions to IR. This entails acknowledging and then confronting preexisting notions about what men and women should and cannot achieve in terms of global affairs and what is significant when it comes to international relations.

The prevalent viewpoints in many facets of Modern civilization, from culture to legislation, have been influenced by feminism. Feminist activists have fought for women's basic protections mainly including the ability to vote, the right to own the property, the negotiation right. Further highlighting the women's choice to physical dignity as well as independence also focusing on the women's divine right to go for abortion or rights against patriarchal society, and for other forms of racism. The protection of all these basic rights of women was aroused under the framework of feminist IR-theory stressing upon the gender equality.

Concerning the contributions of feminism, that aims to make women aware, a clear objective of feminist theorists is highlighting how frequently women are subjected to male violence. Under this, a global structure that implicitly accepted a considerable degree of aggression alongside violence against women as the norm was uncovered in the process of bringing aggression and violence against women evident. As a matter of fact, there is widespread violence towards women across the globe highlight the fact that it is not unique to any one governmental or the economic structure.

One of the prominent political scientist Jacqui True brought to attention the connections between; abuse and aggression towards women in the home as well as types of abuse women encounter in the workplace and in society (Truce, 2013)

Women do not have the same social or individual liberties as that of man, yet the patriarchal violence towards them mainly including domestic violence and sexual assault is pervasive worldwide. Feminist IR theory has brought women's exclusion from organizational and decision-making processes to attention by making them apparent. The main focus upon states and the relationships among them neglects the notion that men control most democratic institutions, predominating political institutions completely ignoring the other sectors, having an impact on and getting affected by world politics actually demonstrating the fact that it is a discrimination against

women because, despite the fact that they have been more prone to work in lower-level political positions and have daily lives that may be viewed as unimportant and incidental, women make significant contributions to world politics. Gender-blind traditional attitudes not just neglect the achievements of women and the effects that geopolitics has on them, but they also continue to rationalize and defend their exclusion and absence from international arena. Feminism played a vital role here. The feminist theorists struggled to disprove the validity of this personal and the public split.

This leads us to feminism's next major commitment that mainly includes revealing and dismantling socially imposed male dominance. This theory in International Relations has shown the creation of social identities that uphold traditional beliefs of what men and women could accomplish by thinking logically in relevance to IR in a manner that considers both women and gender seriously. Putting an emphasis on the socially constructed gender, it lead to two type of behaviors. 'Masculine' or 'Feminine' behavior is thought to be proper when referring to the socially created norms that are attributed to either male or female identities. As a matter of fact, men tend to identify manhood with authority, autonomy, reason, and the public realm. Meanwhile the characteristics of feminine are frequently linked to uncertainty, the need for security, domesticity, and the private realm. So, in order to maintain presumptions regarding who should do what and why, gendered identities are also manufactured by global politics and IR theory. Alongside that, there is the presence of power associated with all these identities, particularly patriarchy placing women under those of males and masculine gender identities.

Liberal feminists, as well as the cultural feminists, radical feminists, and the third-wave feminists are the four major strands of feminism. Highlighting the significance of these Liberal feminists, they focus on intimidating societal jurisdictions and recognizing that some issues are personal and others are public ultimately advocating for equal rights and the abolition of discriminatory practices through legislative changes. Meanwhile, Cultural feminists recognize the root of gender inequality in how society depicts masculine and feminine roles, which leads to weaken feminine roles. Inequality, according to radical feminists, stems from men's subordination of women thru the sexuality, defined as a sociological phenomenon that seeks, creates, directs, expresses, and shapes the person. Third-wave feminism advocates for liberty, fairness, social equity, and self-actualization.

US intervention in the Afghanistan brought liberal feminism in that state. In order to further understand liberal feminism, it is important to shed a light on feminist theory as a whole because relying on fact that as the practice of discussing gender discrimination evolved, feminism became more exciting and unique, though a common basis remained: the desire to recognize the inherent disparity that women face in a male-dominated society.

2.3 Liberal Feminism: A way to achieve gender equality through liberal democracy

One of the first types of feminism, liberal feminism asserts that men's superior status and isolation from women are the causes of women's inferior standing in society. This branch of feminism, which originated in the US with the abolitionist and women's movements, is concerned with ending gender discrimination. Since everyone in society is created equal, everyone must have the same rights. That function of the government and freedom of the individual are distinct from one another. By influencing people's opinions and working within current social systems, liberal feminists bring about change. Liberal feminism, commonly known as mainstream feminism, is a major subset of feminism whose goal is to bring about gender equality under the light of liberal democracy. (Maynard, 1995)

Classical liberalism, a political theory that rose to prominence during the Enlightenment, marked the beginning of liberal feminism. Liberal feminists shared the view of many early 19th-century classic liberals that suffrage for women was the greatest route to their liberation. The foundation of liberal feminism is made up of two linked ideas. First of all, women have unalienable, universal human rights as reasoned beings. The mind has had no gender, in the eloquent words of the first-wave feminist pioneer Mary Wollstonecraft. Liberal feminists support a world in which women have political equality with men in terms of gender equality. (Neill, 2001) The goal of liberal feminism is to encourage women to lead a variety of lives, which is its second tenet.

The very first feminism of the late nineteenth century, which was linked to 19th century liberalization and progressive politics and focused mainly on women's suffrage and the right to education, is where the origins of liberal feminism, the strongest of the "Big Three" schools of feminist thought, may be found. (Maynard, 1995) In order to incorporate women into general society, liberal feminism "works inside that system." (West, 1913) Liberal feminism places a high priority on the public sphere, particularly laws, political structures, education, and the workplace,

and sees the denial women equal rights in law and politics as the main barrier to equality. Liberal feminists have therefore pushed to advance women's participation in politics.

The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw the beginning of liberal feminism, which has persisted to the present day. The liberal feminist movement has centered on eradicating female inferiority throughout its history since it stems from social and legal barriers that prevent women from accessing and excelling in the so-called public sphere. A perspective called liberal feminism places more of an emphasis on topics like the job, schooling, and democratic freedoms. Liberal feminism also emphasizes how one's personal life affects or advances equality in society. Therefore, liberal feminists encourage more male engagement in parenting and marriage as an equitable relationship. (Mukul, 2022)

Eliminating sexual assault and domestic abuse will eliminate obstacles to gender equality. Liberal feminism's fundamental objective is equal rights in the public domain, including improved working conditions, equal access to education, and remuneration for equal work. Zhang and Rios discovered that the prevalent and "default" version of feminism is liberal feminism, with its emphasis on equality. (Zhang, 2021)

Both women and men are always active members of the organization; since the movement's founding in the 19th century, liberal men have played a significant role alongside women in the battle for equal political freedoms. Liberal feminism actively encourages men to participate in feminism.

Liberal feminism is a specific strategy for achieving gender equality that places an emphasis on a person's ability to change negative stereotypes about women. Consider the scenario in which you decide to hike more than 200 miles from New York City to Washington, DC in the year 1913 in support of women's suffrage or the right of women to vote.

In the Women's Suffrage Parade of 1913, people adopted a liberal feminist stance by exercising their democratic right to protest in support of equal liberation. And it succeeded! The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote, was approved by the US Congress in 1920.

Therefore, preserving women's rights in terms of work and reproduction is at the heart of liberal feminism. Liberal feminism, the branch of feminism that is closest to the forefront of

political range, involves rejecting both the extreme positions taken by radicals on the fringes of political discourse and the assertive focus on equity from the women's group's left.

The **primary traits of modern liberal feminism** are:

1. Faith in the parity of the genders in society, business, and politics
2. Devotion to enacting legal change to achieve aims
3. Support for the representative democracy
4. Idea that in order for each person to be capable of expressing themselves fully, they should all have right to be treated equally and resources

2.4 Core beliefs of liberal feminism

Compared to other feminist ideologies and activities, liberal feminism is unique. Here are some liberal feminism's core beliefs:

Liberal feminism places a strong emphasis on the *independence and freedom of the individual*. They have liberal feminism at their core. Individualist feminists used the divine law paradigm to advocate for equality in a more respectable manner. Through legislation that equally protects the lives and private land of men and women, they hope to achieve complete recognition of women's individual liberty. Nowadays, because it has grown so popular, individual feminism frequently comes to mind when people seem to think of feminism.

Liberal feminists frequently concentrate on using the current structures of power, such as the *judiciary and the government*, to uphold rights and enhance the lives of women. Women have long campaigned for equal rights to employment and governmental institutions, and their presence in cutting-edge fields is a sign of advancement.

Many liberal feminists approach reform in a practical manner under the light of *pragmatism*. They search for political battles that appear to have been won and advancements they may make in the social order's present political and economic structure. (Mukul, 2022)

2.5 Goals of liberal feminism

Liberal feminists strive for a number of predetermined objectives in accordance with the core ideas of liberal feminist thought. **Liberal feminism's top priorities** are:

2.5.1 Women were finally granted the right to vote in the early 20th century.

2.5.2 Create equal pay for the same job irrespective of the worker's gender to eliminate the pay gap among men and women.

2.5.3 Inspiring society to embrace women as employees and participants in society in the exact manner that men were regarded by challenging the stereotype that women were dependent on their parents, siblings, spouses, or other male figures in their lives. **The liberal feminism's secondary objectives are:**

1. Encourage taking unpaid leave from work to fulfil critical family obligations, such as looking after elderly parents or other ailing family members.
2. Ensuring that women have access to jobs and education
3. Gaining state recognition and official support to give women access to public services, care for children, financial, and educational resources.

Liberal feminism denies gender disparities and places an emphasis on the equal liberty and rights of men as well as women. One amongst the most well feminist societal and political theories is liberal feminism, which is generally acknowledged. Liberal feminists stand up for gender equality and place a strong emphasis on women's social, familial, and sexual responsibilities in a way that promotes their own fulfilment. They tend to highlight a variety of genderless virtues for both parties, including both men and women, and emphasize commonalities between men and women rather than the ordinary differences between them.

Also, legislation that serves to safeguard more women has been advanced with the assistance of liberal feminists. They have even more privileges, they can still own property, and they are not subject to sex-based discrimination in the employment. Additionally, in order to shield more women from the kind of oppression exclusive to this sector, liberal feminism expands its ideals into the domestic domain.

2.6 Liberal feminism debate in post 9/11

The events of 9/11 and the accompanying "War on Terror" had ramifications for the United States' liberal feminist movement. The war in Afghanistan and the subsequent global wars aroused serious concerns about the link between feminism and militarism, as well as the role of the United States in supporting women's rights in the Middle East.

Some liberal feminists advocated military action in Afghanistan as a means of assisting Afghan women in their liberation from the Taliban's oppressive dictatorship. They contended that the US

had a moral commitment to assist Afghan women and that military intervention was required to accomplish this purpose. Moreover, the Bush administration held up to the liberal values with regards to feminism.

Post 9/11 policies encapsulated the policies of George W. Bush administration that may be considered as supportive to feminist values, especially when it comes to the area of violence against women.

In 2000, the administration voted in favor of reauthorizing the abuse Against Women Act (VAWA) and increasing financing for domestic abuse programs. VAWA provided essential resources for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, as well as contributed to a better response to violence against women in the justice system. Furthermore, the Bush administration nominated women to crucial positions of leadership, notably Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State, and Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

2.7 Foundations and Early feminist activists of liberal feminist-IR theory

2.7.1 Marry Wollstonecraft's perspective

“A Defense of the Rights of Women” by Mary Wollstonecraft in 18th century and subsequently “Female Subdued” by John Stuart Mill served as major influences on early feminist scholars and activists. Among the key figures in the first wave of feminism is Mary Wollstonecraft. She is a key player in the liberal feminism school of thought as well. In her article “*A vindication of the rights of woman,*” she made the case that both men and women must be recognized as rational creatures with the same respect. She added that although it might seem like it since they have been denied educational chances, women are not inherently inferior to males. Women’s equity was strongly defended in “**A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.**” (Wallstonecraft, 1972)

Wollstonecraft favored formal equality, according to which women should have the same legal rights as men. Women can enjoy a life of true independence, unrestricted by patriarchal norms, in this way.

2.7.2 John Stuart Mill

It is one of the foundational ideas for creating a liberal as well as democrat society, according to John Stuart Mill. Women’s rights, woman liberation, and women’s rights to education access have been the causes on which Mill focused his advocacy efforts the most. He participated in many types of women’s political conflict against racism and repression, for human and civil

rights, especially for woman liberation, as well as political changes to better the status of women, from the later part of the 1850s until his death.

According to Mill, since all people are created equal, it is inappropriate for traditions to “*Ordain that one should be born a girl rather than a male, or to be born black rather than white, or a regular person rather than an aristocrat, shall determine the person’s status throughout the course of life.*” (Mill, 1869)

2.7.3 Harriet Taylor

Stuart Mill’s 1869 essay “*The Subjection of Women*” expanded on Taylor Mill’s 1851 article “*The Enfranchisement of Women*”, it is Taylor Mill who is more well-known for championing women’s rights. She advocated for “equality with the society’s men in all liberties, governmental, legal, and societal.” She claimed, for instance, that married women should be allowed to work for pay since “reliance on the male side is degrading to both of the character”.

(Hampton, 2022)

As per Harriet Taylor, a woman’s duty as a mother or wife must not hinder her from seeking other vocations. She also thought that women has a right to self-development and education. She thinks that attaining true political freedom for women and men depends on equal access to education and jobs. According to her, a woman should have the freedom to choose any profession, and if she decides to become a wife and mother, than supporting her family would beher work. Political liberalism’s tenets, particularly those of equality, individualism, and liberty, had a significant impact on her.

2.7.4 Abigail Adams

The very first lady of President John Adams named Abigail Adams, especially believed that women’s equality depended on their ability to vote, rights to have their own property as well as to get an education. In one of the Abigail Adams letter to his husband, she argues that “If special attention and concern is not taken to the Women we are resolved to provoke a Conspiracy and rebellion, and will not consider ourselves obliged by any Legislation in which we have no say.”

Women were actively involved in the French revolution from the very beginning, as seen by the vast number of employed women who marched to Versailles to seek political reform in addition to food for their families. The rights of women were not, however, properly acknowledged as a result of the French Revolution. In reaction to the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen”, Olympe produced the “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female

Citizen” in 1791 with the goal of highlighting the French Revolution’s failure to recognize gender parity

Thus, the “Rebellion” Adams foresaw began in the nineteenth century, when voices calling for the abolition of enslavement joined those clamoring for more freedom for women. All this led to first wave of feminism. As a matter of fact, the most important of the three main streams of feminism is liberal feminism, which dominated both the first and third waves of the women’s liberation movement.

The following table summarizes the work of early feminist activists of liberal feminist IR-theory;

Early feminist activists of liberal feminist-IR theory	
Marry Wollstonecraft	Women’s equity was strongly defended in her article “ A Vindication of the Rights of Woman ”
John Stuart Mill	Woman liberation, and women’s rights to education have been the causes on which Mill focused his advocacy efforts the most.
Harriet Taylor	She claimed that married women should be allowed to work for pay since reliance on the male side is degrading to both of the character
Abigail Adams	Adam believed that women’s equality depended on their ability to vote, rights to have their own property as well as to get an education

TABLE 2.1 EARLY FEMINIST ACTIVISTS OF LIBERAL FEMINIST IR THEORY

2.8 Declaration of sentiments at Seneca Falls Convention

The protracted era of feminist activism in the Britain, United States and some other states started in the late 18th and 19th century. Initially, it was centered on the advancement of constitutional and women contractual and property rights as well as the resistance to slave marriage and husbands' possession of wedded women. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, political influence, notably the rights of woman liberation, became the primary focus of activism. A fight from the feminists continued for female empowerment, psychological, and reproductive choice at this period and also in 1854 the female nurses were introduced into the military as well.

Some of the civil rights activists like Elizabeth Stanton and Lucretia announced in Declaration of Sentiments at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention that we believe these facts to be

self-evident; that “**almost all men and women are born equal**”. Feminists clamored for their sacrosanct right to the electoral franchise or the ability to vote, in a contentious manner.

Consequently First Women’s Rights Convention’ came into existence in 1848.

2.9 Right to vote

These 19th Amendment mainly concerning the right to vote was adopted in 1920, partly due to the efforts of suffragettes like Susan B. and the Carrie Catt. In 1866 the right to vote was ultimately achieved for American women with the evolution of American Equal Rights Association. Though it collapsed and was later replaced by **National Women Suffrage Association** (NWSA) in 1867. Later that year, **American Women Suffrage Association** came into existence. The exclusively female-led NWSA used to have a broad programme and aimed to collaborate on a government level for the overall betterment of women in societal structure, although the AWSA decided to focus on attaining the important voting right through the state legislative changes. As well as The **National Association of Colored Women** that, established in 1896, alongside the establishment of the **Alpha Suffrage Club** in 1913, were the first organizations to fight for black suffrage and inform people within and between black communities. The "educated voter" debate was used to **bolster white female voting rights**. Though the White women protesting for votes for women asserted that their learning and political understanding would enable them to be a good electorate and make well-informed choices highlighting the fact that as black women have less access to higher education that would not enable them to be a good electorate. Consequently the Suffragists i.e. the campaigners of the women’s rights to have an active participation in politics so to cast a vote, gradually started to celebrate their victories. New Zealand emerged as the first nation entity to grant women the ability to vote in 1893, and it was joined by Australia basically in 1902 as well as in Finland in 1906. (Odhiambo, 2022)

The liberal feminist tradition may incorporate elements of later waves of feminism despite being rooted in first-wave feminism and historically emphasizing constitutional and political reform.

2.10 Women Liberation

The early second wave from 1960’s to mid-1980s are referred to as the second-wave feminism movement emerged from the Women Rights Movement which was also known as the Women Liberation Movement. As per Imelda Whelehan, the second feminism wave was a prolongation of the prior wave that included the women's suffrage in the Britain alongside the

United States. The feminist movement began to advocate for women's rights in the 1960s, including income parity with men, legal equality, and the ability to decide when and how many children to have. Mixed results came from their initiatives.

This has its roots in the annoyances of college-educated moms, whose dissatisfaction drove their daughters in a different route. It symbolized an apparent sudden rupture from the serene modern lifestyle portrayed in American popular culture. Women had been assured they had it all, the nice houses, adorable children, and responsible male partners overwhelmed by domestic life and unable to realize their own despair. (Friden, 1963)

Congress approved the **Equal Rights Act** in 1972, which intended to ensure legal equality for women and outlawed sexism and discrimination. Feminists rejoiced historic Supreme Court's historic Roe v. decision that ultimately protected a woman's right to seek an abortion.

From that very time, feminism's second-wave has persisted and had coincided with third-wave feminism. Though the first wave concentrated on rights like democracy, or to have freedom of political opinions or to cast vote while the second wave primarily engaged itself with other equality-related issues like having legal right and abolishing racism. This wave feminists encouraged women to recognize that certain areas of their daily life were highly politicized because they believed that women's socio-political injustices were intricately intertwined.

2.11 Feminism's third wave

It was believed that the accomplishments of second-wave feminist were generally taken lightly, and the significance of feminism was not grasped, which posted the biggest hurdle to third-wave feminism. As per Baumgardner and Richards,

"Anyone who was born after the first half of the 1960s takes feminism's influence for granted. Feminism serves as the fluoride of our generation. It's just in the water; we hardly even realise we have it." (Baumgardner, 2000)

Starting in the 1990s, the third feminist wave emerged in the wake of the second wave's observed shortcomings as well as the opposition against the ideas and initiatives it had inspired. The second wave's elitist notions of feminism, which actually in their view, overemphasize the experiences of outmost white women, are challenged or avoided by third feminist's wave. Third Wave Feminism has been construed in many different, frequently conflicting ways. Both a

neoliberal strain of feminists and a more overt feminist involvement with international gender equality agendas have been viewed as being present. (Włodarczyk, 2010)

Some people point out that Third Wave Feminism aims to restore and overturn traditional ideas of femininity, while others see it as a crusade against feminism. (Mc. Robbie, 2009).

The third feminist wave of 1980's philosophy is based on a post-structuralism's understanding of sexuality and gender roles, thus, frequently concentrating on "micro-politics" as well as questioning the second wave's assumptions about what is or is not beneficial for women.

Third wave feminists portray their movement as more comprehensive and racially mixed than the second wave. As per Heywood, third wave of feminism is basically known as a "form of social inclusion". This wave of feminism values not only disparities between women due to race, ethnic background, religion, and financial standing, but also keeps a firm believe on different identities inside a single individual." (Walker, 2007)

The "third wave" of feminism, as some refer to it, is where this perspective on feminism came from. Postmodern feminists, according to Olson (1996), believe that women have been confined to the task of the other. They critique the patriarchal characteristics of the existing order and the way society is organized. However, a lot of postmodern feminists oppose the term feminist as anything that ends in "ism" shows a stereotyped viewpoint. The pinnacle of diversity acceptance is postmodern feminism. Its focus includes numerous realities, different truths, and different roles.

Post-modern feminism incorporates the post-structuralism's viewpoints on gender and sexuality roles as Ideology from the third wave emphasised a stronger post-structuralist understanding of sexuality and gender (Maynard, 1995)

Concerning the second and third-wave feminists, there are three major tactical differences. Third-wave feminists, for example, use "personal notions to demonstrate an interpretive and multi perspective of feminism." (Snyder, 2008) Instead of replicating action and theory justification, second and third-wave feminists endorsed a contradictory technique that doesn't rest on the category of "woman," but rather tends to take multivocality, inclusion and diversity, and non-judgmental approaches in establishing its analysis. The third wave of feminism for the first time stressed upon the presence and rights of women in Islam.

2.12 Conflict stricken Afghanistan through the lens of Liberal Feminism

The capitalist bloc introduced liberal feminism in Afghanistan, the conflict stricken area. The isolation of Afghan women from the cultural, governmental, and economic spheres has grown worse during the course of Afghanistan's continuing war. The Afghan warfare has continued as a result, in addition to the intensification of endemic poverty. Peace and dialogue with rival non-state actors have taken centre stage in the present conversation as the external intervention in Afghanistan feels pressure to cease the nearly two-decade-long intervention. Afghan women are still not allowed to participate in decision-making or hold leadership positions. A lasting peace in Afghanistan is not possible if women are still not included in peace initiatives or negotiations.

To pave the road for Afghanistan to accept a durable peace, feminism should play a significant role. As per U.N Secretary

“Without the restoration of women's rights, Afghanistan cannot experience true peace and healing.”

As it is illegal to violate a woman's civil liberties, such as denying her property or stopping her from pursuing employment or education. (Madeleine Freeman, 2021). Arrival of Bush administration and its policies generated a linkage with liberal values and so liberal feminism.

During the post-9/11 era, the Bush administration attempted to promote liberal feminist ideals and practices into Afghanistan as part of a larger strategy of nation-building and democracy promotion (Basham, 2011). The administration claimed that promoting women's rights was a critical component of its efforts to establish a democratic and secure environment in Afghanistan (Woolf, 2012). This includes initiatives to promote women's political and public engagement, as well as improve their accessibility to education and healthcare.

The establishment of the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, tasked with advancing equality for women and men in Afghanistan, was one of the Bush administration's significant achievements in this respect. The ministry strove to enhance women's participation in public life, such as elections and civil service employment, as well as to support and assist victims of violence.

The Bush administration's implementation of liberal feminist concepts and practises in Afghanistan was controversial and met with criticism from certain groups. Some contended that the administration's approach was excessively focused on individual rights and ignored Afghanistan's culture and historical background (Cockburn, 2007). Others said that the government's attempts

were insufficient and that it did not address the structural hurdles that prohibited Afghan women from exercising their rights (Woolf, 2012).

Overall, the Bush administration's efforts in Afghanistan to promote liberal feminist principles were part of a larger attempt to construct a stable and democratic society, and constituted an important change in US foreign policy towards promoting the rights of women and gender equality.

2.13 Review and reflections

Aiming to achieve gender equality through eliminating social and legal impediments to women participating in public life, liberal feminism is a political theory and social movement that supports women's individual freedom and choice. The liberal feminist approach has been effective in bringing about legal changes and increasing the number of women in politics and the workforce, but it has also come under fire for its emphasis on individual rights and failing to address the underlying reasons of gender disparity. Liberal feminism's focus on individual autonomy and choice is one of its advantages. This strategy acknowledges that women ought to have the freedom to decide how they want to spend their life, including decisions regarding their careers, families, and education. It also acknowledges that social or legal restrictions should not prevent women from accessing the same opportunities as men.

The primary focus of liberal feminism on promoting institutional and legislative changes to advance gender equality is another strength. The Bush administration brought forward the liberal values and liberal feminism in the conflict stricken Afghanistan. The bush administration promoted these values in the post 9/11 which is also discussed further in the research paper. The next chapter focuses on the historic values of the Afghan society with regards to women. Various rights of women under constitutions of different eras are also discussed.

CHAPTER 3:

AFGHANISTAN STATE AND SOCIETY: A HISTORIC OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Afghanistan's landscape is extremely rough, and it is only thinly populated by a wide range of ethnic, religious, and tribal communities. Afghanistan has a population of roughly 14 million people. Pashtuns make up the largest ethnic group. The Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Aimaq are the following largest ethnic groups. The Afghan country has never known a strong, centralized state with a uniform legal system, despite intermittent efforts to reconcile opposing tribes. The liberal values which merely existed previously were further suppressed with the Taliban takeover in 1996, after the deposing of Gullbudin Hikamtyar. (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003) Miseries in women status escalated. This research chapter examines the history of women in Afghanistan for three main motives in this study:

- 1- To demonstrate that extremism did not always oppress women in Afghanistan as it did under the Mujahedeen and the Taliban
- 2- To demonstrate that, even in the early 20th century, women's rights were a crucial component of national building objectives
- 3- To draw attention to the influence of tribe or communal leadership in determining how women should behave as well as their capacity to effectively thwart any modernization that would undermine their patriarchal rule

3.2 The Afghan society

Afghanistan's leaders and various other ethnic groups have been at odds over what women ought to do and how they ought to be for more than a century now. Women have not had a lot of voice. Women in Afghanistan face a lot of danger and have been facing under tribal culture of Afghanistan. They were attempting to find refuge in a terrible position, possibly counting down the hours before they died. (Gopalakrishnan, 2022)

The two regimes of Taliban in Afghanistan; in 1996 and 2021 , have led to women marginalization to a very great extent as well as women in Afghanistan have paid large prices to survive under the extremist regime. They have had under both regimes of Taliban in Afghanistan, been severely impacted by the Taliban's ban on women working. Under this ban, single mothers as well as the family's only source of income have been impacted a lot.

Following their takeover, the Taliban first implemented constraints, most of which were directed at urban women. Now, all Afghan women may be impacted by the expanded laws under the second extremist regime. Since taking control of Afghanistan in 1996, the Taliban have begun imposing their strict Islamic interpretations. Despite making an effort to project a more moderate image, the Taliban has enforced a number of limitations that deny Afghan women their freedom.

In response to the attacks carried out by the al-Qaeda organization on September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, DC, the United States of America invaded Afghanistan. The sexist philosophy and beliefs of the Taliban were heavily discussed throughout the justifications for the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. According to the US President at the time, George W. Bush, the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan was also a battle for women's independence, rights, and privileges. This drew vast international community's attention and urban women of Afghanistan started to become a part of public life in Afghanistan.

3.3 Women's survival in marginalized state of Afghanistan

It is acknowledged that Afghan women's full engagement in all facets of life in Afghanistan is essential for the future and growth of the country because they outnumber men by a ratio of six to four.

Women's involvement in politics leads to significant increases in social responsiveness, democracy, and transparency while reducing corruption. In nations where there are few differences between men and women in regards to health, schooling, profession, and land ownership, economic growth happens most quickly.

Upper and middle-class women in Afghanistan have traditionally struggled for their rights and advanced modernization. However, notwithstanding these instances, the majority of Afghan women in rural areas have experienced persecution due to local custom and laws. All through Afghanistan's history, the women who've been seen in public belonged to the privileged and made up a small percentage of the nation.

There is a background to the decades of female oppression in Afghan society. Women have been particularly hard hit because their lives are frequently utilised as a basis for establishing ethnic dominance. In determining gender norms, tribal customs and punishments have frequently prevailed over Islamic and secular legislation. In Afghanistan, the subject of women's rights has traditionally been hindered by (a) the culturally entrenched patriarchal origins of gender and social

relations in indigenous societies and (b) the presence of a feeble state structure, which has been hampered carry out modernizing programmes and objectives in the face of "tribal/ feudal system." Additionally, from the 1880s, American, Soviet, and British foreign meddling has severely hampered Kabul's social growth. Tribal chiefs obstructed moves to modernize the state and reforms that sought to detach a woman's identity from her family and tribal society.

However recently, the Mujahedeen's era of 1992 to 1996 is witnessed to be worse than that of the Taliban's. Consequently, one must address a study of the position of women in Afghanistan in a greater historical context, through the ideological framework of before and following the Taliban era. Only with such a viewpoint can women be considered as essential to the Afghanistan's national rebirth. Women can be positioned at a better place for the future by understanding the history of women in Afghanistan and the lessons can be drawn from it.

Women in rural Afghanistan play a crucial part in the development of the country as well as the status of women. Tribal forces that have regularly thwarted modernization attempts headquartered in Afghanistan have their origins in rural Afghanistan.

In rural Afghanistan, patriarchal tribal structures influence how much power women have over their lives and gender stereotypes. These familial ties stem from the Quran and tribal customs that place unrestricted male authority over females. Although Islam has a stronghold in the nation, a hybridised balance of Islamic and secular principles of gender relations will be presented as a way to advance women's status in rural Afghanistan. Women should reinterpret their roles within their family and society under the present situation, which would benefit both their lives and that of the country's.

History, politics, social, cultural, and religious considerations all have a role in determining the destiny of Afghan women. In addition to a variety of domestic conflicts, external or global political factors have had a considerable impact on Afghanistan and its women.

Gender complexities and the position of Afghan women have indeed been moulded by two pivotal periods in Afghan history. The two periods demonstrate Kabul's history of progressive measures to guarantee women's rights and lay the groundwork for a more equal society. This historical analysis also highlights the relevance of Afghanistan's rural-urban split.

The first era, which began in 1923 under Amanullah's rule, saw quick changes made to the status of women in the home and their quality of life. Intense opposition to the measures led to Amanullah's

rule's eventual downfall. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which was supported by communists, served as the government during the second phase. A decade long war among both Afghanistan and the U.S.S.R., the creation of the Mujahideen, and the fall in the status of women were all results of this government's objective for social transformation to empower women. (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003)

3.4 A Historic briefing

The foreign media, local news reports, and scholarly literature are replete with descriptions of Afghanistan's downtrodden women. There have been so many occasions of starving widows, young girls being pushed into marriage, high maternal mortality rates, sexual assault, violence, adultery, abductions, wife-beating, self-immolation, education deprivation, burning of girls' schools, mobility restrictions, and, above all, burqa wearing that Afghan women have come to represent the stereotypical victims of male dominance, ignorance, and hidebound religious belief in the eyes of the remainder of the world. (Murray, 2013)

Neglect the sensation; it is still true that many Afghan women are subjected to abuse, poverty, and restrictions on their right to movement and choice. Additionally, the Afghan government frequently ignores their situation or accepts it as the norm. Afghan women are frequently assaulted again after acting to protect themselves. Women who flee their homes risk being jailed, while rape victims risk being found guilty of adultery or executed for jeopardizing family honour. At best, they might seek sanctuary, but even that isn't much better than a prison because it leaves them in a limbo with no obvious way out.

3.5 Socio-political paradigm of society and women status

The golden period

Governments all over the world, including Afghanistan, saw the need for modernizing changes after the Second World War, which led to the revival of a state women's movement. With Queen Humaira Begum serving as its advocate, the government-backed Women's Welfare Association (WWA) was established in 1946. From 1950 to 1951, women were allowed to enrol in Kabul University courses.

Liberal policies that increased the visibility of women in society were promoted in

1953, under the administration of Mohammed Daoud Khan. He wanted to end the ultraconservative, Islamist culture of treating women like property, among other things. He contributed significantly to modernising throughout his reign.

In 1959, the first women without the veil to be spotted in Kabul's streets were state employees, such as radio announcers, who were asked to arrive at their worksites without it and instead wear a scarf. Later, they were also asked to leave their homes in the same manner. In an open letter of complaint to the Prime Minister, a group of Islamic clergy demanded that the sharia be upheld in this matter. The prime minister invited them to provide him with evidence that the Islamic law did, in fact, call for the veil. The Prime Minister said that the female members of the Royal Family wouldn't any longer be wearing veils since Islamic law did not require them to do so after the clerics failed to locate a proof the prime minister asked for.

3.6 Afghan women under Afghan Constitutions

3.6.1 1964 constitution

The constitution was brought up in state of Afghanistan in 1964 and stayed enacted up until 1973, before coup d'état. The constitution of 1964, though was brought back in 2002 after the arrival of United States, to Afghanistan. Mohammed Zahir Shah set up a group of foreign education to bring this constitution up, which included Sardar Abdul Hakim Ziai and Sardar Abdul Rahim Ziai.

Women's rights under the 1964 constitution

Afghanistan's 1964 Constitution recognized women's rights to study, employment, and political engagement. (Akbarzada, 2017). The 1964 afghan constitution stated, among other elements, the conditions of justice and equality in afghan society. More to it, the emphasis was clearly placed on the "liberty" of the afghan individual as well as the individual's welfare. And that the human dignity was to remain intact on the grounds of Afghanistan. Moreover, the Afghans, including women were to be given and granted their rightful privileges. The Constitutional Commission's strategy included not only reestablishing Afghan women's legal rights but also creating a future legal precedent in Afghanistan and establishing the norms and values of Afghan society. Back then, the preservation of women's rights and the prevention of unjust discrimination for all Afghan residents were issues that were intertwined with those of human rights protection. Moreover, the 1964 Constitution and successive constitutions, Afghan legal precedence, and

Afghanistan's adoption of numerous international treaties all favour gender equality and equity. (Nawabi, 2003)

Article 26 of the 1964 constitution

1964 Constitution's Article 26 broadly protects individual freedoms and rights without making any distinctions based on gender in any of its clauses. Throughout the 1964 Constitution, words like "human being," "no one," "person," and "every Afghan" are being used, illustrating the notion that its content are inclusive and should not be restricted based on sex or other such qualities. Despite being frequently cited as stipulating equal rights for women, the 1964 Constitution's provisions did not state this explicitly. Nevertheless, the phrase "people" was understood to include women, and as a result, it has served as the foundation for Afghan women's equal rights. Women began to take part in the nation's representative assembly, the public sector, and a range of occupations following the passage of the 1964 Constitution. Afghanistan's 1964 Constitution gave women equal rights, including the ability to vote in all elections and seek positions in governmental departments. In the urban areas, women enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and access to excellent educational possibilities. They might appear uncovered, occupy public office, and work as researchers, teachers, doctors, and government workers. Jameela Farooq Rooshna was Afghanistan's first female judge as well as the country's first female cabinet members both served in the 1960s (1969). Women began to show up in the entertainment industry as well. Safia Tarzi was the first Afghan fashion designer, while Rukhshana was one of the first female pop musicians to achieve fame in the 1960s. Afghanistan's Revolutionary Association of the Women (RAWA) was established in 1977, too.

Regardless the Women's Welfare Association's (WWA) efforts, the majority of women were still excluded from these chances because these policies mostly affected elite women and had little impact outside of urban centers. Rural women's life were unaffected by the changes occurring in the towns since they lived in a profoundly patriarchal, traditional society.

Following the Saur uprising and the rule of Mohammed Daoud Khan, Afghanistan experienced a period of historically exceptional equality for women from 1978 to 1987 and from 1987 to 1992, during the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan era and the Republic of Afghanistan era, respectively. During the era, supporting women's rights and gender equality was the communist philosophy as well. Women's rights were promoted under the Communist era by both the Afghani government and the Soviet Union. The Communists sought to expand women's rights

to all social levels, including remote women and girls, contrary to the monarchy, when they had only been available to elite women.

3.6.2 1976 constitution

The constitution of 1964 was abolished in 1973 in face of coup d'état. The new constitution came up in 1976 which was seen to advocate women rights. In 1977, women constituted 15% of Afghanistan's legislature body, a proportion that only a few Western legislative bodies have attained. (Nawabi, 2003)

This constitution also improved women's rights regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance. (Bashir, 2018). Article 27 of the constitution supports the rights of afghan women.

It states as follows:

“[A]ll the people of Afghanistan, both women and men, without discrimination and privilege, have equal rights and obligations before the law.”

3.6.3 1987 constitution

The constitution's **article 28** promotes women in Afghan society. Men and women residents of the State of Afghanistan are treated equally by the law, regardless of their nationality, race, language, tribe, educational attainment, social standing, religious affiliation, political views, profession, wealth, or place of residence. It is prohibited to designate any unlawful privilege or to treat citizens' rights and obligations differently.

Furthermore, article 33 supports women and advocates their rights.

Article 33 advocates women rights and states as follows:

“The citizenship of the Republic of Afghanistan is equal and uniform to all citizens.”

3.6.4 1990 constitution

The afghan Constitution of 1990 did not amend Articles 28 and 33 of the Constitution of 1987. Early in the 1990s, afghan women made up 40% of doctors, 50% of government employees, 70% of school instructors, and 50% of university students. (Nawabi, 2003)

In 1991, there were 230,000 girls enrolled in schools all over Afghanistan and 7,000 women attending colleges of higher education. There were over 22,000 female instructors and 190 female lecturers.

The following table summarizes all the constitutional developments with regards to women.

Constitutional Developments with regards to women	
1964 Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of justice and equality in Afghan society prevailed • Reestablishment of Afghan Women • Article 26 of 1964 constitution protects rights without any gender discrimination
1976 Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocated women rights in Article 27 • In 1977 women constituted 15% of Afghan legislature body
1987 Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 28 and 33 promotes women rights
1990 Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1990 constitution bears Article 28 and Article 33 of 1987 constitution • 230000 enrolled in schools during the period

Table 3.1 Constitutional developments with regards to women

3.7 1992 Afghan Civil war

The Islamic State of Afghanistan replaced Mohammad Najibullah's administration in 1992. When Gulbuddin Hekmatyar began a campaign against the Islamic State in Afghanistan, the war in Afghanistan entered a new phase. Many women were abducted during the brutal 4 years civil war, and several were raped.

The Afghan Civil War began in 1992, following the collapse of the Soviet-backed government and an ensuing power struggle between several factions of mujahideen groups. (Gonzalez, 2011). The Mujahedeen had perceived the Communist system as anti-Islamic. When they came to power, their aim was to revoke the freedom women had experienced under the Communist regime in order to Islamize afghan society. The Islamic State implemented "the prohibition of alcohol, enforced hijab for women," among other restrictions. The Supreme Court issued an order to government agencies and state officials on August 27, 1993, directing them to fire any female employees. This included that Women must be staying at homes. If there is a need to move out they must be entirely covered, they must refrain from wearing appealing attire, avoid

wearing perfume, wear jewelry that doesn't make sound, avoid walking proudly, avoid speaking to unfamiliar people, avoid speaking loudly, and never leave the house without first getting their husbands' approval.

However, because the government lacked adequate authority over the nation to put the policy into effect, it existed only on parchment. Thus, notwithstanding the ruling, women continued to work, and the 1964 constitution's liberal principles were substantially upheld. Later, during the unstable political climate, competing Mujahidin organizations in Kabul kidnapped women from their homes, workplaces, and offices and tortured those to different sorts of cruelty. The Mujahidin believed that professional and learned women's minds are corrupted, thus they kidnapped and murdered many of them.

3.8 1996 Islamic State of Afghans under Hekmatyar and women survival

After Gulbuddin Hekmatyar joined the Islamic State (formed by mujahideen parties) and took over as prime minister of Afghanistan in 1996 for a brief period. Restrictions on women started to increase. He pushed for the dismissal of TV actresses. Women's existence became much more difficult during Hekmatyar's Islamic State of Afghans in 1996, due to the enforcement of harsh Islamic rules and limitations on their mobility and activities. (Moghadam, 2002).

The Taliban of 1996 pushed him out in a short while and ruled that women were not allowed out of the house without a male guardian and were not allowed to go to work. Whenever they did venture outside, they had to be in an all-covering burqa. Formal schooling was not available to women, and they were typically required to remain at home.

3.9 Social Positioning of women under 1996 Taliban regime

Women were virtually placed under house arrest in Afghanistan under the Taliban's five-year rule. The Taliban regime faced catastrophic financial hardship as a result of the United Nations' refusal to recognise it and the United States' harsh sanctions. The 1996 Taliban regime in Afghanistan marked a substantial shift in women's social status, with tight restrictions and regulations imposed that significantly limited women's independence and autonomy. (Sabur, 2020) The dictatorship also prohibited women from attending school or working outside the home, with the exception of a few professions such as healthcare and education. (United Nations, 1999).

Before the Taliban government, women made up the majority of teachers, therefore the new limits on their work resulted in a severe teacher shortage that severely hampered the schooling of

both boys and girls. Some women in the medical profession were permitted to continue working, despite the fact that they were prohibited from all the occupations, including teaching. This is due to the Taliban's requirement that only female doctors be allowed to treat women.

A number of Al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders were involved in human smuggling, kidnapping women and trafficking them into sex slavery and enslavement in Pakistan. Time Magazine placed a critique in this regard which upon summarizing says that the Taliban frequently contended that the harsh limitations they imposed on women were really just a cover for honoring and defending the other gender. That assertion was refuted by the Taliban's actions during the course of the six years of their power practice in Afghanistan. The 9/11 incident brought a shift an abrupt shift and US pushed into Afghanistan just as abruptly.

3.10 Review and reflections

The importance of Afghan women's participation, rather limited in all aspects of life for the country's future and growth has been emphasized during the first regime of Taliban. By comprehending the history of women in Afghanistan and drawing lessons from it, it can be examined how women should have been placed in a more advantageous position during that era beginning from 1996. The oppressed Afghan society, the status of women and their survival in various eras of governance, and the status of women in Afghanistan's constitutions detail that women still can up bring themselves and that the role of social activists can be essential.

The chapter briefs about the oppressed afghan society, women status and survival in different eras of governance, women status in Afghanistan's constitutions up until 2001 when U.S intervened in Afghanistan an account of 9/11 incidence. The next chapter will go about detailing the status of women U.S stationing and the start of bleak era of American de stationing as well as the misery and marginalization of Taliban 2.0, the second takeover in 2021.

CHAPTER 4: THE 2001 AMERICAN INTERVENTION AND TALIBAN REGIME 2.0

4.1 Introduction

A brief period of privileged position was enjoyed by Afghan women with the stationing of United States after the incident of twin tower, 2001. George W. Bush promoted his liberal values and the approach of liberal feminism gained grounds. Fortunately, the period also celebrated the adoption of universal declaration of Human Rights and Afghan women were significantly enjoying their right in dignity. Afghan Women relished advancements in social, constitutional and cultural sectors during this era. Unluckily, the March, 2021 de stationing of US brought it all back, the bleak age. (Ghaedi, 2022) The second takeover of Taliban once again brought back the marginalized and markedly gendered society, with the little say in political and public sector. While the women of this age were well aware of their rights an account of the liberal values and awareness the US brought it the region, they were seem to be actively participating.

4.2 United States' take over - 2001

The United States of America invaded Afghanistan in response to the assaults carried out by al-Qaeda group on September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, DC. The Taliban's misogynistic ideology and notions received a lot of attention throughout the arguments for the war against terrorism. The war against terror in Afghanistan was, in the words of the administration of United States at the time, US President George W. Bush, also a struggle for women's freedom, rights and privileges. That brought international support and funds for social projects as well as NGOs that aimed to improve the livelihoods of Afghan women by attracting attention to their predicament. This made it possible for women to engage in public life in ways that were previously inconceivable under the Taliban government of 1996, in urban areas, especially in the capital city of Kabul.

4.3 “Public Papers of united states” under President George W. Bush – 2001, December 12

George W. Bush, the President of the United States, spoke on signing the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001 on December 12 under these public papers. Bush said that the inhabitants of Afghanistan have endured one of the worst horrific regimes and extremist rulers in modern history, a state which stayed at war with women and affiliated with terrorists. The president

pleasingly declared an end to the extreme and misogynist. Also President George W. Bush remarked, "The United States is dedicated to advancing women's rights in Afghanistan." Women will be critical to the success of a reformed Afghanistan. We want to ensure that they are able to fully engage in the life of their nation of origin. (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001).

Taliban regime. However, our obligations to the Afghan people have not been fulfilled, bush added to these papers. In that nation, we strive for a new era of human rights and dignity. Thereby, we see president bush talking of ensuring rights of women. United States was to support the interim government's efforts to improve health and educational opportunities for all women and children in Afghanistan. And were to make a significant advancement in that direction with the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act.

Under these papers, the administration of United States of America and the president of U.S, George bush made an emphasis and briefed upon the organizational members, working for women rights and women as a whole. They were the foundational elements for the feminist movements of earlier 2000s in Afghanistan. These included all of the members of Congress as well as the esteemed members of the House and Senate who backed this legislative measure. Sima Wali, who served as the president and chief executive officer of Refugee Women in Development and was a prominent supporter of women's rights at the Bonn conference, was also included.

Bush highlighted in these papers that America is starting to understand that Afghan women and their children lived in a nightmare that was inspired by the terrorists and the Taliban. The regime had been hard and harsh for women. It was forbidden for Afghan women to speak or giggle aloud. They were not allowed to go to school or ride bicycles. They were executed on the allegation of adultery and refused access to basic medical care. It's difficult to find a lady in Kabul who does not recall being beaten by the Taliban, according to one news publication at the time.

America and the United States president vehemently opposed the Taliban approach. They vehemently condemned their abuse of women and children. Not only do they infringe fundamental human rights, but the Taliban also administer justice in a cruel manner, America thought and emphasized in the public papers. Afghanistan's way of life was not always this way. Women were an extremely significant element of that society prior to the arrival of the Taliban. Women made up 70% of the country's teachers. In Afghanistan, women made up 50% of the governmental workforce, while in Kabul, the capital city of the state of Afghanistan, 40% of the doctors were

female. (United Nations, 1998) The Taliban undid that advancement and, in doing so, gave us a clear picture of the reality that they and the terrorists want to inflict in the unfortunate country, especially upon the states unfortunate inhabitants, women.

The ruthless persecution of women, not just Afghan women, is the terrorists' main objective. The jihadists that support the Afghan government can be found in countless other nations, as well. Indeed, this was the reason Americans and the Bush administration thought significant to grant protection to women rights.

4.4 Celebration of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Public Papers of United States” - 2001, December 12

President Bush also emphasized under these documents in year 2001 that now Afghanistan and significantly Afghan women would be enjoying human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (Public Papers of the United States, 2001). The world's citizens reassert their "confidence in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equitable rights of men and women," according to the prologue of that declaration of Human Rights. Afghanistan's new administration under United States will uphold the rights of both women and men. American administration promised to complete this very mission. This was Bush's promise that he made under these public papers. Humanitarian assistance and insurance of rights to women was promised to be provided to Afghans.

4.5 Afghan Women and Children Relief Act

This was a new humanitarian act that was enacted by the United States administration in Afghanistan after their take over in 2001. This relief act was signed in The National Women's Museum in the Arts Washington, D.C, in 2001 The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act mandates that the United States will be helping Afghan women, children, and Afghanistan's refugees in neighboring nations, with access to healthcare and education. This was to authorize the assistance to Afghan women. They will, in short be protected. (Bush, 2001)

The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act was signed after several findings by the United States administration.

These findings are enlisted below:

Firstly, during the Taliban era, right before the arrival of United States, women in Afghanistan found it practically impossible to practice their fundamental human rights because of Taliban

prohibitions on their ability to participate in afghan society. Afghan women's freedom of expression, association, and travel was restricted by the Taliban in pre 2001 era. This prevented them from fully engaging in society and, as a result, from successfully securing basic access to employment, education, as well as health treatment.

Secondly, during the talib era of 1996, just 20% of hospital medical and surgical beds designated for individuals were accessible for women as of May 1998, and thousands of Afghan women and girls were habitually refused medical services.

Moreover, from year 1996 to 2001, while the Talib administration ruled Afghanistan, women were not allowed to depart their houses unless a male family member accompanied them. Due of this, many women were unable to obtain essentials like food and healthcare for their kids. as well as, single mother was much in trouble. Additionally, the Taliban forbade doctors, the most of whom are men, from providing specific sorts of care that they believed were inappropriate, as males were not allowed to check up on female patients. (bush, 2001)

Schools in Kabul were open to all students; female and males before the Taliban seized power, and women made up 70% of the teachers and staff at schools. In the public sector, women made up about 50% of the workforce, while 40% of the city's surgeons were female. Women were not allowed to work as teachers, doctors, or in any other occupations after the Taliban gained power in 1996.

Girls and women were forbidden from going to school by the Taliban under their extremist regime. More than 100 privately sponsored educational institutions, where hundreds of teenage women and girls were obtaining skills and education in professions that could have enabled them sustain themselves and their households, were closed by the Taliban in 1998. Many of Afghanistan's numerous hundreds of thousands of war widows were forced to beg for sustenance as well as sell their possessions and other things because they were not permitted to work and get out f homes without a male. Resistance movements bravely continued to educate Afghan girls secretly and abroad in defiance of Taliban legislation, during their extremist regime. Under these findings, much as feasible, the President of United states was to use institutions and nongovernmental groups, particularly women's organizations, to guarantee that such support is given in a way that respects and promotes the human rights of every person in Afghanistan, primarily women.

The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001, which Bush signed in Washington, was to give disadvantaged women and children, including refugees, immediate access to cash for

vaccination, fundamental education, and other forms of aid. These programs, which will be carried out by UNICEF as well as local and global NGOs, will also help Afghan refugees in nearby nations. Many Afghan women and children witnessed the signing event, where Bush said that his administration will seek to usher in a new age of human rights and dignity in Afghanistan. (Rights, 2001) The resounding support for this law sends a strong message. This was clearly meant to resolve as well as to uplift the Afghan people, especially women, while driving out the Taliban and the terrorists from Afghanistan. Afghanistan's women and children have had endured enough suffering. This America was now to make every effort to support and offer these deprived Afghans, primarily women, hope.

4.6 Women status after US stationing

After the American invasion of Afghanistan after the crashing of twin towers in September 2001, Hamid Karzai established a new government in Afghanistan that included women, much as it had done in Afghanistan before the 1990s period.

4.6.1 Political and Constitutional Status

- Under political sector, Afghan women's say increased surprisingly. 27 percent of the 250 seats in the House of the People were allotted for women according to 2004 amendment to the constitution.
- A considerable number of Afghan women participated in the parliament after the Taliban administration fell in 2001 and United States took over, and several of them were appointed as ministers, as well

4.6.2 Social status

- Afghan legislation under United States invasion allowed women to run motorbikes and other automobiles. A number of human rights advocates, including Human Rights Watch and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, had also voiced alarm about the state of women's rights in Afghanistan
- Additionally, Afghan women came to sport's ground. They were also allowed to compete in some international tournaments, like the Olympics and various other competitions. Afghan legislation under United States invasion allowed women to run motorbikes and other automobiles within the Afghan state. Afghanistan is one of the least favorable nations for women, according to the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

- Airlines had welcomed Afghan women in a variety of positions during the period. Afghanistan's educational system had been progressively getting better from the period of 2001 that ended in 2021.
- In general, Afghan women's circumstances increased during the 2000s, especially in big cities, although those who lived in the nation's remote regions continued to suffer several challenges. A 20% increase in violence against women was reported by the United Nations in 2013, largely as a result of marital violence being accepted by traditional Afghan society and a wrong interpretation of religion. (United Nations, 2013) Afghanistan enacted a law in February 2014 that restricts the government's power to compel some family members to testify against domestic abuse. Human rights groups deemed the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women's enforcement to be "poor," adding that certain crimes went unreported.
- Sports like futsal, soccer, handball, skiing, and other games were all open to Afghan women. Afghanistan conducted its first marathon while it was under American occupation. Zainab, a 25-year-old lady, was one of the participants who finished the full race, making her the first Afghan woman to accomplish this feat. Afghanistan sent female athletes to the Olympics for the first time in 2004, three years after the demise of the Taliban administration (2001).

4.7 2021 American de-stationing; beginning of bleak age

The withdrawal of American soldiers from Afghanistan in 2021 ushers in a new, uncertain period for the country. (Ahmad, 2021) Formal talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban ultimately began in September, though they had originally been scheduled to begin in March of 2021. Five Afghan women were witnessed to be a part of the 21-person negotiating delegation that the Afghan government had formed. The High Council for National Reconciliation was founded by Ashraf Ghani, the president of Afghanistan, as a higher administrative entity to oversee and to guide the negotiating team. Only nine of the 46 appointed members are female, and the list is dominated by older male power brokers and former warlords.

Afghan observers largely viewed the list as marginalizing Afghan women and therefore only offering them representation "in reserved seats," as well as "mirroring a 2001 Afghanistan state apparatus" that was predominately ruled by warlords and tribesmen, despite the fact that it is still being disputed between the groups of President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah—his chief political rival and the head of the High Council.

4.8 U.S complete military pullover

The future of Afghan women and their rights are in serious doubt as the United States scales back its military/troop as well as political involvement there on Afghanistan grounds, while the Taliban continue to dominate the battlefield and peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban have started. The destiny of Afghan women is entirely dependent on how the intra-Taliban talks and military advances and actions in administration turn out, according to the agreement that the United States and Taliban reached on February 29, **2020, in Doha**, the hub and capital city of Qatar. The United States of America only obtained guarantees from the Taliban that perhaps the militant groups would refrain from attacking United States of America. And ally targets, carrying out terrorist attacks against U.S. and ally assets. With this they assured United States that they would be allowing the territory under Taliban control to be used for such terrorist attacks in exchange for the pullout and complete withdrawal of its forces by summer of year 2021. (Ghaedi, 2022)

Negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government, as well as other Afghan politicians, pressure groups, and—hopefully—representatives of Afghan civil society, will determine how Afghanistan and its political system are reconstructed.

With all this, the plight of Afghan women, particularly urban women from middle- and upper-class households who profited the greatest from the post-2001 order in Shadows of United States' control, would likely get worse, according to many credible sources. The United States has little as well as dwindling power to protect at least some of its rights and privileges. It is not zero, though. Therefore, the U.S. must use whatever power it still possesses to protect Afghan women's rights and basic necessities.

4.9 Taliban regime 2.0 – A second takeover

The time when the administration of American president, George W. Bush hailed women's rights and their strength as a reason for its conflict with the Taliban is long gone now. The times of the Barack Obama administration when Hillary Clinton, who was then the secretary of state of America, declared that the Taliban's renunciation of al-Qaida as well as their dedication to upholding the Afghan constitution and protecting women's rights were prerequisites for U.S. dialogues with them are long gone too. (Ghaedi, 2022)

Only around a decade later, al-Qaida has not yet officially and explicitly renounced its existence; in addition, the constitutional order and women's rights are still up for debate within Afghanistan and will be impacted by the shifting military power dynamics in Afghanistan.

After the U.s and Afghan leader Ashraf Ghani fled the state of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban once again seized power and installed an all-male administration. Since the international world tied legitimacy to support for women's and minority rights, the Taliban government did not receive any acknowledgment from any other nations as they thought Taliban's were violent towards women.

4.10 Women marginalization in Talib regime

However, there aren't any women whatsoever on the Taliban's negotiating team. The lack of women in the Taliban's political leadership, governing bodies, and negotiation team has been regularly brought up by both Western scholars and Afghan civil society members, who have also raised the issue with the Taliban. However, the Taliban's position, which reflects the Taliban's ongoing marginalisation of women, has stayed hard as well as resistant to demands that it include women in at least a portion of its administrative and political bodies, particularly its negotiation team. (Fawcett, 2005). Women's reach to education and employment has indeed been severely restricted, although the Taliban's repeatedly promised that these rights would be upheld. The Taliban ordered women to simply eliminate working in several places. Only schools divided by gender were allowed to begin education in the lower grades. Higher-level courses for girls and women had been suspended in grades seven through twelve as well as at the college and education at higher level. (Ghaedi, 2022)

4.11 Women education under Taliban regime

Women were not permitted to rejoin university in order to study or as for job, according to Mohammad Ashraf Ghairat, the new chancellor of Kabul University, who made the announcement on September 27. The Taliban justified these actions by citing security issues. Afghan women are deprived of basic right to education under the strict Taliban regime. Women were not permitted to rejoin university in order to study or as for job, according to Mohammad Ashraf Ghairat, the new chancellor of Kabul University, who made the announcement on September 27.

The Taliban justified these actions which humiliated afghan women, by citing security issues.

4.12 Women involvement in political sector under Taliban regime

There are no women serving as ministers or deputy ministers in the new provisional Taliban administration now. There is no longer a Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Taliban security services have used violence against women who have protested these statements, particularly in country's capital.

Urban, educated women, a few of whom have had government posts while others are active in civil society, make up the women appointed to the two governmental organizations. They are expected to speak for all Afghan women.

The Taliban's mistreatment of Afghan women has been denounced time and time again by these women, who also vehemently reject any return to political institutions that would seriously curtail their rights. The Afghan people anticipate that they will fight against constitutional and societal changes that would severely curtail the official status that Afghan women have accrued over the previous two decades in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, not all rural Afghan women easily relate to these urban class women, and not all rural Afghan women think that urban elite women speak specifically for them. Even if it means forgoing some official women's rights that they are presently unable to enjoy, the inclinations of these rural women slant considerably more strongly toward a wish for tranquility and harmonious environment.

4.13 Review and reflections

The Afghan women had relished a privileged period of women during the stationing of the United States. The situation of Afghan women has been analyzed and it is witnessed that it improved during the 2000s, particularly in major cities, but those living in the nation's remote regions continued to face numerous obstacles. The United Nations reported a 20% increase in violence against women in 2013, primarily due to the acceptance of domestic violence in traditional Afghan society and a misunderstanding of religion. In February 2014, Afghanistan passed a law that restricts the government's ability to compel certain family members to testify against domestic violence. A considerable number of Afghan women participated in the parliament after United States took over in 2001, and several of them were appointed as ministers,

as well. Games were all open to Afghan women. Afghanistan conducted its first marathon while it was under American occupation

But unluckily, the de stationing of the United States brought back the era of dismay. The suffering and marginalization of women during the second Taliban takeover is investigated to conclude the new challenges of the new age. The misery and marginalization of women during the second takeover of Taliban is looked into in this chapter, to further conclude the challenges that women are facing and have faced in first regime of Taliban (1996), in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: IMPACTS ON STATE AND SOCIETY UNDER TALIBAN ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Introduction

Afghan Women endured a great deal of discrimination with regards to their rights during Taliban 1.0 and 2.0. Many Afghan women anticipated a return to such gloomy times when the Taliban seized power again in August 2021. International Crisis group is also dedicated to ensuring the rights of the disenfranchised afghan women, who have been excluded from public affairs. The focus of international community has now shifted to these long term women rights suffocation in Afghanistan. Women were subjected to severe limitations on their freedoms and liberties under the two regimes of Taliban. There was some hope for women in Afghanistan following the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. The new administration vowed to uphold women's rights and advance gender equality. After being granted the right to vote, many women started going back to school and working. Though progress was sluggish, numerous women persisted. Additionally and lastly, women who stand out against the Taliban or attempt to overthrow their rule incur harsh punishment as well.

5.2 The Taliban in Afghanistan

Since the Islamist group took back control of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, the female population has suffered with some of them being forced to live at home as a result of limitations on their fundamental human rights and outright exclusion from local, diplomatic, educational, and institutional life. When the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan last year, they asserted that they would indeed permit women to "exercise the freedoms given to them under Sharia law." However, these assertions proved to be baseless because the female population had become unwilling to adequately access education, employment, health care for all, and humanitarian assistance, further lowering their standard of living.

The Taliban regrouped in Pakistan less than ten years after the U.S.-led war that toppled the previous administration in 2001 and began retaking territory. By August 2021, the Taliban had seized back power. As the United States prepared to remove its last troops from Afghanistan in compliance with a 2020 ceasefire accord with the Taliban, they mounted a swift assault.

The Taliban instead implemented a rigid interpretation of Islamic law despite their promises to protect the rights of women and communities of religious and racial minorities. As the Taliban

transitioned from an insurgent group to an operational government, they fought to provide Afghans with enough food and financial opportunities. The rights of women have been totally eroded. Due to Taliban limitations, few girls are permitted to enroll in secondary education, no women are permitted to participate in or teach at colleges, and no women are permitted to work. The Taliban's leadership has also reversed advancements in the level of living that Afghans made in the 20 years that followed the U.S. invasion.

According to Halima Kazem-Stojanovic, scholar on Afghanistan, "*Afghan women and girls are facing both the collapse of their rights and dreams and hazards to their fundamental survival*". They are allegedly caught between the atrocities committed by the Taliban and the foreign actions that are escalating the misery of Afghans every day.

The Afghan people's constitutional and democratic rights, which are upheld by the constitution that the government drafted with U.S. assistance, are put at risk by the Taliban. Since taking over, the Taliban have behaved similarly to how they did during their brutal rule in the late 1990s

After years of civil conflict and political unrest, the Taliban administration took power in Afghanistan in 1996. It was primarily made up of Pashtun students from remote regions who opposed the powerful warlords as well as corruption in the nation's capital.

Their reign, which survived until the invasion by the United States in 2001, was founded on the Taliban's stringent interpretation of Sunni Islam. Women's rights, access to school, and employment were severely restricted under the Taliban, who also upheld a stringent moral code. In addition to being forbidden from working outside the home or enrolling in school after the age of eight, women were also required to wear the burqa in public and were not permitted to leave the house without a male family member. The Taliban's conception of Islam, which they believed called for the seclusion and isolation of women, provided justification for these measures.

Human rights organizations and governments alike demanded that the Taliban respect women's rights in response to the international condemnation and criticism of the Taliban's attitudes towards women. The Taliban, however, held faithful to their principles and steadfastly resisted changing their ways. They said that their strategy was required to uphold social order and shield women from the immoral and corrupt effects of contemporary society.

However, the Taliban's treatment of women was not just confined to these laws. Women

who disobeyed Taliban laws faced harsh penalties, such as public beatings, floggings, and killings. The Taliban also targeted women who they believed to be aiding the opposition or who they deemed to be "immoral" with rape and other forms of sexual assault.

The Taliban's repressive policies and acts did not deter Afghan women from speaking up. By founding covert schools, taking part in clandestine political activities, and offering healthcare to women who couldn't afford it, many women fought the Taliban's prohibitions. These women took a life-threatening risk in order to oppose the Taliban's policies and demand their rights.

In the 1990s, Afghanistan's Taliban government implemented a stringent interpretation of Islamic law that had a negative influence on women's lives. Under the Taliban, women had to deal with a variety of societal issues that made it difficult for them to live normal lives and to pursue possibilities for economic independence, healthcare, and education. Taliban practices and policies were marked by repression and violence, which frequently resulted in abuses of women's human rights. Women's basic human rights and freedoms, such as the freedom of movement, access to learning, and equal opportunities in society, were denied at this time. From 1996 to 2001, when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, women were deprived of the majority of their fundamental liberties and rights. Strict Islamic regulations were enacted by the Taliban regime, severely limiting women's access to political, economic, and medical opportunities.

The Taliban forbade women from holding political positions or engaging in political activity. Without a male relative escorting them, women were not permitted to vote or even leave their homes. The Taliban used severe penalties, like as public beatings, incarceration, and execution, to impose these limitations.

Some Afghan women were able to withstand the Taliban's brutal rule and carry on their political activism in spite of these limitations. They set up covert networks, produced covert publications, and convened private conferences to talk about politics. Even some women put their lives in danger to run girls' and women's schools in secret. In the meantime, the social difficulties that women under Taliban control encountered have also been well-documented and are still a hot topic in international human rights discourse. The following challenges puts light on the impact of taliban regime on Afghan society specifically on women in all aspects of life.

5.3 Challenges faced by women under Taliban regime 1.0

5.3.2 Domestic Challenges

Ban on Education

Taliban forbade girls from going to school, and women were not permitted to teach or pursue further education. (Human Rights Watch, 1999)

Girls were prohibited from attending primary and secondary schools by the Taliban, depriving many young women of access to a fundamental education. Women were not permitted to enroll in universities, which prevented them from pursuing further education or career training. It was challenging for females to locate female mentors and role models because the Taliban forbade women from serving as teachers and employees in schools. Women who disobeyed these regulations also endured harsh punishment, including as public beatings, incarceration, and even assassination.

Even if women were able to enroll in school, the standard of instruction was sometimes subpar because of a lack of funding and qualified teachers. (Ahmed, 2001) The Taliban threatened violence against women who tried to obtain an education, including corporal punishment and execution. (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 2015) Furthermore, the Taliban's rules were discriminatory towards women and girls, denying them access to the same educational possibilities as males and boys. (Mukhopadhyay & Higgins, 2012) Even when girls were permitted to attend school, the course offerings were frequently restricted to religious topics and lacked the requisite knowledge and skills for economic empowerment. (United Nations Development Programme, 2003)

Restriction on Movements

Women's independence and freedom were severely restricted because they were not permitted to leave their houses without a male relative. (Ahmed, 2001) As part of the Taliban's rigorous male guardianship system, women were not permitted to leave their houses without a man's permission.

Domestic Violence

The Taliban's rigid gender norms and laws frequently worsened domestic abuse and made it challenging for women to leave dangerous circumstances. (Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan, 2015) Without their consent, the Taliban coerced a large number of women into marriage, frequently at extremely early ages. (Human Rights Watch, 1999) Women

were regularly the targets of physical violence, including beatings, whippings, and public floggings, frequently for trivial offences. In public, women had to cover their entire body with a burqa. If you don't, you risk punishment, which includes physical abuse. (Mukhopadhyay & Higgins, 2012) This time, the Taliban permitted husbands to have many women, which frequently resulted in unjust and abusive marriages. The Taliban also approved of "honor killings," in which male family members killed female relatives for allegedly transgressing social or Islamic rules. Additionally, the Taliban imposed rigid gender norms on both men and women, which frequently resulted in the marginalization and maltreatment of women who disobeyed these roles.

Women and their families were frequently compelled to quit their houses and become refugees as a result of the Taliban's violence and tyranny. (Mukhopadhyay & Higgins, 2012)

Lack of Healthcare and Limited Access to Food

There was a significant paucity of healthcare for women as a result of the Taliban's restriction on male doctors treating female patients. (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 2015) Women frequently had difficulty leaving their homes to go to marketplaces or buy food. Many women and their families became hungry as a result of this lack of access to food. (Ahmed, 2001) In addition, women were severely restricted in their ability to pursue employment outside the home.

5.3.2 Social Challenges

No Political representation

Women are probably not represented in politics under the Taliban government. No women have positions of authority in the Taliban's temporary administration, and the Taliban has a record of rejecting women's involvement in public life. Women's rights and interests may be disregarded, and their opinions and viewpoints may not be heard in decision-making processes.

Concerns regarding the position of women in politics have been raised as a result of the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan. Following the demise of the Taliban government in 2001, women took a significant role in politics, occupying posts in the government and taking part in the democratic process. However, given the Taliban's history of opposing women's rights, it is uncertain whether or not women will play a significant part in politics.

Women were completely barred from taking part in politics during the initial Taliban government. The Taliban felt that women should be restricted to their homes and that political participation by women

was against Islamic values. Women were prohibited from voting, running for office, and holding any kind of political office (AIHRC, 2021). Women in Afghanistan became much more politically active after the Taliban government was overthrown in 2001. Women now have the ability to vote and to compete for politics thanks to the 2004 constitution, and they have been appointed to a number of important government positions, including ministerial and ambassadorial posts. The loya jirga, or grand council, which was crucial in determining Afghanistan's political future, included women as well. (UN Women, 2021).

Punishment for Violations

Taliban lawbreakers were subject to harsh penalties, such as execution, imprisonment, and public beatings. (Human Rights Watch, 1999) The Taliban executed people in front of the public for crimes like murder, adultery, and drug trafficking, frequently in stadiums or other public locations. Additionally, Taliban authorities or religious leaders would frequently publicly beat women who disobeyed the Taliban's clothing code or other guidelines.

Additionally, women who disobeyed the Taliban's restrictions risked being detained, often for years, in filthy, overcrowded conditions.

Strict Dress Code

When women went out in public, they were compelled to put on the burqa, a full-body covering that entirely hid their faces. This was carried out by the Taliban's "moral police," who would severely beat and humiliate women who did not follow the dress code.

5.3.3 Economic Challenges Restriction on Employment

The Taliban forbade women from working outside the home. This legislation significantly limited women's capacity to work and make a contribution to the economy. Many women were unable to obtain schooling or training, which meant they lacked the essential skills and certifications to enter the labor field even if they were permitted to do so. Furthermore, the few professions open to women did not provide many chances for economic progress or financial independence. (UNDP, 2002)

Lack of Education and skills training

As the matter of fact, Taliban administration prohibited education for girls and women, many women lacked the requisite skills and knowledge to enter the labor force, even if they were permitted to do so.

These challenges witnessed an end and a ray of hope for improved rights for women in Afghanistan arose with the fall of the Taliban government in 2001. Women's rights organizations and activists started to appear, and the new Afghan constitution acknowledged the rights of women to political participation, job opportunities, and education. After the Taliban system was overthrown in 2001, the United States played a key role in Afghanistan, notably in terms of advancing and defending women's rights. Women were deprived of fundamental rights like access to employment, healthcare, and education under the Taliban's stringent application of Islamic law.

In order to create a more secure and democratic Afghanistan, the US government and its allies understood how critical it was to empower Afghan women and advance gender equality.

To help create a stable and safe environment in which women's liberties could be respected, the U.S. government significantly increased its financial and military support for the Afghan government and security forces. The U.S. government has played a significant role in advancing law reforms that attempted to protect women from assault and discrimination while also increasing their involvement in politics and the economy.

The adoption of the Afghan Constitution in 2004 was one of the most significant legal reforms that the U.S. administration backed. The Constitution protected gender equality in the law and acknowledged women's rights. A constitution for Afghanistan that included many liberal feminist ideals was endorsed by the US in 2004. The constitution forbade biasness based on gender and recognized gender equality. The right of women to take part in politics, including the ability to vote and run for office, was also guaranteed.

The right of women to work outside the house and to pursue an education was likewise recognized by the constitution. It mandated the state to take positive action to advance gender equality, especially by creating laws and initiatives that would encourage women's involvement in public life. Additionally, the constitution expressly forbade any rule or custom that goes against its values, especially gender equality. As a result, any legislation or practices that stigmatize women or infringe their rights are unconstitutional and ought to be overturned by the courts.

Although adopting a liberal feminist constitution was a step in the right direction for Afghan women, it has not been enough to guarantee gender equality in daily life. Despite the constitutional protections, Afghan women nevertheless encounter many obstacles while trying to exercise their rights and freedoms. Actually, the conditions Afghan women and other women like them are today facing are due to U.S. imperialism, which was brought by this US involvement. Because of its reliance on the imperialist capitalist state, the type of feminism being pushed by the United States, known as liberal feminism, would never be able to liberate the impoverished women. Women's rights and liberties have previously been perceived as being further threatened by the Taliban's recent return to power, and this threat still exists today.

Additionally, the U.S. government backed the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and contributed money to a number of initiatives and programmes that attempted to empower women and advance gender equality. The U.S. government also made a significant effort to support the inclusion of more women in politics. The U.S. government backed the implementation of female representation quotas in the Afghan parliament and supported female candidates by paying and providing training. As a result, from only 27 in 2001 to 68 in 2021, there were significantly more women in the Afghan parliament.

Additionally, programmes focused at enhancing women's access to healthcare and education were financed by the US government. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided financing for efforts targeted at enhancing women's access to healthcare services as well as programmes intended at raising the caliber of education for girls. Additionally, the U.S. government funded initiatives that supported victims of gender-based assault and worked to end it.

5.4 Return of frightening 1990's for Afghan women

However, despite these initiatives, Afghan women continue to face a number of severe obstacles. Concerns concerning the state of women's rights in Afghanistan upon the Taliban's return to power in 2021 have been expressed. Given the Taliban's history with women's rights, there are concerns that the advancements gained by Afghan women during the previous two decades may be squandered. For Afghan women, the Taliban's rise to power represents a return to the terrifying 1990s.

Women in Afghanistan have suffered greatly as a result of the Taliban's invasion of the country in August 2021. Afghan women made considerable improvements in their level of living,

notably in education, healthcare, and political representation, in the two decades following the US invasion of Afghanistan. However, despite these initiatives, Afghan women continue to face a number of severe obstacles. Concerns concerning the state of women's rights in Afghanistan upon the Taliban's return to power in 2021 have been expressed. Given the Taliban's history with women's rights, there are concerns that the advancements gained by Afghan women during the previous two decades may be squandered. For Afghan women, the Taliban's rise to power represents a return to the terrifying 1990s. Women in Afghanistan have suffered greatly as a result of the Taliban's invasion of the country in August 2021. Afghan women made considerable improvements in their level of living, notably in education, healthcare, and participation in politics, in the two decades following the US invasion of Afghanistan.

5.5 Challenges faced by women under Taliban Regime 2.0

The domestic and social struggles faced by Afghan women under the Taliban regime 2.0 are highlighted below as a result of the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law, which has left them with limited opportunities for education, strict dress codes, and marginalization from political representation, among other social issues.

5.5.1 Domestic challenges

Limited Access to Education

Access to education is one of the biggest social obstacles Afghan women suffer under Taliban regime 2.0. Education for Afghan women is under danger under the Taliban regime 2.0. There are worries that the Taliban will implement similar limitations under their new government because they have a record of depriving women and girls the right to an education (AI, 2021). Given the advancements achieved in the education of women in Afghanistan over the past 20 years, this is especially troubling. In Afghanistan, the percentage of women who are literate has increased, from 8% in 2001 to 30% in 2018 (UNESCO, 2021).

Since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August, girls have been forbidden from attending secondary school, but the regime has allowed *women to study in gender-segregated classes* at universities as long as they wear appropriate Islamic garb. The Taliban's most recent attempt to further marginalize women was successful in abolishing all restrictions placed on Afghan women's lives by the government during its initial term in office in the 1990s; as a result, Afghanistan is the only country in the world that forbids girls and women from entering school.

There are worries that women's education may be severely restricted as a result of the Taliban's rigid application of Islamic law, and many girls have already been barred from attending school.

Additionally, women's empowerment on both the social and economic levels depends on their education. Women who pursue education may acquire the information and abilities required to participate in the workforce and give back to their families and communities. Additionally, knowledge may empower women to speak up for their rights and the rights of their families, as well as make well-informed choices about their health, particularly reproductive health. (HRW, 2021).

However, under Taliban administration, Afghan women faced enormous barriers to education, which is essential for economic emancipation. The Taliban has a record of closing girls' schools, and they have previously declared that women will not be allowed to attend universities with males. Women's economic potential will be limited by this educational restriction since they won't have access to the expertise and abilities required to enter the workforce.

There is still hope that the education of women in Afghanistan will proceed despite these obstacles. In promoting women's education and assisting women who want to pursue education, women's organizations and civil society could play a significant role. The continuation of women's education in Afghanistan may also be supported financially and technically by international organizations and donors. (HRW, 2021).

Human rights violations

Widespread human rights crimes committed by the Taliban against women have included violence, forced marriage, and sexual enslavement. According to Amnesty International, the Taliban have executed people extra judicially and forced the abduction of women who have protested their policies. The Taliban's treatment of women, according to the UN, is "fundamentally at odds with internationally recognised human rights." Women in Afghanistan are subjected to severe human rights violations under the Taliban government 2.0, including limitations on their ability to access education, work, and freedom of mobility. In addition, women are vulnerable to abuse and violence, such as forced marriage, domestic abuse, and sexual assault. (AI, 2021).

The suppression of women's access to education in Afghanistan under Taliban rule 2.0 is among the most serious human rights crimes. There are worries that the Taliban will implement similar limitations under their new government because they have historically deprived women

and girls the right to an education. Women are thus prevented from acquiring knowledge and skills, which restricts their ability to advance economically and socially. Taliban rule 2.0 also limits the freedom of movement for women. When leaving the house, women must be escorted by a male relative, and they risk abuse or violence if they appear in public without one (HRW, 2021). This restricts women's access to employment, healthcare, and political participation.

Additionally, there is a significant risk of violence and abuse against women in Afghanistan, including marriage under duress, domestic abuse, and sexual assault. A third of women globally are thought to endure physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021). However, because of the country's continuous conflict and instability, women in Afghanistan are especially at risk for violence and abuse.

5.5.2 Social Challenges

Limited Participation in politics

Concerns are expressed concerning the prospects for women's political engagement in Afghanistan if the Taliban retake control in 2021. Women's rights have historically been denied by the Taliban, who also restrict their involvement in public life. According to the Taliban's understanding of Islamic law, women should be restricted to their homes and have only domestic responsibilities (AIHRC, 2021). In addition, the Taliban has attacked and intimidated women who have previously held positions of authority or participated in politics (Amnesty International, 2021). Women's political involvement under Taliban rule 2.0 is likely to be constrained by a number of circumstances. The Taliban's philosophy is probably averse to women participating in politics, to start. According to the Taliban's version of Islamic law, women participating in public life poses a danger to established social norms and gender roles. The Taliban may use this as justification to limit women's political participation, including their capacity to vote and run for office. (HRW, 2021).

Second, the Taliban's history with women's rights raises questions about their dedication to allowing women to participate in politics. During their former tenure, the Taliban treated women violently, intimidated them, and repressed them. Physical abuse and even execution were meted out to women who resisted Taliban policy or attempted to defend their rights (AIHRC, 2021) The Taliban has also made education a priority, closing girls' schools and preventing women from enrolling in higher education. (UN Women, 2021).

Third, societal and cultural hurdles may restrict women's political engagement. Afghanistan has a strong patriarchal culture, making it difficult for women to participate in public life. If women decide to get involved in politics, they may encounter opposition from their families or communities as well as societal discrimination and stigma (HRW, 2021). This might reduce the number of women who are qualified or eager to participate in politics.

Women in Afghanistan may still have the opportunity to participate in politics, despite the obstacles that the Taliban 2.0 administration has put in their way. Although there is doubt as to whether the Taliban would actually follow through on their promises to be more inclusive and protect women's rights, they have made public declarations to that effect (HRW, 2021). The Taliban have also come under pressure from the international community for recognizing women's rights, especially their freedom to engage in politics (ICG, 2021). Women's organizations and civil society have historically been important in advancing women's rights and encouraging their involvement in politics. Under Taliban rule 2.0, these organizations might still encourage women's political engagement and campaign for their rights (UN Women, 2021). The international community may help assist Afghan women in participating in politics by providing financial and technical support to women's groups and political parties.(UNDP, 2021). Moreover, there are Afghan women who have expressed a desire to participation politics and have the necessary skills and qualifications to do so. These women may seek to engage with the Taliban leadership to advocate for their rights and work towards a more inclusive political system (UN Women, 2021).

In addition, there are Afghan women who have shown a desire to get involved in politics and who meet the essential credentials. To promote their rights and work towards a more inclusive political system, these women can try to interact with the Taliban leadership.

Dress codes and public presence

Afghanistan's women may be subject to stringent dress regulations under the Taliban administration 2.0. The Taliban has a tradition of demanding women to adhere to traditional dress codes, such as donning the burqa or another type of head covering (HRW, 2021). There are worries that the Taliban's new government may enforce similar dress regulations and limit the rights of women to pick their apparel.

Additionally, women are being urged not to work outside of their homes or appear in public unaccompanied by a man. Without the hijab, a headscarf that covers the hair and neck, women are

already forbidden by the Taliban from appearing on television and in public (Al Jazeera, 2021). In addition, there are accusations that women are instructed to cover themselves in regions controlled by the Taliban. (NYT, 2021). These dress regulations restrict women's freedom of expression and choice and violate their rights. In addition, women may find it difficult or risky to engage in public life when there are rigorous dress regulations in place.

Lack of Property Rights

Women in Afghanistan have always faced considerable barriers to property ownership. Women may not even be allowed to own property under Taliban control. In the past, the Taliban has prohibited women from owning property; under Taliban rule 2.0, they might continue to do so. This will make it harder for women to earn money from owning property and may make it harder for them to get credit or loans. Women in Afghanistan are having a very difficult time accessing and protecting their property rights under the Taliban government. Human Rights Watch said in 2021 that women in Afghanistan have historically experienced discrimination when trying to acquire and own property, and that the Taliban's recent control of the nation is expected to make matters worse.

Women's rights, particularly their right to acquire and pass on property, have historically been restricted by the Taliban's rigorous application of Islamic law. The group's recent recommendation that women stay at home for their own protection also prompts worries about the possible effects on women's capacity to exercise their property rights because they might not be able to get to court or meet with attorneys.

In addition, the Taliban's capture of important infrastructure and cities as well as the implementation of new trade and commerce restrictions may cause many women and their families to lose their possessions. For instance, the Taliban's new strategy could put women who run their own companies or agricultural property at risk of losing their assets. In general, the lack of legitimate property rights for women under the Taliban system is alarming, and the issue will need constant attention and intervention from the international community.

5.5.3 Economic Challenges

Limited restrictions on Employment

Women in Afghanistan may experience considerable occupational limitations under the Taliban regime 2.0. Historically, the Taliban have prohibited women from working outside the

home; it is uncertain if this regulation will be upheld under Taliban rule 2.0. Even if women are permitted to work, they might still have a difficult time getting a job. Finding occupations that provide a decent wage for women may be difficult in a society where men predominate in the workforce. Women's employment options may be restricted as a result of the Taliban's severe dress code because they may be obliged to wear full burqas, which can make it challenging to do some tasks.

Women's access to job and educational opportunities has historically been restricted by the Taliban (Amnesty International, 2021). There are worries that the Taliban's new government may enact similar limitations and restrict women's capacity to work outside the home. Women are already prohibited from working in the administration and the media by the Taliban (NYT, 2021). In addition, there are stories of women being forced to quit their work in a number of Taliban-controlled industries.

Women's rights are violated by these work constraints, which also restrict their capacity to support themselves and their loved ones and participate in public life. Women's organizations and the general public should promote the rights of women to employment, education, and other possibilities. In order to protect women's liberties in Afghanistan and make sure that women are not exposed to discriminatory legislation, international organizations and donors may also be extremely important.

It is significant to remember that economic empowerment and employment for women are essential elements of gender equality and sustainable development. As a result, the UN and other organizations have started a flash appeal for Afghanistan that includes assistance with women's economic development and job prospects. (UN Women, 2021).

Economic hardship

Women are probably going to experience economic difficulties under the Taliban government. The Afghan economy has collapsed under the Taliban's rule, resulting in increased food costs and a shortage of products. Families may struggle to meet their basic necessities if women that work outside the home struggle to make a living.

In truth, the Taliban government in Afghanistan has long persecuted women, and now that they have recently taken control of the government, women are once more dealing with severe economic difficulties. In Afghanistan, women face considerable obstacles to economic

involvement, including limited access to higher education and training, unfair laws and practices, and limitations on their mobility and capacity to work outside the home, according to a UN Women report published in 2021. These difficulties will probably be made worse by the Taliban government's history of limiting women's access to education and work prospects. Since there are little chances for promotion, many women face the possibility of losing their employment or being compelled to work in low-paying, unstable positions.

Additionally, there are worries about the potential effects on women's economic engagement in light of the Taliban's recent declaration that women should remain at home for their own safety. The Taliban's restrictions on women's freedom of movement and capacity to work outside the home, as stated in a recent assessment by the International Crisis Group (2021), might cause a considerable loss of skill and production in the Afghan economy.

Limited Access to Financial Services

Economic empowerment requires access to financial services, but historically Afghan women have faced considerable barriers to obtaining these services, including bank accounts, loans, and coverage. Women may not have any access to financial services at all under Taliban control. Women have always been prohibited from working in banks, therefore the Taliban might put similar limitations on women's utilization of financial services. This will make it more difficult for women to launch their own companies or make educational investments for themselves or their children. (World Bank, 2021).

Further limiting their access to financial institutions are likely the Taliban's limitations on women's mobility and capacity to work outside the home. Banks might be hesitant to lend money to women who are unable to evacuate their homes without a male guardian, for instance, and women might not be able to use financial services in regions where the Taliban is most powerfully in charge. (UN Women, 2021).

The following table shows a comparison between the Taliban regime 1.0 and 2.0

Challenges faced by women under Taliban Regime 1.0	Challenges faced by women under Taliban Regime 2.0
Domestic Challenges	

Ban on Education Restriction on movements Domestic Violence Lack of Healthcare and Limited Access to Food	Limited access to Education Human rights violations
Social Challenges	
No participation in politics Punishments for violence Strict Dress code	Limited Political Participation Dress codes and public appearance Lack of property rights
Economic Challenges	
Restriction of employment Lack of education and skills training	Limited restriction of employment Economic hardship and limited financial services

TABLE 5.1 COMAPRISON OF CHALLENGES BETWEEN TALIBAN REGIMES 1.0 AND 2.0

5.6 International Condemnation

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Taliban rule experienced considerable international censure for its human rights breaches, notably against women and religious minorities. The Taliban faced financial sanctions and diplomatic exclusion from many countries (Rubin, 2019).

Following the Taliban's re-election in 2021, there was considerable worldwide condemnation of their human rights violations, especially their treatment of women and girls. The United Nations, the European Union, and other individual countries have urged the Taliban to uphold human rights and women's and girls' rights. (The Guardian, 2021) The international community denounced human rights crimes committed by both Taliban governments, notably against women. The United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution in 1998 denouncing the Taliban's maltreatment of Afghan women and calling for their rights to be protected. Similarly, numerous countries and organizations denounced the Taliban's conduct, particularly their abuse of women and girls, during the second Taliban regime in 2021. In August 2021, the United Nations Security Council issued a resolution asking for an immediate cessation of all violence in Afghanistan, including violence against women and children. The positive impact of these

condemnations, however, yet to be seen, whereas the Taliban maintains authority throughout Afghanistan.

5.7 Review and reflections

The Taliban regime's treatment of women in Afghanistan has been widely documented and condemned by human rights organizations and governments worldwide. Under both the first regime, which lasted from 1996 to 2001, and the current regime, which began in August 2021, women in Afghanistan have faced severe restrictions on their rights and freedoms, including limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. The treatment of women under both Taliban regimes in Afghanistan has been nothing short of horrific. The oppressive and restrictive measures imposed on women have deprived them of their basic human rights and freedoms.

During the first regime, women were forced into isolation, with limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. They were not allowed to leave their homes without a male chaperone, making it nearly impossible for them to participate in public life. The Taliban's brutal enforcement of their strict moral codes further restricted women's ability to express themselves and participate in cultural activities.

Although some progress was made following the first regime's overthrow in 2001, women still faced discrimination and violence. Women's rights activists were targeted and killed, and violence against women, including sexual assault and domestic violence, remained pervasive. With the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, women are once again facing the same challenges they did under the first regime. The Taliban has already forced women to quit their jobs and expelled girls from schools. Women are also being told to stay inside their homes and not to leave without a male chaperone. The fear of violence and abuse is one of the biggest concerns for women under the current Taliban regime. There are already reports of women being abducted and forced into marriage by Taliban fighters. Women who speak out against the Taliban or try to resist their rule may also face severe punishment.

The international community must take action to support women's rights in Afghanistan. The Taliban must be held accountable for their treatment of women and must be pressured to respect their rights and freedoms. Humanitarian aid must be provided to those in need, and efforts must be made to ensure that women have access to education, healthcare, and employment.

It is also essential to amplify the voices of Afghan women and support their activism. Women's rights organizations have been advocating for change and fighting for the rights of Afghan women for decades. These organizations must be supported and given a platform to speak out against the Taliban's oppression. The challenges faced by women under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan are severe and widespread. The Taliban's oppressive and restrictive measures have deprived women of their basic human rights and freedoms.

It is crucial that the international community takes action to support women's rights in Afghanistan and hold the Taliban accountable for their actions as Afghan women have persisted in defying authority and fighting for their rights in the face of these obstacles. Often at considerable personal cost, women's rights organizations and activists have been instrumental in advancing women's rights and promoting women's empowerment. There is an urgent need for ongoing campaigns for women's rights and freedoms because the situation for women in Afghanistan is still very tough. And, women have been seen actively participating in order to get their equal rights. The next chapter will highlight active participation of women in all sphere of lives while keeping a focus on efforts that are being made to improve women's participation in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER-6: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN (2021)

6.1 Introduction

Among the most challenging places for women identity and mere survival, around the world right now is Afghanistan. Women's rights are in danger of becoming politically orphaned as the international community assists Afghanistan in fighting poverty and the breakdown of its health service, neglecting women rights. Would foreign actors encourage the resuscitation of institutions and political processes that might lay the groundwork for a complete and robust, even though funders have provided financial assistance to avert an imminent tragedy in face of women's rights discrimination? Foreign assistance contributors ought to reconsider how they approach gender issues in state-building AND PEACE MAKING politics. Women's capacity to influence power relations, political systems, as well as the connection between the state and its citizens is constrained when they have restricted access to government entities. Afghan women experience widespread political, social as well as economic insecurity, educational inequity, sexual abuse and assault, and poor health, yet when given strong economic and vocational skills, women may alter their life no matter the circumstances. As per this research, there are more incentives for women to mobilize in post-conflict situations. The Taliban's ideology and institutional impediments, however, hinder women's participation in state-building efforts as long as Afghanistan is still in a state of conflict.

Afghan women and girls were prohibited from engaging in civic life, employment, or schooling during the Taliban administration in the 1990s. After the Taliban were overthrown in year 2001, Afghanistan made considerable strides towards advancing women's rights and political engagement, and the Constitution of 2004 now ensures that women will have two positions in the Lower House of the country's National Assembly, one from each province. (Nawabi, 2003). As a result, women held 27% of the available seats. Ten years later, Afghanistan implemented its first WPS National Action Plan with the objective of enhancing women's effective involvement in elections while also raising women's active engagement in decision-making as well as executive levels of the civil service, as well as in security, peace, and reunification. Most lately, four women made up the 21-member group representing the Afghan government in the 2020 intra-Afghan peace negotiations.

Notwithstanding the Taliban's assurances that they will be upheld in accordance with

sharia law, the concern to women's rights is evident following their seizure of Afghanistan in August. The Taliban has used temporary security protocols since reclaiming control to prohibit women from working and postpone their entry to government schools and institutions. With the exception of those whose roles cannot be replaced by men, female workers of the Kabul municipal government have been instructed to remain at home. (Murray, 2012)

The Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, which has a reputation for upholding a narrow interpretation of Islamic law, was also installed in Afghanistan by the Taliban in place of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was established in 2001 to advance the rights of Afghan women.

This mismatch between the Taliban's call with reporters, dialogues over press conference and its internal decision-making on women raises more questions about whether the organization is only lip-service to women's rights in order to gain global recognition while actively ignoring them in practice.

Any hopes of the Taliban becoming a political force that welcomes women are absurd. Yet, recognising gender disparity as political and being aware of the various obstacles that prevent women from entering politics, particularly in unstable nations, can help donors give subtle participation. Women, along with them are seen to be backing themselves and standing for their own rights in Afghanistan, now.

The constraints imposed on women by the new Afghan government are intense, to a certain extent. The gains Afghan women have gained over the last 20 years are being reversed. Everything from access to the employment market to abortion rights to enrollment in schools. Women lose the liberties they have acquired. Women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan keep fighting for their fundamental rights while still having to contend with significant gender-based limitations.

6.1 Participation of Afghan women under current Taliban era

Women's participation in Afghanistan has been limited due to cultural and political factors. During the Taliban regime (1996-2001), women were banned from attending school, working outside their homes, and participating in public life. After the fall of the Taliban, women's

participation in society improved gradually, but they still face significant challenges. (Nawabi, 2003)

Following are several significant challenges that the participating women face in Afghanistan:

Education: According to the World Bank, only 30% of Afghan girls attend primary school, and only 15% attend secondary school.

Employment: Women face significant barriers to employment, including discrimination, harassment, and lack of access to education and training.

Political representation: Despite constitutional guarantees, women remain underrepresented in government, with only 28% of seats in parliament held by women.

Violence: Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous places for women, with high rates of domestic violence, forced marriage, and honor killings. (Murray, 2012)

Efforts are being made to improve women's participation in Afghanistan, including the establishment of quotas for women in government positions and increased funding for education and training programs. However, progress is slow, and many challenges remain.

6.2 Women engagement despite Talib threat

In addition to influencing personal lives, new gender regulations also reshape organizations and civilization. At the moment, women have little standing to sue if their rights are abused. The Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and several civil society organizations, among others, were important institutions for the defense and empowerment of women that were lately dissolved. (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003) Even parliament, the most important venue for female representation, has been disbanded. Zuhra Zaheer, Cordaid's Gender and GBV coordinator in Kabul says that; in practice, we have less access points to justice and less opportunities to participate in public and civil life than ever before at a time when our fundamental rights to speak, vote, labor, and move freely are cruelly restricted. But, we will not yield.

Yet, regardless of the challenges they face, Afghan women have not surrendered. Zaheer refers to not only herself and other young, literate Afghan women in Afghanistan but also the larger

network and group of women's activists nationwide. Included in this are the local Provincial Women's Networks.

6.3 Afghan activists today use every inch of freedom they have

In actuality, this elaborate system of Afghan women's activists has played a significant role in the country's development towards gender equity during the past 20s years. Before the Taliban took control in August 2021, they violently fought for their rights in a peaceful manner. In five separate provinces, we questioned five of them to find out how they were thriving, whether they were still operating, and how they were handling the present limitations. We don't reveal their identities, connections, or entities, nor do we reveal their faces for security purposes.

In the Afghan province of Herat, it was observed that women who work for the government are prohibited from going to work and are required to remain at their places until further warning. One of the active women campaigner told that many women have left the nation, particularly professors and intellectuals. She further said that she along with other activists is not staying at home; they are still out there, attempting to arrange themselves. They used to support women in getting jobs in government and governmental institutions, but that is no longer possible. Nonetheless, they still do visit workplaces where they congregate with other women and female activists. Indeed, their inability to start outdoor activities is due to a lack of funding. Yet, working together at least offers emotional support. And at least afghan women are aware of where to find help.

6.4 Women participation in Afghanistan:

The full and equitable engagement of women in Afghanistan's political and public spheres is crucial to resolving the nation's various issues and must be viewed as a safeguard of their human rights, UN experts* stated on 15 September 2021. (Allen, 2020) The academic professionals highlighted women's right to labour, education, housing, and health, as well as their freedom of expression and nondiscriminatory participation in cultural life. "We are highly worried about the quick rollback of women's rights on prominent display to the world, especially in the field of women's public life and politics," the professionals said in an assertion. "The Taliban's creation of a predominantly male interim management and the encroachment of constraints on women in public spaces are particularly alarming." (Ghaedi, 2022)

"Such backsliding is not only in complete opposition to the country's international obligations and in clear violation of the country's foreign legal duties, but it is also untenable and detrimental to the country's overall advancement and peace-building process," they stated.

Afghanistan is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which mandates states to abolish prejudice against women in the political and public spheres. It also states that women must have equal privileges for engaging in the creation and execution of government decisions, as well as the opportunity to assume public office and undertake official services at all levels of government, including the executive, judicial, and administrative branches, as well as other legislating and key decision-making authorities.

"While Afghanistan undergoes radical transformations, the State remains obligated under international human rights law to protect the human rights of women," they stated. (Dupont, 2022) "The Taliban in possession of the region are bound to uphold and preserve human rights, since the duty to respect, protect, and implement human rights responsibilities is not contingent on the political, economic, or cultural systems of the state in question."

The experts stated that Afghan women have proved that they are active participants in reconciliation and recovery efforts. "Now, they are at the vanguard of the rallies calling for fairness and liberty, defiantly disregarding verbal assault threats and harsh bashings," they stated. In Afghanistan, women in politics are attacked for a variety of reasons, including their gender. To dissuade and limit their political participation, they are being assaulted.

The international community must heed to the views of Afghan women, who have every right to seek a favorable atmosphere for their full and equal involvement in the country's public and political life, as well as a say in shaping the country's future.

The slipping back and backtracking on women's and girls' rights in periods of change that we have experienced in other locations, particularly when women are sidelined from decision-making, is occurring in Afghanistan," analysts warned. "The preservation of the human rights of women and girls must be at the center of all laws, regulations, political systems, and institutional practices.

This egregious marginalization of women from Afghanistan's public and political life must be remedied immediately at this critical time." The priority of women's human rights to parity must

triumph above purportedly 'conventional', historic, religious, or cultural interpretations or sentiments that are incompatible with their human rights."

Afghan women's rights campaigner Mahbouba Seraj told the United Nations Security Council on January 26, 2022, "While it might seem appear that the international community has given up on Afghan women, we have not We need your support."

6.5 Role of Afghan activists: Afghan women Activists' Commitment to staying firm

6.6.1 Activist in herat

As for myself, I am determined to staying here and supporting other women", states an **activist** in Herat. She further went on promising that she would keep fighting for the rights of women in Afghanistan. As long as the law is followed and no rules are broken, afghan women will continue to fight for themselves and the other women's rights. The only chance for women is in themselves and therefore their support is needed, the activist cleared. **"Who, if not us, will reach out to them?"**

6.6.2 Activist in Kandahar

In the district of Kandahar, restrictions are more difficult. "We're not even allowed to function as an entity. In Kandahar, all civil society organizations have been shut down by the authorities. Also, I am not even permitted to visit state offices since I am a woman. Women activists are unable to even interact in person. We only have Messaging app, claims a women's rights activist in Kandahar province's southwest.

“Despite the limitations, we do whatever we can”

But, she only has single opening of chance. Not with her company, but rather as a powerful and well-respected woman in her community. "I am permitted to assist ladies who are victims of domestic abuse. There have been no institutional bodies to assist abused women, so they have nowhere else to turn. Hence, notwithstanding the restrictions placed, we are doing everything we can to support them and assist in resolving such family matters.

Circumstances have also altered in Paktya, in southern Afghanistan. Women's rights activism played a significant role in our work. Currently, visiting government departments is exceedingly difficult. Public hearings cannot be scheduled any more. Hence, to keep in touch, we use WhatsApp. Local government representatives occasionally do consent to meet with us and talk about problems, but not in front of the press. They face significant stress from senior officials,

according to a Paktya-based activist. Many of the ladies have since lost their employment and their income source. They are now making an effort to make up the shortfall by employing all of their skills, she continues.

We assist females who are older than grade 6 and are unable to attend school in locating alternative educational institutions so they can finish what they are studying.

She notes, like her colleague from Kandahar, that her organization is the sole resource for assistance available to women in Paktya because the Human Rights Commission and several civil society organisations have all vanished.

Now is the time to speak out and act

In Kabul, a coworker confirms her sentiments. "Nations and institutions across the world must stand out, take action, as well as offer assistance. The time has come.

Zarqa Yaftali, a well-known Afghan activist, stated in an interview with Cordaid less than two years ago, when peace negotiations with the Taliban had begun: "Peace is not the disappearance of conflict. In order for there to be no more war and also for justice to triumph, peace must be established. The fact that women's and young people's basic liberties and rights aren't just guaranteed by our law but also by our civilization, is an essential component of fairness.(Human rights news, 2022)

We can contribute to the continuation of that peace goal in Afghanistan by demonstrating unity with and support for Afghan women. Soon after, Zuhra Zaheer departed Cordaid for factors unrelated to the current political climate in Afghanistan. The vacant Gender and GBV Coordinator role is being filled by Cordaid Afghanistan. The experts stated that Afghan women had shown themselves to be active participants in the efforts of establishing peace and healing. They claimed that, despite verbal assault threats and harsh whippings, they were leading today's demonstrations for equality and freedom. In Afghanistan, political women are attacked for a variety of reasons, notably their sexuality. Aggression is used against them to deter and limit their political involvement.

The international world must pay attention to Afghan female experiences as they justifiably call for a secure and peaceful atmosphere that will allow them to freely and equally participate in the public and political life of their state and play a part in determining its future. The specialists

continued, "The regression and falling back on women's and girls' rights in periods of transition that we have experienced in other areas when women are removed from decision-making—is being reproduced in Afghanistan. "All legislation, regulations, political procedures, as well as institutional arrangements must be based on the principle that women's and girls' human dignity must be protected.

At this crucial time, this blatant isolation of women from Afghanistan's life in politics and society must be immediately corrected. In any alleged conflict with what are claimed to be 'historical,' institutional, religious beliefs, or social mores that are incompatible with their human rights, the priority of women's human rights to equity must triumph.

6.6 International women's day, 8th March, 2023

On International Women's Day, we must reflect on the situation of women's equal liberation in Afghanistan and its implications for the global fight for gender equality. (The congress U.S., 2001) For International Women's Day, women's rights are not only being attacked in Afghanistan. But, the rapidity and breadth of the eradication of women's rights in Afghanistan should serve as a reminder to women throughout the world about the vulnerability of development towards equality, how quickly it may be reversed, and the extent to which few people will defend it. Everyone should be in sympathy with Afghan women; their fight is a fight for the rights of women everywhere. (Barr, 2022)

From 1996 until 2001, when they ruled Afghanistan, the Taliban were known for abusing women's rights. In light of this, when the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, Afghan women's rights advocates were extremely doubtful that the new authorities would protect women's rights regardless their promises.

The campaigners warned that the Taliban would retaliate violently against women and girls, and that the tyranny would worsen with time. It seems. they were right after all.

In less than 7 years since seizing power, the Taliban have shuttered most girls' secondary schools; created barriers to women and girls seeking higher education; prohibited women from most paid permanent jobs; eliminated the Ministry of Women's Affairs; confined feminist rights, including preventing them from traveling abroad alone; disassembled Afghanistan's system that Provided protection against female violence; and created barriers to women and girls obtaining health care. But, the international response has been modest. Several nations boast of a "feminist

foreign policy. “Yet, the international response to these events has failed to be on urgent basis and there is few evidence of an unified reach to protect the rights of Afghan women and girls. In contrast, countries appeased the Taliban by dispatching all-male delegations to meet with them.

6.7 WHO advocates afghan women on women’s international day?

On International Women's Day, March 8, 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) in Afghanistan recognizes the dedication, resiliency, and courage of women health professionals who persist to provide quality healthcare to Afghans, particularly women and girls, despite the harsh national backdrop.

Afghanistan continues to be one of the largest and most severe humanitarian issue on a global scale. In 2023, a total OF 28.3 million people, or over two-thirds of the inhabitants, will seek humanitarian as well as protection aid, with over 17 million Afghans requiring quality healthcare. In Afghanistan, women and children remain to be disenfranchised and are at an increased risk for poor survival rates, especially when it comes to issues of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health. (MASSRALI, 2023)

According to Dr. Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan, "women health professionals in Afghanistan endure great hurdles, nevertheless still keep reaching women and girls wherever they are." "From the moment a child is born, to vaccinating them against illness, to delivering maternity health services, to healing them when they are ill, female health care professionals are an essential component of everyday life. Today and every day, we honour their valiant efforts to safeguard health and assist the disadvantaged." (WHO Afghanistan Country Office, 2019)

Mrs. Malika Sultani has been a nurse for seventeen years at the Injil Community Health Center in Herat Province, where she has been in charge of providing health care to pregnant women in the community. She states, "A literate woman could contribute significantly in giving lifesaving health treatments." Women serve as a link between households, communities, and health care facilities, fostering public confidence, saving lives, and decreasing maternal deaths.

Women serve as a link between households, communities, and health care facilities, fostering public confidence, saving lives, and decreasing maternal deaths. International Women's Day is a significant and historic day for women, particularly those who are denied their personal, political, and cultural rights, so that their voices may be acknowledged by governments and the global

community. Mrs. Atifa Andisha, a physician at the Guzarah District Hospital in Herat, finds fulfilment in her work as a medical professional. "As a female physician, I work alongside my male colleagues to provide health care to those who require it, the majority of whom are women. Every day for almost two decades, I have experienced the remarkable strength of women. In response to discrimination and strife, women adapt their life and assist their neighborhoods. On International Women's Day, we honour women and call on our national and international communities to respect women's equal human rights. (MASSRALI, 2023)

Mrs. Latifa Sakandari of Herat Province is a nutritional nurse who promotes for the education of women and girls. Without knowledgeable women and girls, we will not have a civilized nation and a healthy community. We would like to see all Afghan women in the workforce and all Afghan girls in education. They should possess their human rights and be permitted to participate in academia and the workforce.

In Afghanistan, WHO and its collaborators serviced 18.1 million individuals who required health assistance in 2022, half of whom were women. In order to boost the role of women in the expansion of humanitarian response in the country, WHO has tripled the number of women in its workforce compared to previous years. Dr. Dapeng says, "We strive to enhance the number of women in WHO and are dedicated to offering chances for women health workers."

WHO provides support and assistance for empowering women and girls, including advocacy for medical treatment and education. On International Women's Day, we honour the contributions of female health professionals.

WHO's work in advancing the role of women in the health sector is currently supported by: (WHO Afghanistan Country Office, 2019)

- Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF),
- Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance – UASID
- European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO),
- Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) and
- World Bank (WB).

Ministerial Statement on the situation for women in Afghanistan on International Women's Day

The following is a statement given by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the High Representative of the European Union, among others.

They state that on International Women's Day, March 8, 2023, they are unified in bringing for urgent action in Afghanistan, which has suffered one of the greatest drops in the regard for the fundamental rights of women and girls over the previous one and a half year. Access to secondary school, further education, public and political venues, and job prospects have been restricted to Afghan women and girls. The majority of support services for survivors of female abuse have been eliminated. Without a reversal, the adverse impacts of these heinous policies would be catastrophic and permanent for Afghanistan's economy and society; these consequences will be experienced by every Afghan. Full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, as well as their equal and impactful involvement in society, are not only desirable ends in themselves, but also necessary conditions for Afghanistan's economic and political development, social cohesion, stability, and peace.

We acknowledge collectively the tremendous bravery of Afghan women and girls. Despite increasing Taliban constraints and coercion, they continue to provide for their families and communities. We salute the several Afghan communities and individuals who have courageously and staunchly defended Afghan women and girls.

We support the Afghan people's demands for women and girls to have unhindered opportunity for excellent learning in schools and universities, as well as the unhindered ability of women to work in every sectors, including humanitarian aid and basic services delivery, the equal and fair and thorough delivery of which is impossible without women's full participation.

We take note of the December 2022 proclamation by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that prohibiting women and girls from gaining educational opportunity violates Islamic law. Millions of people are on the verge of hunger in Afghanistan, which is undergoing one of the world's greatest humanitarian catastrophes. The Taliban's edict prohibiting women from working for national and international nonprofit groups, as well as the effects of this mandate on some

government organizations, are already jeopardizing the ability of humanitarian organizations to achieve the more than 28 million Afghans who rely on humanitarian aid for survival. (Barr, 2022)

We recognize the United Nations' vital role in the delivery of humanitarian aid. In addition to substantially impeding Afghanistan's desperately needed economic recovery, preventing women and girls from obtaining an education and preventing women from working in critical areas will prohibit women from acquiring an education as well as from working in those sectors, respectively.

Our assistance for the Afghan people is especially important because we fear that the Taliban may enact additional restrictions on the civil, political, economic, cultural, and social rights of women and girls, which will have a devastating impact on the foreseeable future of Afghanistan and its people.

Together, we ask the Taliban to regard all Afghans, Honour their obligations to the Afghan people and the international community, and reverse all policies and practices that hinder the fulfillment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls.

6.8 Review and reflections

The restrictions imposed on women by the new Afghan government have their severity. The gains made by Afghan women over the past two decades are being reversed. Everything from employment market access to abortion rights to school enrollment. The liberties that women acquired, are slipping away. nevertheless, the women of present Taliban-controlled Afghanistan continue to fight for their fundamental rights despite facing significant gender-based restrictions.

As long as Afghanistan remains in a state of conflict, the ideology and institutional impediments of the Taliban prevent women from participating in state-building efforts. Cultural and political factors in Afghanistan have limited women's participation. Yet, despite the obstacles they encounter, Afghan women have not given up. Zaheer, the Afghan activist, not only alludes to herself and other young, literate Afghan women in Afghanistan, but also to a larger network and group of women's activists across the country, who utilize every inch of freedom they can get their hands on. In various cities of Afghanistan, including Herat, Kabul, and Kandahar, activists are advancing. Even this year, on the 8th of March, women's international day, there was a strong showing of participation. While significant progress has been made in advancing women's rights and opportunities in Afghanistan over the past two decades, the situation remains precarious as a result of the recent Taliban takeover. The future of women in Afghanistan will depend on a variety

of factors, including the policies of the new government, the efforts of civil society groups and international organizations, and the international community's continued support. There are also other several programs that are presently working for women progression in Afghanistan, run by the female activists and other participants, for instance, 'Women for Women International' program.

Syncing with the previous chapter's detailing over the challenges faced by afghan women during the Talib reign, this chapter has included the active participation for the promotion of women rights by various activists and their serving organizations. Though challenges have been underway but the active role of participation to build strong afghan women has led to portray a defensive approach of women in Afghanistan, this time. The next chapter will conclude this paper's debate.

CHAPTER-7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Conclusion

Afghanistan is a landlocked, multi ethnic nation in south-central Asia. Afghanistan since a long time has been a war torn region. War crimes and other significant human rights abuses were still being committed with impunity by parties to the Afghan conflict. Under Taliban leadership, the meagre advancements gained in increasing women's rights were abruptly undone. The Taliban severely restricted people's rights to free speech and assembly. Women and girls have essentially been excluded from Afghani social sphere in the year after the Taliban assumed control of the country. The process of resolving gender inequality progressed, the requirement to acknowledge the inherent injustice that women experience in male-dominated societies became a need to be recognized.

In 2001, Gender equality became the main focus as Feminism expanded in scope. Feminism was the center of focus after the demise of Taliban government in 2001. These challenges faced by women under the Taliban regime are well encapsulated under the feminist theory. Feminism is the idea that women should have complete social, economic, and political equality. A prominent and influential component of feminist ideology that has contributed significantly to the advancement of equality and the rights of women is liberal feminism. Women's exclusion from organizational and decision-making procedures has been made clear by feminist IR theory. The basic objective of liberal feminism, also referred to as mainstream feminism, is to achieve gender equality in the context of liberal democracy. There have been three waves of feminist action since this movement's inception in the latter part of the nineteenth century, each building on the successes of the one before it. By promoting women's political and educational rights, early feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill lay the foundation for liberal feminist philosophy.

The goal of the first wave of feminism, which evolved in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was to give women political and legal representation. During this time, liberal feminists fought for women's suffrage and the repeal of laws and practices that limited women's ability to fully participate in society. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are notable individuals from this time period who were instrumental in the American women's suffrage campaign. Feminists fought vehemently for their sacred right to vote. As a result, the First Women's Rights Convention

was founded in 1848. Due in part to the work of suffragettes like Susan B. and Carrie Catt, the 19th Amendment, which primarily deals with the right to vote, was enacted in 1920.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of the second wave of feminism, which concentrated on societal and cultural problems such as reproductive rights, discrimination in the workplace, and the devaluation of women in the media and in advertisements. During this time, liberal feminists sought to enhance women's rights through legislative and policy changes. Women's rights problems were brought to the forefront of debate during this time by feminist activists like Betty Friedan, who also influenced the cultural and political environment of the era.

The largest obstacle to third-wave feminism, according to this theory, was the overall lack of appreciation for the achievements of second-wave feminists and the significance of feminism.

The third wave of feminism, which emphasizes intersectionality and inclusivity, began to emerge in the 1990s and is still going strong today. This movement aims to establish a more varied and inclusive feminist movement by acknowledging the particular issues encountered by women from various races, sex identities, and socioeconomic origins. Third wave feminists portray their movement as more comprehensive and racially mixed than the second wave. As per Heywood, third wave of feminism is basically known as a "form of social inclusion".

During this time, liberal feminists fought to address a variety of concerns, including the female pay gap, employment discrimination, and violence based on gender. Additionally, the liberal feminism perspective is used to examine the violent and conflict-ridden regions, like as Afghanistan. Afghanistan, a country racked by strife, was introduced to liberal feminism by the capitalist bloc. The events of 9/11 and the accompanying "War on Terror" had ramifications for the United States' liberal feminist movement. The war in Afghanistan and the subsequent global wars aroused serious concerns about the link between feminism and militarism, as well as the role of the United States in supporting women's rights. Post 9/11 policies that encapsulated the policies of George W. Bush administration that may be considered as supportive to feminist values, especially when it comes to the area of violence against women, has been talked over.

The significance of Afghan women's full participation in all aspects of life for the future and development of the nation has been emphasized. By comprehending the history of women in Afghanistan and drawing lessons from it, it is examined how women can be placed in a more advantageous position for the future. Women's participation in politics and other aspects of society

increases social responsiveness, democracy, and transparency while decreasing corruption. The oppressed Afghan society, the status of women and their survival in various eras of governance, and the status of women in Afghanistan's constitutions detail that women still can up bring themselves and that the role of social activists can be essential.

7.1.1 Status of women in the post-2001 era

The Afghan women had relished a privileged period of women during the stationing of the United States. The situation of Afghan women has been analyzed and it is witnessed that it improved during the 2000s, particularly in major cities, but those living in the nation's remote regions continued to face numerous obstacles. Afghan legislation under United States invasion allowed women to run motorbikes and other automobiles. Airlines had welcomed Afghan women in a variety of positions during the period. A number of human rights advocates, including Human Rights Watch and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, had also voiced alarm about the state of women's rights in Afghanistan. The United Nations reported a 20% increase in violence against women in 2013, primarily due to the acceptance of domestic violence in traditional Afghan society and a misunderstanding of religion. In February 2014, Afghanistan passed a law that restricts the government's ability to compel certain family members to testify against domestic violence. A considerable number of Afghan women participated in the parliament after United States took over in 2001, and several of them were appointed as ministers, as well. The significance of Afghan women's full participation in all aspects of life for the future and development of the nation has been emphasized. Games were all open to Afghan women. Afghanistan conducted its first marathon while it was under American occupation

But unluckily, the de stationing of the United States brought back the era of dismay. The suffering and marginalization of women during the second Taliban takeover is investigated to conclude the new challenges of the new age. The United States only obtained assurances from the Taliban that militant groups would possibly refrain from attacking the United States. Executing terrorist attacks against U.S. and ally targets and assets. In exchange for the pullout and complete withdrawal of its forces by the summer of 2021, the Taliban have assured the United States that they will enable the territory under Taliban control to be used for terrorist attacks. The Afghan populace anticipates that they will fight against constitutional and societal changes that would significantly diminish the official status that Afghan women have acquired over the past two decades. However, not all rural Afghan women readily identify with these urban class women, nor do they all believe that urban

aristocratic women speak specifically for them. Even if it means forgoing some official women's rights that they cannot currently enjoy, the inclinations of these rural women lean significantly more powerfully towards a desire for peace and harmony.

7.1.2 Women rights' suffrage during Taliban regime

The Taliban's recent return to power in Afghanistan has brought attention to the continued difficulties Afghan women continue to endure. Women's rights and freedoms are already subject to harsh restrictions under the Taliban system, which has largely undone the progress gained in previous years. The Taliban 2.0 has persisted in placing limitations on women's social activities, including ordering them to cover their hair with a headscarf called a hijab and forbidding them from taking part in sports. According to reports, women face substantial societal stigmatization and are frequently seen as second-class citizens. Additionally, the Taliban 2.0 has stated that they will permit girls to attend school, although reports indicate that many institutions are still closed or run under stringent guidelines, making it challenging for girls to enroll. In addition, there are still questions about the Taliban's understanding of Sharia law and their position on girls' education, raising fears that they would resume their old practices and restrict girls' access to education.

7.1.3 Limitations on active participation of women

Afghan women's life and well-being have been severely affected by the social, political, and educational obstacles they experienced throughout Taliban regimes 1.0 and 2.0. Women's rights and freedoms have significantly declined as a result of the Taliban's rigorous application of Sharia law and attitude towards women, which has also restricted women's prospects for political engagement, education, and social advancement.

Despite claims that they will permit women to engage in society, the Taliban 2.0's deeds have not yet matched what they have said. To safeguard Afghan women and girls and to give them the resources they need to meet their challenges, the global community must cooperate. Access to basic essentials like food and shelter, as well as to healthcare and education, are all part of this support. The Taliban must be pressured by the international community to uphold women's rights and make sure they are not the target of prejudice, abuse, or persecution. We can only expect to provide Afghan women and girls a better future by working together.

The Taliban's return to power and the ongoing violence and upheaval in Afghanistan underline the essential need for sustained support and activism for women's liberties and rights in that country.

In addition to broader economic and social advancement programmes aimed at advancing gender equality including empowering women at all levels of society, this must involve a reaffirmed devotion to liberal feminist ideas.

Promoting for women's rights in Afghanistan has benefited greatly from the embrace of liberal feminist values like individual liberty, freedom, and equality. This strategy, meanwhile, has encountered many obstacles, including opposition from traditionalists, religious fundamentalists, along with other conservative forces, as well as complaints that it is overly focused on the individual while neglecting the importance of more collective solutions. Alongside that the restrictions imposed on women by the new Afghan government have their severity. Afghan women and girls were prohibited from engaging in civic life, employment, or schooling during the Taliban administration in the 1990s. After the Taliban were overthrown in year 2001, Afghanistan made considerable strides towards advancing women's rights and political engagement, and the Constitution of 2004 now ensures that women will have two positions in the Lower House of the country's National Assembly, one from each province. As a result, women held 27% of the available seats. Ten years later, Afghanistan implemented its first WPS National Action Plan with the objective of enhancing women's effective involvement in elections while also raising women's active engagement in decision-making as well as executive levels of the civil service, as well as in security, peace, and reunification. Most lately, four women made up the 21-member group representing the Afghan government in the 2020 intra-Afghan peace negotiations. The gains made by Afghan women over the past two decades are being reversed. Everything from employment market access to abortion rights to school enrollment. The liberties that women acquired, are slipping away. nevertheless, the women of present Taliban-controlled Afghanistan continue to fight for their fundamental rights despite facing significant gender-based restrictions.

7.1.4 Analyzing the Afghan women progression and status under Taliban

As long as Afghanistan remains in a state of conflict, the ideology and institutional impediments of the Taliban prevent women from participating in state-building efforts. Cultural and political factors in Afghanistan have limited women's participation. Yet, despite the obstacles they encounter, Afghan women have not given up. Zaheer, the Afghan activist, not only alludes to herself and other young, literate Afghan women in Afghanistan, but also to a larger network and group of women's activists across the country, who utilize every inch of freedom they can get their

hands on. In various cities of Afghanistan, including Herat, Kabul, and Kandahar, activists are advancing. Even this year, on the 8th of March, women's international day, there was a strong showing of participation. While significant progress has been made in advancing women's rights and opportunities in Afghanistan over the past two decades, the situation remains precarious as a result of the recent Taliban takeover. The future of women in Afghanistan will depend on a variety of factors, including the policies of the new government, the efforts of civil society groups and international organizations, and the international community's continued support. There are also other several programs that are presently working for women progression in Afghanistan, run by the female activists and other participants, for instance, 'WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL' program.

Recommendations

- The absence of female instructors, particularly in colleges and universities, is probably going to equate to a de facto refusal of education for many girls and women due to these limitations.
- Advocates should make every attempt to ensure that the Taliban keep their education promises for women and girls. They should seek assurances from the Taliban that the right of girls and women to education will be completely respected.
- The activists must ensure engagement of males in their struggle to eliminate violence against women and girls.
- The international community, particularly the United Nations and the G20, can be brought together to resolve the critical issues facing Afghanistan with regards to safeguard of women's rights
- In accordance with Afghanistan's international human rights obligations, Afghan females actively working sponsors ought to stress that women have the freedom to participate in any employment and urge the Taliban to uphold this right. If the Taliban do not recognize women's full freedom to work, donors should monitor the legal and practical restrictions women face.
- Responsible nations should exert considerable effort to ensure that the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghan human rights groups, as well as international nongovernmental organizations can freely function and operate. The United Nations has to play a crucial role, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has a vital mission to follow in this regard.

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PLAGIARISM REPORT

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