INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BULLETIN
ISSN: (E) 3007-1917 (P) 3007-1909
Volume 3, Issue 8, 2025

TALIBAN GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN: A TALE OF TWO POLITICAL ERAS

Aimal Agha[*1], **Dr. Jahanzeb Rind**[*2]

[*1]*M. Phil Scholar at Area Study Centre, University of Baluchistan, Quetta*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Area Study center University of Baluchistan, Quetta*

[*1]aimalagha89@gmail.com, [2]jahanzeb.rind@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *
Aimal Agha
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16892364

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
16 May, 2025	21 June, 2025	21 July, 2025	18 August, 2025

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the government and politics in Afghanistan under Taliban government in 1996 and 2021. The research shall present a comparative analysis of Taliban's governance structures particularly its approach towards the women, minorities, civic rights and its stance towards the national and international terrorist organizations. In their first regime, Taliban focused on establishing an administrative structure based on conservative interpretation of Islamic principles and ideals. Arguably, this era witnessed a strict repressive Taliban rule with no social space for women, discriminatory treatment of minorities, wilful disregard for fundamental rights and providing safe havens for the global terrorist outfits. However, the second Taliban regime that was formed in the wake of historic deal between the Taliban and the US government in Qatar followed a significant shift in Taliban's governance pattern and its increased regard for the international norms and laws. This study underlines the similarities and shifts in Taliban's governance framework in their two regimes. Further, the attempts to identify the domestic and international factors that has inspired the Taliban to reorient its ideological and governance structures.

Key words: *Taliban, civic rights, female education, Politics of Afghanistan, religion and politics, comparative analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Taliban in the political landscape of Afghanistan was a landmark event which not only shaped the regional political and strategic dynamics but also the history of the world. In fact, the civil war in Afghanistan after the abdication of power by the communist ruler Najeebullah Ahmedzai in 1992 gave rise to conflicts among diverse Mujahideen groups seeking power and control of Kabul. With the support of the United Nations and regional forces, an accord was signed in Peshawar under which it was agreed that Burhanuddin Rabbani was to become the president of Afghanistan and there shall be a coalition government having representation from all the Mujahideen groups. However, Hizb I Islami leader Gulbadin Hekmatyar, who was against the formation of coalition government and believed himself to have enough strength to unilaterally capture Kabul, contested this decision. However, the spiraling differences gave rise to second civil war in Afghanistan, which continued till the rise of Taliban in 1996.

Actually, the civil war created horrible chaos in Afghanistan where different militant groups secured strategic areas and started extorting money and taxes from people. Moreover, the law-and-order situation was in terrible condition where unarmed Afghan civilian population was killed, raped and robbed by the armed robbers, religious groups and militias. The economic

corridor that had been established from Spin Boldak to Herat during the regime of Burhanuddin Rabbani served as lifeline for the crumbling economy of Afghanistan as it connected Pakistan with the Middle East and central Asia. However, inspired by the economic gains of this route, different militant groups started making check posts along the route and they started receiving
taxes from the trade caravans. Thus, the failure of the government to ensure law and order and the consequent miseries of the general public caused significant space for the
Taliban to step in and restore law and order.

In fact, the Taliban (students) were one of the conflicting factional groups in the second Afghan civil war. They were Talibs (students) from different religious seminaries hailing from the Pashtun dominated areas of eastern and southern Afghanistan. They were led by Mullah Muhammad Omar, who became commander of the *Mohammadi* party in the Arghestan district in the province of Qandahar. During the second civil war, Mullah Umar was disgusted by ex-Mujahideen leaders who fought for power and were causing miseries for the general Afghan population. He became prominent as he successfully resolved a local dispute and challenged the authority of local landlord and established security and stability of the area. The Taliban, with its growing support among general public because of its ability to restore order and their religious orientation, soon developed into a movement.

By the late 1996, the Taliban gained control of almost two-third of the Afghan territory, and they became rulers of Afghanistan with Mullah Omar as its head. In the first phase, the Taliban ruled from 1996 to 2001 when they were ousted in the wake of US attack on Afghanistan. The Taliban established strict religious rule in Afghanistan with little or no space for the opposition. They completely banned the women from education and social life. Moreover, the Taliban government revived strict Islamic punishments making themselves the subject of international criticism.

Additionally, the UN documented horrible human rights violations during the Taliban regime. The Taliban heavy handedly suppressed freedom of expression causing the closure of hundreds of news organizations and abductions of news reporters and anchors. There was a complete ban on demonstrations and protests and any attempt for the expression of dissent was dealt with an iron hand. In 2001, the United States
Attacked Afghanistan causing an end to the Taliban rule. The Taliban, however, fought
a guerrilla war against foreign forces and were successful to regain power in 2021 because of a ceasefire agreement with the United States. Though, the new Afghan government has the same agenda of establishing a political and social system based on strict Sharia, yet the Taliban are portraying their rule as more lenient, liberal and guided by international norms and laws.

In this research, a comparative analysis will be made of the governments and politics in Afghanistan under the Taliban regimes from 1996 to 2001 and their present regime.

1. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND SOURCES

There exists a plethora of literature regarding the Taliban rule in Afghanistan covering myriads of aspects. The major sources upon which this study is drawn include:

The Taliban ascent to power by M J Gohari occupies a position of considerable significance particularly with reference to Taliban's explanation and implementation of Shariah during their first regime under Mullah Umar. The author presents and insightful commentary on Taliban's policies towards women, judicial system, minorities, society and politics under their rule. It starts with outlining a history of Afghanistan from pre- Islamic era till the establishment of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Further, it focuses on the Taliban ideologies and their frameworks for the political, social, religious, judicial, economic and moral establishment of Afghan state and society.

Likewise, fundamentalism reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban by William Maley (1999) is yet another insightful work analyzing the Taliban Origin, journey to power and their role in the structural reorientation of the Afghan state and society. It provides a vibrant commentary on the administrative and ideological organization of Afghanistan by the Taliban based on their restricted version of Sharia. Further, it explains how sectarian orientation defined Taliban's

relationship with their neighbors particularly Iran. additionally, the author has put preferential focus on Taliban's foreign relations with US, Russian and central Asian countries during their rule.

Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the fall of the Taliban, by Stephen Tanner (2002), gives an overview of Afghanistan's military history. It provides a comprehensible overview of Afghanistan military history from Alexander the Great to the fall of Taliban, and the occupation of Afghanistan by the United States of America. Tanner claims that Afghanistan is famous for its military history, and in recent time, one can learn a number of lessons from Afghan military history. He further elaborates that in the nineteenth century, Great Britain invaded Afghanistan but failed to annex it in its Indian empire. In the same way, Afghans defeated the Red Army, and now United States can face a number of difficulties in Afghanistan.

Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal by Diego Cordovez, and Selig S. Harrison (1995), narrates the inside story of the negotiation for the decisive Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The authors assert that the Soviet invasion was aimed at securing the so-called communist revolution rather than their need to approach the warm water. Additionally, the authors argue that Soviet leaders committed a mistake by invading Afghanistan. Likewise, the US missed a number of chances for constructing peace. In 1989, ultimately, following the Geneva talks, the Soviet forces eventually evacuated Afghanistan which, in turn, put an end to the cold war.

Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, by Ahmed Rashid (2000), provides firsthand knowledge about the Taliban phenomenon. It is a painstakingly researched work, and is considered as one of the most reliable and revealing works on Taliban. Owing to his personal experiences in Afghanistan, Ahmed Rashid depicts a rosy picture of the reasons which ultimately led to Taliban's rise. The author then elucidates that how Taliban were able to put an end to the four year civil war, and to occupy most of
Afghanistan within few years. The religious and political ideology of Taliban is also discussed in great detail. Moreover, he highlights the negative impact of Talibanization over Russia, Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asia.

Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, by Ahmed Rashid (2008), is another important source which covers the recent history of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. It covers all the major events from 2001 to 2008. The author has extensive knowledge about Afghanistan. He asserts that the Bush administration committed a mistake by intervening Afghanistan. In addition, he claims that United States and her allies are on the verge of losing the war to militant Muslims, and the results would have been much different if the Bush government had not invaded Iraq. Furthermore, he has also discussed the emergence of Pakistani Taliban, warlords, Al-Qaeda, the intensification of drug trade, security situation, and economic development in Afghanistan.

Likewise, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982 by M. Hasan Kakar (1995), Understanding War in Afghanistan by Joseph J. Collins (2011), The Taliban Ascent to Power by M. J. Gohari (1999), The Pakistan-US Conundrum, Jihadists, Military and the People: the Struggle for Control by YunasSamad (2010), The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region by NeamatollahNojumi (2002), The Taliban: War, Religion, and the New Order in Afghanistan by Peter Marsden (1998), and Taliban and Anti-Taliban by Farhat Taj (2011) carry special importance in the context of the present debate. All the above-mentioned studies are worthwhile and have their strengths. Nonetheless, none of these sources provide a comparative analysis of the Taliban regimes. The vacuum, therefore, needs to be filled, and that is the objective of the study.

2. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TALIBAN'S ADMINISTRATION AND POLICIES DURING BOTH ERAS

a) The Status of Women

The Taliban undertook the strict Islamization of Afghan state and society right after assuming the reins of power. This wave of strict Islamism reflected vividly in their treatment of female population of the country. The status of women

has been deplorable during both the regimes of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Importantly, the Taliban came up with outright declaration regarding women shortly after their assumption of power in 1996. Crucially, the Taliban stressed the women to be within their Chadar and Chardivari. In fact they were discouraged from government jobs and those already enrolled were eliminated from service (Maley, W. 1998). Arguably, the education and health department had significant number of women specifically in urban centers.

However, the ban on women jobs caused the crumbling and breakdown of these sectors. Additionally, women were not allowed to leave home without a ***mahram*** male counterpart.

Further, women were ordered to wear a specific **burqa** which cover the entire body while having a tiny space or veil of cloth in front of the eyes through which they could see. Al though, even Islamic Sharia does not prescribe such a covering of human body, yet the Taliban define it as an underlying measure to bring moral order in the society. The Taliban even whipped women over their failure to wear **burqa** without veil (Haroon Janjua, 2019). The Taliban administration maintained specific department titled ***"department of Amr bil maroof wa nahi anil munkar"*** through which officials were given authority to ensure strict observance of the moral principles defined by the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan.

In November 1995, during the regime of Mullah Umar, the international humanitarian aid organizations stopped providing financial aid to districts where female students were stopped from enrollment in schools as well as participation in social affairs (Maley, 1998). The Taliban, however, justified the non-inclusion of female in schools under the pretext of non-availability of separate buildings for girls and sufficient security. They believed that only under such provisions could girls be allowed to go to schools.

Besides, the Taliban government notification barred women from washing clothes on rivers. It was announced that any woman violating the decree would be picked up by the government forces and will be left in her home while her husband will be given strict punishment (Lee, 2018). Moreover, the same decree prohibited taxi drivers in Afghanistan from picking women wearing **burqa** other than the one specified by the government. Additionally, strict punishments were announced for tailors who would take measurements of female bodies. Thus, the Taliban rule during the rule of Mullah Umar was reign of terror for the Afghan women as they were denied space in any field of life.

Crucially, the Taliban approach towards girls' education and women has negligible difference if compared with the previous regime of Taliban. In fact, the western governments and United States froze the foreign assets of Afghan government to pressurize them and prohibit them from reviving their strict administrative rules and policies. Additionally, the international donor agencies threatened to stop humanitarian assistance if Afghanistan Government does not back down on its policies.

In January 2022, Taliban diplomats flew to Oslo, Norway where they assured the western authorities of the revival of the secondary education for female. However, in practice, the government followed a diametrically opposite path. The Taliban stopped girls from attending their classes in schools, colleges and universities. As an illustration, the higher education department of Afghanistan issued a notification in Dec 2022, in which the girls and female were officially prohibited from University education (Janjua, 2022). Arguably, armed men were deployed outside university gates where the girls were refused entry. In reaction, the university students, teachers as well as the civil society organizations staged protest on the roads of Kabul. They chanted slogans against the government and sought the revival of female education. To add insult to injury, the Afghan education ministry defended the move as it claimed that the students were not complying government orders for not intermingling with opposite genders as well as not following the state defined dress code (Al Jazeera, 2022).

Besides, the Taliban government heavy handedly suppressed any attempt aimed at protesting for their rights on the part of women. According to the report of amnesty international, the Taliban attacked women holding rallies for the revival of education in the country. Literally, they were attacked, tortured, threatened and imprisoned by the Taliban

authorities (Janjua, 2022).

Besides, the current Taliban government has defined strict dress code for the news anchors and staff working on air. Crucially, Taliban says female news anchors must cover faces when on air (Al Jazeera, 2022). Moreover, the Taliban has also barred women from playing any role in T.V dramas. Thus, the regime characterizes restricted role and limited space for women in all spheres of life.

B) THE PLIGHT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

The Taliban introduced strict laws and decrees which were meant to establish a moral and dignified society. Crucially, this task was also to be performed by the ministry of *amr bil maroof wa nahi anil munkir*. As an illustration, the Taliban revived strict Islamic punishments for crimes such as theft, robbery, adultery and wine drinking. In addition, the Taliban introduced strict edicts to be observed by both males and female. The females who were found guilty of adultery were stoned to death in the presence of wide gathering of people from the town. Such public punishments were meant to teach and terrify the general public (Burns, 1996). In addition, there was a complete ban on music, TV, satellite dishes, VCR, pictures and videos. Additionally, the government strictly prohibited the shaving of beards while those defying the orders were punished with lashes. Besides, women were completely banned from getting out of their homes without mehram males. (Nojumi, 2004). The government ordered the windows of the houses in Kabul to be shadowed or painted so that it will be impossible to see what's inside. (Gohari, 2000). Besides, the government identified punishments for all those drivers who would pick up women without having full hijab.

In addition, the Taliban government had imposed complete ban on playing soccer as it was declared as an un-Islamic practice. Denying sports activities to the people contributed to the degeneration of society in the form of increasing drug addiction and resort to extremist and jihadist activities.

Literally, the Afghan government consciously adopted a policy of refraining people from sports and recreation (The Guardian, 2021).

Thus, the Afghan society under the Taliban rule during the reign of Mullah Umar was the picture of fear, suppression, brutality, torture, punishments and bloodshed.

The plight of the human rights presents the same dismal picture as that old the previous Taliban regime. To start with, the Taliban government has given outright powers to its officials to attack, threaten, kidnap, torture and kill the government officials linked with the previous government.

Arguably, according to human rights watch report 2022, hundreds of armed forces officers, civil servants, intelligence officials and key figures of the

previous regimes have become the subjects of Taliban's wrath after the latter's assumption of power (Human rights watch, 2022). The report also underlined Taliban's brutality against the people belonging from the provinces of Aruzgan, Qandhar, Mazar Sharif, Kunduz and Daykundi by throwing them out of their homes and forcing them to flee to other areas and countries for their alleged support of the previous regime.

The Taliban administration has declared any sort of opposition to the Islamic regime as against the Quranic Injunction which bind them to obey the ruler (Surah-an-Nisa, 59).

However, the administration has been continuously misusing Quranic commandments to justify and impose their other unjustified and inhuman rules and policies. Moreover, numerous cases have been reported of violence against women in the form of domestic violence, child marriages and restriction on women's movement and denying public space for earning livelihood (Abbas, 2023).

However, there is a clear observation of Taliban's leniency in certain spheres which were strictly prohibited in Taliban's previous regime. for example, the strict edicts regarding shaving beards, watching TV and usage of social media is allowed. Besides, the Taliban government has encouraged sports activities in the country. It has maintained the Afghanistan cricket board while the Afghan cricket team is making foreign tours and earning international recognition.

C) TREATMENT OF MINORITIES:

Over the course of its checkered history, Islam

in Afghanistan had been very liberal with sheer respect and tolerance for the followers of other sects and religions (Rashid, 2010). Crucially, the Sikhs who had come to India along with the Britishers as camp followers dominated the commercial and business activities of Afghanistan as they were the leading merchants (Rashid, 2010). Importantly, they were allowed to freely profess and practice their religion without any fear of religious persecution and discrimination. Similarly, the Jews and Ismailis lived with religious freedom in the Afghan territories.

However, the rise of the Taliban in 1996 ushered an era of intolerance for the religious communities and sects. The brutality and ferocity unleashed by the Taliban caused religious minorities to flee the country en masse which included the country's Sikh population and Jews (Tanner, 2002). In the same vein, the Taliban's massacre of Hazaras in Mazar Sharif in 1997 and their subsequent ethnic cleansing not only caused the deaths of a large number of Hazaras but also their migration to the friendly neighboring countries. Literally, Hazaras have been the most persecuted minority in Afghanistan who faced the wrath of Afghan Taliban throughout the regime.

Importantly, Taliban's conscious efforts aimed at the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras led many of the political and academic thinkers to conclude that the Jihad of Taliban was not aimed at the unbelievers. Rather, it was believed that Taliban are using Jihad as a pretext to eliminate other ethnic groups that could challenge their power and authority in Afghanistan.

Another manifestation of religious discrimination and persecution by the Taliban was the demolition of the third and fifth century C.E. stone Buddha at Bamiyan under the orders of Mullah Umar in February 2021 (Wahab, S & Youngerman, 2007) No doubt, these relics were the living examples of the great civilizations that had existed in these territories over the course of history.

However, the Taliban felt threatened from such remnants of great civilizations

believing they might seduce the Afghans towards idolatry. Therefore,

The prospects for the social, political, economic and religious inclusivity for the minorities in Afghanistan has become bleak with the assumption of power by the Taliban. In March 2020 an attack on Gurdwara Har Rai Sahib in Kabul caused the death of 27 Sikhs which they took as an indication to flee the country en mass. (Amnesty International, 2023). Various reports from media and humanitarian organizations attest the apprehensions that most of the minority groups in Afghanistan including Sikhs and Jews have fled from Afghanistan to escape the Taliban wrath. As an illustration, in oct,2020 the Sikh community shared videos of their Gurdwara in Karte Parwan being vandalized and ransacked by alleged members of the Taliban. Moreover, even those left in small numbers are forced to practice their religion in hiding,

Particularly, the Hazaras, which is the third largest ethnic community in Afghanistan, are facing horrible persecution and discrimination at the hands of Taliban. Crucially, despite assurances from the government, the Hazara population was killed mercilessly in targeted attacks by the ISIS-K. As an illustration, in Sep 2022, the ISIS attacked an educational institution in Dasht-e- Barchi district of Kabul which claimed lives of 36 women and girls belonging to Hazara community. (Ochab, 2002.) Further, the Hazaras who controlled key government positions before Taliban have been almost purged from government services. (Amnesty international, 2022). Moreover, the Hazaras have been declared as heretics based on their sectarian Shia beliefs making them vulnerable to sectarian violence. Therefore, majority of Hazaras have either fled to the western countries or they have migrated to Iran and Pakistan.

D) THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF OPIUM:

Before the assumption of power and authority, the Taliban as a Mujahideen group out rightly opposed the Opium production declaring it as against Islam. However, the opium production soared staggeringly during the first four years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Crucially, Opium was the underlying support of Afghan economy as earned them billions of dollars.

According to the United Nations Drug Control program, the country's farmers produced more than 2000 tons of dried opium in 1995, which increased to 2800 tons in the next two years.

Amazingly, by 1999, Afghanistan collected a bumper crop of 4600 tons which broke the records of opium production even during the communist regimes (Barnett, 2000).

However, in July 2000 Mullah Muhammad Umar imposed a complete ban on poppy production and literally there was zero production that year in Taliban controlled areas. In fact, the Taliban government wanted to explore other areas of revenue generation which predominantly included the transport and transit economy of central Asian Petro chemicals. The Soviet Union had undertaken numerous projects for the exploration of central Asian natural resources, particularly, the natural gas which had opened new lifelines for the Central Asian economies (Wahab, S. &Youngerman, 2007).

The present Taliban regime has put a ban on opium production terming it as unethical and also because of the fear of suspension of the international humanitarian aid. Arguably, the decision has severely affected the economic fortunes of ordinary Afghans as they have very scant opportunities for business and earning livelihood.

In the same vein, the Afghan government is also facing severe economic crisis being a war-ravaged country. While poppy production has historically been the source for billions of dollars for the Afghans, its production and trade are tacitly in practice in Afghanistan. The United Nations office on drugs and crimes (UNODC) reported a 32 percent rise in opium production in 2022. (Wahab, S. & Youngerman, 2007). The report in the foreign policy magazine also highlighted that most of the poppy production is concentrated in southern provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan. The local Afghans claim that the Taliban soldiers and officers are themselves involved in this trade.

Actually, the Taliban government is unable to pay salaries to its soldiers and it has become difficult for the ordinary Afghan soldier to earn a living for his family. In these circumstances, a ban on poppy production might further aggravate the economic miseries of Afghan government and general public.

Thus, it has actually become a compulsion and necessity to allow the growth of poppy economy. Thus, it can be argued that opium production and sale is underlying source of the economy of Afghanistan under the present Taliban rule.

E) THE APPROACH TOWARDS REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS:

Afghanistan remained a safe haven and training ground for many regional and international Pan-Islamist and jihadist groups during the regime of Mullah Muhammad Umar. As an illustration, in May, 1999 Taliban allowed Tahir Yaldashev, leader of the revolutionary Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) to establish a base in northern Afghanistan where he trained anti- government Islamist forces from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgystan and the autonomous region of Xinjiang in China being funded and ideologically inspired by the Wahhabist regimes of Saudi Arabia (Abbas, 2023). The Taliban not only provided them with safe havens but also weapons and military training.

This objectionable approach earned the Taliban government the opposition of not only its neighbors but also Russia and China. Besides, the Taliban Government gave refuge and safe havens to Usama Bin Laden who later laid the foundation of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda gradually developed as an international terrorist/Jihadist organization as it killed American soldiers in Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Eventually, the attacks on world trade center in United States by Al Qaeda and refusal of the Taliban government to handover Usama Bin Laden to US government caused the latter's attack on Afghanistan in 2001 and the consequent removal of Taliban government from Afghanistan. Thus, the Taliban rule under Mullah Umar characterized full support and facilitation for the regional and international Jihadist organizations.

Taliban has failed to come up with a definitive policy as far the regional and international terrorist organizations are concerned. As an illustration, the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have strained owing to the refusal of Afghan government to take action against TTP as it is using Afghan soil as its base to undertake terrorist activities against Pakistan (Lodhi, 2023). Actually, the Taliban believe that any action against TTP might cause them to join the ranks of ISIS-K, thus, adding to the enemies

of already troubled state. This has contributed to straining relations between the two neighboring countries.

Crucially, the defense minister of Pakistan Khawaja Asif has threatened to bomb the bastions of TTP in Afghanistan if Taliban fail to undertake decisive action against the former.

However, the Taliban has taken strict and indiscriminate action to root out the ISIS-KP from Afghanistan. Crucially, the action against ISIS was the honoring of its commitment with the foreign forces in Doha accord to completely stop the usage of its territories by the terrorist organizations.

Importantly, Afghanistan has witnessed a staggering peace and stability under
the Taliban rule thanks to their iron fist policy against the terrorist groups particularly the ISIS-KP.

CONCLUSION:

To pen off, Islam in Afghanistan has been very tolerant and liberal throughout the course of its history. In fact, Islam has been a unifying force among the Afghans to forge a nationalistic front against the foreign forces such as British empire and Russia. As discussed, religion has been intrinsic to the life of Afghans as they have been practicing Muslims over the course of their history.

However, the civil war in Afghanistan in the wake of abdication of authority by President Najeebullah in 1992 was sufficient to break this remarkable tradition. Actually, the war had not only ethnic orientation but also a religious and sectarian one. These groups not only committed the religious persecution of non-believers but also that of their fellow Muslims. Ahmed Shah Masood massacred Hazras, Hazaras massacred Taliban and when Taliban came to power they massacred Hazaras en masse.

The Taliban actually proclaimed the puritanical and fundamental version of Islam which undoubtedly had retrogressive effects on Afghan state and society. The Taliban brought about the strict Islamization of social, political, legal and economic spheres.These retrogressive policies complicated the lives of the Afghans who had lived under communist rules for decades. Not only this, the unrestricted growth and usage of Afghan territory as a bastion and training ground for international terrorist organizations eventually caused the fall of Taliban at the hands of United states in 2001.

Undoubtedly, the Taliban presented an unprecedented resistance and fought a guerrilla war against the invading forces for more than two decades, thus, causing them to retreat and withdraw from Afghanistan in 2021. Though, the Taliban are guided by similar religious inspirations which dictated their first regime, yet we can observe a significant consideration and regard among the Taliban for the international norms, rules and laws. As an illustration, Taliban has been very strict and has completely refused educational, social and economic space for Afghan women.

Similarly, the religious minorities such as Hazaras continue to be the objects of state persecution and terrorist attacks by the ISIS-K. However, The Taliban have ensured decisive actions against foreign terrorist organizations and outfits as part of their commitment to the foreign forces under the withdrawal treaty. Through this, Taliban have assured the stability and order in Afghanistan. Similarly, the Taliban have assured good governance and rule of law throughout the country which has significantly revived the confidence of the Afghans.

REFERENCES

Afghanistan. (2022, January 13). Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/Afghanistan

Afghan minorities & the return of the Taliban. (2021, August 9). https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2021/08/09/afghan-minorities-the-return-of-the-taliban/

Amnesty International. (2023, March 14). Women, protest and power-confronting the Taliban.
Retrieved from https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2023/03/women-protest-and- power-confronting-the-taliban/

Burns, J. F. (1996, November 3). Stoning of Afghan Adulterers: Some Go to Take Part, Others Just to Watch. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/1996/11/03/world/stoning-of- afghan-adulterers-some-go-to-take-part-others-just-to-watch.html

Freedom of religion under grim state since Taliban seized power in Afghanistan. (2022, August 25). Retrieved from https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/freedom-of-religion- under-grim-state-since-taliban-seized-power-in-afghanistan20220825012601/

Gohari, M. J. (2000). *The Taliban: ascent to power*. Oxford University Press.

Jazeera, A. (2022b, May 19). Taliban say female Afghan TV presenters must cover faces on air. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com

Janjua, H. (2022a, October 19). "I lost consciousness": woman whipped by the Taliban over burqa without veil. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com

Kennedy, L., & Southern, N. P. (2023, February 1). Afghanistan: The Taliban's "War on Drugs" could backfire. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from https://foreignpolicy.com

Lodhi, M. (2023, May 1). The Taliban conundrum. *DAWN.COM*. https://www.dawn.com

Lee, J. L. (2018). *Afghanistan: A history from 1260 to the present*. Reaktion Books.

Maley, W. (Ed.). (1998). *Fundamentalism reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*. NYU Press. Nojumi, N. (2004e). The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region.

Ochab, E. U. (2022, November 8). Yet another attack on the Hazara in Afghanistan. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com

Rashid, A. (2002). *Taliban: Islam, oil and the new great game in Central Asia* (p. 57). London: IB Tauris.

Surah An-Nisa - 59 - Quran.com. (n.d.). https://quran.com/en/an-nisa/59

Tanner, S. (2009). *Afghanistan: A military history from Alexander the Great to the war against the Taliban* (Rev. ed.). Da Capo Press.

Wahab, S., & Youngerman, B. (2007). *A brief history of Afghanistan*. Infobase Publishing