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# Taliban and Gender Ideology

November 25 is designated as "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women" in the United Nations November calendar. The purpose of this designation is to increase public awareness of the fact that women around the world are subject to rape, domestic violence, and other forms of violence, and to emphasize that the true scale and nature of this problem are often kept hidden. To be International and national human rights institutions usually try to fight violence and discrimination against women and their intellectual and cultural roots from November 25 to December 10, while holding various awareness campaigns. Discrimination and violence against women are obvious and continuous problems in the society of Afghanistan, so violence against women is associated with the name of Afghanistan in the international media. Part of this continuous discrimination and violence is rooted in the general culture of the society and is not specific to a period, group, or region. The fact is that the dominant attitude in the culture of Afghan society is patriarchal (Ahmad 2012), and to varying degrees in different regions, the dominant view of women and women's activities has always been and has been humiliating.

Women in Afghanistan have suffered greatly during Taliban rule, but their situation is not simply a result of war and violence. Afghan women are also oppressed by Taliban rule and need liberation from this oppressive regime. Islam was introduced to Afghanistan in the seventh century, and today the majority of the population is Muslim, following the Sunni teachings (Leede 2014). The Afghan society is composed of several ethnic and tribal groups, each of which has a significant role in society and politics at all levels. Tribal codes help to maintain security and order within the tribe. Men and women both rely on communication and interaction to shape and define their behavior. Honor is an important status symbol in Afghan society, and it is considered men's duty to uphold their women's respectability. *Purdah* is a key part of the protection of the family's honor and is an essential component of the honor code. There is no strict segregation related to Purdah practiced in all parts of Afghanistan. Some *Kuchi* “nomadic” women are not segregated from men, and the Shiite Hazara *“99% Hazara’s are Shiite”* women are not required to isolate themselves. There is less of a strict separation between genders in the Tajik culture of Afghanistan, compared to other parts of the world.

Throughout modern Afghan history, tribal links and religious authority have often been stronger than a central authority. The opposition to Amanullah Shah's reforms of the 1920s was fierce. He tried to alleviate this by advocating against the veil, opening schools for girls, and allowing the government to regulate various family problems (Malik 2012). The 1950s and 1960s were a time of turmoil in Afghanistan as opponents of the reforms fought against government representatives. In 1979 a group called Mujahedeen, backed by the United States and trained by the Pakistani armies, went to war with the Soviet Union, not only men but also women played a very significant role in this war, women provide food for mujahedeen, provide them places for rest, in a nutshell, anything that could help the mujahedeen women would not hesitate, this war is known as the holy war in the history of Afghanistan (Jalali 1995), quickly the war shaped to a civil war, several tribes fight each other after defeating the Soviet Union.

This is where the Taliban declaration of existence, the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996 after a long period of civil war. Initially many people hoped that they would provide stability and justice in the country, but unfortunately their strict Islamic rule caused many problems. Taliban emerged as the Islamic students under the name of Mullahs or mullah, “Islamic scholars” according to Ali, “Karachi is home to a sprawling network of madrasas (religious schools) and jihadist militant groups (Ali 2010)”, this is something which no one can deny, the Taliban studied in Pakistani madrasas, and having the strict Islamic ideology, as they do not allow girls to educate above grade six, women are not allowed to go out without *mahram* (a man, member of family), and several other restricted laws which are against Islam, in this study I would go further, and discover what are their sects, what jurisprudence they follow, and for what reason, they limit the women activities. According to Ahrari, M. Ehsan, the Taliban follows Saudi Arabia's *salafiyya* (puritanical) tradition ideology (Ahrari 2000), further Ahrari highlights, that the conservative social practices observed by highly conservative elements of the Afghan tribes and lower middle classes allow very little interpretation or deviation.

Borthakur has divided the Taliban ideologies into two different categories, the contemporary Taliban moves with a traditional Islamic ideology while the Taliban which fought the Soviet Union was purely Islamic and followed the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ways, and they were trained in refugee camps in Pakistan (Kotokey 2021), further, the second generation of the Taliban which is the contemporary Taliban lost considerable support of the international community, also, Afghanistan women’s criticized them for their harsh measures against women for posing the traditions like wearing a *chadar* (Burqa). Meanwhile, Jones, Seth G, argues that the Taliban are motivated by a radical interpretation of Sunni Islam which is linked with Deobandism (Jones 2008). Further, according to Jones, Deobandism is a form of conservatism orthodoxy, which follows the Salafi theology and mimics the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Franks, Mary Anne (2003), in her paper called the Taliban “Islamic fundamentalist”, further Franks, talks about the restrictions that posed on women after 1994, when the Taliban controlled over 90 percent of Afghanistan for the first time, which is as follows: (Franks 2003, Hirschkind 2002).

1. “Women may not work outside the home, except for a few health workers, or attend any kind of educational institution.
2. Women are not allowed to leave their houses at all unless accompanied by a mahram (a close male relative).
3. Women are not allowed to be treated by male doctors.
4. Women must wear a burqa (a garment that covers the body completely, with only a piece of mesh around the eyes).
5. Women may not gather for any public functions or festivities.
6. Women are not allowed to use cosmetics.
7. The windows of women’s houses must be painted over so that women cannot be seen from the outside.
8. Women must not talk or laugh loudly, must not wear high-heeled shoes or any shoes that make noise, must not wear bright colors, or at any moment allow any part of their flesh to show, wash clothes in public, or appear on the balcony of their houses, so as not to incite the lust of men.
9. The names of places that include a reference to women must be changed; for example, “women’s garden” is renamed spring garden”.

This is something that reflects today’s reality, on August 15, the Taliban once again seized power in Afghanistan, and during a couple of weeks they imposed those nine laws which Franks highlighted above, one more thing Franks forget to mention is the education, girls are not allowed to go to school from grade six above, right now schools are closed in Afghanistan, no girl is allowed to go to school after grade six, several demonstrations have been done by the activists, women, girls, even international community urged the Taliban to open the school’s doors for the girls, there is respond yet from the Taliban. To strengthen my argument, really these things happened, Middleton, Shannon A, brings an Afghan women’s adventure, and says, life is hard under the Taliban rule especially when you are a woman, once I went out to buy some bread, and I saw another woman was also there, her sleeve suddenly went up and a Talib beat her very badly because you showed you a hand, even though it was by an accident, I cannot go out because I am a woman, further the author continues, the women’s had equal rights under the communist reign in 1992, women’s enjoyed the equal rights and expands job opportunities (Middleton 2000).

# Taliban and Fundamentalism

This section talks about the fundamentalism ideology, I would analyze whether the Taliban are fundamentalists or not, since Franks, called the Taliban fundamentalism. To understand the fundamentalist, it’s important to know how it emerged, according to Armstrong and Karen (2000), fundamentalism is a powerful force in the world, challenging the dominance of modern secular values and threatening peace and harmony. Armstrong believes that fundamentalist groups are multipart and advanced, but argues that they have not been successful in terms of their religious goals. Further, the author explains, that one of the most surprising developments of the late 20th century has been the emergence of militant piety known as "fundamentalism" within every major religious tradition. Fundamentalists have no belief in democracy “pluralism, religious toleration, peacekeeping, free speech, or the separation of church and state”. Christian fundamentalists deny the biological and physical discoveries of the origin of life, claiming that Genesis is logically correct in every detail. any are throwing away the restraints of the past, Jewish fundamentalists are watching the revealed law more closely than ever, and Muslim women are it denies and veiling women's freedom. Both Muslim and Jewish fundamentalists interpret the Arab-Israeli conflict religiously. Fundamentalism is not just limited to the Abrahamic faiths or Islam, but also other religions involved, such as Buddhism, Hind, and so on (Armstrong 2000).

Jurgen Kleiner (2007) says in his paper, that the Taliban has fundamentalist views, and this group has established an Islamic system that focuses on the implementation of Shariah. The most striking feature of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan is the strict implementation of Islamic law, which began immediately after they seized power in Qandahar in 1994. Taliban has no constitution, and the implantation of Shariah is not referring to any constitution so far, some newspapers reported, “when the journalist asked the spokesman of the Taliban movement, Mullah Wakil Ahmed Mutakil, about the constitution, he answered with a smile that it would take some time to revise the old constitution (Kleiner 2007).” The Taliban leadership is dedicated to following divine instructions, and they don't care who gets in their way. Numerous statements made by Taliban leaders make this clear. Kleiner further explains, that the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Taliban, in an interview, “We received rules from Almighty God which guide us. We cannot act against these rules.”

My argument is, from where did they receive this revelation, or do they refer to Quran and Hadith? If they follow Quran and Hadith, everything is clear about human rights, women’s rights, the punishments for thieves, and so on ……. For instance, the very basic requirement for human beings is learning, as Allah says in Quran, “Read. Read in the name of thy Lord who created; [He] created the human being from a blood clot. Read in the name of thy Lord who taught by the pen: [He] taught the human being what he did not know (Q96: 1-5).” Shariah law considers both the masculine and the feminine genders to be included in all revealed commandments. If this principle is rejected, then the fundamental pillars of Islam, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and due alms-giving, are ineffective for women. The Taliban has confined all human beings' rights in Afghanistan, especially the women’s rights, based on what verse or Hadith Taliban says we received from Almighty Allah, if so, they must implement the very basic verse on the society, which is “Read”. This refers to 1994 when they seized power for the first time in Afghanistan.

Further, Kathleen Carroll (2022) talks about when they seized power for the second time. The Taliban has a fundamentalist ideology, in August 2021 when this group seized power, they imposed several harsh laws on women, media, public speaking, and so on ……. Also, the Taliban warned the media to stop saying “this group”, and not use critical language against any single member of them, rather media must call their governments as “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.” This was not only for local media but also goes to the international journals that works in Afghanistan and make a report for the world, the Taliban warned them “You have to be on the Taliban side or they will close your office (Carroll 2022).” Taliban have imposed a very harsh interpretation of Islamic law in society, meanwhile, the poverty rate is extremely high, this is the very first time in the last twenty years, that Afghanistan is under the poverty line, some experts say by the end of 2022 over 90% Afghan people would suffering from food insecurity. Again, people are dying from hunger, there is no food to eat, people sell their children, their kidneys, and even people commit suicide because cannot feed their family, but the Taliban still send an order, that no “man is allowed to shave their beard” and no “women are allowed to leave their house without a *mahram.*” To conclude the fundamentalism, they aim to revive the Islamic Shariah and follow the way of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), they try to show the essence of Islam in terms of the socio-political-economic” system. Nowadays the term fundamentalism has been misused by some groups such as the Taliban. Next, I will discuss the traditional Islamic ideology, which plays an important role in countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, and some other countries.

# Traditional Islamic Ideology and Taliban

I am talking about Islam and the teaching of Islam here, it’s important to understand the basis of Islam, and what Islam says about certain things, such as whether can women work, and can a girl study, because most of the authors blame Islam, meanwhile actors carry something in the society which is their personal views and ideologies. The basis for Islamic doctrine is the holy Quran, Muslims believe in the Quran, the word of God (Allah), and the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the Gabriel (Kamoonpuri 2001), and in the other hand Muslims have Hadith, the saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), anything inside Quran and Hadith mentioned about human rights, idea, ideologies, study, working, in a nutshell, it's acceptable for all Muslims around the world, a true Muslim would never have any problem with the verse or Hadith. Today many groups have risen and claim to be Islamic groups and implement the Shariah law in society, like the Taliban, I always mention the word “Taliban” because this paper is focusing only on the Taliban side, I would not focus on any other groups here, even though there are tons of groups which have different ideas, views about Islam and its implementation in a certain society.

Mortada, Hisham (2003), Islam has a rich tradition of social organization and behavior. Many of its principles apply to society as a whole and can help to improve the quality of life for all. In Islam, every aspect of a Muslim's life is dedicated to the will of God. Muslim society cannot ever break from the laws of God. This society must adhere to a specific set of guidelines laid down by God in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. This is known as Shariah or Islamic law (Mortada 2003). Further, Seyyed Hossein N asr (1987) explains traditional Islam in his book and says, “Traditional Islam defends the Shari'ah completely as the Divine Law as it has been understood and interpreted over the centuries and as it has been crystallized in the classical schools (madhhab) of Law (asr 1987).”

The Taliban's ideology was based on the traditional beliefs of the Pashtun people before the Taliban's years of fighting and chaos, and it did not originate from extremist Pakistani madrassas. Over the past two decades, the ideology of the Taliban has changed. While the movement previously represented "traditional" Islam, it sought to articulate and defend certain concepts of Islam that in the Pashtun villages of the south are now, in their insurgency phase, a form of political Islam that is being expressed in the Arab world. It has become closer. This is not to say that the Taliban are necessarily less conservative or less authoritarian, but what they suppressed and how they constructed their mission have undergone significant changes (Gopal 2017). Angana Kotokey & Anchita Borthakur (2021) confirms that the Taliban studied in Pakistan but their ideologies are still traditional Islamic ad linked with Afghanistan, “However, despite staying and studying in Pakistan, these future first-generation members of the Taliban remained attached to Afghanistan and their southern Kandahari Pashtun culture and village (Kotokey 2021)”, further, the author says, the events of 1994 in Kandahar involved the greed of warlords. One of the incidents was the kidnapping and rape of two women by a leader in Sangesa, and another was when a young boy in Kandahar wanted a sodomy leader. Noteworthy since there are several groups of fighters in Afghanistan, Sangesa is a different rebellion group, and they have no affiliation with the Taliban, but still, both have studied in madrasas. According to Kotokey, the members of the first generation of the Islamic movement were influenced by Kandahari culture and rural norms, which made it part of traditional Islam. The Pashtun villages in southern Afghanistan are home to a particular concept of Islam, which is defended by the villagers. This concept of Islam is based on traditional values and beliefs, and it is important to the villagers.

# Conclusion

The rise of the Taliban in Kandahar in 1994 signed the beginning of a series of events that ultimately led to the September 11 attacks. The Taliban's ideology is defined as either Pashtun nationalism or an integral part of an international Islamist insurgency continued by Al-Qaeda. This short paper discusses the Taliban’s ideology, I have first talked about their views about women in society and covered some of their violence, also I have explained their ideologies, namely fundamentalist and traditional Islam, these two ideologies are based on experts. I believe one cannot limit their ideologies, since they are separated into groups, each has a different understanding of Islam, and each has a different gender view.

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