Talibanization has grown as the new ideology at the spectrum of world sphere and thus has been the subject of considerable debate within the academic and political circles, both in the Western and the Muslim world. In the backdrop of this, the present study is an attempt to evaluate and analyze the role played and the influence yielded by the religious outlook of Taliban in shaping the different aspects of the Afghan society, economy and politics. The study also deals with evaluation and assessment of the influence yielded by religious outlook of Taliban in giving impetus to Taliban movement. While the study mainly deals with the socio-religious outlook of Taliban and its impact on Afghan society, it also attempts to catch the imprints the Taliban left on the wider Muslim world.

The study also takes into account varied factors that were instrumental in giving birth to the Taliban ideology and eventually turning it into the Taliban movement. For accomplishing this task successfully, an inter-disciplinary approach has been adopted by borrowing insights from history, geography, economics, political science, philosophy and psychology. The assigned work, as such, besides introduction and conclusion comprises of three chapters namely:

01. Emergence of Taliban
02. Socio-religious outlook
03. Response and impact in global perspective.

Chapter 1 i.e. Introduction of the thesis is therefore, an important unit of the structural part of the entire research work, as it gives an appraisal of the geographical location and brief account of the historical legacy of the region. At the same time, it also carries a brief summary of the chapterization of the thesis.

Geographically speaking, Afghanistan lies on the borders of Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China, it has a population of 22 million
people, the overwhelming majority of which is Muslim, although a significant minority between 10 to 15 percent comprises of non-Muslims. Since ages it has been the meeting place for many cultural and ecological areas: the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia,

Not surprisingly therefore, Afghanistan is a conglomerate existence of different tribes and ethnic groups, which makes it microcosm of diverse cultures and nationalities. Desperate ethnic groups with strong tribal affinity that constitute the populace of Afghanistan could not have been held together without the religious affinity. Religion as such has always played a significant role in the consolidation of Afghanistan as a nation state. Historic Afghanistan, in fact, turns out to be a part of Dar-ul-Islam with the rise of Abbasid caliphate in 750 AD. The weakening of the caliphate, which followed a century latter, led to the emergence of Semi-independent dynasties, which ruled Iran, Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia. Numerous dynasties ruled Afghanistan till 1747. When Ahmad Shah Abdali was chosen as a leader by Afghans in 1747, he found the kingdom of Afghanistan with its capital at Khandahar. Afghanistan then was merely a confederation of tribes and khanates, with the central authority confined to the cities only. Since then the Islam catches its glory and established its influence over the entire Afghanistan and initially transformed the life of the people by creative and progressive spirit. Belief in Islam has however, been important for the population, not only in providing the spiritual elevation, but also in giving a sense of identity to the people of the area.

The struggle for power in Afghanistan has in fact, gone through different phases since 1973. This political instability resulted in armed invasion by neighbouring ‘Superpower’ former USSR (1979) and consequently the Russian military presence lasted till 1989. The decade of struggle against the Soviet occupation of their country did not bring this nation unto a single platform. Although all pro-
Islamic parties fought for the common purpose of evicting the Soviet troops from their land and to replace the Communist Afghan Government with the Islamic one, no religio-ethnic unity was demonstrated by them. The end of the war against the Russian enemies resulted in a new array of conspiracies of the international powers over the *jihadi* parties by means of relinquishing Kabul to the hands of Masoud and the Communist militias headed by Rashid Dostum, and the exclusion of the *Hizbi Islami* (Islamic Party) from rule.

This led to the bitter conflict, which the Muslims paid for dearly, whereby more than forty thousand civilians were killed, cities and towns were destroyed and gangs and highwaymen became widespread in the midst of a dangerous increase in drug dealings. This tragic state was not only caused by the adversity, deprivation and poverty of the citizens, but also by the misunderstanding of some leaders to the planned conspiracy while insisting to remain in command, and then joining in some interlocked alliance with Communists, pro-Iranians etc. This led the people to lose confidence in the leaders engaged in a struggle over power, especially when those alliances between the *jihadi* parties and Dostoum's party and other criminals especially the war lords was changing monthly and even hourly. As such, "Afghanistan has moved from a holy war into a civil war.

The intruders in Afghanistan not only intended to control and exploit the natural resources of the region, but were also opposed to the age old system of thought and social institutions and were inclined to replace them with a different set of belief. The Central force to combat this ideological onslaught was Islam. The abortive attempts of Britain to take Afghanistan during the nineteenth century and the pressure from the Soviet Union have strengthened the resolve of the *Ulema* to resist outside interference and to render the government of Afghanistan more purely Islamic
In a country like Afghanistan, where the State is seen as external to society and where people’s allegiance is directed primarily towards their local community, the only thing which all Afghans have in common is Islam. However, it is an established fact, that Afghan Muslims are identified with the most conservative expression of the religion. Remote from the intellectual centres of the Islamic world and lacking strong urban institutions, Afghans have developed local variations on Islam’s major doctrines incorporating distinctive beliefs and cults that predate Islam. The Islam practised in Afghan villages, nomad camps, and most urban areas (the ninety to ninety five percent non-literate) would be almost unrecognizable to a sophisticated Muslim Scholar. Aside from faith in Allah and Prophet Mohammad (SAW) as the messenger of Allah, most of the customs and superstitions often of pre-Islamic origin, exist everywhere. The institutions like the counsel of the venerable elders, and mwrb, have developed without any direct link with the Shari’at. As such a common law has gradually evolved in the countryside. Pashtunwali (Comprising tribal code) and Jirga(Assembly) is at one and the same time an ideology and a body of common law, which has evolved its own sanctions and institutions. In addition to the basic requirements of Islam, Pashtuns observe the code of Pashtunwali. As such, the role of tribal custom and culture has dominated the religious identity of Afghanistan. The tribal code and Shari’at are at variance on some matters. For example adultery (zina), according to the Shari’at if proved, requires four witnesses, but contrary to the Shari’at for the Pashtunwali to convict a Zani (adulterer) hearsay is sufficient.

Women in Pashtun society is not allowed to inherit property, while the Quran grants to women half the share granted to a male. Contrary to Shari’at, revenge (badliln) is also commanded within the tribal code notwithstanding the fact that forgiveness is treated as a better revenge in Shari’at. The two systems as such are opposite & contradictory to each other. A Pashtun defines himself in opposition
to everything which is not Pashtun. Whereas a Muslim is bound to fully surrender his personal interests, will and aspirations before Shari’at.

As far as political life in Afghanistan is concerned, the tribal code tends to isolate the Pashtun community, while the Shari’at which does not recognize that ethnic groups have any ultimate reality, envisages a moral universal social order. For this reason the work of the ulama is seen as a threat to the identity of the tribe, in so far as they wish to replace the Pashtunwali by the Shari’at and to minimize the role of the Khan. Statements by scholars on the seemingly great divide between the textual Islam and the corrupted Islam in Afghanistan appear to have resulted from a flawed distinction between literacy and illiteracy, and between the modernization and traditionalism.

Moreover, Afghanistan was a competing ground for ideological rivalry between the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States. With this great game ensued, religion played a great role as unifying factor in fight against Soviet Union. This was the period in which the radical ideology vis-à-vis Theo-democracy developed in common masses in general and youths in particular. Because of the vested interests, political uncertainty and turmoil became an inherent part of Afghanistan and made the radicalism more relevant. The influence of Wahabi Movement, writings of Moulana Maudoodi and Syed Qutb’s number of manifestos can not be ruled out, which became the foundation of radical Islam during 20th century. Expectedly Taliban emerged as a group committed to Islam that promised to establish a society free of vices. It was in the back drop of these introductory observations that Taliban made its way to the throne of Afghanistan in mid nineties. Chapter 2nd, is therefore, an effort to bring into limelight the factors responsible for emergence of Taliban ideology and eventually turning it into the Taliban Movement. Besides, a general definition and connotation of the word “Taliban, the origin, rise, ruling structure and Military dimension of
Taliban has been examined and explained in detail. The chapter comprises of nine sub-headings as is indicated by the title of the chapter it gives an overview of the circumstances in which Taliban emerged and enumerates, in detail under different sub-headings various aspects related to the emergence of Taliban. The very first subheading of the chapter briefly resituates the Afghan history upto the year 1979 and then focuses on the main turnovers in Afghan history since 1979 upto 1996 and finally discusses the emergence of Taliban in 1996. An effort has been made to build a cause-effect relationship for the political uncertainty and instability in Afghanistan.

The etymology of the word Taliban, its explanation and the discussion about the various connotations it has assumed over the time in various societies forms the subject matter of the 2nd sub-heading. The 3rd sub heading not only discusses in detail various perspectives regarding the origin of Taliban, but also gives a detailed background of the factors that are responsible for shaping of such perspectives. The role played by the ethnic composition of Afghanistan in shaping its political framework has been the theme of 4th sub heading of the chapter. The country is home to many different ethnic groups and tribes. it is a fact that these ethnic groups have co-existed for centuries but still their attitude is hostile to each other and it is this tribal hostility that has created political instability in Afghanistan. However during Taliban regime, the ethnic strive did not remain a sensitive issue.

The 5th sub-heading, “The rise of Taliban” summarizes the circumstances in which Taliban emerged as a saviour-military group providing security to the weak and justice to the oppressed. The organization and the ruling structure of Taliban are discussed in the separate headings in the same chapter. A humble effort has been made to underline the forces and factors involved in the organization of Taliban. It has also been discussed, how this organization played
and important role in expansion and consolidation of Taliban authority. It is interesting to find that, the Taliban administration was the first administration in twenty years that was truly interested in the well-being of its citizens and trying hard to make life easier for them. The aims and objectives of the Taliban movement have been highlighted in the 8th sub-heading while the last sub-heading of the chapter brings out the military dimension of the Taliban and herein an effort has been made to make it clear that it was basically the military success of Taliban together with broader mass support that made Taliban an effective force in Afghan history.

The main aim of the first two chapters of the thesis is to give a clear picture about the circumstances in which Taliban came into the forefront. It were actually these circumstances which shapes the Taliban ideology. It is the Taliban ideology that is basically the main theme of the thesis and has been discussed in detail in the 3rd chapter together with the social response it evolved. However, the emphasis has been laid on the socio-religious aspect of the Taliban ideology. An effort has been made to discuss the title of the thesis socio-religious outlook of the Taliban threadbare, under many sub-headings. An effort has been made to highlight the impact of the Taliban's religious outlook and social response thereof. Besides, Taliban's governance, the other social dimensions like Economy, Education and women under Taliban were discussed in detail. At the same time an attempt has been made to reflect the human Rights record of the Afghanistan during Taliban rule both in the Islamic as well as world perspective, especially when the Taliban earned world wide condemnation for destruction of Bamiyan treasures and their policies towards women.

The 1st sub-heading of the chapter attempts to through light on the religious outlook of the Taliban. It needs to be mentioned here that the word Taliban persianized plural of Arabic word Talib literally means students, but widely used
for religious students. It is an expression of Sunni Islamic fundamentalism studying in Deoband seminaries, particularly a strict school of Islamic law. Taliban adhered to the Hanafite school of Islam, which is being overwhelmingly adhered among the Muslims of India and Pakistan, although the methodological approach of the Taliban to this school is a matter of political as well as academic concept.

The religious policies of Taliban were rooted in their political socialization and the mode of education imparted in the Madrasas. The environment in which they have grown up also shaped their outlook and concept of religious values. The uncertainty and divisive social culture, religious consciousness, implanted in them created a sense of urgency to take arms to restore order in Afghanistan with a view to establish an ideal Islamic Society. The movement led by the committed students came as a viable alternative to all other political maneuverings. Since Religion has always played a significant role in Afghanistan’s State consolidation. Desperate ethnic groups with strong tribal affinity that constitute the populace of Afghanistan could not have been hold together if the religious affinity would not have been under lined. The most important factor in Afghanistan has been the role of tribal customs and culture that has dominated the religious identity of Afghanistan. Afterwards, Afghanistan became a competing ground for ideological rivalry between the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States. With this great game ensued, religion played a great role as unifying factor in fight against Soviet Union. This was the period in which the radical ideology vis-à-vis Theo-democracy developed in common masses in general and youths in particular because of the vested interests political uncertainty and turmoil became an inherent part of Afghanistan and made the radicalism more relevant. Expectedly Taliban emerged as a group committed to Islam that promised to establish society free of
vices. As past experience, the Taliban had understood that only unifying force is Islam.

Thus Taliban after taking over major part of Afghanistan enforced Shariah as the law of land with the objective to establish a truly Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. Just after their takeover of Afghanistan they imposed strict rules which brought them to limelight and put them to all sorts of difficulties. Taliban insisted all men to grow beard and forbade women to work outside their homes. Schools for girls were closed, non-Muslim minorities were required to append a distinct badge or stitch a yellow cloth onto their dress so as to be differentiated from the majority Muslim population. Cinema halls, Cyber cafes and other entertainment houses were declared closed and whosoever found to participate in such activities was thrashed to the pulp. Even Internet became out of bound for an ordinary Afghan. Music, its performance and listening became a taboo for both sexes. Islamic laws were enforced by amputations and public executions. In certain cases like restrictions on women and demolishing of historical idols provoked international criticism. In spite of all the criticism Taliban made sincere and timely efforts to restore law and order in the State. They promulgated certain laws which were abhorring for the western value system but were needed for stem the riot created by drug mafias and war lords. They came in and actually protected women from violence. They veiled them and kept them out of the public sphere, though in many ways oppressed women but they nonetheless protected the fundamental rights of women from the sexual exploitation and physical abuse. They also opened up food lines and actually restored the order. Accordingly, a reference is made to the contribution of Taliban, they initially earned fame and popularity for themselves at-least in their own country. The basis for earning such popularity and fame was their initial proclamation which included:-

- Restoration of full security of the citizen's.
Support for the United Nations and Organization of Islamic Conference Peace efforts.

Search for mutual respect and friendly relations towards all countries.

Establishment of a credible and accountable Islamic regime.

Protection of human rights and liberties.

Restoration of women's safety, dignity and freedom.

Observance of Islamic *Hejab* or the veil.

Establishment of a representative government on the basis of Islamic *Shariah*.

Efforts to combat production and consumption of illicit drugs.

The efforts to rebuild the war torn country.

Offering of *Salah* was made compulsory.

Together with this proclamation the dedication exhibited by the Shura members also earned much respect for Taliban. Most of the Shura Members worked without salary and home servants and lead a very simple and austere life and practice what they preached. Taliban moved into a power vacuum and also took advantage of the moral corruption of predecessors. Taliban regime marginalized armed opposition during 2000, but the uncompromising severity of its fundamentalist Islamic view of society resulted in continued economic stagnation and international isolation. Nonetheless military success by Afghanistan's Taliban government appeared to move the country close to a unified political authority in 1998 than any other time since the Soviet invasion of 1979. Taliban were misunderstood because they took Quran, Islamic law and Islamic preaching seriously, which had been the part of Islamic culture right from its inception. The statement issued by one reputed Mufti Rashed Ahmad of Afghanistan helps in identifying the theology of Taliban in Afghanistan "Today thanks to Allah, we are very fortunate that under the leadership of *Amirul-Momineen*, the *Talaba* (students) of religious *Madaris* (Schools) have written down history with their pious blood and exemplary sacrifices and have thus gladdened our hearts and souls by practically implementing the laws of Islam. Our proud and blessed sons have proved wrong the propaganda that Qur'an and *Hadith* system of government has become outdated and impossible to put to practical
Socio-Religious Outlook of Taliban

use". Thus the outlook of Taliban’s religious policies and the Taliban Movement were, by and large, influenced by Pristine Islam.

As far as the governance of Taliban is concerned, from September 1994 they proceeded systematically in their administrative affairs and gained control over most of Afghanistan with little or no resistance using mostly non-military means. By early 1996, the Taliban came to be reckoned as a force capable of enforcing some order lines in the war ravaged Afghanistan. The reasons were mainly:

- They professed allegiance to Islam and Islamic values.
- They effectively neutralized the warlords.
- They disarmed the people so that the locals could lead a peaceful life.
- They provided an alternative hope to the Mujahidin groups who could not reach to a consensus on sharing power.
- They faced opposition only from the Tajik dominated regime led by Rabbani and his defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud.

However, the following main factors led to the failure of Taliban:

- Immature leadership and the harsh laws.
- The drug connection (Group of drug peddlers).
- The connections with terrorist network.
- Foreign Interference.

The most important drawback of the regime and the immediate cause for its downfall was its incoherence with international system. Apart from the intolerable gender policies and human rights abuses, the regime lent active support to the Islamic militants apparently fighting for a "holy cause".

The Taliban perpetually announced that they are fighting merely for the word of Islam to remain transcendent. However, at the same time they emphasized that their first task was to purify the country from the stains of hypocrisy, lawlessness, administrative failure, internal conflicts, which inflicted heavy damages and huge suffering on Afghanistan. The Taliban, however, gained
international disrepute because they banned women from working. Women were obligated to observe strict *pardah*. Girls had been stopped from going to schools. The Taliban forced women working outside their homes to stay at homes and ensured their monthly salary without any work; the restrictions as per the Taliban perspective have been put to protect their honour and dignity. At the same time Taliban claimed that they are not against the working women. They justified their statement and maintained that they need time and resources to create the proper environment, right texts and curriculum for women's education. For this the Taliban seems to have been greatly influenced by the Islamic revolution of Iran where the educational establishments remained closed for many years in the aftermath of the revolution. They remained closed until the Iranian revolutionaries formally established an educational syllabi conforming to their own principles. The Taliban had stated that they wish to establish a pure Islamic State which would govern the socio-religious status of women in Afghanistan. Presently women have no place in the public arena. They are required to stay at home and take care of their husband and children.

According to the Human Rights Organizations violations of human rights continued in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime that led Afghanistan to destruction and devastation. Taliban have been severely criticized with regard to their policies related to child care, free access of journalists into Afghanistan and their conservative interpretation of acquisition of knowledge. With regard to the health services, the correspondents of the news international reports that walking through the hospital corridors one had to keep cloth on the nose. The stench was unbearable due to desperate shortage of disinfectants. Dispensaries could not even provide basic health care to the common masses. IV, Music, Dancing and any form of entertainment was banned because the Taliban believed that it would poison the peoples mind and they would not be inclined to learn the values of Islam. Men were also required to conform to a dress code,
avoiding western clothing and abstaining from shaving. The requirement that men should pray five times a day, ideally in a mosque, is consistent with the wish of the Taliban to ensure a higher degree of religious observance.

Moreover, the universal outrage at the offensive launched by the Taliban rulers against Afghanistan’s Buddhist post condemnation had not remained confined to non-Muslim states alone. Even several Islamic countries including Iran were appalled by the destruction of Buddhist statues in the province of Bamiyan so much so that the Iran even offered to buy the statues or move them in to safe keeping. However, the Taliban officials rejected any offer to prevent the destruction of the statues reiterating that the presence of the statues conflicted with the Islamic teachings. The Bamiyan incident stirred up dual controversies about both the character of the Taliban regime and the relationship between culture, religion, and national heritage in the Islamic state. One of the reputed Indian Muslim scholars while reacting to Bamiyan episode said “while the Taliban were ostensibly smashing idols, what in reality they were doing was demolishing Islam”. Defending this order with regard to the Bamiyan idols the then Taliban Govt. said, “though no research has been conducted to Islam’s position on statue, but the decision to destroy the Buddha’s was taken on the advise of 400 Ulamas across Afghanistan and it was decided that the statues were un-Islamic leading to their destruction”. In his characteristic style, Mullah Omar shrugged off all objections to the planned destruction of the Buddhist statues, saying “my job is the implementation of Islamic order”. He invoked Islamic law, a fatwa issued by the Afghan Ulama associated with this regime, and the decision of the supreme court of Afghanistan to support his decision. While it is also believed that, the Taliban undertook their actions in reaction to the tough sanctions imposed on them by the World, nevertheless the destruction of the statues had mottled the Taliban’s image.
Besides this, in the spectrum of socio-economic structure of the country opium cultivation appeared as an important viable for the economic restructuring of the country. Under economic stagnation during Taliban Rule, opium and narcotics remained the major source of revenue. All this was making it difficult for the Taliban to make any serious attempts at its eradication. As far as poppy cultivation is concerned, the Taliban leaders denied any connection with drug trafficking and have maintained that they will eradicate opium poppy crop once they had established order in the fractious country and can persuade poppy growers that they can grow other crops profitably. Taliban justified this unique policy with another twist. Drugs are evil and we would like to substitute puppies with another cash crop, but it’s not possible at the moment, because we do not have international recognition, obviously, the poor economy destabilized the Taliban regime as it would have as could undermine even the strongest regimes of the world. Over two years, Mullah Omar periodically assured both US and the UN to end poppy cultivation provided the Taliban were given international recognition. It was first time in the history of Afghanistan that Taliban had offered the international community with such an option.

Chapter 4th of the thesis deals with the global response to the emergence and expansion of Taliban as a movement in Afghanistan An attempt, as such, has been made to look into the innumerable developments that took place in Afghanistan during Taliban rule coupled with the response it evoked at the global level.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it has always been important to external powers due to its strategic location. They have meddled in its affairs both in the past and at present. The prolonged civil war made it more vulnerable to external penetration. The external powers were more than willing to do so had it been served their national interest. The Afghan civil war had important regional
implications. Various external powers were pursuing divergent objectives in Afghanistan. The most influential player, Pakistan was aiming to establish a friendly government in Afghanistan. Pakistan wanted to attain strategic depth against India. A complete victory by the Taliban might have given Pakistan greater access to Central Asian markets and a safe route for the planned oil and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the Arabian Sea, plus, the end of the civil war in Afghanistan would have lead to the repatriation of Afghan refugees, as Pakistan was growing impatient with the effects of having these refugees on its soil.

After, Pakistan the major competitor for influence in Afghanistan was Iran. Iran had sought to give its support to Northern alliance as a way to express its solidarity with Afghanistan’s Shiite population. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was providing financial support to the Taliban to limit Iranian influence in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia had an affinity to the Taliban’s interpretations of Islam.

But unfortunately, Pakistan and Iran were not the only parties to put their interests in Afghanistan and use its borders to create a regime which would serve its purpose well. Soviets, Indians and more remotely placed American too were interested to keep the region under their own sphere of control. All of them agreed that they desired a weak divided Afghanistan rather than a united one that might become the launching pad for Islamic nationalism in Central Asia. The great powers determined that Afghanistan was to its former states as a neutral buffer state.

Right from the emergence to the collapse of Taliban there are positive as well as negative aspects of Talbanization. The positive side of their administration was mainly to put the whole nation in a proper religious order, even in this part of
their effort, they could not pull on successfully, because of harsh attitudes with regard to numerous socio-religious issues. Negative part includes the extreme measures and harsh verdicts in implementing Islamic ideology which runs contrary to the liberal socio-religious ideology frequently propagated both in Muslim and non-Muslim world. Even in the implementation of Islamic Shariah they failed to prepare grounds on the Afghan soil for the smooth implementations of Shariah code. Their harsh rules with regard to women and education globally earned the disfavor and disregard for Taliban rule. Consequently Taliban regime and Talibanization has gone deep inside the ditch. However, certain questions do come up with regard to their future course of action. Accordingly an attempt has been made to find answers to these questions in the pages following.