CHAPTER-III

Religious outlook and social response
Religious Outlook and Social Response

Afghanistan is a conglomerate of different tribes and ethnic groups, which makes it microcosm of diverse cultures and nationalities. By and large, Islam became the only unifying force behind these diverse groups together under one umbrella of an independent nation. 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 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. Consequently numerous dynasties ruled Afghanistan till 1747. When Ahmad Shah Abdali was chosen as leader by Afghans, he seized parts of adjacent countries On assuming Power and for the first time Afghanistan appeared as a Nation State, so began modern united Afghanistan with the success to gather the various ethnic groups under the banner of Islam. Since then Islam caught its glory and established its influence over the entire Afghanistan. It transformed initially the life of the people by creative and progressive spirit. Belief in Islam has been important for the population, not only in providing spiritual fulfillment, but also in giving a sense of identity to the people of the area. In fact, before the beginning of the 20th Century, the people of what is now Afghanistan saw themselves as part of a Sunni Muslim entity, sandwiched between the two infidel empires of Britain and Russia and on the other side Shia Iran, rather than as citizens of a nation. However the self identification of the

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93 Afghanistan fundamental Victories, p 179.
population is primarily Muslim and the society has been dominated by convention and Islam has had a strong hold. 95

Islam has played different roles and is understood on different levels in Afghanistan; however, the major way in which Islam has traditionally acquired a more active role in Afghan Society is the foreign intervention, as all the times religion plays a great safe as a unifying factor against these foreign enemies.96 As such traditional fundamentalism- that is the will to have the only sharia as the sole law has been persuasive right through modern Afghan history.97 Therefore, throughout the history of Afghanistan, the religious fundamentalism has shown its political manifestation. Whenever attempts of modernization have taken place, the Afghan Society particularly, the Ulema opposed it tooth and nail for contradicting with the fundamentals of Islam. Since the governance of country remained based on the Quranic law and dictum as interpreted by the religious leader, the traditional Ulema have acquired considerable hold on the Afghan State.98 Hence to analyze the impact appropriated by the traditional Islam and the role of other organization is necessary to understand the legacy of religious outlook of Taliban.

95 Peter Marseden, The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Piciurc, p 78.
97 Islamism is something different; it is the perception of Islam more as a political ideology than as a mere religion. For Islamists, the Shariah is just a part of the agenda. They address society in it's entirely, in politics, economics, culture and law; they claim to reshape the society along purely Islamic lines. In this sense Islamism is a modern movement, the last wave of an anti-imperialist mobilization which dates back to the last century. The Islamists recruit among the intelligentsia and the modern strata of society, including students from 'secular' faculties, mostly in sciences. They have also been able to attract many educated women, who if wearing the Islamist veil, were accepted into the political and economic arena, which is almost anathema for traditionalists. The Islamists think that a truly Islamic society could be established only through an 'Islamic State', which presupposes a revolution, or at least a struggle for gaining political power-while fundamentalist mullahs rely on any de facto power to implement Shariah Olivier Roy, Has Islamism a future in Afghanistan?, William Malay (ed.) Fundamentalism Reborn?, Afghanistan and the Taliban, Hurst & Company-London. 1998, p 199.
Islam in Afghanistan, throughout the ages has been a mixture of orthodoxy and Sufism. The Afghans have always had a liberal attitude to religion owing to the wide spread influence of Sufism in the country which demonstrates reaction to authoritarian domination of the mullahs in Afghanistan. Out of the four orders of the Sufism the Naqshbandi, Qadriya and the Chistiya had great influence in the country. These sufi orders had made people understand man God relationship in real sense. Under the influence of these sufi orders people at large were united and had developed true understanding. They were kind and compassionate and people used to gather, when sufic ideology was being imparted. These sufi orders were the only school of thought who had made people to follow Islam and Quranic teachings. Sufi orders had no lust for power or politics. Their only object was to strengthen human relations by making human being aware of their philosophy of existentialism. Only sufi orders in true perspective enlightened human beings about teachings of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. People at large gladly and willingly had accepted Islam. It is the contribution of these orders that Afghan soil had attained fertility and enlightened with true ideology (Islam). The elementary teaching, institutions exalted in all aspects before the introduction of a western type of schooling in the middle of the 20th Century. Before 1978 these Quranic Schools established their relevance during the chaotic years that followed and continued to play an important political role up to the present day. The leading Naqshbandi and Qadri Families were allied to the royal family, and consequently were harshly persecuted after the Coup -D’etat’ of 1978. By and large, Sufi organization creates a network among adherents and were fowlloung teachings of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Since the Sufistic tradition promoted the concept of living within society” rather than being removed from it in a monastic way, these orders actively participated in the socio-political movements throughout the region in accordance with teaching sof

Afghanistan Fundamental Vitories. Pp 180-81
Quran. Ahmad Rashid too, narrates, that the two main Sufi orders of Naqashbandiya and Qadriya in Afghanistan played a major role in uniting the anti-soviet resistances as they provided a network of association and alliances outside the Mujahidin parties and ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{102}

Besides the activities of Sufi Orders, the reformist Organizations of the region as compared to traditional Islamic groups played an active role in shaping and moulding the religious out-look of Taliban.\textsuperscript{103} To promote such an approach, the establishment of Islamic Brotherhood (1929) by Hassan-Ul-Bana is deemed to be a corner stone in shaping the religious out-look of Afghans in general and Taliban in particular. Although the movement originated in Egypt, it spread throughout the Muslim world\textsuperscript{104} and finally it was imported to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{105} However in contrast Ahmad Rashid is of the view that, before the Taliban, Islamic fundamentalism had never flourished in Afghanistan, but it is a Wahabism from Saudi Arabia which brought it to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{106} Another organizations which inspired the radicalism in Afghanistan is the Pakistan's Jamati-e-Islami founded by Maulana Syed Abu A'la Maududi RA, (1903-1978)

\textsuperscript{101} Ralph. H. Magnus, Afghanistan, Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, p 94.
\textsuperscript{102} Leaders of these orders were equally prominent. The Mujaddedi family were leaders of the Naqshbandiya order and had been king makers in Kabul for centuries. In a brutal act, the communists killed 79 members of the Mujaddedi family in Kabul in January 1979 to eliminate potential rivals. Nevertheless one survivor, Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, set up his own resistance party in Peshawar, the Jabha-i-Najat Milli Afghanistan, National Liberation Front of Afghanistan, and became a fierce critic of the radical Islamic parties. He was appointed President of the Afghan interim government in 1989 and then became the first Mujaheddin President of Afghanistan in 1992. Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, the head of the Qaderyah order and related to ex-King Zahir Shah through marriage, set up the Mahr-e-Milli, National Islamic front of Afghanistan, in Peshawar. Both leaders were supporters of Zahir Shah and remained the most moderate of all the Mujaheddin leaders. They were also sidelined by the CIA- ISI nexus and by Hikmetyar and Masud and later by the Taliban. They returned to politics in 1999 by setting up a new Peace and National Unity party that attempted to mediate between the Taliban and their opponents. Ahmad Rashid, Taliban, Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, 1 H. Tauris Publishers, London-New York, 2000. p 84.
\textsuperscript{103} Ralph. H Magnus, Afghanistan, Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, p 96.
\textsuperscript{104} Shaul Shay, The Endless Jihad The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, Interdisciplinary Centre Herzlya, Israel. 2002. p 14.
\textsuperscript{105} The Post Taliban World in the Afghanistan Crisis: problems and Perspectives. p 185.
\textsuperscript{106} Taliban, Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia. p 85.
with the aim to bring about an Islamic Revolution. The influence of this movement can clearly be seen in much of what the Taliban stand for. Their conviction that there should be no compromise with Western values and that instead, the West should respect and accommodate itself to the value system espoused by the Taliban movement is an obvious parallel. The total reliance on the Shari'ah and the assertion by the Taliban that they have the right to interpret Islam a new and that theirs is the correct interpretation, also carry echoes of Maulana Maududi. Moreover, his ultra-conservative view on the seclusion of women provided ideological justification for the position taken by the Taliban. Therefore, the ideology of the Afghan Islamists has been entirely influenced and inspired both by the Islamic Brotherhood and Jamati-Islami of Pakistan the two biggest main stream organizations as the Afghan movement has sometimes been seen as just an offspring’s of these organizations. The other personalities who insert new currents are the manifestos of Syed Qutub, the radical ideologue of Muslim brotherhood, and the Ayatollah Khomeini’s contribution to Islamic political thought, (the Islamic revolution of Iran 1979), are deemed to nourish the roots of fundamentalism in Afghanistan. It is also argued, rather inner feelings and faith of people that persecution of Naqashbandiyas and Qadriyas sifi orders was responsible for downfall of Afghan.

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107 Taliban: Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 85.
108 Maulana Syed Abu A'la Maududi, established the Jamaat-e-Islami party in India, which became Pakistan’s Jamaat-e-Islami party in 1947. He was highly elitist in his approach in that he set out to influence those holding power in society as a means of promoting change within it. This was quite distinct from the policy of Muslim brotherhood, which advocated the building of change from the bottom, through the development of mass movements. He described the West as morally decadent and corrupt and argued that Islam was self-sufficient and quite separate from, and indeed opposed to, both Western and socialist ways of life. He advocated total reliance on Shari'ah, while recognizing the need for interpretation in response to changing circumstances. Peter Marsden, The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Picture., pp 81-82.
110 Hardcore extremists were not representing Islam and Islamic teachings in true perspective. Their approach and understanding of Islamic ideology was far behind. They mislead people and created total confusion and chaos in the minds of people. Their ideology fractured Afghan territory and Afghan people and congruently these people could not develop a stable political or economic government.
Nevertheless these radical Islamists, as compared to the Taliban, were relatively modern and forward looking. They favoured women’s education and her participation in social life and proposed theories for an Islamic economy, banking system, foreign relations and a more equitable and just social system. However the impact of these revolutionary movements can never be undermined as both worked for an Islamic revolution to create a true Islamic society. It is worth to mention here that along with the spread of Islam, mullahism also became prevalent in Afghan society. Mullah system has great significance in the Afghan society, because it is the Mullahs who interpreted and applied Islam in tune with the Afghan ethical and social value system. For example, the ‘Pushtunwali’ actually contradicts with the Islamic tenet of forgiveness of murder or acceptance of monetary or material compensation against bloodshed. Since the tribal blood feud and revenge system of Pushtunwali was so hard to break, the mullahs made it part of the Islamic belief system. It is attributed that, the Taliban has tried to restore a similar system in Afghanistan along with other features of tribalism as well as feudalism.

To sum up, Islam has always been at the very centre of the lives of the Afghan people, be it in one’s prayers five times a day, fasting in Ramadan or giving Zakat, they were on the forefront like any other Muslim country. Islam thus has been the bedrock for the unity of Afghanistan’s diverse and multi-ethnic people while Jihad has frequently provided the principle mobilizing factor for Afghan nationalism. Therefore the Ulema and village Mullahs of Afghanistan were at the heart of the Taliban movement. These religious leaders were marginalized
during the years of State building, although attempts were made at various times to co-opt them into the state structure by putting them on government payrolls.

These attempts were manipulative, as Amir Abdur Rahman, Daoud and later, the communists - intended to curb or control their traditional influence over the rural population of Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion provided the opportunity for the Islamist movement, much weakened by recent purges, to strengthen its ranks. Islam therefore became the binding force of the resistance movement and a jihad was called against the invaders, whence the resistance fighters took on the name of Mujahidin. So, the Taliban were not therefore, as is widely believed, an upstart movement or a sort of religious proletariat, an inseparable part of the Afghan social fabric associated with religious schools, mosques, shrines and all kinds of Islamic activities. They could be rapidly mobilized by the Ulema as Mujahidin, or holy warriors when the cause of Islam was felt to be threatened. To summarize one can see a range of influences in the creed of Taliban, drawn from Islamic movements in the Middle East, Iran, the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan. However, the dominant influence appears to be that of the Afghan Ulema, who could be perceived as seeking a return to the status quo that existed before the intellectual movements of the 1950s and 1960s set in motion a chain of events from which Afghanistan is still reeling.

Religious Outlook of Taliban

The religious ideology of Taliban starts with its nomenclature itself, that is, Taliban the term derived from the Islamic context itself, widely used for the

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114 The Islamists parties, led by intellectuals, who had borrowed Western political concepts in order to create a new political ideology based on a reinterpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith, and the so-called traditionalists, who drew their support from the Ulama, the mullahs, and tribal and other leaders, they based their interpretation of Islam on a long history of scholastic commentary on the Qur'an and also drew on other traditions, including those relating to the behaviour of women: Peter Marsden, *The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Picture*, p.82.


116 Peter Marsden, *The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Picture*, see again ref.
students of Islam, both in Arabic and Persian. As a movement, it was a reaction to the self-seeking and destructive policies of the so-called "Mujahidin", whose pretensions to "Islam and leadership were discredited. It was this ideological vacuum and an atmosphere of Hobsonian state of anarchy and lawlessness that made Taliban’s rule acceptable to the common man. This ideology was rooted in their political socialization and the kind of education imparted in madras’s. The environment in which they had grown up also shaped their outlook and concept of religious values. This religious consciousness in them created a sense of urgency to take arms to restore order with a view to establish an ideal Islamic state.

Educated in religious seminaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban did not first come out of the blue as some commentators thought. They had always been an integral part of Afghan society, living in madrasas attached to mosques, knocking from door to door to collect food for their meals, and entirely dependent on the generosity of the faithful for their education and upkeep. They had actively taken part in the Afghan Jihad as members of various Mujahidin groups and most of them returned to their madras’s once the Soviet troops retreated from Afghanistan. For them the jihad ended on 15th February 1989, when the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan. Others remained in the battlefield until the fall of Dr. Najib-u-llah’s regime in April 1992, with a hope to install a true Islamic government in Kabul. The power hungry Mujahidin groups disappointed all Afghans, including the Taliban. Taliban believed that Rabbani government and most of the rival Mujahidin movements in Afghanistan did not properly practice the laws of Islam (Shariah) and were far from establishing an Islamic state which they had pledged to constitute during the

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struggle against the communists. The Taliban movement therefore emerged as a socio-religious movement with a view to change the anarchic face of Afghanistan, turning it into a true Islamic state according to the interpretation and understanding of its founders. Under these circumstances, everybody from students to teachers, businessmen to officials and from common masses to intellectuals look forward for a change. As such, Islam became the only vehicle for social protest and reformulating identities. Expectedly a group of teachers and students led by Mullah Mohammad Omar framed the Taliban movement to end the power of disillusioned and morally corrupt predecessors to establish a pure Islamic regime. Consequently the ranks of the Taliban grew in direct proportion to the society’s desperate desire for the order. Initially the Taliban leaders announced that their desire was to bring peace to Afghanistan by disposing of all Mujahidin factions, however, as the militias territorial control expanded, its political ideology and agenda made it explicit that their ultimate goal was to transform Afghanistan into a “Pure Islamic Emirate as a prelude to achieving wider regional objective, where Shurah law, as interpreted by them, will be the law of land. The country is to be called the Islamic State of Afghanistan, governed in accordance with the Sunni Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence). A nominated Shura (Consultative body) is to run the affairs of this State, with the edicts of Amirul-Mominun. Although the concept of Islamic Caliphate was put to an end with the end of Ottoman Empire in 1924, the Muslim World after decades witnessed the revival of Khalifah, with the Amirul Muminin as its head with consultative body of Mujhs-e Shoom, though such a system even today existed only in papers in several Muslim countries.

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119 The Endless Jihad: The Mujaheddin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 71.
122 Ahmad Rashid, The Taliban Exporting Terrorism, Foreign Affairs, Volume 78, No 06, p 26
The Taliban with strong will and determination dedicate themselves to the cause they have set out to accomplish and lead a very simple and austere life and practice what they preach. The Taliban document released on the eve of the establishment of rule explained in unequivocal terms their mode of revolution with the statement that since the triad of mosque, Imam (guide) and students have been central to the life of all Afghans. For the last 1200 years all Afghans, as such, are bound to Islam from cradle to grave. Immediately after having achieved their long-proclaimed goal, they started to refer themselves as representatives of Islamic State of Afghanistan rather than a movement. The pious students quickly gathered more like-minded followers and set-off a snowballing movement, which Taliban spokesmen themselves like to compare with the success of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) after his hijra to Medina. Emergence of Taliban therefore is seen as revolutionary movement motivated by an Islamic world view and a social purpose aimed at establishing a pure and a just Islamic state in Afghanistan. Mullah Mohammad Omar was uncompromising in his determination that Sharia be the law of the land and in asserting his leadership he summoned his vision of the miraculous years of Islam. After the capture of Kabul, he assumed a traditional title of the Caliph, Amir-Ul-Mumineen, commander of the faithful and the country was renamed as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Mullah Mohammad Omar under the inspiration of Shariah invited number of Ulemas from various provinces at an official meeting held in Kabul to find out a solution to the internal and external problems being faced by Afghanistan. He proclaimed that the Ulema-e-Kirim (the respected scholars of Islam) have always guided the Muslims as per the dictates of Shariah and now the need of the time is that they should provide true

125 Franz Schurmann, p.104.
127 Afghanistan’s Taliban: An Islamic Revolution of the Pushtuns, p 129
128 The Endless Jihad The Mujaheddin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 72
guidance to the Islamic government and the Afghan people. Three thousand scholars were reported to have gathered in the capital to deliberate upon a six points religious enquiry (*Istifta*) made by Mullah Omar. He asked the *Ulema*.

1. In case of an attack by Iran or any other country, will ensuing war will be called *Jihad-fi-Sabeelillah* (a holy war) or not?
2. Is the defense of the country a *fardh* (compulsory) upon Taliban alone or upon each and every citizen?
3. In case of an attack on Afghanistan, what will be the duty of world Muslims and Muslim governments as per the *Sharia*?
4. Will defense of the country be enough or will action against the aggressor carrying the war to its own territory, be necessary?
5. The Taliban version of Islam is under severe criticism today as such the verdict of *Ulema* is sought whether the system implemented by the Taliban has been invented by the Taliban or it is approved by the holy Qur’an and Sunnah, and further more is it the same system which had been implemented during the *Khilafati-Rashida* (The Righteous Governments of prophets (SAW) first four successor’s)?
6. The learned scholars have to justify the allegation of foreign countries that the people of Afghanistan are not happy with the Taliban rule.\(^\text{130}\)

To convene such a meeting by and large confirms that whatever the actions taken by the Taliban were legitimized and endorsed by the *Ulema*. Therefore among many decrees to legitimize their outlook, the statement issued by one reputed Mufti Rashed Ahmad of Afghanistan, helps to identify the theology of Taliban in Afghanistan “All praise to Allah for having blessed, after centuries, the oppressed Muslims *Ummah* with a *Khulafat-Rashida* (righteous caliphate) form of government. Today thanks to Allah Ta’ala, we are very fortunate that under the leadership of *Amirul-Mumineen* 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 of the west that a government with an Islamic orientation has

become outdated and thus impossible to be put to practical use". Similar views have been expressed by Mullah Turabi, an ideologue of the Taliban movement "ours being the only fully Shariah country in the world and don't believe in doing things on a piecemeal basis. Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries are partly Sharia... The Quran says there are specific punishments for specific crimes that is why punishments are executed in public. Public executions actually protect life and keep away common masses from committing a similar crime.... We think women ought to work at home; this is what we are taught by our culture and faith. It is imperative for us to implement Islamic law; otherwise we are committing a sin. It is not only a question of beards and veils; every vice has to be stopped and every virtue promulgated. The ideology with an Islamic orientation made Taliban acceptable to common masses. While analyzing this outlook, a noted Pakistani scholar in an interview with Anwar Haq (The man from Darul Uloom Haqqaina) wrote that Taliban, mostly the products of this madrassa were imbued with Islamic Shariah was not inspired by the holy Qur'an and Sunnah, but the Fatwa's of religious scholars influenced their vision and world view. These religious injections however introduced extremism in the comprehension and understanding of those Afghans who joined the Taliban movement. The religious teachings imparted in the religious seminaries to a large extent fashioned their outlook towards Islam and social setup. However, there is perhaps no denial to the fact that the honesty of the Taliban in application of Islamic law without equivocation or defects has been found on the ground. The statements and actions they have taken in the area they controlled put them in the category of extremists and brought disrepute to the Taliban.

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movement and made the government unpopular by insisting on enforcing harsh strictures. Taliban by parasitizing hardliner policies to a greater extent spoiled their case for recognition. Many controversial statements came into being in view of their religious outlook. To many scholars, Taliban were neither radical Islamists or mystical Sufi, nor traditionalists and simultaneously failed to find a place for themselves in the Islamic spectrum of ideas and movements that had emerged. The distortion and collapse of legitimacy of all the three trends into a naked rapacious struggle for power created an ideological vacuum which the Taliban came to fill. The fact is that the Taliban represented no body but themselves and recognized no Islam except their own. To Barnett R. Rubin, "The Taliban represents an Islamic radicalization of that code under the impact of war and mass displacement, where the restrictions on women may be a some resemblance to the tribal code; other regulations such as forbidding of celebrations of Nawroz are opposed to traditionalism and enforce such ideology a new disciplinary alien to tribal tradition." Sultan Sahin, while alleging Taliban as a new religion, substantiates the aforesaid view, Taliban view of Islam did not correspond with the teachings of Islam as understood by majority of Muslim throughout the ages. Talibanism, therefore, may be considered a completely different religion as the movement has undermined the sanctity of living by consensus. Its medieval interpretation of the great religion of Islam as a binding for the day-to-day life style of Afghan people is viewed as a desperate quest for legitimacy to rule. Under no legitimate dispensation would the Afghans have accepted for the women to stay indoors and not to resort to any profitable economic activity, or for the men to be compelled to grow beards at least 6 inches long. The Islamic world has realized that the Taliban's interpretation of Islam is bringing disrepute to their religion more than at any other time in Islamic

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137 Talibain, Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 87.
138 Afghanistan under the Taliban-1999, p 80.
history. The actions of Taliban’s religious police—Amar-Bil Maruf va Nabi Anil Munkar (Inviting people for benevolence and stopping them from bad deeds) have brought considerable adverse publicity to Islam at international level. As such no respectable theologian seems to endorse Taliban’s interpretation of Islam. Keeping in view the controversial statements, there has been a great debate and rightly so on the legitimacy of Taliban as an Islamic movement. The discussion became more frequent after Taliban took number of extremist measures while enforcing Sharia as law of the land.

Therefore, dubbing the Taliban movement completely as un-Islamic, the movement needs to be objectively studied and analyzed taking into account the factors responsible for the emergence of Taliban i.e the political instability, socio religious scenario, people’s verdict for a change before issuing a decree for or against the Taliban.

Taliban Governance:

Having achieved their long-proclaimed goal to drive the “Criminals” and “Usurpers” out of the capital, the Taliban started to refer to themselves as representatives of the “Islamic state of Afghanistan” rather than a movement. Mullah Omar immediately appointed a six member council for running government affairs in Kabul and announced that a completely Islamic System would be enforced to ensure full protection of life, property and honour of all citizens. All remaining rivaling fractions of the country called to lay down their arms and surrender to the “Islamic government”, all those who surrender may expect an amnesty for their previous deeds. As such, the Taliban programme was simple but astonishingly effective. They promised to end the fighting and to

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140 The Frontier Post, 1996.
restore law and order under the Shariah. Selfish commanders who had taken advantage of their positions to enrich themselves were removed, and God fearing commanders loyal to Islamic values were confirmed in office. Even the former communists were accommodated in the Movement; however, their conduct was closely watched.  

The ruling structure of the Taliban was based on their understanding of the Islamic percepts of the government; it had a structure where the supreme leader, 

Amir is assisted by Shura or consultative bodies. Taliban is said to have based their governance on a very rigid interpretation of principles that were followed by the four Caliphs of Islam, in the 7th century, who stood out as embodiments of simplicity and devotion to their people.

Appointments of all the 28 provincial governors and military personal were made directly either from Mullah Mohammad Omar or his trusted aides who were to follow the instructions of Mullah Omar to rule and adjudicate matters based on the principles of Shariah. The lower and high courts at provincial level and even the Supreme Court of the country were to decide the cases in accordance with the dictations of Shariah (Islamic Jurisprudence). It is noteworthy to mention, aside from the core group of members, meeting of the original Shura also saw participation from military commanders, tribal leaders, and Ulema; this indeterminate structure is one of the key features of the Taliban's central Shura. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Taliban leadership was that top government officials often switch from battle field to the ministry and back again. In one sense, this produces remarkable flexibility among the Taliban hierarchy as they all act as both administrators and military
commanders. This flexibility in the military command has allowed the leadership to maintain better ties with the rank-and-file fighters than might otherwise be the case. Moreover, government ministers were working without pay and would avoid government resources for private use, something unheard of in modern times.145

Economy and Taliban:

Afghanistan being a landlocked country depends on farming and livestock raising (sheep and goats). Economic considerations have played second fiddle to political and military upheavals during two decades of war. Gross domestic products have fallen substantially over the past twenty years because of the loss of labour capital and disruption of trade and transport; severe drought added to the nations difficulties during Taliban regime in 1998-2000. The majority of population continued to suffer from insufficient food, clothing, housing and health care. Inflation remained a serious problem through out the country. International sanctions further added the misery. Under this stagnation, opium and narcotics remained the major source of revenue.

Sound economy and economic system of a country is generally deemed to be the backbone of country's stability. The economic issues of Afghanistan constitute one of the significant components of its social history, as such, Taliban did not left this vital aspect of society unattended. Since the Islamic law contains general economic rules and regulations so Taliban administration insisted even in statements dealing with civil issues such as economy to be handled within the frame-work of Islam. Concerning enhancement of the economy they insisted of de-arming the people and subdued the opposition in order to achieve peace and an appropriate atmosphere for commercial transactions. On the other hand they consider practicing the “golden” principles of Islam as a precondition to establish

a booming economy and to place it on a strong and solid foundation. Taliban propagated their concern with economy from time to time through media.

Several steps had been taken to ensure the economic accomplishments of the country. Ministers were working *fi-sabeelilah* without pay; and did not use government resources for private use; curtailing expenses, refraining from indulgence in squandering and extravagance, were all steps taken in this direction. Likewise, from time to time, suitable measures were announced to improve agriculture, to reorganize and revive unproductive industrial units and to give vast concessions to businessmen for the promotion of trade activities. In this connection, some members of the supreme *Shura* (Assembly) were specially delegated to attend to the businessmen and help draw a wider plan for improving Taliban economy. In some of these meetings, the Taliban leaders were read out and encouraged and urged the Afghan businessmen and traders to work with the government in reconstructing the war-ravaged country. He further added that the first priority for Afghan businessmen should be the regular supply of foodstuffs. In these meetings issues of economic importance were discussed and were supplemented by the efforts made by the ministry of finance for promotion of foreign investment in Afghanistan in order to feed new projects and revive unfinished ones.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ *The Taliban Ascent to Power*, Pp. 89-90. The steps towards reconstruction that Taliban undertook were as: some 125 new small scale projects were either revived or began operative, providing jobs to almost 3000 people. According to the Central Office for Promotion and Development of Domestic and Foreign Investment, despite a second set of sanctions imposed in January, 2001 by the United Nations to force the expulsion of usama bin laden, the Taliban quietly carried on with the rehabilitation of infrastructure and telecommunications. By the middle of 2001, the fertilizer factory in Mazar-i-sharief and the power plant were functional again after break of four years. Four textile mills in Kandhar and Mazar were also rehabilitated, producing coarse cloth and some basic textiles. Besides, one cement plant in the Baghlan Province with the production of 4000 bags a day and two wool factories were also back to the production of rugs, carpets and blankets. Five of the 400 factories and Plants that had been almost all functional till 1992 have meanwhile been reactivated, among them the Afghan Industrial Factory, that makes shoes, soap and recycles used tyres. *The Unholy Nexus*, p 173.
In Afghanistan poppy cultivation is a major crop as well as a primary source of income. Being a preferable and profitable crop it has been under cultivation from a long time. It is estimated that some one million farmers are directly dependent on this crop. As far as poppy cultivation is concerned, Taliban leaders denied any connection with drug trafficking and were determinant to eradicate opium poppy crop. It was their plan to establish a socio-economic order in the country only then puppy growers be persuaded to grow other profitable crop. Governor Mohammed Hussain justified their policy with another twist. They were planning to substitute another crop (preferably Poppy) instead of drugs in case Taliban gained international recognition. Even at times their prevailing government succeeded in gaining an international fame for Taliban and congruently were in a position to control more than 90% drug cultivation. Afghanistan's socio-economic situation makes opium production the only available economic means for access to land, labor, and credit and the Afghan peasantry's heavy dependence upon opium production made it difficult for the Taliban to make any serious attempts to eradicate it. Albeit initially Taliban had declared to eliminate all drugs and US diplomats were encouraged enough by the announcement to make immediate contact with Taliban. In this connection, a complete ban on opium poppy cultivation that eliminated the crop in the year 2000 went although largely unacknowledged. However, within a few months the Taliban realized that they needed the income from poppies and were forcing farmers to cultivate the said crop. They began to collect an Islamic tax called Zakat on all dealers moving opium. In the non-Taliban controlled areas however, individual commanders, former Mujahidin commanders and provisional commanders imposed their own taxes to keep their coffers full and

147 Taliban. Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 118
148 The Taliban: Ascent to Power.
149 Taliban. Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 118
151 Taliban: Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 118
152 Imtiyaz Gul, The Unholy Nexus - Pak-Afghan relations under the Taliban, p 172
their soldiers fed. Some of them became substantial dealers in opium. Publicly they refused to admit that they indulged in drug trafficking, but always blamed their rivals for doing so. But none had ever been so honest, in declaring their lack of intention to control drugs as the Taliban.\textsuperscript{153} However, sources amongst the opposition claim that senior Taliban officials deal directly in the cultivation and trade of drugs. As a result of which the opium production in Afghanistan in Taliban controlled provinces reached 400 tons. Though cultivation and use of drugs is contrary to Islamic ideology, drug trade was considered the only economic source for survival and sustenance. The international community left no option to Taliban to go with the cultivation till alternative arrangements were made.\textsuperscript{154} It is pertinent to mention that after major crackdown on poppy production by the Taliban in the final year of their rule the economic uncertainty of the post-Taliban period, coupled with autonomous behavior of numerous local actors, led to bumper opium crops in 2002 (3400 tons, according to U.N estimate) and especially in 2003 (3600 tons), constituting 75 percent of words heroin.\textsuperscript{155}

Twenty years of continuous conflict have taken a very heavy toll of life and property in Afghanistan. Millions of people were killed, hundreds of thousands were disabled, untold members have to flew their country and seek shelter in neighboring lands while numerous families kept moving from one town to another in order to save themselves from turmoil of war. Therefore, much of the devastation was carried out during the Afghan \textit{jihad} and the civil war that followed well before Taliban came on the scene.\textsuperscript{156} Hence, the turmoil not only

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{153} \textit{Taliban: Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia}, Pp 118-119.
\item \textsuperscript{154} The Endless Jihad: The Mujaheddin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 86.
\item \textsuperscript{155} Larry P Goodson, \textit{Afghanistan in 2003: The Taliban resurface and new constitution in both}, Asian survey, Vol.44, No.1, p 17.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Almost all major roads are full of potholes, their surfaces torn apart by the frequent of tracked vehicles, bridges have been blown up, making crossing of obstacles slow and cumbersome. Houses have been razed to the ground by constant bombing and racketeting. Wells and water channels need major repairs before they can be used again. Fields have dried up. Electric installations and power lines have been damaged, in some
\end{itemize}
resulted in physical destruction but also destroyed Afghan social fabric, the 'clan community and family structure'. Afghanistan became one of the lowest rated indices for the human conditions in the world.\textsuperscript{157}

With this devastating background, the Taliban policy has been piecemeal and somewhat reactionary and no clear policy framework could be elucidated.\textsuperscript{158} To preserve, promote and strengthen the social fabric of Afghanistan the vision and policy of Taliban needs to be objectively and analytically studied as the new social order that came into existence underwent a radical change under the influence of Islam. Consequently the issues concerning woman, religion, practices, minority rights, human rights and entertainment and host of other issues got a new orientation.\textsuperscript{159} Which earned both fame and disregard for Taliban at the hands of few Muslim thinkers and western countries.

Afghanistan's indigenous culture was the target of various combatants throughout the war, as such; Afghan popular culture: the arts and music, architecture, customs, education, historical heritage, the intelligentsia, literature, publishing, and sports has been affected over them past two decades.\textsuperscript{160} As for as Taliban and Afghanistan's popular culture was concerned, they were prepared to disrupt the former and destroy the latter if they thought it necessary to do so.\textsuperscript{161} To play music in shops, hotels, vehicles and rickshaws etc. was prohibited and any raring of pigeons playing with birds and flying of kites was also abolished and consequently kite shops in the city had to be closed down. To prevent idolatry, all pictures and portraits in shops and hotels were abolished. Any form

\textsuperscript{155} Case beyond repair. Telephone poles have been uprooted. The cultural heritage including the Kabul museum, which held some rare pieces of ancient times has been destroyed and partially disfigured. The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, 1994-97, p 201.
\textsuperscript{156} Afghanistan's Endless War, p 48.
\textsuperscript{157} Afghanistan's Endless War, p 118.
\textsuperscript{158} The Week, India, 26 November, 2000
\textsuperscript{159} Afghanistan's Endless War, pp 117-118.
of gambling, sorcery, British and American hairstyle, music and dance in wedding parties were strictly prohibited and anyone found guilty was fined and punished.\textsuperscript{162} The Taliban had banned even Nauroz, the traditional Afghan New Year festival as 'anti-Islamic'.\textsuperscript{163} In addition to all this, Taliban also banned the use of the Internet to stop access to vulgar, immoral and anti-Islamic material. According to Taliban Foreign Minister Maulvi Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, "the movement was... opposed to obscenity, vulgarity and anti-Islamic 'stuff' on the Internet. We want to establish a system in Afghanistan through which we can control all obscene and immoral activities which are against Islam", he said.\textsuperscript{164} It was their intention to make people understand the philosophy of Islam in its true perspective. They were trying to clear society from all evils. They used to preach people that Islam aims at universal brotherhood, peace and prosperity. Islam in its real sense guides humanity in almost all spheres of life in right direction and eradicates all evils. This was the outlook of Taliban and were trying their level best to implement same in society.

Women and Education:-

Women were a most sensitive issue in Afghan society and it was of course a bit difficult job after war to implement new rules for Afghan woman.\textsuperscript{165} From the beginning of their rule by identifying and fixing the role and status of woman in Afghan society, Taliban made the issue a cornerstone of their Islamization programme. Women had been virtually eliminated from public space by being forbidden to work outside the home and to appear in public with out being covered from head to toe (requiring adoption of burqa or chudri). Girls had been forbidden to attend school. Taliban did not think Afghanistan as a Muslim

\textsuperscript{162} Afghanistan towards a viable state. Pp 117-118.
\textsuperscript{163} The Week, India, 26 November, 2000
\textsuperscript{164} Afghan Islamic Press, Islamabad, 14 July 2001.
country before they took power. As a result of this soon after their take over strict rules were enacted especially with regard to the activities of women. Women were not to step outside their place of residence and if they did, they should not look like those of their erstwhile sisters who used to parade themselves before men, wearing fashionable clothes and cosmetics. It was strictly prohibited to wear make-up, nail polish, jewellery, pluck eyebrows, cut hair short, wear colourful or stylish clothes, sheet stockings, white socks and shoes, high heel shoes, walk loudly, talk loudly or laugh in public. Women should not create an opportunity to attract the attention of men. A woman is responsible for coordinating her family. It is the husband, brother or father who has to provide that family with the necessary requirements. Women who had to step out for ‘education’, social needs and social services, should be covered from head to toe. If they were found wearing ‘fashionable, ornament, tight and charming clothes to show themselves, they would be ‘cursed by the Islamic Shari’ah and such women would be ‘threatened, investigated and severely punished.’ Female patients were to go to female doctors, but if they had to be seen by a male doctor they had to be seen by a male doctor they had to be accompanied by a close relative. Male doctors were not to touch or see ‘other parts of female patients except for the affected part, nor were they allowed entering the rooms or wards of female patients unless they had been specially requested to do so. According to New York Times, a woman comes into a Kabul hospital with burns over 80 percent of her body. An official of the Taliban prohibits the doctor from undressing her. The doctor says she will die if he does not treat her. ‘Many Taliban die on the battlefield,’ replies the official. The women untreated dies. After the Taliban took over, it closed down schools and colleges affecting more than 70,000 female students and imposed strict dress codes. Men were also required to conform to a dress code, avoiding western clothing and abstaining from shaving. The

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166 Dr. G.N. Khaki see ref.
167 Dr. G.N. Khaki
168 Dr. G.N. Khaki

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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\textsuperscript{169}. Whatever we are doing in our country, it is not in order for the world to be happy with us, said Sher Abbas Stanakzai, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{170}.

Women were not allowed to participate in public nor they were having access to free education.\textsuperscript{171} Lorne W. Craner, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour in response to a question at Foreign Press centre Washington, DC, said that under Taliban rule, Afghanistan has one of the worst human rights records in the world. Universally accepted human rights, particularly those of women, are virtually nonexistent. The human rights of women and girls, ethnic and religious minorities, and indeed all who do not share the Taliban’s increasingly radical interpretation of Islam continue to be systematically denied by the Taliban. Mullah Walkil Ahmad Mutawakil on Sunday, however, rejected United Nations (UN) report that accused Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban of violating women’s rights with unabated severity. Speaking from Kandahar, southwestern Afghanistan, he questioned the methods used to arrive at such conclusions. He described the UN rapporteur Kamal Hossain, who compiled the report, as “an ignorant and incompetent man who is working solely for money”. Mutawakil said human rights issue had been turned into a business by the people like Kamal Hossain. “This man hasn’t taken the trouble to verify facts, seek Taliban version regarding all allegations against them, and check his information before making his report public”, alleged the Afghan Foreign Minister. Mutawakil claimed Kamal Hossain was biased towards Taliban, “He lacks experience to tackle human rights issues and has fallen prey to propaganda against the Taliban by their opponents. There were no solid proofs of abduction
of women. Kamal Hossain, a former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, compiled his report following visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The report is based on a survey of internally displaced Afghans and refugees who left the country during 1998-99. The report accused Taliban of enforcing their severe edicts against women's participation in public life. It said they continued to deny women's access to education, health and employment. However, Mutawwakil rejected the findings of the report and instead blamed Kamal Hossain for believing in hearsay and failing to do a proper job as the UN rapporteur on Human Rights.

Despite the clarifications of Taliban led rule in Afghanistan, according to the Human Rights Organizations, violations of human rights continued in Afghanistan which led Afghanistan to destruction and devastation. According to the Frontier Post report, "when one travels through Afghanistan, the deserted villages and ruined urban centers remind one of the ghostly cities of Hollywood movies. Two million people – one-tenth of this country's pre-war population of 15.5 million- have been killed during the past 18 years. Another 1.5 million are permanently disabled. No fewer than 5000 Afghan have lost one or both legs to mines. Inside Afghanistan, there are 500,000 refugees. The most poignant and the most heart-rending aspect of this whole grim affair is the fact that all the war-mongering factions regard themselves as the trust among the Muslims and are obsessed with the zeal to enforce their brand of Islam on the rest of the country. The UN called for emergency meetings with the Taliban after its decision to close more than 100 private school many of them educating girls. "The closure had a devastating impact on welfare of many of the neediest people particularly women and children, the UN said in a statement released in Pakistan. With regard to the health services, correspondent of the News

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International reports that walking through the hospital corridors one had to keep a piece of cloth on the nose. The stench was unbearable, due to desperate shortage of disinfectants. Doctors, not having any anesthesia inject atropine and diazepam before surgery. There are no disposable syringes, no antibiotics. Dispensaries can not even provide basic medicine like pain-killers.

Although, the Taliban claimed repeatedly that they only oppose the system that facilitates co-education. However, the movement Afghanistan returns to normalcy, girl schools will be opened and encouraged. The issue of woman education to Taliban however is to be governed under the strict guidance of Islamic Shariah. The Taliban claimed that they need time and resources to create the proper environment and right texts and curriculum for women education. The approach of Taliban in fact, is influenced by the Islamic revolution of Iran, where educational establishment remained closed for many years after the revolution. Woman Schools remained close until the Iranian revolutionaries formally established an educational syllabi conforming to their own principles. On the other hand, Taliban although laid restrictions on woman education, announced that all women, were working outside their home, will continue to receive their salary, thus claimed that there is no need for them to work any longer. For this Taliban representatives explained that the isolation of women from the work place and all public venues is intended to serve two main purposes: to prevent the molestation of women and girls by any

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In interview with Dharbi-I-Mumin Moulvi Ehsan –Ullah Ehsan, Minister of Finance and Member of Supreme Shura (council) said, 'enemies of Islam through -'rights of women', want to incite women students against Taliban. Thirty thousand home confirmed women are being given salaries by us Purdah (veil), is not injunction of the Taliban but order of Allah. Objection against it, is point blank kufr (infidelity). In Kabul, the Taliban are also giving monthly salaries to thirty thousand job free women sitting at home. These are the women who were associated with the anti-Islam mixed system of communists and Rabbani era. Taliban Ascent to power, p 109.


remaining unlawful and un-ruling elements and to allow the stabilization of the work place and other institutions for men whose education was also interrupted by war.\textsuperscript{181} By this act, the widespread incidences of rape and molestation that occurred during civil war had declined since the Taliban’s ascendance to power.\textsuperscript{182}

Although, Taliban claimed that their policy was for the protection of the honour, dignity and safety of Afghan women, what happened in reality was the extreme violation of women’s rights and preparation of severe atrocities against the women.\textsuperscript{183} The Taliban restrictions, however, were generally acceptable to the rural people, who largely shared the Taliban’s view on women. Urbanite Afghan chafed at the Taliban edicts that rendered working women jobless and denied opportunities of education to the female population. Though the Taliban made certain exceptions and allowed widows to work and limited number of females to receive medical and nursing education, it did not win for them any prays due to harshness of their edicts.\textsuperscript{184} However, while defending the attitude of Taliban towards women, the Taliban deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammad Abbass Satankzai said, the United Nation’s has misunderstood our position on women. We have imposed no restrictions on the movement of women. They still move out on the streets. The only difference is that they now adhere to Islamic rules. The Taliban also do not believe in denying women their right to education. Islam permits them education under certain conditions. We are at the moment working on what these conditions should be.\textsuperscript{185} The outlook of Taliban towards educating women was purely based on Islamic ideology. It was their basic intention to work for a clean society in which both men and women will be in a position to

\textsuperscript{181} Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, p 206.
\textsuperscript{182} US department of state: Afghanistan; Human Rights practices, 1996-98.
\textsuperscript{183} Amnesty International Report-1995-96.
\textsuperscript{184} The Anatomy of Conflict Afghanistan and 9/11, Pp 112-113
serve humanity and country in totality. Taliban in true perspective were not opposite to education, but the social system was polluted to such an extent, wherein it was difficult for them to come to quicker means and methods of reviewing the society, it was certainly more difficult for them to combat with opposite forces, who were working with full momentum to uproot the society. Taliban regime had to face lot of upheavals and still they struggled hard to clean up the social systems. Taliban leaders often used to announce in open gatherings that it is compulsory to seek knowledge both for men and women.

Human Rights and Taliban:-

The history of human rights, in fact, is traced back to the ancient times, and has gained impetus only in recent times; it has formally become recognized only after the formation of the United Nations in 1945. Its central concern reaffirmed its faith in fundamental human rights in dignity and worth of the human person, equal rights of men and women, as well as nations, large and small. The term human rights, "in fact, denotes all those rights inherent in our nature without which one seizes to be a human being". Being an eternal part of the human life, it promotes! Individual personality, human qualities, intelligence, talent, conscience and consequently culminates in satisfying the spiritual and mundane needs of an individual. Being a generic term, it embraces civil rights, civil liberties, social, economic and cultural rights, as such; the range of human rights is very wide and covers a variety of rights. The denial of human rights by all means is not only an individual or personal tragedy; it also opens doors for social and political unrest, which ultimately sow the seeds of violence and conflict within and between the societies and the nations.186

Since Taliban did not consider Afghanistan as a Muslim country after their takeover of the country, as a result of this soon after their takeover, strict rules were enacted, which became the focal point of criticism throughout the globe. Despite the clarifications of Taliban led rule in Afghanistan, according to human right's organization, violations of human rights continued in Afghanistan, which led the country to destruction and devastation.

Torture and inhuman treatment to the general public, suppression of right freedom of thought and expression, disrespect for privacy, disrespect for privacy, denial of right to property, infringement of right to economy and denial of cultural rights etc. were the pre-dominant human rights issues that came to fore-front after the takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban. The introduction of Shariah law, known as the Hudud for specific perimeters by Taliban invited spontaneous reaction both from the west and other parts of the Islamic world. Stoning of adulteress and amputation for theft, for example, have been the issues of great debate and concern among the Islamic scholars throughout the history of Islam as to whether such a punishment is to be applied and if so, with, what safeguards although, such type of punishment is in vogue in countries like Saudi Arabia and Sudan. In justifying its implementation Sher Muhammad Stanakzarai, the Foreign Minister speaking on voice of Shariah Radio, said, on 20th November, "By the enforcement of 'Shariah Hudud' we have made safe the life and property of millions of people. No one can commit theft or indulge in crimes. We have not introduced this law; this is the law that was revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad SAW. Those who consider the imposition of this law to be against human rights infact insult all Muslims and their belief". In fact according to holy Quran rights of all humans are safe reserved and protected. Islam in its true perspective safeguards life of human beings, because

188 The Taliban: War, Religion and New Order in Afghanistan, Pp 62-63.
it is basically a peaceful message for all creations. Taliban Ulmus often used to convey the message and were trying their level best to make people understand the preservation of human rights according to holy teachings of holy Quran. But because of extreme social turmoil they could not make a quicker implementation of Islamic laws often and on. Taliban social planners used to talk about human rights within the framework of Quranic teachings, which encompasses whole humanity in absolute terms. However in a fractured society like Afghanistan it takes times to get the society on right track. The Sharia courts established by the Taliban had continued to pronounce sentence of amputation of the hand or foot for theft, reportedly often after summary trials. Mullah Omar claimed that “United Nations had fallen under the influence of imperialist powers and under the pretext of human rights has misled from the path of righteousness”. “We don’t accept something which some body imposes on us under the name of human rights, which is contrary to the Holly Qur’an”, he concluded, “we can not adjust ourselves to the requirement of others! People should understand themselves to the requirements of the Holly Qur’an”. The truth of the matter is while the Taliban’s system of execution of justice was being condemned by many, it has raised a great deal of admiration among other Muslim governments and individuals. However, despite the rigid approach in implementing Shariah laws, there are reports wherein Taliban frequently advocate and recommend to the enforcing agencies to restrain from violating norms. The Taliban Supremo decree issued a restraining order in December, 1996 circulated to the Ministry of Information that must follow in true spirit the Islamic laws which are so simple.

191 The Taliban claimed to follow the Islamic code of rights. Duly they hold that the whole conception of human and civil rights must be reinterpreted What the West understands from these rights is apparently at odds with what Islam prescribes, the Taliban said. The Taliban and fundamentalist Shiites in Iran promote to belief that the rights declared as human rights in United Nations declarations and Conventions are not universal: The Taliban Ascent to Power. Pp 105-107.
and applicable to society at large. These Islamic laws will help us in growth and
development of society and nation and accordingly all evils will be vanish.\textsuperscript{192}

Taliban have been severely criticized with regard to their policies related to child care, free access of journalists and their conservative interpretation of acquisition of knowledge. Even if they have not been the direct targets of human rights abuses, the majority of Afghan children have been witness to acts of violence and destruction which have destroyed the social fabric of society. Children have suffered in greater numbers from the collapsed infrastructure, health care and educational system. Access to education has been reduced as schools have been destroyed and teachers forces to flee. UNICEF estimates that only 4-5 percent of primary aged children get a broad based schooling, and for secondary and higher education the pictures are even bleaker. Besides, Taliban restricted the entry of journalists into Afghanistan, because Taliban leaders assumed that the journalists were creating a hindrance in shaping the Taliban and Afghan society. Following their self-created rules Taliban have imposed a ban on English language and computer courses in the Nangarhar province on the grounds that western media was trying to pollute society by implementing social evils. Earlier they had imposed ban on internet with the intension that internet-policy paralysis society and makes them slaves in longer times. On 8 August, 1998, Taliban leaders captured the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Within the first few hours of seizing control of the city, Taliban troops killed scores of civilians in indiscriminate attacks, shooting non-combatants and suspected combatants alike in residential areas, City Street and markets\textsuperscript{191}.

The special rapporteur of UN Human Rights for Afghanistan, Dr. Kamal Hussain has expressed concern over extra-judicial killings in Afghanistan. He said the

\textsuperscript{192} Afghanistan, towards a viable state, p 119.
\textsuperscript{191} Dr. G.N.Khaki, Central Asian Digest-University of Kashmir-2003
country lacked economic order, government system, judicial organization and even police. Adding that punishments like lashing and flogging are very harsh punishments and though the Shari'ah prescribes them it also lays serious conditions for awarding them. According to an AFP report "we found official widespread, systematic violations of the human rights of women in the Taliban areas of Afghanistan", Radhika Kumaraswamy, UN special rapporteur for violence against women, said on return from Afghanistan, women are beaten publicly and public lashings of women are held on Fridays, mainly for the violation of the ministry's edicts, she said. Women's begging's on the increase in Kabul, adding that depression among women is rampant\(^1\).

Part of the International response to the Taliban's policies, both from the west and from other parts of the Islamic world, has been a reaction to their use of certain punishments laid down in Shari'ah law, known as the Hudud within Taliban regime, some of the leaders had not understood philosophy of Islam in true sense. As such they used to punish people badly. This created a fraction within Taliban regime and opposite forces used to highlight the issue. However, most of the leaders within Taliban and outside Taliban kingdom were reforming society in real perspectives according to Quranic principles. These scholars used to preach that they must follow Quranic principles in all spheres of life, because these are the guidelines of the Creator and Creator is kind and compassionate to his creation. And it is fundamental to understand Quranic guidelines and that way our nation; rather whole world will be peaceful.\(^2\)

Keeping in view that human rights abuses or otherwise in Afghanistan, it would not be out of place to refer to the established code comprised of the Quran and Hadith which has been the guiding force of Muslim Ummah throughout the ages.

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\(^1\) Afghan News.net
\(^2\) afghanmagazine.com
to be more closely acquainted with the concept of human rights and human dignity which has been granted by Allah to mankind in unequivocal terms without any discrimination. He is the Merciful, whose mercy enshrines all. He has given human beings dignity and honour and apart from their other human attributes, men are substantially the same and no tangible and actual distinction can be made among them on account of their accidental differences such as nationality, colour or race. Every human being is thereby related to all others and all become one community of brotherhood in their honourable and pleasant servitude to the most Compassionate Lord of the Universe.

Even in an established Islamic State, it does not seek to restrict human rights or privileges to the geographical limits of its own state. Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected whether such a person is residing within the territory of the Islamic state or outside it, whether he is at peace or at war. “O believers! Be you secures of justice, witness for Allah. Let not destination for a people move you not to be equitable: be equitable that is nearer to Allah-fearing”196.

Human blood is sacred in any case and can not be spilled without justification. If anyone violates this sanctity of human blood by killing a soul without justification, the Quran equates it to the killing of entire mankind. “Who so slays a soul not to retaliate for a soul slain, nor for corruption done in the land, should be as if he had slain mankind altogether”197.

The manifestation and application of human rights can be well estimated within the framework of Islam. It is not permissible to oppress women, children, old people, the sick or the wounded. The hungry person is to be fed, the naked

196 Al-Quran
197 Al-Quran (C-4, V- )
clothed and the wounded or diseased treated medically irrespective of whether they belong to the Islamic community or not. Every Muslim or administrator, who without any discrimination. If they fail to enforce then, and start denying the rights that have been guaranteed by Allah, or make amendments and changes in them, or particularly violate them while paying lip service to them, the verdict of the Holy Quran is unequivocal. "Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down are the disbelievers".198.

Islam, in fact, tries to achieve every human right not only by providing certain legal safeguards, but also mainly by inviting mankind to transcend the lower level of animal life to be able to go beyond the mere ties fostered by the kinship of blood, racial superiority, linguistic arrogance, and economic privileges. It invites mankind to move on to a plan of existence where by reason of his inner excellence, men can realize the ideal of "Brotherhood" of man. Keeping in view the significance of human rights in Islam, it is incumbent upon every established order to promote justice and equity in the society without any discrimination. Its implementation becomes more indispensable when the state administration is run in accordance with the injunctions of the Shari'ah and in no way be judged on the mere acts of some of the factions in the Muslim community.

Bamiyan Destruction and Taliban:

The most spectacular episode, which earned the Taliban world wide condemnation, was the destruction of Afghanistan's two greatest archeological treasures, the giant statues of Buddha carved in the cliffs on 10 March, 2001.199 In the years preceding the advent of the Christian era, Buddhist rulers of the day and the monks had carved out these two huge statues of Buddha in

198 Al-Quran
Afghanistan’s Bamiyan valley. Initially, Taliban Minister for culture and information Mullah Amir Khan Mutaaqi said no decision had been taken on the statues. Then the Taliban’s Supreme leader, Mullah Omar said they would not be destroyed as they were ‘not part of a religious cult’. It is believed that, the reopening of the Kabul museum in November 2000 caused the first ripples between the hard-liners and the moderates with the latter arguing that it was a good step since Afghanistan needed to interact with the rest of the World. The hard liners counter-argued that if the militia continued with the practices of the past regimes they would be no different and it would run contrary to their ideology. ‘We had given [Mullah] Omar our word that we would remove everything un-Islamic from the country for implementation of “Shariah”. When Mullah Omar found himself in dilemma; whether to abide by the oath he had taken or side with the ‘liberals, he decided to refer the matter to a committee of Ulema. The committee concluded that the issue did not need a fatwa (edict) or further consultation since ‘it is clear that everything that is against Islam must be destroyed or demolished’. Further more, two judges from the Bamiyan High court said that the Buddha’s statues were un-Islamic and therefore it was necessary to destroy the statues. These ulmas had issued demolition orders of Buddah statues with this intension that human beings are a creation of one God and we must not create imaginary idols. God is one and He is eternal, who created all creations and human beings as have to worship one God. If we preserve idols, human beings will be defected in times to come and that way humanity will again be caught up within the vertex of deep evils. Mullah Omar then issued the decree saying that: ‘The preservation and exhibition of un-Islamic

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200 Bamiyan lies on the historical ‘silk road’ that facilitated commercial ties between China and the Roman empire. Historically Bamiyan was a center of Buddhist cultural development. Many Buddhist monks lived there and the place became a site of pilgrimage for many of that historical era. Afterward, the warring sides were careful not to damage the statues because of their cultural and historical importance. Mehendra Prasad, Indo-Afghan relations, Taliban and the Afghan warlord, p 123.

idols is not allowed... and I herewith order their demolition'. Immediately after decision to destroy the statues countries like US, Germany, France, most Buddhist countries including India and Thailand, and even Muslim countries like Pakistan, Malaysia and Iran, called on the Taliban to refrain from harming the statues. The metropolitan museum in New York and other museums in Europe offered to buy the statues from the Taliban and transport them out of Afghanistan. Even the Iranian government offered to purchase the grand statues, but to no avail. On this Mullah Abdul Zaeef, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan said, “Selling them will amount to selling our soil, we will never do that”. The Taliban preferred to make of public first, the decision to destroy the statues- which generated intense international pressure-and latter the actual destruction, which invoked condemnation and protest throughout the World. Taliban spokesman provided no explanations for this other than stating that this is a question of Muslim religious law and a religious commandment. By this act, perpetrated by the Taliban was meant to convey to the world, that the Taliban wanted to expose the hypocrisy and ‘double standards’ of the international network, especially the US. The Taliban claimed although there was international commitment of significant financial assistance in lieu of protection and safety of statues, Afghanistan’s appeal for humanitarian aid to save human lives in poor, battle-scared Afghanistan was not responded positively. In addition to this, Taliban were determined to implement their strict interpretation of Islamic law so that it serves as a message and model for emulation.

202 Afghanistan: Things fall apart, p 226. Communal fanatics and fundamentalists of one hue strength their counterparts in other regions. The Bamiyan Buddha demolition undertaking has been sought to be justified by the Taliban by referring to the pulling down of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, India, by Hindu extremists and declaring that the process underway in Bamyan was in retaliation of that incident. Vagti Alekperov, Russian and the Moslem World, Vol-5, No.107, Russian academy of Sciences and Bulletin Reference Information Moscow, 1999, p 47

203 The Endless Jihad The Myjahidden, the Taliban and Bin Laden, Pp 118-119.

204 Initiyaz Gul, The Unholy Nexus: Pak- Afghan relations under the Taliban, Vanguard, Lahore, 2003, p

205 The Endless Jihad The Myjahidden, the Taliban and Bin Laden, Pp 118-119

206 Others inferred a desire to punish Hazaras, as the Bamiyan region is mainly inhabited by Shites (Hazaras) but despite the Muslim identity of the population the Buddha statues were part of the regions
some the destruction as a primal scream prompted by international isolation or as an attempt to force the international community to enter discussion with Taliban.\textsuperscript{207} As in New York, Pakistan's UN ambassador Shamshad Ahmad said there were reasons the Taliban was 'so irrational', 'when people are ostracized, isolated, politically, economically, socially and culturally, can you expect them not to act in a desperate manner', he said.\textsuperscript{208}

Non-Muslim Minorities and Taliban:

Another controversial issue related to the Taliban, was enforcement of an edict, according to which non-Muslim minorities were required to wear a distinctive yellow piece of cloth. After Khandahar fell to Taliban, the Hindus were frequently intercepted by the religious police for not having beards. This was done by some of the Taliban people, while majority Taliban leaders supported by local Afghan's were opposing it. In most of the parts of Afghanistan Taliban ulmas announced complete freedom to Non-Muslims. They further added that Islam protects all human beings, provides shelter and safe guards their interest. Most of the Taliban ulmas issued \textit{futwas} for preservation of rights of non-Muslims. They issued decree that non-Muslim are products of Afghan soil and are having equal rights in all socio-economic spheres within the territory of Afghanistan. In an apparent bid to avoid such confusions in future, some of the extremist Taliban people enforced a new code for the non-Muslim community. Taliban asked Hindus to put a yellow coloured piece of cloth on their shirts to differentiate them from the bearded and turbaned Muslims. The sikhs, who keep beards and wear turbans, escaped Taliban action, because they also wear a steel bangle as part of their faith. There was, however, no restriction on non-Muslim

\textsuperscript{207} The Rise and Rule of the Taliban, 1994-2004, p.241 (Book title not known)

\textsuperscript{208} Afghanistan: Things fall apart, p 226.
minorities according to a Taliban official in performing their religious duties. 'Hindus and Sikhs live freely here but of course they have to abide by the law of the land'.\textsuperscript{209} In this connection, Abdul Hanan Hemat, a senior spokesman for the Taliban information Ministry said that the demand was only to save the Hindus from harassment during regular spot-checks when police herd Muslims into mosques and to check their beards meet strict requirements. It is only to differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims\textsuperscript{210}. On the implementation of this edict, the US, India and other countries denounced the badges, likening them to the yellow—stars, Jews were forced to wear in Nazi Germany.\textsuperscript{211}