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BEATA PIETKIEWICZ-PAREEK<sup>1</sup>

*University of Wrocław, Poland*

ORCID 0000-0001-8450-1707

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## CHILDHOOD IN A CONFLICT-RIDDEN ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IN GENERATING (DIS)PEACE

### DZIECIŃSTWO W OGARNIĘTYM KONFLIKTEM ISLAMSKIM EMIRACIE AFGANISTANU I ROLA EDUKACJI W GENEROWANIU (NIE)POKOJU

**Streszczenie:** Głównym celem artykułu jest zrozumienie trudnych warunków życia dzieci w Afganistanie po 2021 roku. Artykuł omawia wyzwania społeczne, takie jak praca dzieci oraz problem wczesnych małżeństw. Młode dziewczęta są zmuszane do zawierania małżeństw przez swoje rodziny, aby wspierać gospodarstwa domowe, ponieważ nie mają możliwości dokończenia edukacji. Badanie opierało się na wywiadach z Afgańczykami oraz afgańskimi uchodźcami, a także na przeglądzie odpowiedniej literatury. W trakcie okresu badawczego, który trwał od grudnia 2021 do listopada 2023, miałem okazję odwiedzić Ośrodek dla Cudzoziemców w Grupie, gdzie poznałem mieszkających tam afgańskich uchodźców. Kodowanie było kluczowym etapem w procesie analizy danych, ponieważ pomogło w ustaleniu kategorii, które następnie zostały przypisane do kategorii przedstawionych w perspektywie Marthy Nussbaum. Kwestie dotyczące afgańskich dzieci w Europie zostały zaniedbane, z jedynie ograniczonymi i nieregularnymi próbami ich zrozumienia. Autor niniejszego tekstu pragnie zwrócić uwagę na społeczne warunki, w jakich znajdują się afgańskie dzieci.

**Słowa kluczowe:** analfabetyzm, praca dzieci, edukacja, wczesne małżeństwa, Taliban

**Abstract:** The primary goal of the paper is to understand the dire circumstances of children in Afghanistan after 2021. The paper discusses societal challenges such as child labour and the issue of early marriage. Young girls are being forced into marriage by their families in order to support their households because they are not permitted to complete their education. The research was based on interviews with Afghans and Afghan refugees, as well as a review of pertinent

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Beata Pietkiewicz-Pareek** – a researcher at the University of Wrocław, specializing in social issues related to marginalized groups. Her research interests include illiteracy, child labor, the lives of street children, and refugee issues, with a particular focus on the Asian context. Email address: [beata.pietkiewicz-pareek@uwr.edu.pl](mailto:beata.pietkiewicz-pareek@uwr.edu.pl)

literature. I had the opportunity to visit the Center for Foreigners in Grupa during the study period, which lasted from December 2021 to November 2023, and I became acquainted with the Afghan refugees residing there. Coding was a crucial phase in the data analysis process, as it helped to identify themes that were then aligned with the categories outlined in Martha Nussbaum's Perspective. The issues facing Afghan children in Europe have received insufficient attention, with only limited and irregular attempts to comprehend these issues. The author of this text aims to draw attention to the social circumstances facing Afghan youngsters.

**Keywords:** illiteracy, child labour, education, early marriage, the Taliban

### **Introduction: Childhood in Afghanistan „The worst place in the world to be born”**

Globally, childhood and children are commonly understood as belonging to a „golden age” that is characterized by freedom, play, joy, innocence, and similar attributes. It is the period of time when, having been spared the hardships of adulthood, one scarcely has any commitments or responsibilities. However, it is also true that children, particularly those who are very young, are vulnerable. Due to this vulnerability, children require attention and protection from „the harshness of the world outside” and their surroundings.

Since the Taliban took power, most children in Afghanistan have lost their childhood. Girls over the age of 12 have been forbidden from attending school, and mothers with young children have been prevented from returning to work. Many families now live in a relentless battle against hunger and poverty. Some children cannot attend school because they have to work to pay for food. Girls are marrying at an increasing rate. Two decades of battling for women's and children's rights, including the right to education, were wasted in Afghanistan once the Taliban took power. For some, girls' education was out of the question due to the instability brought about by the Taliban. Mothers who had escaped from a Taliban-occupied district of Nangarhar said, „We didn't want to send them because of bad security, even if the Taliban allows girls to study until class four” (Barr 2017, 65). They recounted numerous instances where family members were either abducted and killed or detained on suspicion of engaging in Taliban activities.

### **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan – short history**

The Taliban, who have been around for three decades, emerged as an armed force after Afghanistan's civil war broke out in the 1990s. By 1996 they had taken control of the majority of the nation. After being overthrown by Afghan, international, and American forces in 2001, the organization promptly launched what would turn into an almost two-decade long insurgency. They are still in charge of Afghanistan

in 2021—possibly even more so than they were in the 1990s. Understanding the Taliban's past could help one comprehend their resurgent power in 2021.

The Taliban movement was founded in 1993–1994 by Afghan Sunni Muslim clergy and students, the majority of whom were of rural Pashtun origin. Many of its members were mujahideen, or former fighters against the Soviet Union. There was a civil war between the mujahideen parties following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the subsequent fall of the Afghan government that the Soviet Union had supported in 1992. The core of the Taliban was made up of those former combatants who had lost faith in the civil war. Since many of the movement's members had attended seminaries in Pakistan's neighbour, they selected the name Taliban—plural of talib, which refers to a student of Islam — to distinguish themselves from the mujahideen (Rashid 2000). Pakistan backed the Taliban because they could „bring order in chaotic Afghanistan and make it a cooperative ally”, according to the 9/11 Commission Report. This would give Pakistan greater security on one of the several borders where Pakistani military officers hoped for what they called strategic depth (Rashid 2000). Taliban customs and beliefs were consistent with, and partly descended from, Pashtun traditional tribal traditions, which comprise a plurality (though not a majority) of Afghanistan's diverse ethnic population (Rashid 2000)<sup>2</sup>. After seizing control of Kandahar, a city in southern Afghanistan, in November 1994, the Taliban began a series of armed campaigns across the nation, which resulted in the seizure of Kabul on September 27, 1996 (HRW 2001). As the group enforced strict adherence to its version of Islam in areas under its control and used harsh punishments, including public executions, to enforce its decrees, including bans on television, Western music, and dancing, the Taliban soon lost favour from both the international community and the local community. It forbade women from working outside the home or going to school, and it killed women in public when they were accused of adultery. Massive Buddha statues from the sixth century that were carved into the hills above the city of Bamiyan were destroyed by the Taliban in March 2001, drawing criticism from all over the world. The Taliban saw the statues as blasphemous and against Islamic law. The Taliban's security for Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda (AQ), eventually became the key problem affecting foreign views of and relations with the Taliban. As a result, the group swiftly lost popularity both domestically and internationally due to its tight adherence to its ideology. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in a series of terrorist strikes carried out by AQ agents in the United States on September 11, 2001. In a national address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush made the following demands: the Taliban „must hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate,” he said, and they must hand over

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2 Like Taliban founder Mullah Omar, most of the senior figures in the Taliban regime were Ghilzai Pashtuns, one of the major Pashtun tribal confederations; most modern Afghan rulers have been from the Durrani Pashtun tribal confederation.

AQ leaders and permanently close terrorist training camps. Taliban chiefs declined, pointing to Bin Laden's invitation to stay with them and what they described as a dearth of proof linking him to the attacks. On October 7, 2001, U.S. military action in Afghanistan began in accordance with a P.L. 107-40 authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) against the attack perpetrators and those who assisted or harboured them. The air strikes targeted Taliban targets across the nation, and the Northern Alliance, an anti-Taliban Afghan force, received close air support (The 9/11 Commission Report, 64).

The Taliban's post-2001 insurgency was largely maintained by a well-functioning organizational structure and ongoing financial support. According to reports, President Trump requested official, direct talks between the United States and the Taliban without the involvement of the Afghan government because he was dissatisfied with the lack of military success against them. The U.S.-Taliban agreement reached in February 2020 was the result of these negotiations. The Taliban started a massive push in early May 2021 that took large portions of the rural sections of the nation, strengthening the group's hold on those areas where it was previously heavily present. The Taliban started taking control of Pakistani, Iranian, and Tajik borders in July. General Milley stated that the Taliban had around 200 districts as of July 21, 2021, but stressed that the group had not taken control of any provincial capitals where the Afghan forces were concentrated. President Ashraf Ghani left the nation on August 15th, and the Taliban took over Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, with little opposition. As a result, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed, and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was reestablished de facto. Many governments were taken aback by how quickly the Taliban took control, including the governments of Russia, the United States, and their allies (Lorenz, 2021).

### **Children's rights in Afghanistan**

Childhood is biologically defined as the period of life from birth to adolescence. According to Article 1 of, "A child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child). The UNCRC's definition of a child has a clear impact on budgetary allocations for child development programs as well as the creation of data that are appropriate for various child demographics based on reference ages.

The Afghan government signed the UNCRC in 1994, and in the fifteen years since then, it has achieved great strides, especially in expanding access to health care and education for both boys and girls. However, millions of children continue to be denied their fundamental rights, which include the rights to life, safety, health, education, play, participation, and the ability to grow and develop to the fullest potential. The CRC, which protects children's rights, has been accepted and ratified

by 192 nations. The two other international instruments that mandate member states to take extra precautions for the protection of children are the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography of 2002 and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 2002. The protection of children is enshrined in specific provisions of the constitutional legislation. For example, Article 54 of the Constitution states: “Family forms the fundamental unit of the society and is protected by the state. The state shall take the necessary measures to secure the physical and mental health of the family, particularly the mother and child, to rear children, and to eliminate the traditions contrary to the sacred religion of Islam.” Similarly, the Article 53 of Constitution states, “The state shall take the necessary steps to regulate and provide, in accordance with law, medical service and financial assistance for the survivors of the martyred and the disappeared, and for the rehabilitation of the disabled and their active participation in the society. The state shall guarantee the rights of the retired, and provide, in accordance with law, assistance for the elderly, the widowed, the disabled, and the orphaned.” Moreover, Article 49 of the Constitution sets out explicit provisions on the issue of child labour: “Compulsory labour shall be proscribed. Active participation in states of war, calamity, and other states threatening the life and peace of the nation is among the fundamental duties of each Afghan. Child labour shall be prohibited”. Regarding children’s right to education, Article 43 of the Constitution states “Education is the right of all Afghan citizens, which shall be provided gratis up to the bachelor’s degree level in state educational institutions by the state. The state shall design and implement effective programmes for the balanced generalisation of education in the entire country and the provision of compulsory secondary education and shall pave the way for teaching mother tongues in areas where people speak in those languages” (AIHRC 2007, 6-7). In 2019, the Afghan Parliament approved the Law on Protection of Child Rights, which set the legal definition of a child as a person below the age of 18, and provided a legal framework for promoting, protecting and guaranteeing children’s basic rights, including access to services for birth registration, health, education, vaccination and social protection (Unicef 2021, 8).

### **Demographic profile**

The NSIA’s population statistics department projects that 32.9 million people will live in Afghanistan in 2020–2021. The population consist of 16.8 million men and 16.1 million women. The projected population graphs show that there are 8.0 million people living in urban areas, 23.4 million in rural areas, and 1.5 million is Kochi (Nomadic). 12.0 million people are reliant on government assistance, of which 11.1 million are under 15 and 0.9 million are over 64 (National Statistics and Information Authority 2021, 1). Currently, a quarter of the population (26 %)

are adolescents aged 10 to 19, of which 49% are female and 51% male. The number of adolescents is expected to increase from an estimated 9.5 million in 2019 to 11 million by 2045. While, three-quarters of the population live in rural areas, they face rapid urbanization, providing both opportunities and challenges to the provision of education and to economic development (Unicef 2021)

There is insufficient statistical information available, so estimates are typically used to determine the percentage of children in the population and other relevant statistical data. The current issues facing the nation prevent people from having their identities registered by the appropriate government agencies. These challenges stem not only from systemic inefficiencies but also from a general disregard for registering births and obtaining national identification cards. Additionally, a significant factor in the non-registration of births is that the majority of births occur in households where physical violence is prevalent, affecting 48.4% to 51.6% of families. Mental violence in households further exacerbates the problem, making it difficult to register births and depriving mothers and children of access to adequate healthcare facilities. The lack of national ID documents poses major issues for children, as these records are essential for proving their age and identity. This is particularly problematic in legal matters, where determining a child's age is crucial. The absence of national identification documents raises a fundamental issue that could lead to the denial of children's rights during the handling of their cases. Girl children, due to their increased vulnerability, are more likely to be forced into early marriage as a result of these circumstances (AIHRC 2007).

The patriarchal system in Afghanistan—where men make decisions for and on behalf of women—is being reinforced by the Taliban. The decree legitimizing men's dominance over women and the degrading of women in public opens the door for further domestic abuse, harassment, and oppression of Afghan women and girls. The ruling also provides ammunition to hardline Afghan men who want to deny women the opportunity to exercise their civic rights. In essence, it promotes the mistreatment and subjugation of females. It demonstrates, in essence, that the Taliban's views on women have not evolved. In addition to being against Afghanistan's history and culture, the Taliban's rule requiring the headscarf exposes their limited interpretation of Islam. Afghan women have vehemently disputed the myth that the burqa is a required part of the country's traditional clothing code for women throughout the past few decades (Belquis & Tariq 2022).

### **The function of education in generating (dis)peace**

UNICEF reports that Afghanistan's education system is beset by serious problems, such as a high percentage of children who are not attending school, a shortage of qualified instructors, inadequate school facilities, and low teacher quality. Education indicators improved rapidly between 2001 and 2012, but after 2013 progress has slowed down. This progress made has not been uniform, with a considerable

proportion of girls, children residing in rural regions, and children belonging to Kuchi reporting far higher levels of deprivation than average. Indicators of school attendance reveal the existence of severe barriers to education. 4.2 million Afghan youngsters did not attend school in 2016. There were very low rates of school completion. Among children and young adults in the relevant age group, in 2015, only one in two, two in five, and one in four completed elementary education, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school, respectively. When data on attendance rates, out-of-school children, and dropout rates are combined, it becomes evident that the main causes of Afghanistan's low educational attendance rates are children being out of school and, in particular, not starting school (Unicef 2021).

Following the signing of a peace deal in February 2020, the United States of America and the Taliban announced that their soldiers would be leaving their country by September 2021. Only boys were allowed to return to class in the middle of September 2021, with no consideration given to the situation of girls. Girls will not be permitted to attend secondary school until a new education strategy is adopted, according to remarks made in December by interim Deputy Education Minister Abdul Hakim Hemat. Advocates for a „safe learning environment” for girls provided very little information about what it would entail or when it may be implemented. The erratic messaging from the Taliban leadership highlights its deficiency in transparency and governance. The restriction on girls' access to education is already harmful. Since young females are not allowed to finish their education, many families are forcing them into marriage in order to give their support to their spouses. Women's rights, status, and dignity at home and in society are being taken away from them, and their responsibilities have been degraded. Under the guise of religion, women would soon be barred from all spheres of life if the ban on girls attending high school becomes permanent (Ahmadi & Ebadi 2022).

The most illiterate social groups are women, those in the lowest socioeconomic strata, and people living in rural areas. Reading and writing skills are not encouraged for women living in traditional villages. Medical care is comparable in this regard. A father would send their son to the doctor or to school, but he would not give a daughter or daughter-in-law's education any thought. The urban middle class views the matter differently, but as most Afghans reside in the nation, they are not the majority of people who agree that women should receive an education. Education for women is viewed as „luxurious consumption” in higher socioeconomic classes, where it may represent the status of the family. Stigma and guilt play a role in keeping impoverished children out of school in addition to covering the necessary expenses of sending them there. „People from low-income backgrounds experience mental health issues when studying because they lack new clothes and bags and feel embarrassed to attend school” (Barr 2017, 47).

Poverty frequently forces girls to drop out of school first. Boys are more likely than girls to attend school when families are struggling to make ends meet for some

of their children. Daughters, not sons, are more likely to be kept at home to take care of the household when moms are forced to work due to financial constraints. Girls can perform household tasks like carpet weaving, tailoring, or needlework when forced to labour for pay due to financial hardship, and their education is viewed as less important than that of boys. Boys' education should be prioritized for economic reasons in addition to the negative effects of gender norms. Sons typically stay with their parents after marriage, whereas daughters typically move in with and support their husband's family; therefore, sending boys to school is an investment in the family's financial future in a way that sending girls to school is not. One significant factor that contributes to Afghanistan's varying illiteracy rate is sex. Sons are given preference in schooling since it is thought of as an investment and a means of preparing them for the job of a breadwinner and an investment for their retirement (Barr 2017).

### **Child labour**

UNICEF defines child labour as follows: for children aged 5 to 11, it is considered child labour if they engage in or at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of domestic work in a week. For children aged between 12 to 14, it is considered child labour if they engage in at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work per week. According to UNICEF: "Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work – promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest – at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development" (Unicef 2011, 29) Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of children to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is hazardous, interferes with their education, or is harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

All other factors that contribute to educational exclusion are often impacted by poverty, and nearly every family and community in Afghanistan has some level of financial difficulties. Poverty affects choices and opportunities regarding, among other things, child labour, child marriage, and children with impairments. According to the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, 15.9 million people, or nearly 54.5% of the country's total population, live in poverty Central Statistics Organization (2016). Child labour is a major issue that affects kids nowadays. The worst types of child labour, such as hard labour, beggary, and street participation, are increasingly affecting children. These conditions provide startling information about the demographic segment that is both expected to influence the nation's destiny and is becoming more and more endangered and deprived of its legal



rights. A significant portion of children work to support their families, according to AIHRC data (AIHRC 2007)

Males are more likely than females to work as children. In Afghanistan, almost 2.7 million children, or 27% of the country's youth, work as minors. While girls are less likely to be abused and exploited than boys in this age group (33% of boys compared to 20% of girls), boys are more likely to be involved in child labour. Furthermore, girls are far more likely than boys to forgo school as a result of working as children; only 34% of girls who work as children attend school, compared to almost 50% of boys. Furthermore, compared to 71% of working boys, only 37% of working females attend school. Due to unfair gendered standards that expect women to take care of cooking, cleaning, children, siblings, and elderly or sick individuals, girls are more likely to be involved in unpaid housework (Unicef 2019). The oldest daughter in the family typically takes on the majority of household chores and consequently misses school. In large families multiple people are needed to help with chores, girls are sometimes left at home to assist their mothers. Other girls are kept at home because their mothers are sick or disabled. Some households where the mother works outside the home expect the oldest daughter to take over the role of the mother in cleaning, sometimes at the expense of the daughter's education (Barr 2017).

Many children labour in occupations where there is a risk of disease, injury, or even death because of unsafe working conditions and lax enforcement of health and safety regulations. In Afghanistan, children typically work long hours for little or no pay. Children can be paid to work at home creating carpets, sewing, or tailoring; as bonded labourers in brick kilns; as tinsmiths and welders in the metal industry; in mines; in agriculture; or as street vendors, shoe shiners, and beggars. Other kids labour around the house or on their family's property. Children who work are either forced to drop out of school entirely or to balance the demands of both work and school. Only 50% of working children in Afghanistan go to school (Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) The most common jobs for girls are in tailoring and carpet weaving, although a sizable percentage also work on the streets, begging or selling goods.

### **Child marriage**

Afghanistan is home to around 4 million child brides with 3 in 10 young women married in childhood. The percentage of girls who get married before turning 15 is not known (Unicef 2023). The age of marriage is 16 for a female and 18 for a guy, as stated in Article 70 AfgCC. However, in practiced families do not adhere to any of these age limits. The actual marriage age of young girls in rural Bamiyan, Badakhshan, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Ningarhar regions might be as low as 8 years old. Although young females are more frequently the victims of child marriages, young boys can also fall prey to these customs and be coerced into marriages at

an inappropriate age. According to reports, sexual contacts are resumed as soon as the girl gets married, regardless of whether she has reached puberty. There are no reports of the married minor's parents stipulating that the girl must remain with them until she reaches puberty or imposing any restrictions on sexual activity (Mate Law 2005).

One of the most detrimental effects of child marriage is that it might cause girls to drop out of school or not attend at all. Serious health risks—including death—to girls and their unborn children are another negative effect of underage marriage. In addition, girls who marry young have a higher chance of experiencing domestic abuse than do women who marry later in life (Barr 2017).

The “badal” bride swap is one type of arranged marriage that is common in Afghanistan and frequently involves underage marriage. Human Rights Watch was informed by several girls that they had sisters who were engaged through badal arrangements. For instance, one girl got married at age 9 after getting engaged at age 2, while another girl was engaged at age 8 and married at age 11. Due to these early commitments, girls may be prevented from attending school while their sisters pursue their education (Barr 2017).

Before 2021, The government was attempting to create a pilot education program for girls in three districts in Nangarhar province that they have identified as having both high rates of child marriage and low girls' education participation. Ministry of Education officials expressed their concern about child marriage. The Afghan government unveiled a nationwide initiative to prohibit child marriage in April 2017 (Government of Afghanistan 2016). However, there is reason to be sceptical about the potential outcome of these efforts given the government's poor track record of implementing laws and policies intended to promote the rights of women and girls (Barr 2017).

## Methodology

Interviews with Afghans and Afghan refugees were performed as well as a review of the relevant literature served as the basis for the research. The study period was from December 2021 to November 2023, when I had the chance to visit the Center for Foreigners in Grupa and get to know the Afghan refugees residing there. Respondents who are still in Poland connected me with fellow citizens and refugees in Iran. Responses to the semi-structured interview questions were either recorded or written down in a diary. More than twenty interviews, each spanning several hours, were conducted in the apartments of the refugees in Toruń and Warsaw, as well as at the Center for Foreigners in Grupa. I also used WhatsApp to conduct interviews with Afghans both in Iran and in their own country. Coding was a crucial step in the data analysis process in order to identify categories that were then assigned to categories included in Martha Nussbaum's Perspective.

### The impact of The Taliban on children

It can be said that all facets of children's lives, and consequently the functioning of families, have deteriorated since the Taliban came to power and the introduction of conservative decrees that negatively affect not only the functioning of women and girls but also the functioning of entire families. Women in Afghan society are unable to attain justice or equality because they are unable to realize the aforementioned abilities.

The Human Capabilities Perspective, also known as the "Central Human Functional Capabilities" and developed by Martha Nussbaum, served as the analytical instrument for the study. These are the bare minimum capabilities necessary to achieve social justice and equality through their application (Nussbaum 2000).

**Table 1. Utilizing Martha Nussbaum's "Ability Perspective," an examination of how Afghan families function**

Abilities	
Life:	The way families in Afghanistan are run has drastically deteriorated since the Taliban took control again. Initially, the district's female schools were shut down. Women over 12 were told to wear the chadori (burqa), were prohibited from leaving the neighbourhood, and teachers from numerous schools were fired or resigned themselves out of fear for their lives. 75 kilometres, along with the requirement to walk in the company of a male guardian. Even children are forbidden from Western clothing with fairy tale motifs. Every family member is continually impacted by the fear of dying.
Bodily Health:	It is not possible to consider the welfare of entire families under the Taliban. First of all, women must evaluate women before they can receive medical attention. There is no one to look after the women and their kids when female doctors are sacked. As a result of the suspension of the majority of vaccination programs, childhood disease prevention and health promotion are no longer practiced. Mothers and women are now not given any health education, and they lack fundamental understanding about diseases and good hygiene practices. Lack of funds prevents children from receiving medical care, and illnesses that are currently very curable lead to a high death rate among Afghans. Although there were private healthcare facilities in Afghanistan, they lost a large number of employees—particularly foreign workers—when the Taliban took power. The country's health service was at an extremely low standard. Additionally, non-governmental organizations ceased to supply food and medication. Richer Afghans who are able to secure a humanitarian visa—which runs several hundred dollars—travel to Iran and Pakistan for medical care. Because they are the family's primary providers of income, men are unable to get treatment because they cannot afford to miss work.

Abilities	
Bodily Integrity:	<p>Children labour in jobs that might cause disease, injury, or even death because of hazardous working conditions and lax enforcement of health and safety regulations because many women do not have the opportunity to work. In Afghanistan, children usually work long hours for meagre wages, or occasionally none at all. They work for pay at home making carpets, sewing, or tailoring; as slaves in brick kilns; as sheet metal workers and welders in the metal industry; in mines; in agriculture; as vendors, shoe shiners, and beggars on the streets; or as children helping with household chores or on their families' land. Children who are forced to drop out of school by their employers are likely to stay illiterate for the rest of their lives. This incident took place when the Taliban were in power. Many Afghans, including those from higher social levels, lack the skills necessary to read, write, and speak foreign languages since they no longer feel the need to do so following the Taliban's withdrawal. Families disintegrate due to a variety of factors, including inadequate food, limited access to healthcare and educational opportunities, migration from rural to urban regions, which increases poverty in cities, children living on the streets, and children of beggars. They make kids more vulnerable and put them in dangerous and exploitative circumstances. Parents have influence over their offspring in Afghan society, which is patriarchal. Children are treated as the property of both parents. Therefore, there is no opposition to the rigorous techniques that parents and teachers use to discipline their children.</p>
Senses, Imagination and Thought :	<p>The Taliban has closed females' secondary schools and virtually outlawed them from continuing their education past basic school. The education minister for the Taliban declared in September 2021 that there will be gender segregation and an Islamic dress code in universities. Then they barred women from attending universities.</p> <p>The abaya, niqab, and, in certain extreme circumstances, the burqa, which covers the majority of the face, body, and hair, are required Islamic garments for all primary school employees, instructors, and students.</p>
Emotion:	<p>Families cannot carry on as usual. They receive no psychological support. Family members who have benefited from Westernization and now see their status diminished are the hardest victims. Because their lives are still as terrible as they were prior to 2021, residents of tribal communities and villages have essentially not noticed any improvement in their circumstances since the Taliban came to power. The only people whose circumstances changed were those from higher socioeconomic strata, and they are saddened that they can no longer pursue further education or find employment. Their life is ended. An arranged marriage is something that many girls cannot even protest to because it is not now part of their future plans. Although no one maintains statistics, we are hearing more and more about female suicides. To end their lives, many young women light themselves on fire and consume caustic drinks.</p>
Practical Reason:	<p>Afghan women have long been expected to submit to men and follow their elders. Women in Afghanistan have never had any rights, and those that did have were never respected by men, with the exception of a brief period during which the country was dominated by communists.</p>

Abilities	
Affiliation:	<p>Girls are not permitted to interact with people in any way. When they graduate from high school at the age of twelve, they are doomed to loneliness. They are limited to doing housework. They are not permitted to leave the house or go out with friends. They are also confined to the women's section of the house, known as the <i>parda</i>, and are not permitted to make any autonomous decisions for fear of losing their honour. The only way they can speak to each other is over the phone. Children are becoming increasingly dependent on their smartphones, which they use constantly. Indian videos are getting more and more attention on YouTube, Facebook, and shorts. Naturally, this is forbidden and requires access to the Internet. Girls who are unable to attend school also develop an addiction to online media and use their phones nonstop. A portion of them attempt to pursue further education using online and offline resources created during the Covid epidemic. Some girls attend lessons that are not allowed, taught covertly by female instructors. But if the Taliban find out they are learning, they could end up being flogged.</p>
Other Species	<p>Women have restricted their activities as they have been prohibited from entering parks for a few months, are unable to leave the house without a male guardian, and could potentially face the Taliban on every occasion they leave the house. They're used to it; a similar scenario happened during the Covid epidemic.</p>
Play:	<p>Girls aren't given the freedom to express themselves and play. Girls in Afghanistan receive motherhood training from a young age. They are required to look after their younger siblings rather than attending school or doing their assignments. Not even the wealthiest families escape this. Afghan children's responsibilities include lunch preparation and guest service. The boys like to fly kites as one of their hobbies. The Taliban outlawed planning wedding receptions, listening to music, and viewing entertainment on television, particularly Bollywood from India. Afghans frequently put their lives in danger so they can view foreign films or listen to music on their smartphones. Their neighbours have the potential to betray them at any time. For a foreigner, even a phone chat can have a disastrous outcome.</p>
Control Over One's Environment :	<p>The Taliban upholds the patriarchal system in Afghanistan, which allows men to make decisions on behalf of women and justifies public humiliation of women, domestic abuse, harassment, and persecution of Afghan women and girls. At the same time, because there aren't enough women practicing gynaecology, birth control is currently unattainable. Family planning has evolved into a fantasy. The Qur'an states that having as many children as possible is desired. Regrettably, a substantial percentage of youngsters die as a result of inadequate medical care. In a poor community, the birth of a girl is likewise met with a growing amount of disinterest. Sons alone are considered secure for their parents' future.</p>

Source: independent research based on interviews.

## Conclusion

Currently, there is significant global attention on the treatment of children in Afghanistan. External countries, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and foreign governments have harshly criticized the Taliban for its discriminatory gender policies. According to Patryk Kugiel, an expert from the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the Taliban are, in contrast to their earlier declarations, reestablishing a more radical form of their rule from 1996 to 2001, as evidenced by their progressive restriction of women's rights, children's rights and disregard for international calls. There is little chance that the Taliban will ever lose power in Afghanistan because there are no other powerful military or political groups. Moreover, international sanctions primarily impact general population rather than compelling the Taliban to make concessions (Kugiel 2023).

Every child has the right to grow up in a supportive, safe environment at home and in the community, with dignity. This could only be accomplished by: educating parents and other stakeholders on their rights, particularly their right to protection; enacting legislation to penalize individuals who mistreat or take advantage of minors; moving to increase government, non-governmental organization, and civil society accountability.

Prevention can be focused on three level. At the primary level, the emphasis can be on eliminating the root causes, enhancing the child's capacity to identify and respond, raising parental awareness, enhancing social vigilance, and implementing an efficient and strict punishment system. At the secondary level, early detection, prompt intervention, and creating a supportive atmosphere in families and schools should be prioritized. Coordination between the police, judges, counsellors, physicians, and social workers is necessary for tertiary intervention.

There are several programs for empowering women and girls in Afghanistan, but their influence on people's lives has been little. One crucial instrument for government action needs to be the strategy for child marriage. This strategy ought to encourage Afghanistan's donors to put pressure on the administration and provide assistance in enacting substantive reforms. The child brides of Afghanistan require far more than just another meaningless pledge.

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