

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Knock, Knock... Who's there? Misogynism**

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**Harshita Jain**

University of Delhi.

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In the past Afghan women had faced extreme forms of suppression under Taliban regime. Women were denied even the basic rights such as right to education, right to health care, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of movement, right to work. The strictest and brutal version of Sharia was enforced on Afghan civilians especially women by the Taliban government. Timid and downtrodden afghan women were forced to wear an all enveloping burqas at all times in public. They were not allowed to step outside the house without a male family member. They were given rudimentary access to health care services. Afghan women were beaten, whipped and even stoned to death, if by any chance they broke the rules. Not only this, Taliban perpetrated egregious acts of violence against women, including rape, abduction, and forced marriage.

**The current mental status of Afghan women**

As the Taliban has taken over the country, the insurgent group has raised fears of a return to repressive and subjugated policies and human rights violations for women and girls. Afghan pop star Aryana Sayeed recently fled the country after the Insurgent group took over the country. In an interview with The Fox News, Aryana Sayeed shared her experience of her final days in Kabul and getting out. She stated that it was a horrifying experience for her to get out of Kabul alive. She feels blessed to escape from Kabul, but at the same she's worried and concerned for the people who left behind in Afghanistan and they have nowhere to go to.

Few days back an Afghan woman living in Delhi was interviewed. When she was asked the reason of leaving her country, she said, " There is no freedom in her country as compared to Delhi. It's not just about freedom of clothes, it's about freedom of mind."

Zara (Afghan National) said in an interview, ' I have never felt helpless, hopeless, disappointed to this extent. Our 20years of achievement vamoosed in just a few days.'

Right now, the mental status of Afghan women is very critical. They fear a return of subjugated and subdued past after Taliban takeover. Although Taliban has reassured the women in Afghanistan that they will get full rights and liberty within the limits of Islam, yet

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

their words cannot be trusted. There appears to be a gap between what they say and what they do. This could naturally lead to more uncertainty and intense arousal of the negative feelings brought by. it Citizens of Afghanistan have gone through tough times in the past. The Afghan civilians especially women and children have faced brutalities of the Talibanis. Therefore, along with Taliban the anxiety and stress among Afghans have come back. The current statuses of Afghanistan give us a bleak picture of emotional and mental well-being of Afghans. The experiences of observing violence and barbarity, losing loved ones, serving as a fighter, or being separated from family members certainly have mental health bearings. The situation is quite tense pondering what situation the people of Afghanistan are going to face next. In the article published by Canadian Women *For Women In Afghanistan Organization*, Afghan women's mental stats was discussed. According to the outfit, 81% of women reported a decline in their mental condition during the Taliban period. 42% of the study participants met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD, 86% demonstrated significant symptoms of anxiety, 97% reported major depression, 21% reported having suicidal thoughts "extremely often" or quite often. In 2002, the prevalence of symptoms of depression in Afghanistan was 73%. The prevalence rate of anxiety was 84% for women and 58% for men. The prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder was 48% for women and 32% for men. In 210, the Afghan Government announced its estimate that at least 66% of the population suffered from psychological problems. If we look from the past point of view, women's mental health may aggravate if the Taliban continues to follow their old practices.

**Fate of Afghans**

In drawing things to a close, fate of Afghans under Taliban regime is very important. Albeit Taliban have promised that there will be no discrimination on the basis of caste and gender, yet their speeches are just mere words. As Taliban follow Sunni beliefs of Islam, they have a feeling of vindictiveness for Shia Muslims. During their rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had declared Hazaras or Shias as non-Muslims and ordered their massacre. More than thousands of Shias were either massacred or forced into exile by the Pashtun King Amir Abdul Rahman, who ordered mass execution of Shias after he invaded their homeland in central Afghanistan. Even though the Taliban have given their word, the probability of history repeating itself is very high. And if this happens, the Afghans especially women will have to bear heavy consequences. Firstly, they have to bear what Taliban have for them: the laws, punishments and restrictions. Secondly, they will lose their children, husbands, their own lives in the civil war situation as well when Two terror groups fight. Thirdly, a civil war has always resulted in extreme financial crises. It will make situation even worse if their husbands are killed in the civil war and they'll find it almost impossible to find a job (even if they find one,

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

they may not be allowed to work by Taliban) and feed their family. In the end, either they would have to marry someone else or have to sell themselves to Taliban.

In this whole negative scenario, the positive part is the era in which we are currently living. The current political structure is different from the one in 1996. Many countries are now developed, there is more cohesion among nations. Also, UN today is considered to be an important body in maintaining peace among nations and promoting respect for the law and protection of human rights. On the parallel, Taliban also want to have trade with many countries for their economy or country to run. Therefore, they look for legitimacy. Many countries would put pressure on them for giving basic human rights to women and children in return for giving them legitimacy or for trade. This might to some extent help the condition of women in Afghanistan.