



Image source: Animated film on the BBC website

# Research Report

## **Taliban Opposition With Education of Girls**

### What do the People Say?

November 25, 2022

## Post Research Development

Since the completion of the research, the Taliban made two important decisions further restricting women and girls education and their participation in life. On December 20th, the ministry of higher education of the Taliban instructed all universities public and private to suspend access to female students until further notice. "A letter published by the education ministry said the decision was made in a cabinet meeting and the order will go into effect immediately." (1)

The Taliban when speaking about putting a restriction on women and girls, bring up the issue of women's attire that according to them is not Islamic.

The same reasoning was made on December 24th, when they suspended women's work for international and domestic non-governmental organizations.

"The Taliban...ordered all foreign and domestic non-governmental groups in Afghanistan to suspend employing women, allegedly because some female employees didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly. The ban was the latest restrictive move by Afghanistan's new rulers against women's rights and freedoms." (2)

"The Swiss-based CARE, the U.S.-based Save the Children, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) all said they were suspending aid operations in Afghanistan following the Taliban rulers' announcement that all NGOs should ban women from working at their jobs or face losing their license to operate in the country." (3)

Nearly one thousand women are affected by this decision. Some of them like this lady from Dai Kundi that did not want her name to be released said: "I'm the only breadwinner in my family. We don't have anyone else in my family who can work. My entire life depended on my work. [My family] doesn't have any other income." (3) With the dire economic situation, the shortage of food, and the near collapse of the economy, thousands of people will face a harsh winter in Afghanistan. Most of the women working for the NGOs are involved with health issues as well as other services for women. Suspension of their activities and services will further deprive the women of their rights.

"In its statement, the Norwegian Refugee Council said: "Without women driving our response, we would not have jointly reached millions of Afghans in need since August 2021. Beyond the impact on delivery of lifesaving assistance, this will affect thousands of jobs in the midst of an enormous economic crisis."

"The Taliban have hamstrung the operations of more than 20 million people in desperate need of assistance...in Afghanistan." (3)

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(1) <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/20/asia/taliban-bans-women-university-education-intl/index.html>

(2) [https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/taliban-ban-women-from-working-for-domestic-foreign-ngos-in-afghanistan#:~:text=Taliban%20bans%20women%20from%20working%20for%20domestic%2C%20foreign%20NGOs%20in%20Afghanistan,-World%20Dec%2024&text=KA-BUL%2C%20Afghanistan%20\(AP\)%20%E2%80%94wear%20the%20Islamic%20headscarf%20correctly](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/taliban-ban-women-from-working-for-domestic-foreign-ngos-in-afghanistan#:~:text=Taliban%20bans%20women%20from%20working%20for%20domestic%2C%20foreign%20NGOs%20in%20Afghanistan,-World%20Dec%2024&text=KA-BUL%2C%20Afghanistan%20(AP)%20%E2%80%94wear%20the%20Islamic%20headscarf%20correctly)

(3) <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-women-staff-ban-ngos-un/32192717.html>

## Appreciation

We thank all those compatriots who answered our inquiry and questions for this research. Without their cooperation, this research would not have been prepared or finalized.

### **Dedication:**

This research is dedicated to all brave girls of Afghanistan especially those of the Kaaj Educational Center.

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BAN-R0002

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## Abstract

Women in Afghanistan for many years have faced gender discrimination for different reasons under the pretext of Islam. Although violence and discrimination have deep roots in the tribal customs and the unacceptable traditions that the people adhere to, it is the wrong interpretation of Islam that they illogically try to justify. Development of the level of awareness and acceptance of training are important traits of human beings that have given special attention to education and learning in different societies. In Afghanistan, women have always had to struggle for their basic human rights among them the right to education and learning. Unfortunately, with the reemergence of the Taliban, girls are forbidden to attend school.

This field research, carried out with an online questionnaire and interview tries to get the views of Afghan citizens in different fields whether in favor or against the girls attending schools. It will reveal the general feeling about the truth or lack of the Taliban's assertion regarding the families' requests for the closure of schools. Although the people of Afghanistan have used different means to show their views about the closure of schools for more than a year, the Taliban have ignored their demands and have kept the schools closed for girls beyond sixth grade. Bolaq Analyst Network has tried to find out the truth and clear the issue through this research for the general public in the world and those Afghan citizens who claim to represent Afghanistan. With data analysis and interviews with some citizens in Afghanistan, it is being proved that the Taliban claim of the people's demand for closing the school is not correct and the people want the schools to be reopened.

### Key Expressions

Schools, Girls, Education, Taliban

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## Preface

Education and learning are the basic needs of society for progress and development that giving attention to it would put the country in a bright future. The educational system of a country is made up of different elements including teaching material, teachers, students, educational means, budget, proper environment and equipment that have mutual relations to make the desired goal possible. (1).

Women as half of human society and the valuable part have a very vital effect on the progress and development of society. The population of Afghanistan reached 33.6 million in 1400 HS (2022) of which 16.5 million are women and 17.1 million are men. (2) Based on statistics, women make up nearly half the population of the country and as human beings their rights according to the national and international laws should be respected and all forms of violence and discrimination against women in all formal and informal structure of the society should end.

Women rights in Afghanistan in general and their access to education in particular have been under attack during the last decades and they have been deprived of their rights. History is witness to this violence against women and girls. After their ascendance to power on August 15, 2021, the Taliban authorities under order from their leader Mulla Haibatullah closed the girls schools. (3) Despite the pressure put by the international community, independent foundations in defense of women's rights and civil activists to open the girls schools, the Taliban authorities have claimed time and again that they have closed the girls schools in response to the request of the people of Afghanistan. (4) In fact, they blame the people of Afghanistan for the closure of schools.

In this research, after explaining the generalities of the background of the presence of women in educational and learning sections, attention is paid to the education and learning rights of women under the Taliban regime. Afterward, the findings of the research with an analysis of the data and statistics and interviews of the citizens of Afghanistan will be presented. The research will conclude with the conclusion and suggestions of the researchers.

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(1) National Office of Statistics and Information, Yearly Statistics for 1400(2021), Issue 43, April 2022, page 7.

(2) Malaki, Hassan, Teaching Programming (Guide for Action), Mashad, Payam-e-Andisha, sixth edition, page 13.

(3) National Office of Statistics and Information, Yearly Statistics for 1400(2021), Issue 43, April 2022, page 7.

(4) Ministry of Education: Yesterday, we received the news of the closing of secondary schools for girls, (Sharvand News).

<https://sharvandnews.com/%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%81-%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%AD%DA%A9%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%86-%D9%85%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%AA>

(5) Girls Schools Remain Closed due to Cultural Limitations (Afghan News Agency).

<http://afghannews.af/%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%86-%D9%85%DA%A9%D8%>



# First Section

## Generalities

### Objective and the Need for Research

The main objective of the current research is to highlight the views of the citizens of Afghanistan about their opposition or lack of girls going to schools so that the veracity of the Taliban's claim about the request of the citizens for the closure of the schools should be established.

The basic need of this research is to highlight the views of the citizen from different ethnic groups and geographical locations so that it will be made very clear the basis of Taliban decision for closing the schools are which cultural ethnicity and from which geographical area.

### The Subject of the Research

The main subject of this research is the study of the views of the citizen of Afghanistan about the closure of the girls' schools in the country.

### Questions of the Research

For this research two main questions were considered and efforts were made to find answers to them based on the reasons and documents about them.

1. Is the basis of keeping the girls' schools closed, the demand of the people of Afghanistan?
2. Why is discrimination against women in education and learning a priority for the Taliban?

### Assumptions of the Research

The following assumptions are made for this research:

1. Closure of the girls schools is against the values of the people of Afghanistan and the religion of Islam and with the schools remaining closed, there will be damaging consequences in the long run for society.
2. Nearly all the people of Afghanistan are in favor of the education and learning of girls.
3. Taliban are ignoring the demand of the people of Afghanistan and the order of Sharia are insisting on the closure of girls schools based on their political agenda.

### Background of the Research

There are reports and analytical research in news media about the situation of women especially the deprivation of girls from education due to the Taliban's misogynistic attitude. But the advantage of this research is that a lot of the citizens of the country from nearly all the provinces and ethnic groups have taken part in the survey and interviews which can be generalized to represent all the people of the country.

### Method of the Research

This research is both qualitative and quantitative and collecting the information was based on questionnaire, library research and interviews.

The research is made through sharing online questionnaires with 500 citizens in 34 provinces and interviews with 10 people which can be generalized to include a large portion of the population.

### Time of the Research

This research was designed in August 2022 and for receiving the answers to the questionnaires two months were assigned (September and October 2022) and for the interviews the month of October was designated. The findings of the research were analyzed and written in November 2022.

## Method of Observation

To find precise answers and to avoid erroneous information, each participant was recognized by the research group and then through coordination in a given time, questionnaires were given online and each participant was able to write the answer and respond only once. Based on the observation carried out, we believe that the information was real and given by the respondents without the interference of a third person.

## Obstacles and Challenges of the Research

Without a doubt every research has its challenges and there is no exception in this case the challenges that we faced are as follows:

- Censorship of the information from the ruling regime,
- Lack of response from the Taliban authorities to the questions raised,
- Lack of the needed security for the researchers in Afghanistan so that they could freely collect information,
- Shortage of financial resources.

## The Research Team

This research was carried out by members of the Bolaq Analysts Network which included:

Analysis of the data and writing the research report

1. Taiba Jaafary (5)
2. Ali Tai Mirkasha (6)

## Collecting the Information and Interviews

- The Research team of the Bolaq Analysts Network

## Design and Page Format

1. Ali Tai Mirkasha
2. Habib Paiman

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<sup>(5)</sup> Taiba Jaafary has a degree in private law and several years of experience working with national and international foundations in Afghanistan.

<sup>(6)</sup> Pseudonym.



# Second Section: The Findings of the Research

## First Part

### Background of the Women's Rights to Education and the Findings of the Research

#### A - Background of the Women's Presence in Educational and Learning Sectors

For years, women's presence and their activity have had many ups and downs due to insecurity, social limitations and improper customs, and women were considered the constant victims of culture and society. The historical discrimination and violence against women have been so vast that has kept them deprived of one of their basic rights of access to education and learning.

Historical study of women education in Afghanistan has a wide scope together with fluctuations. The trio of King Amanullah, Queen Soraya, and Mahmoud Tarzi (the king's father-in-law), under the reforms and modernizing programs set by the King, established the first girls' school between 1921-23 in the "Masturat" complex. During this period the first group of girls was sent to study abroad. But these efforts for raising women status and empowering them with the right to education and learning were attacked and criticized by the traditional people and faced stiff opposition to the point that uprising and political upheaval took place that eventually led to the downfall of the regime. The fall of King Amanullah, coming to power by Habibullah Kalakani and later King Nader 1929-33 was in a way a reflection of the reaction of the traditional strata to changing the women's status and empowering the hidden half of the society. Among the reaction was clear opposition to sending the Afghan girls to study abroad which in traditional view was the pinnacle of ugliness.

After a period of setback during King Nader, with the coronation of King Zahir in 1933, once again efforts were made to prepare the ground for girls education. Although in the coming years the right to education was limited to the capital and at best to some large cities, a hopeful process had started that later on spread from the cities to the rural areas for girls to go to schools. (7)

Still, the process was always opposed by the traditional strata of society. They considered women's education and learning against the social norms and in a way shameful. In a society with a semi-feudal system where the mullahs, large land owners and elders have the real power in defining the society's progress, despite the large changes, the girls could not go to schools especially in the eastern and southern parts of them without fear. Misogynist ideas and the sick minds that consider women no more than a child bearing being and buy and sell them and subject them to various violences, obviously have problem with women awareness and literacy and create a false interpretation of the religion to create obstacles for them.

However, despite all the difficulties the women of Afghanistan continued their struggle for the right to education and learning. They had widespread presence and activity at all levels especially in education and learning during the last years before the Taliban came to power. According to a new survey conducted by the ministry of education in 2021, the number of schools in the country was 16563. The total number of students was 9502692 of which 3733672 were girls. These figures include primary, secondary, high school, vocational schools, teachers' training schools, and technical, and religious institutes. The total number of teachers in 2021 was 203754 of which 70171 were women. In 2021 the number of literary courses was 2059, the total number of students was 41339 and the graduates were 14889.

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(7) Ghobar, Mir Ghulam Mohammad, Afghanistan in the Course of History, 1967, Public Printing, page 595. of teachers in 2021 was 203754 of which 70171 were women. In 2021 the number of literary courses was 2059, the total number of students 41339 and the graduates were 14889.

## B - Women and their Access to Education and Learning During the Taliban

During the 20th century when other countries were making progress, in Afghanistan during the whole-time people were concerned about whether or not girls should go to school. Taliban during their first term in power also stopped girls from going to schools and universities which was a reflection of their tribal and misogynist thinking under the guise of Islam.

Although the literacy rate was high before the first Taliban government which was 90% for girls and 60% for boys, the gender policies of the Taliban contributed more to the current crisis in the country. After the takeover of Kabul, the Taliban closed 63 schools for three months. As a result, 103000 girls and 148000 boys were deprived of education and 11200 teachers of which 7000 were women lost their jobs. They closed the Kabul university and 10000 students of which 4000 were girls were sent home. (9)

After the Taliban's ascendance to power on August 15, 2021, historic cruelty against women and girls is repeated in Afghanistan. The Taliban once again representing their archaic thinking took the rights of women and girls hostage and deprived them of their right to push for their demand from the international community. They closed secondary and high schools for girls and became under heavy national and international criticism. To justify their action, they claimed that it was done at the people's request. Nurullah Monir, the caretaker minister for education in a press conference in Uruzgan on 11/9/2022 said: "People don't like to send their girls under the current situation to schools. If we don't pay attention to the people's wish, they will revolt." (10)

This field study was conducted in all regions of Afghanistan to get the reaction of the people to the claims of the Taliban so that it would be documented whether people are against or in favor of sending their girls to school.

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<sup>(8)</sup> During the Islamic Republic, the fiscal year would start in December and end in October.

<sup>(9)</sup> Rashid, Ahmad, Taliban, Translated by Asad Shefai and Sadeq Baqeri, Danish Publications, 2000.

<sup>(10)</sup> 8am daily, Taliban Ministry of Education, People Don't Want Girls' Schools to be Reopened.

<https://8am.media/taliban-ministry-of-education-people-do-not-want-girls-schools-to-be-reopened/>

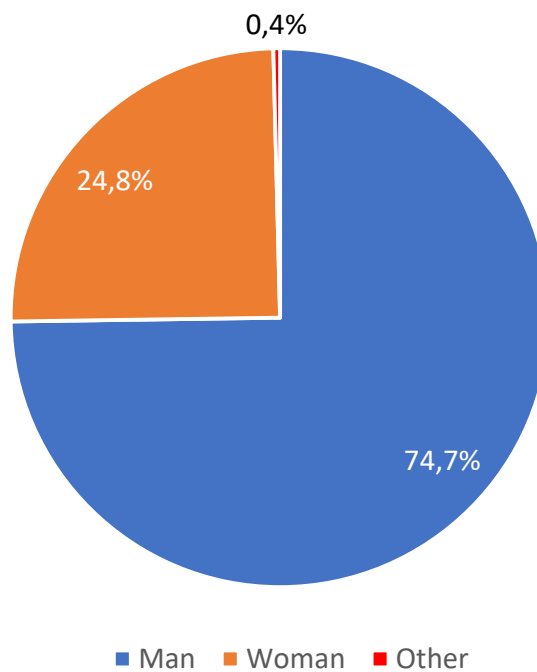
## C - The Findings of the Research

### I - General Information About the Participants of the Survey

#### I.1 Gender

In general, about 500 Afghan citizens took part in the survey 74.7% were men, 24.8% were women and .4% chose to be others. Most of the interviewees were men because the discrimination against women is based on gender, we wanted to seek the views of the citizens mostly men on the issue.

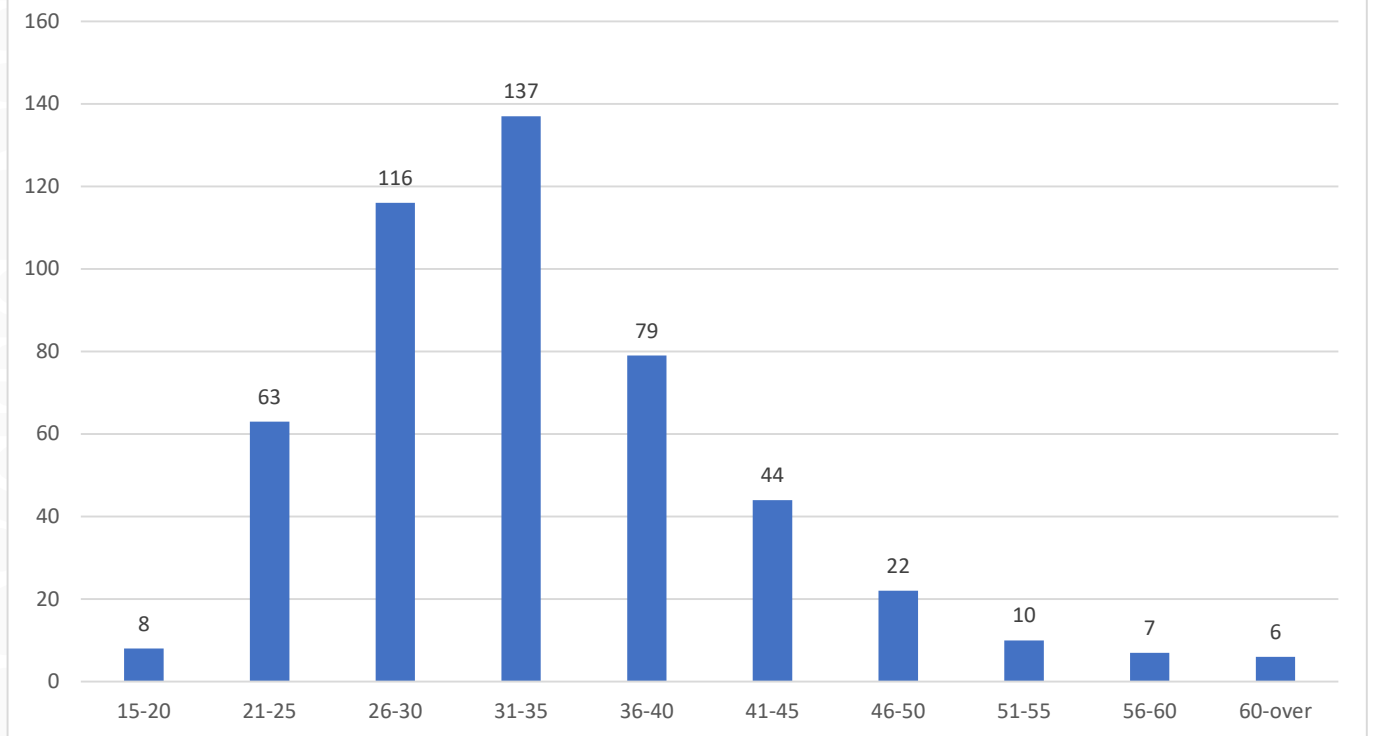
**Figure 1.1:** Gender based participation



## 1.2 Age

Because of the importance of the issue and finding the views of different ages, the basic age was chosen to be 15 and with an increment of five years up to 60 years old were selected. 492 people who took part in the survey answered this question. As can be seen from the following figure, 8 people were included in the 15–20-year range which is 1.6%, and 63 people were the 21–25-year range which constituted 12.8% of the participants. 116 people were included in the 26–30-year range with 23.6%, 137 people were in the 31–35-year range with 27%, 79 people were in the 36–40 year range with 16.1%, 44 people in the 41–45 year range with 8.9%, 22 people in the 46–50 year range with 4.5%, 10 people in the 51–55 year range with 2%, 7 people in the 56–60 range with 1.45% and 6 people in over 60-year range with 1.2%.

**Figure 1.2: Age based participants**

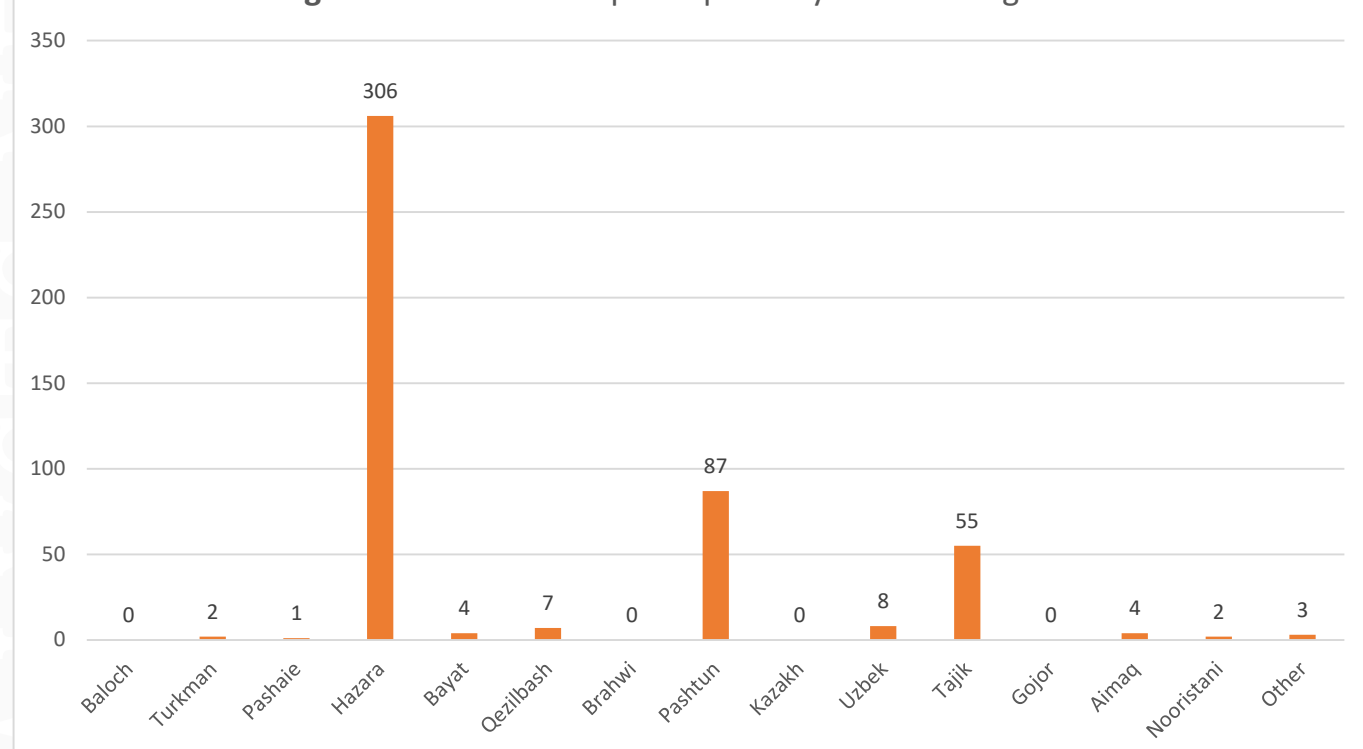


### 1.3- Ethnic Affiliation

Although the Taliban claims have not related the closure of schools to a given ethnic group, we tried to have people from different ethnic groups in the country and get their views.

492 people took part in the survey and answered the question that is mentioned in the following figure. From this group 7 people were Qezelbashs that formed 1.4%, 4 were Bayat at 0.8%, 55 were Tajik at 11.2%, 12 Sadat at 2.4%, 8 Uzbek with 1.6%, 36 Hazaras with 62.2%, 4 Aimaq with 0.8%, 2 Nooristanis with 0.4%, 2 Turkomen with 2.4%, 87 Pashtuns with 17.7%, 1 Pashai with 0.2 and 3 from other ethnic groups with 0.6%.

**Figure 1.3: Number of participants by ethnic background**

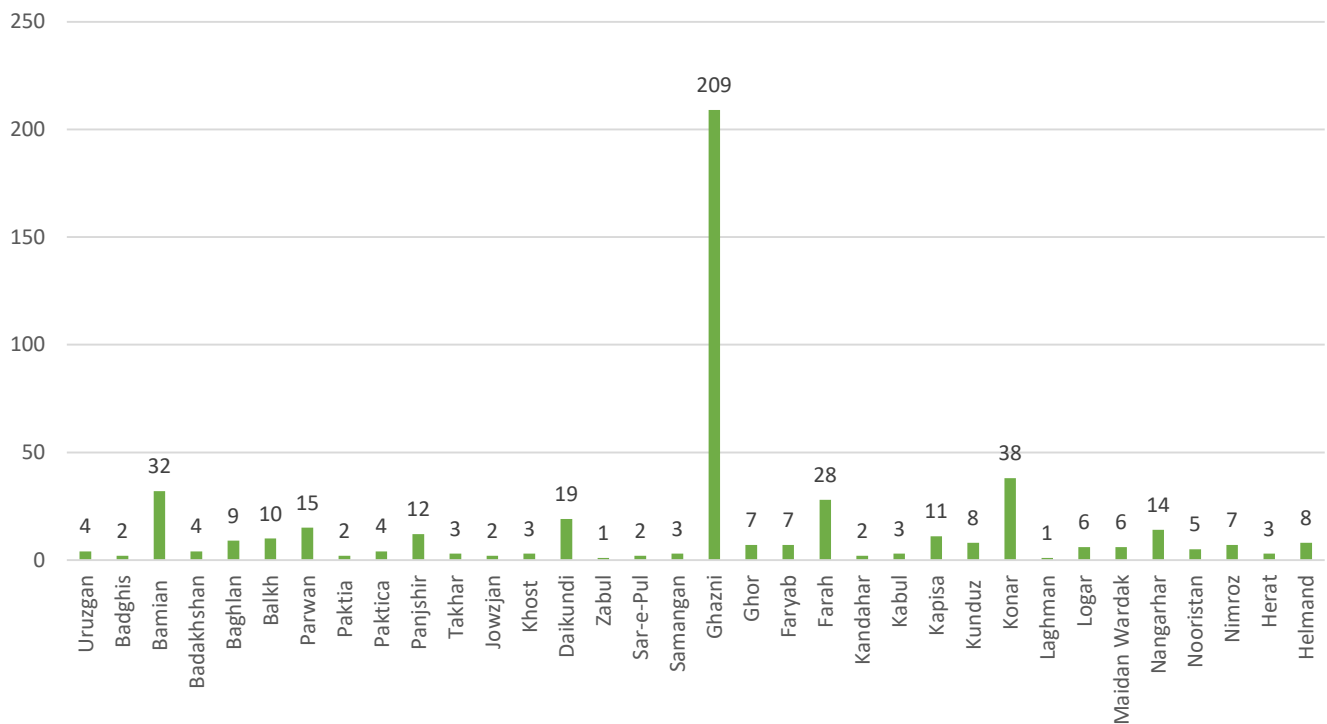


#### 1.4 Province

One of the important distinctions of this research is that people from all 34 provinces of the country took part. As mentioned earlier, due to the importance of the subject, an effort is made to get the views of all the citizens and get the questionnaires filled out by them. Fortunately, this goal was achieved.

In the following figure, the respondents are categorized by their provinces. As can be seen 490 people responded to the question with four people from each of Uruzgan, Badakhshan and Paktika provinces with each having 0.8%, 32 people from Bamian province 6.5%, 9 people from Baghlan province 1.8%, 2 people from each of Badghis, Paktia, Jowzjan, Sar-e-Pul and Nooristan provinces with 0.4%, 3 people from each of Takhar, Khost, Samangan, Faryab and Kunar provinces with 0.6%, 19 people from Daikundi province with 3.9%, 1 person from each of Zabul and Kapisa provinces with 0.2%, 209 people from Ghazni province 42.7%, 7 people from each of Ghor, Laghman and Hilmand provinces with 1.4%, 28 people from Maidan Wardak province with 5.7%, 11 people from Farah province with 2.2%, 8 people from each of Herat and Kandahar provinces with 1.6%, 38 people from Kabul province with 7.8%, 6 people from each of Kunduz and Logar provinces with 1.2%, 14 people from Nangarhar province with 2.9% and 5 people from Nimroz province with 1% of the respondents.

**Figure 1.4: Province based participation**



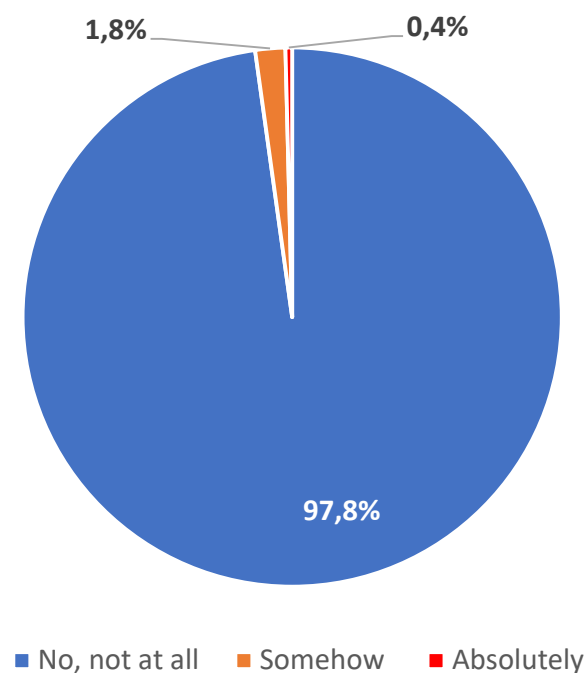


## 2 - The Result of the Answers to the Questions

### 2.1 Are you against girls going to school?

After the information about gender, age, ethnicity, and residence the question was raised whether they are against girls going to school. This question was answered by 491 people as can be seen from the chart. With this question we wanted to determine the veracity of the Taliban claim about the wish of the families not to send their girls to school and get the views of the citizens. For this question three answers were considered. 480 people which constitute 97.8% of the respondents said that they are not against their girls going to schools, meaning clearly that girls should go to schools. Two respondents which constitute 0.4% responded that yes they are to a certain extent against girls going to schools. Nine people which constitute 1.8% responded that they were totally against girls going to schools. It looks like the Taliban decision reflects the views of the last 1.8% and ignores the views of the rest of the citizens.

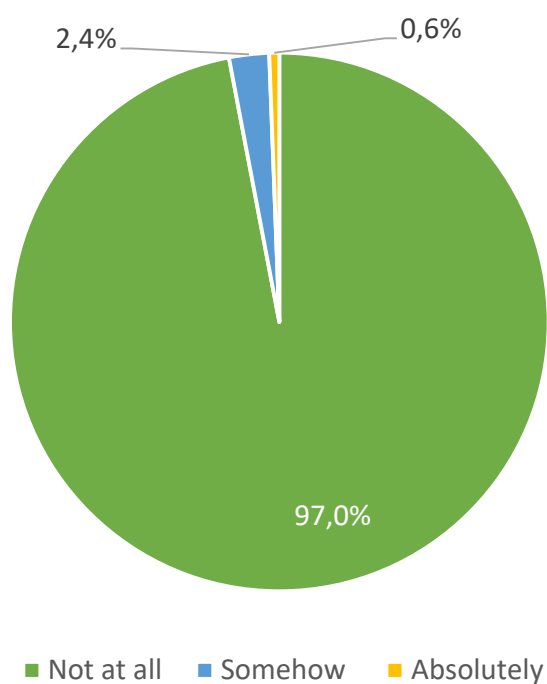
**Figure 2.1: Are you against girls going to school?**



## 2.2 Are you against girls going to university?

The other question that was asked the participants was whether they are against girls going to university. This question was answered by 493 people of which 478 people or 97% of the respondents answered that they are not at all against girls going to university. Three people which constitute 0.6% responded that to some extent they are against girls going to university and 12 people 2.4% were totally against girls going to university.

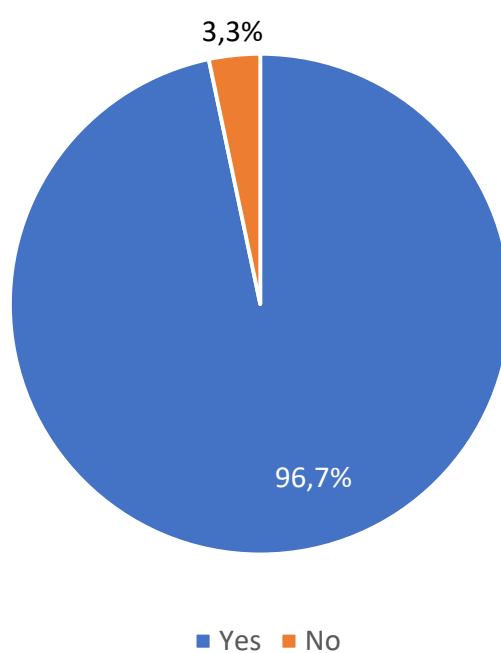
**Figure 2.2: Are you against girls going to university**



### 2.3 Do you have a literate woman in your family that can read and write?

The question was asked to know whether there is a precedence in allowing women to study. 492 people answered the question of which 476 people constitute 96.7% said they do have a literate woman in the family and only 16 people 3.3% said no literate woman was in the family. 96.7% shows that the women had access to education with the consent of their families.

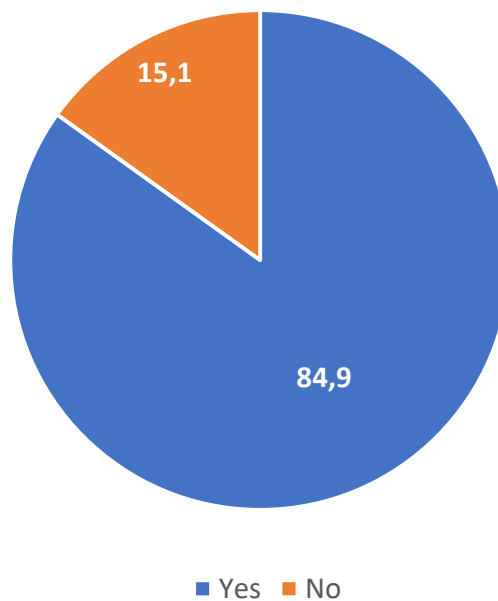
**Figure 2.3:** Do you have a literate woman in your family that can read and write?



## 2.4 Do you have a girl student in your family that has not gone to school after the fall of the republic and the coming of the Taliban?

To find out the damage and violence directed against the girls by the Taliban, we raised the above question. As you can see from the following figure 491 people answered the question of which 417 people about 84.9% responded positively, meaning that with the ascendance of the Taliban the girls from 417 families with each having more than one girl have been barred from school. 74 people constituting 15.1% gave a negative answer which means that either they do not have girls or in their province the girls' schools are open.

**Figure 2.4:** Do you have a girl student in your family that has not gone to school after the fall of the republic and the coming of the Taliban?



### D:The Results of the Interviews

To find the views of more citizens we interviewed 10 by telephone and zoom which are as follows:

**“The first word that came to Prophet Mohammad (PBH) was a command to read (Iqra). This shows that in Islam reading or reality learning has a high priority.”**

“Closure of schools has no religious backing” (Mawlawi Mohammad Bashir).

Mawlawi Bashir the Imam of one of the mosques in the center of Ghazni city told the interviewer of Bolla:

He believes that in this regard there are a lot of verses in the Quran and also the prophet's saying that emphasize learning and education. He believes that in religious literature there is no case where education or learning is tied to gender or any special case. Mr. Bashir in response to the question that what could be the reason for the Taliban's decision, kept silent. The silence can be attributed to fear of persecution or the consequences of his response. He ended the interview by saying that he is not interested in political discussion.

**“I will be the last generation of university students (girls).”**

(Shazia Neda)

Shazia Neda is originally from Laal Sarjangal district of Ghor province that has gone to Kabul to attend courses

and recently took the entrance exam for the university. She said: "The constraints issued have not only prevented thousands of girls in Afghanistan from attending university but also caused a lot of problems."

She said she knows girls who have developed psychological and mental problems as a result of the closure of schools and are now isolated and depressed."

In response to a question about how she sees the future, she says: "With the continuation of the Taliban government and their policies and programs there is no hope for the future for the girls and women in Afghanistan. I may be the last generation of university students inside Afghanistan."

She believes that the Taliban have no logic or justification for their decision and have taken with stubbornness and dark-mindedness insist on its continuation.

### **"In Hazara society, being illiterate had become a shame."**

(Mohammad Hussain Alizada)

Mohammad Alizada is a resident of Jibrail township in Herat whose two daughters are barred from going to school. He says: "Our history was dark and black, the opportunity that came about during the last 20 years, people put education as the top priority."

"Although I have no education as such, I did not spare any support or sacrifice that would help my children get an education because illiteracy had become a shame for Hazara society," he says.

Mr. Alizada was asked if the schools continue to be closed what will he do for his children? He said: "I hope that the situation will change soon, the Taliban will reach to the reality that education and learning are the only way for progress or basic changes in society. But if this situation continues, we have only one option to migrate."

### **"I am a Pashtun, in my house there are three literate people."**

(Mujiburrahman Atal)

Mujiburrahman Atal, a resident of Jalalabad city in response to the question in the interview with the Bolaq Analyst Network that the Taliban are trying to say with their decision that this is the prevailing culture in Pashtun society. He said: "Probably like other tribes in Pashtun society also there has a history of restriction of education, but during the last 20 years with all the security threats and a lot of problems, we tried to make use of every opportunity to put education as our top priority."

He adds: "I am the second child in an eight member family and all the children and my father are literate except my mother who at the time there was no school in her region. My sister is a nurse and has been working in the hospital for years. Opposition to education is not at all the description of our family."

In response to a question that the Taliban are talking from which address, he says. "I can say that they cannot talk from the Pashtun culture address. What intention they have behind this decision is not known to me, but this much I can say that they will be the cause of Afghanistan destruction."

### **"Uzbeks had depravity in history, but they were never against education."**

Najmuddin Yardam

Najmuddin Yardam is a resident of the city of Maimana in Faryab province, currently living in Iran. In an interview with Bolaq Analyst Network and in response to the question about the closure of girls' schools said: "Unfortunately, women and girls throughout history have endured discrimination and oppression and this situation will tragically put a negative effect on their lives." He adds: "The Uzbek society carries the wounds of historical oppression, but it has never been against education and never will. History remembers fondly the efforts of Uzbek leaders in support of learning and education."

He says: "In response to the repeated questions of my sister about the future of her school, I have nothing to say and I just keep silent or I change the subject."

**“The subject of attire or covering is totally illogical.”** (Sabera Azizi)

Sabera Azizi who has a 30-year experience in teaching in one of the schools in Mazar-e-Sharif in response to the question of whether the attire or covering of girls and teachers can be a reason for the closure of schools, says: “I have become old and I spent my life with chalk and blackboard in boys and girls classes. As long as I remember the presence of girls as students and women as teachers have been with the covering or attire according to Islam and the culture of our people.” She says: “Even during the republic there were women who came to schools with Burqa (All covering attire) and nobody stopped them.”

Ms. Azizi adds: “During the communist government the girls would wear a short skirt of head cover in the university which was only for a short period but during the republic there was no improper attire or covering against the Sharia in the schools.”

**“Is it possible to enforce the middle-age mentality in the current century?”** (Sediqullah Salashur)

Sediqullah Salashur is a resident of the Baharak District of Badakhshan province currently living in Kabul. He was asked whether the society that he was raised in had this type of demand from the Taliban? He says: “I was born in Badakhshan, a learning-loving province and in my province, at least in recent years I have not noticed any opposition to education and learning and this issue has no relation to our cultural demand.”

He adds: “The Tajik society in Afghanistan has a bright history of learning and education. I don’t claim but history has proven this fact very clearly.”

**“We the birthplace of Mulla Lang (the lame Mulla, who was notoriously anti-progress and education), we shouted that the schools should be opened.”** (Nizamuddin)

Nizamuddin resident of Paktia province in response to the question as to why the society does not stand effectively against this decision of the Taliban said. “The people do not have the military power except their voices, and the Taliban unfortunately are stifling these voices as well. From the birthplace of Mulla Lang (12) who was against modern values including the education of girls raised our voices because we know the fact that without education and learning we cannot have a rich society.”

He believes that society’s thinking has changed but the Taliban are living with the mentality of Mulla Lang. They should become aware that for the progress of society we need education and modern science.

He adds, “I personally worked as a laborer inside and outside the country to earn the expenses of education for my three daughters. Now, unfortunately two of my daughters are barred from education.”

**“Such animosity towards woman and education is not allowed in any Islamic sect.”** Mohammad Hussain Fayyaz

Mohammad Hussain Fayyaz who is educated in religious studies believes that in basic Islamic principles there is no prohibition for women education. He says, in basic religious texts not only there is no prohibition for education but also there are a lot of encouraging remarks in favor of it. For example, in Sunni and Shia books there is a famous statement that for every Muslim man and woman, education is a duty. He emphasizes that in the Shia sect, a lot of the religious scholars believe women can even reach jurisdiction level.

Mr. Fayyaz says: “What the Taliban are doing is the wrong interpretation of religion and also a misogynist culture that considers women as an honor that should not appear in society and emphasize their home confinement.”

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<sup>(12)</sup> Mulla Abdulla Gardezi, alias Mulla Lang together with Mulla Abdur Rashid came to prominence in reaction to King Amanullah's reforms. In February 1923, the two mullahs with the support of the Mangal, Ahmadzai, Jaji, and Suleiman Khel tribes of Pashtun resurged against the reform projects of Amanullah Khan.

<https://swn.af/how-did-mullah-lang-get-out-of-amanullahs-sleeve>



## **“Closure of schools is a prelude to religious extremism and creation of danger for other countries.” (Naim Poyesh)**

Naim Poyesh, a former diplomat and an expert on international relations believes that there are two issues for the Taliban's emphasis on the closure of schools for girls. The first one is the wrong and extreme interpretation of religious edicts and the second one is the social and cultural background in which the Taliban are born and raised. This culture is basically patriarchal and against any social role and equality for women. The intellectual view of the Taliban on women is not what human society sees rather the Taliban see women as servants and childbearing to men. These two issues have given the Taliban the belief that their decision is for the protection of religion and society. This is not the reality of today's religion and society in Afghanistan. Mr. Poyesh in response to the question of the consequences of this policy for the Taliban in the region and the world says: “The effects of this issue depend on the view and the interest of the countries. For those countries that believe in human values and respect the women's rights, this situation is definitely worrisome because the closure of schools can result in the growth of extremism and eventually terrorism which will definitely be a threat to the countries in the region and the world.”

## **“The Taliban, with the enforcement of limitations, have effectively transformed Afghanistan into a prison for women.” (Parasto Yari)**

Parasto Yari, a civil activist, believes that the Taliban themselves are a serious threat to the women and girls and girls in Afghanistan. She adds: “Taliban thinking about women is not humane thinking because they look at women as commodity and material and in the final analysis as sex slaves and child-bearers.”

Ms. Yari in response to the question about the consequences of the Taliban decision on society says: “The Taliban decision has a direct negative effect on the most important foundation of society which is the family and through that on the education and raising the next generation and as a whole on the fate of women and girls a very negative role.” She adds: “What the Taliban think of being the thinking and demand of the people of Afghanistan is not in the current situation, rather it is the thinking and demand of a limited number of traditional and backward people.”

## **The reaction of the Taliban to the Closure of the Girls' Schools**

Unfortunately, Bolaq Analyst Network with repeated attempts could not succeed in getting the views of the Taliban about the continued closure of the girls' schools. We witnessed their reaction to the issue through the media. The Taliban do not have a specific view about the closure of the girls' schools. Each one has a view and opinion of his own on the subject which we point out some of them.

Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanakzai, deputy foreign minister of the Taliban has criticized the closure of schools and has said: “Education is the natural and religious right of boys and girls. We should build a society which will be endowed with richness of science and education and each individual has the right to actively take part in politics, commerce, agriculture, and building of the country.” (13) Khalid Hanafi the caretaker of the ministry of Vice and Virtue has reacted harshly to Stanakzai's statement by saying that learning modern science is allowed (Mobah: a religious act that may or may not be performed.) but obedience to the leader of the faithful is obligatory. (14) He also added that learning science is (Mobah) allowed and we should not waste our time with such allowable.” (15) This statement clearly explains their view about the right of women to education.

Zabihulla Mujahed the spokesman for the Taliban in an international gathering of religious scholars in Turkey said the reopening of the girls' schools beyond six is definite but he did not say the time of the reopening. He added the Taliban at the moment are working on the syllabus and separate classes. (16)

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(13) Stanakzai's criticism of the closure of girls' school: Education is the natural and Islamic right of boys and girls.

<https://www.afintl.com/202206191164>

(14) Continuation of the prohibition of girls education; Khalid Hanafi: Education is Mobah. Stanakzai: Science is obligatory.

<https://asvakanews.com/afghanistan/11980/>

(15) Reaction of Hanafi to Stanakzai's statement: Education is Mobah, we should not waste our time on Mobahs.

<https://www.afintl.com/202209270161>

(16) Taliban spokesman in the international gathering of religious scholars in Turkey: Reopening of the girls's school is definite. [https://](https://www.afintl.com/202210153386)

[www.afintl.com/202210153386](https://www.afintl.com/202210153386)

Faqirulla Faeq the leader of the Taliban religious council had said in Kabul: "Mulla Haibutulla Akhondzada has no objection to the opening of the girls' schools. The only reason for school closure is to have separate classes for girls and boys." (17) The claim for coeducation is raised at a time when the schools for girls and boys have been separate in the last 20 years.

Looking at the views mentioned one finds out the Taliban time and again mention the opening of schools to draw the attention of the world community and the justification of their decision but they keep the schools closed which is a clear indication of their decision on the future of the women and girls in Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the findings of the research, we come to the conclusion that whatever the Taliban are basing their decision on in relations to the closure of schools, has no objective reality and only exposes their misinterpretation of objective realities in Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan in the 21 century have reached to intellectual maturity to recognize the education and learning of women as a basic right and the de facto rulers must end the people's concern about going or not going to schools. The findings of this research shows clearly that no ethnic or cultural group in Afghanistan favors the closure of the girls' schools and does not consider this act as the demand of their cultural or ethnic group.

The citizens of Afghanistan believe that the Taliban as the de facto regime are using the women and girls' situation in Afghanistan for political purposes and are holding them, hostage. Taking the right of a certain group hostage under different pretexts for achieving their demands on the international level is due to their weaknesses and has no logical, cultural or religious basis. The findings of the research prove that the Taliban's claim for the closure of the girls' schools as a result of the demand of the people is not true and the opposite is proven. The people of Afghanistan men or women are in favor of the knowledge, awareness, and intellectual progress of women which can only be achieved by the girls education in schools and higher studies. According to current research, all the citizens of Afghanistan are in favor of their girls going to schools and have no objection in this regard.

The other important issue that has caused deep concerns among the citizens of Afghanistan in addition to the closure of schools is the recognition of extremist education in the educational system of the country. They believe that extremist education and the reading of Taliban from the religion can be in itself a very dangerous consequence in of keeping the schools closed.

The continuation of the closure of schools have has many consequences that will definitely have very negative effects on the social life and the future of the country. Although the closure of the schools is one of the misogynistic attitudes that are taking place against women and girls in Afghanistan, the observation and playing with words by the international community have given the Taliban the courage to do whatever their interpretation in relation to women under the religion or cultural pretext in Afghanistan.

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<sup>(17)</sup> Closure of the girls' in Afghanistan; 300 days of depravity.

<https://www.darivoa.com/amp/taliban-have-kept-the-girls-schools-closed-for-300-days-now/6656838.htm>

# Second Section

## Suggestions and Appendices

### A - Suggestions

About the findings of the research and to move away from the current situation of the girls right to education in Afghanistan, we have the following suggestions that we propose this research:

#### 1. Suggestion to the Taliban

- The Taliban as the de facto rulers of Afghanistan should consider the following cases and should immediately end their violence against the people especially the limitations and restrictions on the rights of education for women.
- Continuation of the situation will no doubt will cause disaster and roll-back for the people. It is the responsibility of the Taliban as the managers of the ruling regime to seriously reconsider this issue.
- This action of the Taliban will cause the progress of religious extremism and will give a bad impression of the religious and cultural values of the people of Afghanistan to the world which will be a stain on the history of the country and for this reason they should stop the continuation of this action.
- The Taliban with extremist thinking and illusory perception of the religion cannot rule over the logic of people and they should understand that their decision is not to the interest and well-being of the country.
- Taliban should prepare the teaching curricula of the schools in such a way that they should not contain or recognize the false interpretation of the religion.

#### 2. Suggestions to the People of Afghanistan

- The people of Afghanistan as the owners of the land should stand against the Taliban in every possible way and continue their protest constantly to stop the realization of this objective of the Taliban.
- The people should not forget their power and bow to the unjustified and anti-religious orders of the Taliban.
- The Taliban with their current attitude have assaulted the cultural and religious identity of the people of Afghanistan in an unprecedented way. Silence in the face of this assault will mean supporting it so the people should break their silence against the improper actions of the Taliban.
- Those citizens who live outside the country and have access to technical and financial possibilities should strive to prepare proper educational content for the girls in Afghanistan through social media so that they will become prey to the content prepared by the Taliban.
- The people of Afghanistan who are active in academic institutions outside the country should strive to find scholarships for girls from Afghanistan.

#### 3. Suggestions to the International Community

- The world should no longer be a spectator of the situation and suppression of the people of Afghanistan.
- The international community should impose serious sanctions on the Taliban leaders to accept a legitimate government acceptable to the people of Afghanistan.
- The behavior of the Taliban towards women and girls in Afghanistan should be recognized as crime against humanity and the international criminal court in the Hague should act on this.
- Countries of the world should stop their engagement with the Taliban and should definitely make it conditional to the behavior of the Taliban towards the citizens of Afghanistan and the world.
- The United Nations should consider the current behavior of the Taliban as the actual threat to humanity and should take measures to stop and prosecute it.
- Accepting the Taliban representatives and authorities in the international fora and should cancel their trips.
- The international community should put a direct and effective observation on the educational content of the curricula that the Taliban prepare for the schools and universities so that it will prevent the creation of content that will promote terrorism and extremism.

## B - Appendices

### Questions

First Question: Gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Other

Second Question: **Age**

- 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, Over 60

Third Question: **What ethnicity do you belong in Afghanistan**

- Baloch, Turkman, Pashaie, Hazara, Bayat, Qezilbash, Brahwi, Pashtun, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik Gojor, Aimaq, Nooristani, Other

Fourth Question: **Province**

3. ○ Badakhshan, Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Bamian, Daikundi, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni Ghor, Helmand, Herat, Jowzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, Konar, Kunduz, Laghman Logar, Maidan Wardak, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nooristan, Paktia, Paktica, Panjshir, Parwan Samangan, Sar-e-Pul, Takhar, Uruzgan, Zabul.

Fifth Question: **Are you against girls going to school?**

- Totally
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Sixth Question: **Are you against university education for girls?**

- Totally
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Seventh Question: **Are there literate women in your family that can read and write?**

- Yes
- No

Eight Question: **Are there girl students in your family who with the fall of the republic an the advent of the Taliban have been barred from school?**

- Yes
- No

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