MS Research

ETHNIC CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN: CHALLENGES FOR TALIBAN (2021-2023)

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بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATE

It is certified that Ms. Paghunda Almas, a student of MS Political Science, Registration No 159/FSS/MSPS/F22 has completed her research work, under my supervision. Her research topic, "**Ethnic Conflict in Afghanistan: Challenges for Taliban (2021-2023)"** is forwarded for onward submission in viva.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis titled **"Ethnic Conflict In Afghanistan: Challenges for Taliban (2021-2023)"** is my work and that data has been collected from authentic sources and according to the rule provided by the International Islamic University Islamabad for the award of MS degree. This work has not been presented for any assessment.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, siblings, and husband, whose constant love, support, and encouragement have been my greatest strength throughout this journey.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADG	Anti-Democratic Government
AAN	Afghanistan Analysts Network
ALIS	Afghan Local Intelligence Service
ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSDF	Afghan National Security and Defense Forces
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOGs	Armed Opposition Groups
APRP	Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
ECA	Election Commission of Afghanistan
ETIM	Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement
G7	Group of Seven
GJG	Global Jihad Group
HA	Haqqani Network
HIA	Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan
HIG	Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin
HPC	High Peace Council
IAN	Intra-Afghan Negotiation
ICG	International Crisis Group
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IEA	Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan
IJG	Islamic Jihad Group
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IRoA	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISISK	Islamic State in Khorasan
ISK	Islamic State of Khorasan
JEM	Jaish-e-Mohammed
LET	Lashkar-e-Taiba

LFA	Liberation Front of Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	Non-Democratic Government
NEC	National Election Commission
NFFA	National Front for Free Afghanistan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIG	Non-Inclusive Government
NRF	National Resistance Front
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PSC	Protected Social Conflict
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
TFT	Turkistan Freedom Tiger
TTA	Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan
TTP	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNO	United Nations Organization
WU	Wolf Unit

ABSTRACT

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society, remained home to diverse ethnic groups since its creation in 1747. Due to ongoing competition for power and glory among these various ethnic groups, it had a long history of racial conflict. However, despite constant opposition from other ethnic groups, Pashtuns remained the dominating force in Afghan society for the majority of the time. The Afghan ethnic circle's breakup has hampered efforts to achieve peace. These multiethnic groupings have more friction among themselves as a result of this, and no strategy has yet been put into place to cater to the needs of any one of them. Power politics and Afghanistan's partition were greatly influenced by ethnic division. The democratic structure constructed over the previous 20 years came tumbling down as a result of the United States' exit. Through a theoretical framework based on Edward Azar's "protracted social conflict theory," this research study seeks to understand the underlying causes of ethnic conflict, its results, and a way out of a similar situation in Afghanistan. It is challenging for the Taliban, who are primarily from the Pashtun ruling class, to maintain peace in the conflict-ridden nation since they face harsh reprisal from other ethnic groups. The treatment of different ethnic groups and the female fraternity of the society will decide the Taliban government's destiny. The observance of fundamental rights principles also constitutes a need for international aid and recognition.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is vital to be familiar with the term ethnic before answering the question, "What does ethnic conflict mean?" The term "ethnic" is derived from the Greek term "ethnos," which means a group of individuals with a shared heritage (Britannica, n.d). The fundamental approach describes ethnicity as a constant trait of people and societies (Harvey, 2000). On the other hand, an instrumentalist view sees ethnicity as a tool people and groups utilize to organize and mobilize populations to achieve more significant objectives. Social constructivism proponents emphasize the communal element of ethnic resemblance and contend that ethnicity can only be understood in the context of relationships (Kantola, 2021).

In the background of Afghanistan, the word "ethnic" means the division of the country's varied population into separate groups based on recognizable cultural, linguistic, religious, or historical traits. There are several racial groups in Afghanistan, including Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks, all of whom have their own distinct cultures and histories. The phrase "ethnic conflict in Afghanistan" refers to the conflicts, hostilities, and tensions that have developed between different ethnic groups. The nation's ethnic dynamics have become more important as a result of the United States leftover and the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, (Rahi, 2015).

The main ethnic group in Afghanistan, the Pashtuns, have fought multiple interethnic conflicts, the most violent of which has been between Pushtun and other tribes like the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. This makes Afghanistan, unlike other nation-states in that it has a diversified ethnic population. The Taliban, who have Pashtun roots, had a history of trying to overthrow the national government, which provoked hostility from non-Pashtun populations. The Taliban, regional warlords, and other embryonic militants operating based on ethnicity are currently engaged in combat for control of Afghanistan following the withdrawal of United States soldiers. Following the United States' withdrawal, there was a political and social vacuum that provided ethnic militants with the opportunity to play their lethal part in bringing the country back. (Afzal, 2022).

Due to the complexity of its wars and the United States' involvement in its state affairs, Afghanistan has drawn much academic attention during the past forty years (Easterly, 2021). Except for the time following the departure, much information about the relationship between the United States and Afghanistan has been thoroughly studied and is available (Khan et al., 2021). There is a lack of knowledge concerning Afghanistan's time after the United States leaves, especially in light of forecasts of ethnic strife brought on by the United States withdrawal and challenges the Taliban regime would face. This research intends to look into the causes of the rising ethnic tensions amongst various ethnic groups and their possible repercussions on the Taliban leadership. To combat the ongoing threat of ethnic strife in the area, it would also organize Taliban peace-building efforts.

1.1   Statement of the Problem

Afghanistan is a multicultural society and home to various ethnic groups. Pushtoon is the majority ethnic group having political domination for centuries which in turn faced resistance from other ethnic groups. After the civil war when the Pashtun Taliban, which grew out of the Pashtun population exterminated the warlords and established the Islamic government the other ethnic groups showed resistance against them. The national resistance front was founded by the non-Pashtun ethnic groups to challenge the Taliban hegemony. After 9/11 they established an inclusive government with the support of the United States having hegemony for two decades. The ethnic conflict in Afghanistan has posed a complex and constant problem for decades to its peace, integration, and development. The conflict is characterized by deep-rooted tension between Pashtun and other ethnic groups including Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara. However, the ethnic conflict constantly created challenges for the Taliban such as security, legitimacy, institutional deformity, governance, dissatisfaction with basic needs, and economic challenges. This study aims to explore the factors responsible for ethnic conflict genesis, the consequences of ethnic conflict, and the way out of ethnic conflict. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Afghanistan through the lens of Edward Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is based on "Ethnic Conflict in Afghanistan: Challenges for Taliban (2021-2023), the researcher exposed the critical significance of this study. Afghanistan is a diverse nation, home to various ethnic groups, and it has experienced long-standing conflict between the Pushtun community and other ethnic groups. This research serves as a guiding light, providing insight into the complex multi-ethnic nature of Afghanistan and tracing the historical roots of ethnic conflict. By identifying the factors that perpetuate these conflicts and addressing the hurdles faced by the Taliban, this study offers a roadmap for the Taliban to foster peace and reconciliation among diverse ethnic communities. This is of paramount importance because it holds the potential to contribute significantly to the stability and nation-building efforts in Afghanistan, impacting not just the region but the global pursuit of peace.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific expected outcomes of the research are:

- To analyze the reasons for ethnic conflict among different ethnic groups.
- To examine the challenges faced by the Taliban government.
- To explore the Taliban reconciliatory approach towards other ethnic groups.

1.4 Research Questions

Some of the fundamental questions that the study will address are:

1. What factors have paved the way for ethnic conflict in Afghanistan?
2. What are the challenges faced by the current Taliban Government?
3. How would the Taliban contain other ethnic groups in peace-building in Afghanistan?

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

The limitation of the research study is that the researcher is not able to base the research study on firsthand knowledge of primary data due to a lack of economic resources to visit the native region and Afghanistan's unreliable security situation.

The ethnic conflict in Afghanistan and the hurdles faced by the Taliban are the study boundaries. The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan opens up multiple varieties of research studies but the researcher will only focus his research dispute study on ethnic conflict and challenges faced by the Taliban regime. To determine ethnic conflict in Afghanistan through available and relevant data caused by the United States' departure and its consequences on the Taliban's performance of governance.

1.6   Research Gap

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic state which is remained home to many ethnic groups for centuries. The researcher concluded that the ongoing ethnic conflict in Afghanistan resulted from the United State withdrawal. The outcome of an extensive review of the larger body of literature that is composed on pre and post-United States departure. Leading researchers and authors keep to focus on the departure of the United States. However, they do not examine its effects on various Afghan competing ethnic groups.

1.7   Literature Review

The literature review for this research proposal has been based on the reading of international organizations' reports, government reports, and official statements of relevant stakeholders, books, research generals, international survey reports, and media reports.

Sopko (2021) examined past two decades of the United State reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. In 2014 the United States Congress established an independent agency namely SIGAR for the comprehensive review of their reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. In August 2021 this agency issued a detailed report with the title "What We Need to Learn: lesson from twenty years of Afghanistan Reconstruction". It raised questions on the ability of the United States government agencies to devise, implement, and evaluate long-term reconstruction strategies without taking into account the proper distribution of responsibilities among agencies. The document criticized the underestimating of time by the United States government, which ultimately resulted from short-term solutions and unrealistic timelines that ignored conditions on the ground and forced reckless compromises in United States programs, creating perverse incentives to spend quickly and focus on short-term, unsustainable goals that could not create the conditions to allow a victorious United State withdrawal (Sopko et al, 2021). This report is a complete document of 140 pages includes all the information of the withdrawal period but hasn't any data on the post-withdrawal consequences of the year

mission. There is no peace of writing available in this report on the surging ethnic conflict leading to power politics in Afghanistan after the United States' departure and sparking impacts for Pakistan as well.

Thomas (2022) Points out, that despite thunderous history, 2021 marks an almost turning point for Afghanistan's Sunni extremist Taliban which previously ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, retook the power. The withdrawal process started by the Trump administration was eventually accomplished by the Biden government in August 2021. The report identified the composition of the Taliban caretaker government occupied by overwhelming homogeneous Pushtun ethnicity. It further discussed the extreme humanitarian and economic crisis as a result of the draught, COVID-19 pandemic, cut off of international development assistance, and United States sanction on the Taliban. Serious concern has been there for the probability of surging Al Qaeda capabilities after the Taliban takeover. The document also raised questions on women's rights conditions especially education, liberty, and freedom of expression. Taliban's act of closing the Ministry of Women Affairs was also criticized which had been part of the former Afghan government (Thomas, 2022). The report though tacitly discusses Al Qaeda which has been considered die heartallay of the Taliban but fails to mention the growing retaliation activities by different ethnic groups against Taliban hegemony which might push this country to another civil war.

Council (2022) has passed a resolution 2626, on 17th of March, 2022 aiming to revamp life standards in Afghanistan. The resolution emphasized the establishment of inclusive representative government where appropriate female participation is necessary. Deep concern has been expressed about the humanitarian crisis which harshly affects human lives in Afghanistan. It also upholds serious concern about the situation of women and girls, and imposition of restrictions on their participation in public life, and the degrading of respect for their rights especially making worse their access to education, economic opportunities, and justice. A further concern has been raised on the security situation in Afghanistan, specifically the situation for civilians including women, children, displaced persons, and humanitarian workers. Moreover, cultivation problems, trade, production, and trafficking of illicit drugs have been made points of concern. The resolution made a point of discussing the most important contemporary issue faced by Afghanistan but it ignored the growing ethnic strife for power power-gaining struggle among different ethnicities in Afghanistan and its impacts on neighboring states.

The CIA and America's secret battle in Afghanistan and Pakistan built America's longest war, with all of its strategic advances and failures, revealing how cooperation between great power USA and its allies works in times of crisis. The book begins with the assassination of Ahmad Shah Masood, the legendary commander of the anti-Taliban northern alliance, two days before 9/11, and

then takes the reader through the complex world of war, diligence battle, political infighting, insurgency, and counter-insurgency operations (Coll, 2018). The tale spans 2001 to 2016, detailing the full timeline of the United States war in Afghanistan as well as America's tense relationship with Pakistan's ISI. The book also covers the ISI's relationship with Islamic terrorists and its role in insurgencies. The author of this book provided a vast source of literature for the coming generation but he is silent about the withdrawal of the United States, the fall of Kabul and the shifting regime from a democratic era to a non-inclusive government and he is also silent about the raising issue of ethnic conflict among various ethnicities after United State departure.

Mir (2021) Specified the Biden government has wrongly estimated the growing threat of the Taliban as well as their return to power. The historic takeover by the Taliban and mortified withdrawal of the United States further boosted their morale and paved the way for Al Qaeda, TTP, and other terrorist outfits to strengthen their existence. The writing identified three of the Biden administration's decisions that have been proved invalid. First, the militancy menace from Afghanistan to the United States was evaluated slightest. Second, the Taliban can be coerced to adhere to their pledge to not lend haven to Jihadis. Third, foresighted threats, in and neighboring Afghanistan can be easily borne by the United States. Biden made all these judgments basis for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan but Alas. The article points out all the Biden Administration judgments were flawed and the Taliban takeover of power further made the situation worse as a surge appeared in militant activities. The author beautifully discussed the misperception that provided the basis for withdrawal but ignored to throw light on consequences that might become a reason to ethnic conflict in the already war-thorn-divided society of Afghanistan.

The researcher provides, how the Afghan Taliban succeeded in winning the sympathy of the Pushtun ethnic group to govern the country. Taliban ousted the Afghan government and provided an alternative governing structure with the claim of better safety for commoners. During wartime, most of the civilians who run away from their homes are either displaced from their communities (Kaltenthaler et al, 2022). Those who remained have to choose between good and worse for local governing. A constant threat to life, uncertainty, and fear created a vacuum for the Taliban to persuade the same ethnic population of other alternative than the incumbent regime. The author of this article says, that the United State withdrawal and the easy debacle of the Ashraf Ghani government changed civilian mentality in favor of the Taliban and hoping for effective and long-run governance from them. The writer identified the Pushtun Affiliation with Taliban but didn't portray the scene of ongoing opposition by non-Pushtun ethnicities against Taliban hegemony.

Watkins described the monthly performance of the Taliban government. On the 15th of August, 2021, insurgents entered the capital and bloodlessly took control of Kabul. The first month of Taliban rule over the country faced severe challenges on several fronts. Due to the Lack of resources, many of the problems get worse in the initials. Taliban have spent most of their first three months in power positioning to appear in control tackling with full force the sort of problems they can resolve (Watkins, 2021). The earlier three months of the Taliban government has also faced the eruption of many ethnic opposition to Taliban hegemony, especially the northern alliance led by former president Amrullah Salah and Ahmad Masood but the writer didn't mention growing ethnic hatred against the Pushtun-dominated ruling of Taliban.

The development of the Islamic State Khorasan (ISK) from 2015-2019 was tracked by the author. The author describes ISK's rebirth and its struggle to expand their militant activities it also identifies the relation of ISK with TTP, Al Qaida, and Taliban from Afghanistan and lastly its impacts on neighboring states. In 2015, the militant organization ISK was founded and led by Abu Bakker al Baghdadi. In August 2021, the Kabul airport suicide bombing which caused death hundreds of lives and numerous injuries is the best evidence of its rebirth after United States departure. The rapid fall of the democratic era in Afghanistan and the isolation of the Taliban from the rest of the world gave ISK a vital chance to deepen its roots and step up its terrorist activities (Jadoon et al, 2021). Additionally, the support of other militant organizations TTP, Lashkar I Jangvi, and the movement of Uzbekistan ISK, enhance ISK's position against the Afghan Taliban. In contrast to other warlords from northern Afghanistan who represent non-Pashtun identities, the article only identified the threat to the Taliban from ISK.

It is remarkable to know about the collapse of ANDSF which took years to build by the United States military. The author described that the Afghan poor leadership as well as the United States responsible for the worse performance of ANDSF and the rapid collapse of ANDSF. The Afghan national security forces were not permitted by the United States to work independently throughout the past two decades and after the fall of the United States, they couldn't handle the situation (Schroden, 2021). The former leadership of Afghanistan belonging to the military and political sphere left the country after the fall of Kabul and left the ANDSF helplessly. However, the author remained silent about any ethnic group or factor that emerged against the Taliban government.

The way of Taliban thinking and outlook of life has been highlighted by the author. After the United States' departure the Taliban took over state control in their own hands. In the historical context the writer also elaborated on the ideology of the Taliban government, their goals and objectives (Jones, 2020). The Taliban's relations with other ethnic groups such as TTP and Al Qaida were also discussed in detail in this article. The author also identified the Taliban organizational structure, military strategy, and tactics. The author further elaborated on the Taliban relations with other states like China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran. A multi aspect of the Taliban government was discussed by the author but he did not predict a single piece of writing about the future of the Taliban and Afghan government. He did not highlight the ongoing ethnic conflict after the takeover of the Taliban and the fall of the Afghan government. The author prescribed almost a decade of battle as well as the departure of soviet from Afghanistan. According to the author's opinion, the fall of the USSR in Afghanistan may have to responsible for the collapse of USSR but the victory against them but it did not bring peace in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the author moves on to talk about the civil war that was fought between war lords notably, Gul Badin Hikmatyar, Burhan Uddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Mehsood and Abdur Rasheed Dostam and so on. The United State decisive defeat at Afghanistan once again repeated the history (khalilzad, 1995). But it is unclear whether the struggle been made against United State and its allies or merely create a new chapter of ethnic war in Afghanistan. However, the author did not discussed the post-civil war after the withdrawal of Russia and did not analyzed the post United State departure consequences and surging ethnic conflict among various ethnic groups.

Malkasian describes in his book the initial comprehensive history of the whole conflict in Afghanistan. The author spent two years in Afghanistan to conduct a thorough understanding of local culture and have a leading command of the conflict. He studied a lot of primary sources documents and learned the native language Pashto. Malkasian in his book elaborated various phases of conflict. The author sketches the image of the 2001 invasion and in 2006, the return of the Taliban, the administration of Obama, and various reset strategies. Additionally, he also analyzed the peace talk process leading to withdrawal and also explained why the war's results were unsatisfactory (Malkasian, 2021). The book accurately covered all phases of conflict but the author fails to address the effect of the United States departure on the Afghan nation and

other neighborhoods in South Asia. The author of this book focuses on a hugely interesting and illuminating piece of writing. The book highly authentically describes the history of the Taliban and the current situation in Afghanistan the book explains the history of twenty years of Afghanistan's civil war. Additionally, the writer of this book describes his experience about visiting of Taliban. Discussed, his stay with them and conducted interviews with the Taliban leadership including former Taliban leaders since 1994 emergence of influence. The author provided primary info about the emerging militant organization of the Taliban and also analyzed the impacts on regional states like Pakistan, Iran Russia, and other central Asian states due to the influence of Taliban forces. According to the author now they are playing the role of key elements in a new great power struggle (Rashid, 2010). He also outlined how Western states, companies, and businessmen are competing with each other for the construction of oil and gas pipelines to market in Western Asia and Central Asia. However, the writer did not highlight the United States' failure in Afghanistan after fighting years of war nor did he discuss the impacts of the United States' failure on native ethnic groups or its impacts on the region.

The author of the book provided a remarkable interpretation of Pak United States ties in the post-9/11 era in light of the war on terror in Afghanistan. This book describes how American foreign and home policy expansion are linked and it also discusses regional geopolitical changes that have occasionally influenced the internal politics of Pakistan. This book also describes good and poor ties between the United States and Pakistan in the framework of their conflicting post-9/11 perspectives and American strategies regarding Afghanistan (Husain, 2021). The book is an outstanding source of knowledge fact-based base answering questions regarding the 9/11 event and, the death of Osama Bin Laden, and also highlighting so many other issues. The book outlines both countries' strategies regarding ups and downs in the light of the Afghanistan war but it does not justify any sign of repercussion of the United States withdrawal and the resulting continuous ethnic hostility.

The author rightly identified the propaganda created by Western media regarding state-building in Afghanistan. He describes the actual purpose of the United States mission which is to destroy the Al Qaida haven in Afghanistan but not about the nation-building development so their policy was abundant due to various issues outlined by this book. The first issue which is described

by the author the Taliban was a homogeneous Islamist faction that had initially emerged during the conflict era against Russia's former USSR in the 1980s. After the departure of the USSR, the Taliban Pashtun dominant ethnic group took over the control of the state. The second dominant issue described in this book was the doubtful position of Pakistan (Ward, 2010). ISI provided significant support to the Afghan Taliban due to Hamid Karzai's strong indication toward India. The third major issue described by the author was the Hamid Karzai corrupt administration. The author justified the false agenda of state-building but did not discuss the outbreak of ethnic conflict against the Taliban after the American departure.

According to the researcher deep analyses of strategic politics, diplomacies of NATO, and the security forces of America in the Afghan war. Initially, he analyzed Afghanistan's domestic environment and its exclusive combat temperament. Secondly, he analyzed the geostrategic impacts of Afghan territory on its economic, political, cultural, and social fabric and finally, he described the counterinsurgency strategy applied by the United States and its coalition allies in Afghanistan. It also provided literature on comparative analyses of the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations and their nation-building strategic approach toward Afghanistan (Gurcan, 2016). However, the writer was unable to provide any detailed course about the future of Afghanistan and he also failed to provide any significant future predictions about the consequences of war composing two decades and its emergence in a multi-ethnic state.

The author describes the inclusive story of the CIA's role in Afghanistan against the USSR from 1979-1989 to the emergence of the Taliban, bin Laden, and ultimately to his death. Ghost war is the authentic inside story of United States involvement in Afghanistan. The author tried to inform the world about the visible and invisible war fought in Afghanistan and its myth about nation building which shows the seed of the 9/11 tragedy (Gall, 2015). It is the detailed documents of the proxy war and its outcome between ISI, CIA, KGB, and other foreign agencies of Afghanistan. The author provided empirical-based literature on the ghost war but did not provide the consequences of visible and invisible war.

The writer describes a myth about the relationship between Al Qaida and the Taliban. Additionally, the book explores the evolution of international Jihadists and Taliban in Afghanistan. The cultural and ideological differences differentiate all the militant groups from each other.

Instead, all of them belong to the same faith Islam (Linschoten et al, 2012). The authors analyzed the mistake committed by the international community for their misconceiving Islam and radical Jihadists. Moreover, the Western political leadership has also been criticized by the author for not understanding the difference between political movements with grievances (Taliban leadership) and those who pose a direct threat to Western society (Linschoten et al, 2012). The author analytically analyzed Taliban and al-Qaida relations. Though An Enemy is a comprehensive book on Taliban and Al-Qaeda but didn't throw light on the ongoing ethnic conflict after the United States withdrawal resulted in ethnic conflict among different ethnic groups.

The author recounts stories of failure and lying about failure, as well as how those stories lead to even worse failure in the next twenty years. This book also offers a thorough account of the Vietnam War's internal story, showing how the long road to defeat was paved with cheery discourse (Whitlock, 2021). Their political and military leadership avoided taking responsibility for their actions and evaded criticism that may have altered the course of the fight or cut it short. Instead, they decide to let the conflict continue to rage while burying their sins. Despite the Taliban's proposal in December 2001 to negotiate to surrender was excluded but their resilience and eventual victory proved their indelible part of Afghanistan. The writer critically evaluates the US role in Afghanistan but fails to provide a critical evaluation of the United States' withdrawal and its impacts on war-thorn countries.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The researcher used Edward Azar's theory (1980) "Protected Social Conflict" to describe the theoretical foundation of the research studies. Through this theory, the researcher will describe research questions as this theory provides a complete lens to understand ethnic conflict, in the case of Afghanistan the ethnic conflict has been spread among various ethnic groups against Taliban hegemony after the fall of Kabul. Afghanistan is a multi-racial state that has a long history of conflicts for power struggles among various ethnic groups.

In the 1980s the best examples of multi-communal societies were Sari Lanka, The Philippines, Iran, Cyprus, Nigeria's or South Africa, Sudan, Israel, and Ethiopia. All of them characterized the protracted and often violent struggle by various ethnic groups for such basic needs as security,

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recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions, and economic participation (Ramsbotham, 2005).

After the fall of the United States Taliban led the state and emerged as a most powerful force throughout the country. Afghan society faced huge ethnic conflict due to the lack of inclusive government. Edward Azar's theory provided a complete nutshell to know about ethnic conflict and its consequences. This theory perfectly covers the overall sphere of research study.

The scholar of the conflict resolution field, Edward E. Azar, identified the conversion of non-conflict situations into conflict one's by providing protected social conflict theory. He explains the factors answerable for genesis, conflict creation, and its outcomes in society (Azar, 1978).

Edward Azar analyzes that the most important of all factors that are responsible for ethnic conflict are societies having a "multi-communal" composition (Starr, H.1999). The first variable identified by Edward Azar is multi-communal. Historical rivalries or former colonial power divide and rule policies formed multi-communal societies which often resulted in dominance of one group over the other groups.

The second variable identified by Edward Azar which also led to the formation of social conflict is the dissatisfaction with basic needs and the lack of minorities' access to the state resources, governmental institutions, and communal existence recognition. On one side a single group enjoys all their basic needs and state resources while on another side, other groups are suffering from dissatisfaction with basic needs. Which ultimately resulted in social conflict.

The third variable identified by Edward Azar is about political power, as one rational group dominates political power and uses state resources to maintain its dominancy over other identical groups. Countries that are within the PSC regularly see the most dominant group trying to stop the minority groups from coming into power using brute strength, torture, kidnapping, slaughter, and resistance to stay in power. According to Edward Azar, such a crisis exacerbates already existing competitive or conflictive situations, diminishes the state's ability to meet basic needs, and leads to further developmental crises.

The fourth variable is not only about state governance which stops minorities' access to basic needs but their external policies also dictated by foreign states. The economic autonomy of the state ended due to the dependency on foreign economic aid caused the failure of both the domestic and economic systems (Azar, 1990).

In a protected social conflict state the given variables are responsible for the activation of communal conflict. Azar also determined three key factors he said collective recognition of individual grievances led to the formation of social conflict, the second factor identified by Azar is the lack of access to security, political inequality, and poverty faced by common citizen. Response by states to communal grievances, particularly those which have weak governance structures is usually one of coercive repression to avoid outward signs of weakness or defeat invites equally militant responses from repressed groups but Cooption could serve to mitigate communal grievances (Azar, 1981).

The process of protracted social conflict deforms and retards the effective operation of political institutions. Azar points us to four possible consequences of PSC, Deterioration of physical security, Institutional Deformity, Psychological Ossification, Increased Dependency & Clancy (Azar et al, 2003).

Edward E. Azar's theory of PSC is relevant to the nature of the questions, developed for the research study. This theory helped in the identification of factors responsible for ethnic conflict. It also provided a lens to analyze the challenges faced by the Taliban government. Moreover, this theory guides the research study to envisage the way out of ongoing conflict among different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

1.9   Research Methodology

The methodology serves as a guide for researchers to ensure that their study is well-designed, effectively executed, and capable of generating meaningful results (Kothari, 2017).In research methodology, the subheadings including, research design, data collection, and data analysis will be used to explore research questions (Nayak, 2021). This research study will provide accurate knowledge about the deep-rooted causes of ethnic conflict which are creating struggle among different groups in Afghanistan.

1.10 Research Design

Research design is defined as "a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collection and analyzing the needed information (Zikmund. W, 1988)." The researcher will use a qualitative descriptive design for the study including both primary and secondary data.

1.11 Data Collection

The researcher will use both primary and secondary sources for data collection and rely on content analysis to address the research questions (Kumar, 2018).In this study, data will be collected from relevant sources such as interviews with renowned people, scholars based in Pakistan, written scholarly articles from famous national and international journals, electronic sources from different government and non-government sites, Internet, newspapers including, pajhwok Afghan news, Afghanistan times, the Kabul times, bakhtar news agency, and books the mention books namely "Nation, ethnicity and the conflict in Afghanistan, the unfinished war in Afghanistan 2001—2014, Afghanistan: a political and cultural history" based on Afghan ethnic conflict will be given more preference for data seeking purpose. In this study, the researcher will focus on the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan and its challenges for the Taliban (2021-2023).

1.12 Data Analysis

Data analyses play an essential role in the research process as it evolves improving and structuring the collected data (Nayak et al, 2021). The researcher has been using the content analysis method for data explanation and interpretation. In the content analysis technique, the main focus is to develop new insights from already existing data (Mayring, 2004). Method of content analysis is a way of making research reproductive and logical conclusions from routine text (or other significant material) to their contexts (Giannantonio, 2010). In this study, we will use the "Protected Social Conflict Theory" to analyze the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan and its challenges for the Taliban. Finally, the conclusion will be drawn and findings will be generated which will help to provide more logical call and fact-based answers to the main research questions.

1.13 Operational Definitions

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the following terms applied in this study are defined as follows:

Ethnic Conflict: Ethnic conflict takes many forms, ranging from peaceful protest and dialogue to riots and street fighting to the use of terror in self-determination struggles, to concerted ethnic cleansing, and massacres.

Ethnological Diversity: A heterogeneous society whereby people live together in a particular geography for a common cause with racial and ethnic differences and a culturally diverse setting.

Taliban: A fundamentalist Muslim movement which in 1996 set up an Islamic state in Afghanistan. The Taliban were overthrown in 2001 by US-led forces and Afghan groups following the terrorist attacks of 11 September. The name comes from Pashto or Dari, from Persian, literally 'students, seekers of knowledge.

Challenges: A statement or an action that shows that somebody refuses to accept something and questions whether it is right, legal, etc.

Security: The activities involved in protecting a country, building, or person against attack, danger, etc.

Humanitarian Crisis: Describing an event or situation that causes or involves a lot of human suffering, especially one that requires aid to be provided to a large number of people.

Ethnic Groups: A community or group of people with distinctive social, cultural, and behavioral characteristics that distinguish them from others in the same or different country or society.

1.14 Organization of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter deals with an introduction, provides a general overview of the main topic of the thesis as well as with special references to the statement of the problem, its objectives, and research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation of the study, research gap, literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, and operational definitions.

Chapter 2: Causes of Ethnic Conflict

This chapter discusses the main causes of ethnic conflict in Afghanistan including the role of colonial power, Multi communal nature of Afghan society, Pashtun dominance over other ethnic groups, Lack of access to political institutions, Centralization of power, non-recognition of communal existences, Coercive repression of ethnic conflict in Afghanistan.

Chapter 3: Challenges to the Taliban Government

This chapter explores challenges such as security, legitimacy, institutional deformity, governance, dissatisfaction with basic needs, and economic challenges faced by the Taliban government.

Chapter 4: Taliban Policies and Ethnic Groups

This chapter analyses Taliban efforts for peacebuilding contains the following subtopics; Intra-Afghan Negotiations, Fulfillment of promises made in Doha agreement, and Women's rights.

Chapter 5: Major Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This chapter Includes; Conclusion remarks, findings, references, and bibliography.

CHAPTER 2

CAUSES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

Afghanistan is located in the center of Asia connecting South Asia, the Middle East, the Subcontinent and South East Asia. It is a junction of religion and civilization which increases its strategic significance. It shared boundaries in the north northeast with China, west with Iran, east with Pakistan, and North with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. It became home to multi-ethnic communities with time due to its advantageous geographical location. The diverse ethnic nature of Afghanistan society sabotages all the peace-building attempts during the last four decades. The multi-ethnicity increased tension among different ethnic groups and yet no policy has been formulated to deal with the demands of any single ethnic minority. The diverse ethnic divisions play an important role in the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan which created hurdles for peace-building efforts (Huwaida, 2018).

Causes of ethnic conflict can be analyzed in the context of Adward Azhar's theory of "Protected Social Conflict". He offered a complete and perfect lens to deal with the ethnic conflict in both developing and developed societies. The researcher analyzed all the predicted elements of ethnic conflict by Adward Azhar which are also present in Afghan society and consequently develop ethnic conflict among various identical groups. In this chapter, the researcher discussed all the factors that are responsible for ethnic conflict in Afghanistan.

2.1 Role of Colonial Powers in Planting the Seed of Ethnic Conflict

Afghanistan is located between Central Asia and South Asia. At the end of the 19th century, Russia and British India captured some territories which gave birth to a great game struggle between two supreme powers (Lange, 2021). In the late 19th century, the Russian influence challenged the British Indian hegemony in Asia which became a serious threat to British Indian hegemony. It increase their influence in Afghanistan and give birth to great game (Hinrichs, 2017). Afghanistan emerged as a buffer state due to the treaty of Ghandamak signed by the Amir Yaqub Khan in 1878 with British India. This treaty provided protected status to Afghanistan till 1919. Until 1919 the treaty provided a protracted position to Afghanistan.

The failure of Amir Shair Ali Khan (1863-1869) resulted in the second Anglo-Afghan war in November 1878th during the struggle of great powers between Russia in the north and British India in the south while struggling to maintain his nation equilibrium (Karnik, 2024). After the outbreak of war, British India captured Kabul and forcefully pushed the former ruler's son to sign the treaty of Ghandamak. The given treaty guaranteed a protracted status to Afghanistan until 1919. Through this treaty, various territories of Afghanistan were bestowed to the British and they obtained the right to make sure her representative station in Afghanistan parliament as well as in other influenced regions of Afghanistan (Aslami, 2023).

In 1880 King Abdurrahman was appointed by British authorities as Amir of Afghanistan. He was a well-wisher of British India and fulfilled their interest while also overcoming the threat of Russia. The British authorities supported the Pashtun ethnic group through King Abdur Rahman to crush the hegemony of another ethnic group. They tried to reduce the threat of another ethnic group to British interest through Pashtunization policies (Iqbal, 2024).

King Abdur Rahman established centralization policies through power which eliminated the other ethnic groups to ensure Pashtun's dominant status in the late 19th century. He migrated thousands of Pashtuns through his Pashtunization policies from south to north to increase the Pashtun population in those areas where another ethnic group had a majority (Shahzad, 2020). He formulated centralized policies and crushed regional autonomy. The strength of provinces was increased from 13 to 28 by King Abdur Rahman. The durned line was demarcated during King Abdur Rehman's regime in 1893 to separate Afghan territory from the current Pakistan province NWFP. King Habibullah Khan was assassinated by his son Amanullah Khan to arrest the throne and the third war was fought by Amanullah Khan against western empirical powers. King Amanullah signed a treaty with Western empirical powers to ensure the liberation of Afghanistan in the early 20th century. The former ruler's centralized policies crushed the political nourishments of other ethnic group which gave birth to several ethnic conflicts. The former ruler's centralized policies are responsible for the current ethnic conflict (Encyclopedias, n.d).

King Abdurrahman treated other ethnicities with unfair means during his regime. Abdur Rahman treated other ethnicities with unfair means during his regime and only supported the Pashtun ethnic group to reduce their hegemony. The Hazara sect was more harshly treated during centralization policies while other ethnic communities also suffered on an extreme level (Kakar, 1979). The Amir Abdur Rahman faced forty uprisings against his regime due to his centralized policies. He planted the seed of ethnic conflict in Afghanistan through his centralization of power.

2.2 Multi-Communal Nature of Afghan Society

Afghanistan is located in the heart of Asia and has a cross road of religion and ancient civilization which increases Afghan strategic location importance. In the west its boundaries link with Iran, in the northeast of Afghanistan links with China, Pakistan is located in the east of Afghanistan while Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are located in its north. With time, it has become home to many ethnic communities due to its strategic location. All the peace building efforts made by various regime destroyed due to its multi ethnic nature. The diverse ethnic nature of Afghan society created tension between these ethnic groups and no single policy has yet been formulated to deal with the fundamental rights of one communal group.

In the division of Afghan society, the ethnic rivalries played a vital role. In Afghan society there are six main ethnic groups Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Aimaq, Turk's man and Pashtun. Pashto and Dari are recognized official languages while more than twenty other languages are speaking (Report, 2021). At the late of twenty century and the early of twenty first century Afghanistan remain under war which make it difficult to formulate uniform policies toward all ethnic communities. Afghanistan is considering a home to dozens of ethnic communities such as Tajik, Uzbek, Pashtun, Hazaras, Aimaq, Nuristani, Arabs, Pamir, Qizilbashs, Baloch, pasha's and Kyrgyz. But there are some major ethnic groups which make of the majority of the country as Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazaras. The given percentage of each ethnic group is highly controversial due to lack of accurate census (Sinno, 2021).

The largest ethnic group in Afghanistan is Pashtun composed of 40-50 % population of the state. Northern and western regions of Afghanistan are composed of the Pashtun population. Both the Dari and Pashtu languages are spoken by them. Since the 18th century, Pashtun remained the

guardian of Afghan territory. Ahmad Shah Abdali laid the foundation of the Durrani Empire with the support of the British. Till today the Pashtun dominance continues on the Afghan territory (lieven, 2023). After the creation of Afghanistan in 1747 the Pashtun ethnic group has been ruled Afghanistan. Now after the withdrawal of the United States still they are a central force in the non-inclusive government of various ethnic communities.

Tajik holds 20 -25 % population of the Afghan population. Northern and eastern region of Afghanistan composed on them. This group spoke the Dari language and they had a Persian background. This group had never become part of the government but after the withdrawal from the USSR new Tajik leaders emerged as powerful leaders such as Ahmad Shah Masood, Amrulah Salih, Shah Masood, Burhanudin Rabani, Abduallah Abduallah, and the emergence of new leaders changed Tajik community status (Qaiser, 2024). Amrulah Salih remained the vice president before the withdrawal of the US which belonged to the Tajik community. He leads the anti-Taliban movement right now and also pursues a war against the Taliban regime.

Uzbek belongs to Turk origin speaks their language and is composed of 8 % population of the state. Uzbek settled down in Afghanistan due to the USSR's aggression on Central Asian states. Before the USSR aggression, they did not have any representation in state affairs till 1979 (Uzbeks in Afghanistan, n.d). But later it creates an opportunity for Uzbek leaders like Abdur Rasheed Dostam to influence state affairs. After the debacle of the USSR Abdur Rasheed Dostam emerged as a powerful warlord and served as a state representative in various posts after the debacle of the Taliban's first administration with the support of the northern alliance. After the US withdrawal he left the country and due to the lack of inclusive government, he still continues the antiTaliban government movement.

Hazaras come from Mongolia origin and occupy 7-8 percent population of Afghanistan. Hazaras are considered the weakest ethnic group in Afghanistan and are composed of both Imami Shia and Ismaili Shia. The Hazra community was considered legal slaves to other ethnic communities till 1919 in the past. The Hazara community was deprived of their fundamental rights (Hazaras in Afghanistan, n.d). During Amir Abdur Rahman's regime, they were treated very harshly. King Abdur Rehman known as the iron man imposed anti-Shia policies for the first time

to subjugate them. King Abdur Rehman issued through his ulema council a fatwah in 1892 and declared them non-Muslim and implemented hanfi jurisprudence on the Shia ethnicity. King Abdur Rehman anti-Hazra policies increased the ratio of massacres on a large scale and deprived them of their fundamental rights.

After the takeover of the Taliban in the 1990s, in the holy month of Muharram, they banned all religious activities and jaluse of the Hazara community. They were only permitted to perform religious activities in Shia mosques while in public places they were not allowed. Hundreds of Shia civilians were massacred by the Taliban when they showed resistance against the first regime of the Taliban. In 1998 the Governor of the Taliban mullah Niazi at Balkh criticized the sect and offered them either to convert to Sunni Islam or flee the country (Olomi, 2021).

After the fall of the Taliban's first regime, Hazara community not only got legal rights but also assumed state offices as well as important positions in state affairs. During inclusive government the participation of Shia in state affairs makes their ways toward the parliament of Afghanistan and other state important institutions. The Hazara ethnicities were granted fundamental rights such as the Shia community will be dealt according to their own "Jafari Fiqh" and their law was becoming part of Afghanistan's legal system. The inclusive government of Afghanistan worked for the Shia Suni parity but now such parity is at risk due to the rising of ethnic differences among various groups and Taliban (Desautels-Stein, 2005).

In Afghanistan, the ethnic and religious minorities have faced deprivation of necessities by the Taliban and severe repression by terrorist groups after the withdrawal of the United States. After the takeover of the Taliban the Shia community was targeted by ISIS and the Taliban had nearly thirteen attacks carried out against the Shiite community. The majority of the Hazara community was targeted in the different parts of the country. Due to those attacks nearly 700 people were either killed or injured. The other religious community of Sikhs and Hindus has also faced militant attacks. Through these attacks, the religious and ethnic minorities were compelled to leave the Afghanistan. The Hazara community twenty years development and transformation from discrimination to progress have been reversed. The Taliban take over have been significantly affected the Hazara community twenty years transformation and move from discrimination and

marginalization to development has been reversed (Ibrahim, 2023).The peace and prosperity could only be ensured through inclusive government in Afghan multi communal society. But yet Taliban are not agreed for inclusive government which may lead Afghan society into a new civil war.

2.3 The Dominant Status of Pashtun Ethnic Group

After the formation of Afghanistan Pashtun not only a majority ethnic group but also leads the country ruling authority. Pashtun rulers always tried to promote and support their own community through various means (Borthakur, 2021). The foundation of Afghanistan was led by Ahmad Shah Abdali as an independent state then later Durrani was known as a countryman and Ahmad Shah Baba was the father of Afghanistan. In 1747 after Nadir Shah's Assassination his army general, the council of elders nominated Ahmad Shah Abdali as a chief. He introduced a confederation of all tribes instead of a centralized monarchy. Afghanistan remains home to multiple ethnicities for more than two centuries. The foundation of Afghanistan was laid by the Pashtun ethnic group in 1747 and their hegemony remained until 1992.

The mobilization period of Afghanistan of more than two centuries can be categorized into four parts (Lieven, 2021). The 1st period was composed of the Durrani empire's rise and fall 1747-1818, the 2nd period was composed of the decentralization of Afghanistan 1818-1880, the 3rd period was composed of the consolidation of the modern state 1880-1950 while the 4th period was composed on the appearance of nation-state 1963-1992. The Pashtun rule was for the first time established by the Durani Empire in Afghanistan.

The Durani Empire army was completely based on the Pashtun ethnic group which bestowed basic roots to Ahmad Shah Abdali's ruling authority (Shahrani, 2020). Therefore, the Pashtun ethnicity enjoyed more privileges, especially in terms of taxation relief that had been giving to Pashtun from the very beginning as compared to other ethnic group. The greatest land holder in Afghanistan was Durrani Pashtun. They also enjoy their dominant status regarding security and economic affairs. In Durani Empire Pashtun was consider the sole elements of all state related affairs and their power and status were unchallengeable by the other ethnicities.

The Amir Abdur Rahman also known as the Iron Man of Afghanistan introduced the pashtunization policies in Afghanistan with the support of British India. His Pashtunization policies caused two results the first one was the durned-line treaty in 1893 which deprived the Afghan territory of a large number of Pashtun residents while the second one as he tried to resettle Pashtun in the north of Afghanistan. Initially Habibullah the Tajik leader challenged the Pashtun hegemony in 1929 but soon the Pashtun position was reestablished by Hashin Khan (Bleuer, 2012). But later the Pashtun leaders such as the Prime Minister Shah Mahmood and Muhammad Daud in 1946 ensured greater equality and tried to modernize the Afghan society.

To establish a nation state-based equality struggle was started from the mid of twenty century which give birth to 1964 and 1973 constitution. The 1964 constitution was fully based on parity bases and no special status was given to any single ethnic group. The national equality was promoted and the continued discrimination from centuries was totally discouraged. The promotion of national equality after a decade struggle changes the nature of politics throughout the state and give opportunity to other communities to participate in country affairs (Pasarlay, 2023).

The communist "people's democratic party of Afghanistan" was established in 1978 by a non-Pashtun ethnic group which provided primary attention to the non-Pashtun ethnic group (Mahapatra, n.d). The PDPA recognized various ethnic group languages as party official languages such as Uzbeki, Turkmani, Balochi, and Nuristani, also including Pashto and Dari. Although to degrade the status of Pashto and Dari the international attempt had been made by the communist faction.

The PDPA under the Babrik Kamal era in 1980-86 tried to stabilize his position (Jafri, n.d). On one side the minority languages were given official status while on the other side, they were also been given recruitment rights in state bureaucracy. To counter the Pashtun ethnicities' status in national politics Kamal adopted a policy to establish good relations with other ethnic minorities. His policies challenge the Pashtun dominant role in state policies furthermore also create hurdles for them in state departments.

The departure of Soviet Union from Afghanistan give birth to various Islamic fundamentalist groups. Including Jamaat e Islami led by Rabani, Ittihad e Islami regulated by Abdul Rasool Sayif, Hezb e Islami headed by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Younis Khalil group and Taliban the main Pashtun dominant fundamentalist group all of them conducted war against the Soviet Union before USSR departure from Afghanistan. The exit of Soviet Union pushed the country into civil war and all the war lords was busy in power struggle with each other for the glory of power. In pre soviet era all these Islamic fundamentalists were been supported by the internationally funding community but in the post-soviet invasion they were leave in their own resulted civil war in Afghanistan for the glory of powers. These war lords started ruling in those areas where they have gain strong support of their natives. While in 1994 the Pashtun dominant group emerged established their own ruling authority and defeated all these war lords (Bloch, 2021).When Taliban established their government in 1994 at that time Afghanistan was on the verge of disintegration. There was a perpetual war among different war lords, groups, disloyalty and violence was a routine practice. At the beginning of civil conflict Herat and western was under the control of Ismael whereas north eastern and Kabul was under the control of Burhan din Rabani.

In the eastern region, three provinces were under the control of mujahedeen in Jalalabad-based shura. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar influence the eastern and southern areas to the Kabul. Three provinces had influence by Uzbek war lord Rashid Dostam in northern regions. Bamiyan province had control by Hazaras ethnicity in the center of Afghanistan (Newell, 1989). At post-soviet era the Afghanistan was faced perpetual uncertainty, war, lack of law and order, fear of life and property and lack of insecurity. The war lords destroyed the natural resources for gaining their own interest.

Afghanistan was under the civil war at that period the students of Madaris initiated movements to enforce sharia laws and restoration of Islamic norms and values in Afghanistan (Shahab, 2021). Initially Taliban kept away their activities from party politics as they aimed not to serve the struggle for the glory of power but to protect their motherland from the evil practices of others. The founding father of the Taliban movement Mula Omer belongs to the Pashtun ethnic group having links with the ghilzay branch of Pashtun, he was born in Kandahar Afghanistan, Node Village, and the Hutak tribe. He opened a madrasa in the Maiwand district of Kandahar. He

follows the Hezbi e Islami fundamentalist group and in 1989-92 fought against Dr. Najibullah's regime. The founder of the Taliban Mula Omer established Pashtun Taliban hegemony until the establishment of the inclusive government in 2001.

In 1996 the establishment of the Taliban's first regime caused the Northern Alliance led by President Burhan din Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Masood, Abdul Rashid Dustam, and Younis Khalili to establish an inclusive government (Magnus, 1996). After the fall of Mizar Shareef by the Taliban, Abdul Rashid Dustam flew to Turkey while Younis Khalili was imprisoned by the Taliban.

The Taliban Pashtun-dominated ethnicity, formed their rule after a two-decades-long struggle against NATO forces, in 2001 ousted the Taliban's first regime with the support of northern alliances. The 2nd regime of the Taliban dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group created uncertainty among other ethnic groups. Ethnic minorities condemn the Taliban's non-inclusive government. The Taliban's current regime is based on anti-democratic features where the Pashtun ethnic group has a dominant role while other ethnic groups have been banned from taking part in state affairs (Zaland, 2023). The 33-member cabinet of the Taliban is not the choice of the people of Afghanistan but is composed of the spiritual leaders of the Taliban. After the fall of the United States, they occupied the state affairs through force and aggression.

The aggressive policies of the Taliban compel the former democratic leaders due to severe threats to their lives to flee their homeland. On one side Taliban do not agree with the formation of inclusive government and on another side, they are also failed to provide the future outlines regarding state representative government. The caretaker government of the Taliban is a total reflection of a totalitarian regime because the current Taliban government lacks democratic norms and values.

Till today after three years of the Taliban caretaker government came into power are failed to make the constitution for the state. They run the state through so-called Islamic laws. It has been very hard for the young generation turned out under the Western culture during the last two decades to follow the Taliban's harsh rules and regulations. The Taliban is leading the state without the basic

law of the state. Instead, the multi-ethnic nature of Afghanistan Taliban is still not agreed for the formation of inclusive government. The other ethnic minorities challenge the Taliban hegemony in state affairs which may compel Afghanistan into another civil war. In Tajikistan 40 warlords make alliances to fight against Taliban hegemony (Durrani, 2024).

Interview 1: Dr. Adeel Rao, Assistant professor at the University of Sargodha in the Political Science department, Expert on Pashtun Dynamics and Ethnic Conflict

Interviewer: Dr. Adeel, could you provide an overview of how the Taliban, predominantly composed of Pashtuns, have managed their relations with other ethnic groups in Afghanistan?

Dr. Adeel: Taliban are predominantly Pushtoon and have the upper hand in the ruling of the country. The contemporary government of the Taliban is not inclusive and only two members are taken from other ethnic groups. Since the inception of Afghanistan, Pushtoon remained the ruling class while the minorities remained the suppressed class. There is massive evidence against the Pushtoon ruling class of making other ethnic groups the marginalized classes of society. Amir Abdur Rahman is known as the Iron Man of Afghanistan history as he faced the 49 uprisings from minority groups. This signifies the reality of suppressing minorities by the ruling class. After the debacle of Kabul in 2021 into the hands of the Taliban resulted in opposition from other groups. Recently, Ahmad Masood formulated a new alliance of thirty different warlords against the Taliban rule. Taliban are not the representative of the whole Afghan nation but they occupy the country by force and aggression. Fifty-seven political parties were banned and the Taliban dissolved the parliament and election commission.

Interviewer: How has the Taliban's rule impacted the ethnic dynamics in Afghanistan?

Dr. Adeel: The resurgence of the Taliban into power exacerbated ethnic division in the country. Taliban reneged on the promises made in the Doha agreement about inclusive government and ensuring fundamental rights in the country, especially women's rights. Their governance style has led to underrepresenting non-Pashtuns in key administrative and military positions. This exclusion has fueled resentment and resistance among other ethnic groups, contributing to ongoing conflicts

and instability. Furthermore, the Taliban's focus on Pashtun-centric policies has often neglected the needs and concerns of non-Pashtun communities, perpetuating a cycle of ethnic discord.

Interviewer: Can you discuss the role of the US in the Taliban and its impact on ethnic conflict in Afghanistan?

Dr. Adeel: The United State involvement in Afghanistan has a massive repercussion on the integration of Afghan ethnic groups. The previous Constitution of 2004 recognized 14 ethnic groups in the country but the most dominant groups are Pushtun, Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazars. After the debacle of the USSR in 1989 Afghanistan yielded to civil war and various warlords started controlling concerned regions of the country following the resurgence of the Taliban while establishing the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan. The US allied with the Northern Alliance headed by Ahmad Shah Masood. After 9/11 Northern Alliance was composed of minorities' leadership supported by United States-led forces and defeated Taliban in Afghanistan. For the last twenty years United States supported an inclusive government having representatives from all ethnic groups even Pushtun leadership. The government of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani was composed of an inclusive pattern that paved the way for minorities' leadership nourishment on the national level. So I would say, the United States had a greater role in shaping of inclusive society while promoting vulnerable minorities in national politics which is a kind of impediment to the Taliban's smooth ruling in the country.

2.4   Lack of Access to Political Institutions

After three years of the Taliban's takeover of Kabul still, the other ethnic groups are not able to get access to state institutions. The researcher observed the continued institutional deformity. The people of Afghanistan are deprived of their fundamental rights which compels various ethnicities against the Taliban anti-democratic government (Ahmad, 2021).

Taliban government policies based on unjust practices not only deprived other ethnic groups but also deprived female of their basic needs and rights. The gender-based discrimination also created challenges for the Taliban government (Report, 2023).

In August 2021 after the fall of the US, the Taliban took over Kabul and not only dissolved the inclusive government but also the democratic constitution. They installed a cabinet composed of their spiritual leaders and also exchanged the official name of the state from the democratic republic of Afghanistan to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Only a Pashtun dominant group of Taliban are allowed to participate in state affairs all other ethnic groups are banned from getting access to state institutions. Habibullah Akhundzada was appointed as the supreme leader of Afghanistan while Muhammad Hassan Akhund was appointed as PM of Afghanistan. Taliban are leading the state affairs with full hegemony.

The previous government of Ashraf Ghani was democratic in nature his cabinet was also approved by the parliament. According to the election commission of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani was declared as democratic president of the state with 50.6% of votes. During Ashraf Ghani's era, the state was run through an elected parliament but now there is no elected institution prime minister, or president in the state. After the takeover of the Taliban, they dissolved the democratic government and introduced their anti-democratic government (Partaw, 2022). During the last two decades, the state was run with the republic constitution. The previous constitution was introduced by the parliament with the approval of both houses as well as all the constitutionally recognized 14th ethnic groups. This constitution defines the structure and nature of state institutions (Rahimi, 2021). The 2004 constitution was flexible in nature to make changes with flexibility according to given circumstances, desires, and needs of the nation.

But now the current regime of the Taliban is the opposite reflection of democratic government. They failed to formulate a constitution for the state. There are no proper rules and regulations for the distribution of powers among various state institutions. Nobody knows about that under which law they lead the state affairs and institutions (Hazim, 2022). The constitution is a body of rules and regulations that define the nature of powers and how government can be run but the current Taliban government failed to provide such kind of documents which led to the state machinery.

The 2004 legal documents of the People's Republic of Afghanistan provided a bicameral legislature. The 249 members of the lower house were directly elected by the citizens of Afghanistan through the general electoral process while the upper house had 102 members whose $2/3^{rd}$ members were indirectly elected by provincial assemblies while the remaining members were appointed by the head of the state. Each ethnic group was allowed to participate in general elections (Sethi, 2021).

However, the current government is not based on democratic norms and values. Ethnic minorities are not allowed to participate in state governing activities. They imposed restrictions on all anti-Taliban movements. In the previous democratic republic, people had enjoyed their basic rights including the right to speech, the right to criticize state policies, right to remove the specific ministers of the cabinet through parliament, public opinion, and pressure groups but now they have been deprived of such rights (Partaw, 2023). They have no right to say in state affairs. No cabinet member can be changed by the people nor opposed by the common citizens. The prime minister of the Taliban's current government and various other ministers have been declared by the United Nations Security Council as global terrorists.

During the democratic era in Afghanistan, the general elections were conducted under the supervision of the Autonomous Election Commission (Larson, 2021). The candidate's reservation issues were addressed by the electoral commission. After the takeover of the Taliban, they abolished these democratic institutions and have not introduced any other institution to make the Shure electoral process throughout the state. Due absence of democratic institutions Taliban government would not be able to gain public support. Political associations are considered the core elements of democracy but after the departure of the United States, the non-inclusive government of the Taliban prohibited all political parties, groups, and organizations just wanted to deprive the Afghan nation of their freedom of choice (Gul, 2023).

In 2016, the 57 political parties were recognized by the Afghan Election Commission. These political organizations represented a cluster of multi-ethnicities however the Taliban Government restricts all the electoral activities. The interim government of the Taliban appointed only Pashtun loyalist in their cabinet and no one was included from the previous democratic regime. According

to analysts, if the Taliban want to avoid the conflict situation then the establishment of an inclusive government is the ultimate solution for them (Taye, 2021). Right now the Taliban government is not recognized by the global community due to the deprivation of other ethnicities from their basic rights, female fraternity, and lack of inclusive government (Bateman et al, 2021).

Interview 3: Dr. Omar Khalid, Specialist in US-Taliban Relations and Afghan Politics at UOP.
Interviewer: Dr. Khalid, how would you describe the evolution of US-Taliban relations over the past two decades?

Dr. Khalid: Relations between the US and the Taliban have changed from open animosity to difficult talks. The Taliban were once seen by the United States as a significant threat to Afghanistan's peace and stability. The military's pursuit of them was the main focus. However as the war carried on, the US realized that a political settlement was required. This change sparked talks that resulted in the 2020 Doha Agreement, which sought to facilitate the removal of US forces and start a political settlement.

Interviewer: What were the major challenges faced during the US withdrawal from Afghanistan?
Dr. Khalid: The US retreat encountered numerous important obstacles. The Taliban swiftly filled the power vacuum left by the swift withdrawal, which caused the Afghan government to fall. There were many people afraid that there would be a humanitarian disaster during this chaotic and unstable transition. The pullout also made the shortcomings of the Afghan security forces and the absence of a well-thought-out plan for preserving stability after the withdrawal clear.

Interviewer: How has the United States withdrawal impacted the Taliban's ability to govern and the broader ethnic dynamics in Afghanistan?

Dr. Khalid: The Taliban have been able to regain control over all of Afghanistan as a result of the United States withdrawal, which has greatly strengthened their position. However, the ethnic landscape's fragmentation has made it harder for them to rule successfully. Ethnic tensions have become more intense since the Taliban returned, and minority groups are opposing their control. Achieving long-term peace has been made more difficult by the Taliban's historical reputation for marginalizing non-Pashtun people and the absence of an inclusive administration.

2.5 Centralization of Power

Ahmad Shah Abdali the founder of Afghanistan introduced confederation in the country where all the tribal heads had enjoyed autonomous status but King Abdur Rahman planted the seed of centralization. Due to this, He was awarded the title "Iron Man of Afghanistan". He had crushed nearly forty uprisings against his centralization campaign. King Abdur Rahman colonized the Pashtun ethnic group in the north and west of Afghanistan to reduce the influence of other ethnicities that opposed his centralization campaign (Jagjeet, 2019). Through his centralization policies, he marginalized another ethnic group. During Abdur Rahman's regime specifically sabotaged the Hazara community as well as other ethnic minorities.

General Dawood abducted King Zahir Shah which brought the end of constitutional monarchy (Sadiq, 2020). In 1977 he introduced a constitution in which all powers lie in his hands. During King Zahir Shah's Regime, people experienced democratic norms and values. In the history of Afghanistan, his 1964 constitution was the only constitution in which people observed a democratic structure. People had enjoyed their fundamental rights for more than a decade in King Zahir Shah's Regime under the state basic law. He develops his constitution in the light of the Bill of Rights as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

But now the people of Afghanistan are not agreeing to accept a similar anti-democratic regime like King Dawood. King Dawood was coming into power due to the support of PDPA but the centralization policies by King Dawood not only disappointed the party but also the people of Afghanistan (Iqbal, 2023). The variety of various ethnic groups opposed his centralized policies which gave birth to an uprising against him and caused his murder in the presidential palace. Similarly, the tarakye government also adopted King Dawood's centralized approach which also raised an uprising against his regime and made the way for the intervention of Russia.

After the collapse of the USSR and their withdrawal from Afghanistan Taliban emerged as a rising power. In 1994 they took over on Afghanistan. They implemented a non-inclusive government. In response, non-Pashtun ethnic groups established a national resistance front NRF against the Taliban government which is composed of Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara and also includes

some Pashtun leaders (Borthakur A. K., 2021). In 2001 NRF with the support of the United States removed the Taliban government and established an inclusive government for two decades.

In 2001, after the debacle of the Taliban 1st regime, the help of the United States national resistance front installed an inclusive government. Because they considered that regional autonomy may cause a collapse of the country (Larsson, 2021). Humid Karzai ruled with centralized authority from 2001- 2016. The general elections of 2004 and 2009 were also conducted on a non-party basis. In 2001 after the takeover of an inclusive government in Afghanistan various ethnic groups united to make part of a centralized government in the state but later on, they realized that state sovereignty could only be ensured if the United States and NATO forces withdrew from the state. Therefore, different ethnic communities allied against the United States and NATO forces to compel them to depart from Afghanistan. In August 2021 Taliban took over Kabul after the fall of the United States.

After the debacle of the United States and NATO Taliban emerged as a more powerful force in Afghanistan and established their non-inclusive government. Now they run the state with centralized ruling authority without regional autonomy. They also took control of all those provinces where other ethnic groups were in the majority. When the Taliban came into power, they changed the adumbrative structure of the state. They abolished the previous inclusive government and implemented a non-democratic government (Irfan et al, 2023). Their cabinet is composed of religious clergy and mullahs out of 33 cabinet members 17 cabinet ministers also including their prime minister are declared global terrorists by the Security Council of the United Nations organization.

In the current regime of the Taliban, parliament has no role in Afghanistan's administrative structure. They also abolished the provincial assemblies and led the country under a central authority. The Taliban government not only destroyed the local government structure but also wiped out the roots of democracy. The election commission has no role in the current regime of the Taliban (Durrani, 2024). The Taliban government replaced the judges of the Supreme Court and High Court with religious clergy. They run the state under the Islamic code of conduct and

interpretation. Due lack of political stability, economic stability, absence of inclusive government, lack of constitution as well and decentralization make the contemporary situation worse.

Taliban belong to the Pashtun dominant ethnic group therefore they only allowed to Pashtun majority ethnic group to participate in state affairs instead of other ethnic minorities. They ignore the multi-ethnic society of the country which is increasing ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan. They lead the whole country with centralized authority. They did not allow the common people to take part in state affairs (Sahill P. H., 2023). They banned all political parties, and electoral processes, and abrogated the democratic constitution of the country after the fall of the United States.

Taliban forcefully established their government without taking their nation as well as the world community in confidence. The people of Afghanistan have no mandate in the Taliban government nor they are elected representatives of the people but they forcefully came into power after the withdrawal of the United States and are running the country with ruthless authority (D'Souza, 2024). The former constitution was abrogated by the Taliban government and no one knows about that under which law they are running the country. After three years of their ruling, they failed to provide a constitution to the country and the Afghan nation. They appointed all cabinet ministers based on patronage rather than merit basis.

Due to the lack of processualism and competent people in their cabinet now they are suffering from various hurdles such as humanitarian crisis, economic crisis, human rights violations, and so many other challenges. The Taliban government is facing a failure to formulate effective policies for the country (Iqbal S, 2023). They shifted their attention toward imposing restrictions on female rights or keeping away other ethnicities from state affairs rather than focusing on good governing policies.

After the leftover of the United States, the situation in Afghanistan became worse. Due to the lack of inclusive government other ethnic groups affair against the Taliban government which destroyed the peace and security situation in Afghanistan. Their government is dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group which represents 40-50 percent population of Afghanistan but till today they

are not recognized by the other ethnic minorities (Lilja J. F, 2024). Taliban not only faced failure to get recognition on a state level but also failed to get recognition on a global level.

The Taliban government is facing failure because they did not fulfill their promises made during the Doha Agreement behind world leadership. They are facing a failure to ensure democratic norms and values. They also failed to establish an inclusive government in the country because they never wanted to give participation rights in state affairs to other ethnic communities. Out of 33 members cabinet they are taken two ministers from non-Pashtun ethnic groups. They don't have to formulate any plan or future strategy for future governmental policies (Doucet, 2021).

The Taliban's harsh policies toward other ethnic groups may repeat the period of civil war because they will not keep suppressing other ethnicities for a long time from their basic rights. They are still facing failure to formulate a constitution for the country after three years of their ruling. Nobody is clear about that under which law the Taliban are running the state administration. The constitution is a body of rules and regulations that provide complete guidelines line how to run the state administration (Chamas, 2023). But there is no prescribed constitution in the case of Afghanistan.

17 out of 33 cabinet members including the Taliban prime minister and other spiritual leaders globally declared terrorists by the United Nations Security Council. Global sanctions on them are creating hurdles regarding fiscal aid and support from the world community to meet the national economic crisis. After the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban sanctions were been implemented in Afghanistan due to the violation of fundamental rights and violence which badly affected the banking system as well as the national economy (Thomas, 2021). Although later United States and Britten restored Afghan reserves still, they are facing severe economic crises.

The Afghan government is not in a position to pay salaries to their employees and after the takeover of taliban, the state reached the verge of destruction. Due to the economic crisis, thousands of Afghan people have terminated their businesses and are facing a severe fiscal disaster. In the

country, 95% population is living under worse economic poverty. The finance ministry is facing failure regarding a clear vision of the upcoming future (Byrd, 2023).

After establishing a non-inclusive government by the Taliban dozens of militants, former warlords and ethnic groups emerged against the Taliban rule. These emerging groups claimed militant activities against the Taliban's current regime. The national resistance front led by Ahmad Shah Masood made alliances with the most influential various warlords against a Taliban government (Mehran et al, 2023). The former politicians and forty different warlords made alliances against the Taliban and are making a surge against a Taliban government from Uzbekistan.

Ahmad Shah Masood claimed that they conducted various terrorist attacks in more than twelve provinces against Taliban rule. He is following his father's objectives, installing a new resistance movement against the Taliban government, and calling for an independent and democratic Afghanistan all other ethnic minorities are free to participate in this movement (Puts, 2021). The former armed forces, establishment, and former politicians either make their militant groups or join alliances with other militant groups to challenge the non-inclusive government of Taliban hegemony. Taliban are facing failure to protect minorities from ISK terrorist group insurgency.

Instead, after three years of Taliban ruling authority, however, they are still facing failure to gain the confidence of the subjects. Due to a lack of future vision, the situation of uncertainty and instability is increasing with each passing day. The Taliban government has been unable to maintain and balance economic stability. They prohibited the basic rights of women such as the right to education, the right to a job, etc. (Sakhi, 2021). Taliban government also failed to provide security to other ethnic minorities especially to protect the Hazara community from ISK. Due to these worse circumstances, the global community does not agree to recognize them.

The constitution provides a basic guideline under which the state machinery is running but in the case of Afghanistan Taliban ruling authority is not able to provide such documents under which form of government they are leading the country (Geeta, 2024). Their relations with the world community are also not stable due to their hard approach to various state policies. A large number of populations in Afghanistan have been internally displaced due to severe humanitarian crises and insecurity of life and property. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society where dissatisfaction with various ethnic communities' basic rights compels them to oppose the Taliban ruling authority which also increases uncertainty throughout the country (Report, 2024).

After the withdrawal of the United States Taliban came into power through force which activated opposing forces against the Taliban government. After gaining power by the Taliban dozens of militant groups emerged against Taliban ruling. Yassin Zia the former Chief of General Staff and defense minister who lead the Afghan freedom front emerge as the most important opposing group against Taliban rule. After the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban some important attack responsibilities have been claimed by AFF (Safi A. A, 2023).

Abdul Mateen Sulaiman Khail the former commander of the Afghan Army special force is leading the Afghanistan Islamic national and liberation movement it's the only Pashtun opposing group against the Taliban government. This group is coming into being in response to the alleged killing of armed forces by the Taliban. According to a BBC report, this is a single Pashtun ethnic group that is opposing the Pashtun hegemony in Afghanistan (Mills, 2022). Some other more prominent groups that are activated against Taliban hegemony include Freedom Corps and Liberation of Afghanistan, Freedom and Democracy Front, and Soldiers of Waziristan.

2.6   Coercive Repression

After the fall of Kabul right now Afghan nation has been deprived of its basic rights such as the violation of ethnic and religious minorities, prohibited peaceful protest, violation of women's rights, and using extrajudicial execution and disappearance of common citizens creating uncertainty and fear among the nation. The Taliban prohibited other ethnic minorities from peaceful protests. Afterward, the Taliban took power, and unarmed Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara demonstrators have often been beaten and shot during peaceful demonstrations. According to International quoted a person as

stating that he observed numerous people slain by the Taliban army, lying in a bath of blood on a highway in Herat province during a protest and that he delayed going to the medical complex to treat his injured arm for fear of being arrested for denouncing Taliban violence. The Taliban has deprived social activists by afraid them, through imprisonment, and even killing them for advocating for fundamental rights protection following the United States exit from Afghanistan. On September 19, 2021, the government's media and information center issued an edict restricting criticism of Taliban rule and the publication of literature that criticizes Islam and its teachings.

Last year, almost 80 journalists were jailed and tortured for reporting on the Taliban's crackdown on nonviolent protestors and violating the country's 2004 constitution. The Taliban beat journalists and forced them to sign a document vowing not to reveal what occurred to them during their imprisonment. If they did, the Taliban could arrest their entire family. Since August 2021, Taliban fighters have brutally beaten and tortured former Afghan government employees who refuse to work for them. Thousands of civilians have been arrested and arbitrarily detained for no cause. Afghanistan's legal system is unpredictable due to the absence of a fixed constitution, criminal legislation, and court proceedings. There is no court system in place under the current Taliban rule. The Taliban enforced a "might is right" mentality, imprisoning innocent individuals without access to legal counsel or family members. Hundreds of innocent females have not returned home since being arrested by Taliban forces, and their whereabouts are unknown.

The ratio of crime increased after the takeover of the Taliban however some other people belonging to non-Pashtun ethnicities conducted revenge killings as well as alleged resistance regularly. The extra-judicial killing also increased while in some cases the body is bumped with signs of torture. According to a report, a large number of common citizens have been either kidnapped or disappeared by Taliban forces because they are involved in an uprising against the Taliban (Tawakkoli, 2024). The disappearance of some people is still a mystery. Hundreds of people disappear despite receiving pardon letters especially including people who worked for the former Afghan national security forces are more prominent in this regard. They deal people with brutal rules and regulations the stories of innocent people are very commonly blindfolded tiding

their hands behind and torturing them in front of other family members including parents, siblings, and children.

Following the Taliban's conquest of Kabul, other ethnic groups, like as Hazaras, Turkmen, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, were forcibly evacuated from their homes and fields. This was done to reward the Pashtun ethnicity with land stolen from other groups. Evictions were recorded around the country, particularly in Balkh, Helmand, Daikundi, Kandahar, and Uruzgan provinces, adding to the already massive number of internally displaced persons (Kotokey A. B., 2020). The United Nations predicted that by June 2022, the number of internally displaced Afghans had risen to more than 820,000. According to international amnesty, the Taliban have unjustly killed 700 ethnic Hazaras, including young girls, as well as nine members of the Afghan National Defense Security Force, despite surrendering and getting a pardon letter.

In the new pattern of rule in the country, the Taliban has subjected the majority of women, especially young girls, to growing brutality as a means of punishing their family members. Hundreds of women have been murdered and persecuted by the Taliban because their family members worked for the old government. Lida, a 22-year-old lady who was eight months pregnant, was shot dead with her two children, ages two and four. Hundreds of women have been arrested, tormented, and tortured for peacefully protesting their rights and demanding liberation from the Taliban rule (Oluwashakin, 2022). The Taliban forbade education for females above the sixth grade, damaging millions of women's futures.

CHAPTER 3

CHALLENGES TO THE TALIBAN GOVERNMENT

Like the post-Soviet era, Afghanistan is once again clouded by the shadow of uncertainty and the possibility of yielding to failure after the United States' withdrawal. United Nations Security Council passed a resolution 2069 on 9th October 2012 pinpointing the importance of the Lisbon agreement signed in 2010 between Afghanistan and the states that contributed to the international security assistance force for the transference of Nationwide security responsibility to the government of Afghanistan by the end of 2014(Bijlert, 2021). The withdrawal of troops was started by the Obama administration and completed by President Biden's government in August 2021.

The rampant security concern increased with the withdrawal of the United States forces from Afghanistan in August 2021. Most people envisaged the independence of different provinces soon but the fall of the Ashraf Gani government resulted astonishing takeover by the Taliban (Mackinnon, 2021). President Ashraf Ghani fleeing to foreign and Taliban gaining rapid control over Kabul amazed the world at large including Afghans, US government, neighboring countries, NATO allies, Afghan officials, security expert, and political scientists and so on. No one surmise that such a cynic debacle of Kabul government and surprising Taliban returned to power corridor would be the expected future of Afghanistan .

The down fall of Ashraf Ghani government yielded country to many problems needed to be solved on immediate priorities, including ensuring safe evacuation to foreign citizens and their families holding special immigration visas, safe departure of remaining US soldiers, protection to diplomatic community, arrival of thousands of Afghan citizen in Kabul airport and need of security to Capital Kabul created suspicious scenario with sudden presence of Taliban, where it was difficult to comprehend who is actually in charge(Murtazashvili, 2022). Facilitators to Taliban and the Taliban leadership themselves did not knew how to control the eruption of such immediate crisis. After overtook control of Kabul, the world at large was eager and waiting to see how Taliban will present their self before the global community in near future, how would they formulate

governing policies, and whether this time they came with a more moderate vision since the 1990s or will pave the way to posing new challenges. The lack of a central government to be formulated was the biggest challenge before the new emerging force of the Taliban. The immediate debacle of the Ghani government and the takeover of the Taliban resulted from a massive crisis on every front that neither the former government nor the international community was ready to handle nor did the United States and its allies come up with plane B to the unexpectedly worst situation. Taliban was entangled early by the feud of portfolio distribution and it took three weeks to appoint an interim government on a federal level. Following are the serious challenges faced by the new emerging force of the Taliban right now.

3.1 Institutional Deformity

The current regime of Taliban government is composed of three wings the Haqqani network, the political wing, and the military wing. The military wing is commanded by Mullah Yaqoob the son of mullah Omer the former founding father of the Taliban movement, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar represents the political wing and has also remained a member of the peace talk with the international community at Doha Qatar, the third wing is Haqqani network which is given the responsibility of interior affairs as well as the task to look the Afghanistan internal security issues. They had good ties with Pakistan central intelligence agency.

Soon after the interim government differences were initiated between the military wing and the political wing. After the fall of Kabul, the interim government was formulated by the Taliban and removed the democratic government of Ashraf Ghani. According to analysts the arguments between the first deputy Prime Minister Mullah Ghani Barader and the minister for refuges Khalil Haqqani may provoked serious differences between the followers of both leaders in the royal palace of Afghanistan on the issue in which they gave greater credit to the political wing for the victory of Taliban (Thomas, 2021). Mullah Barader argued that due to the efforts of the political wing Taliban got the victory as they had talked for a long time with the world leadership for the peaceable departure of the United States and NATO forces while on the other side, Khalil Haqqani argued that due to the sacrifices of the military wing for two decades, Taliban get the victory. The first deputy prime minister of Afghanistan Mula Abdul Ghani Baradar is not happy with the

structure of interim government in which they give greater emphasis to military wing instead to political wing.

In the care taker government, the leadership of the military wing is presided by Mula Muhammad Yaqoob Zakir, Mula Abdul Qayum Zakir, Muhammad Ibrahim Sadder, and Mullah Muhammad Fazel Malzoom. They do not want to establish an inclusive government in Afghanistan according to them the adaptation of such kind of government will reduce their hierarchy and will also sabotage the military strength of a non-inclusive government (Brown, 2023).

They consider that it will be difficult for them to keep a united mujahedeen if they replace the non-inclusive government with an inclusive government. According to them, these people were responsible for the debacle of the Taliban 1st regime in the 1990s with the support of the United States and also played an important role against the hegemony of the Taliban in the past few decades. The military wing wants the revenge of the 1990s rivalry. The military wing also wishes for a dominant position in state affairs because they claim that it was the military wing that fought for decades against foreign forces and compelled the foreign forces to withdraw (Baheer, 2024).

Differences have been observed between the military wing and the Haqqani network since the initial arrival of the Haqqani wing after the debacle of Kabul. The military wing has been challenging the meeting conducted by the Haqqani wing with the former president Hamid Karzai, the former ex-chief executive Abduallah Abduallah Senate chairman and Abdul Hadi Muslimyar were aiming for the formation of an inclusive government (Ahmed, 2021).

Therefore, after the takeover of Kabul in the first few weeks they gave important ministries to leaders belonging to the military wing. Zakir was appointed as acting defense minister while Sader was appointed as acting interior minister in order to control the important ministries by military wing. Abdul Haq Wasiq has been appointed is acting director of intelligence in the current noninclusive government. In 1990s he also severed as a head of intelligence during the Taliban first regime. But after the released from the United States brutal Guantanamo prison and he has been appointed on vital position in order to strengthen military wing in current regime of Taliban.

Abdul Haq Wasiq was one in five prisoners released from Guantanamo Bay in 2014 prisoner in exchange for the United State Army Sgt.Bowe Bergdahl. He has also smooth relations with different world terrorist organization. The care taker government of Afghanistan political and military branch is governed by Pashtun belong from southern clan they are not agree to recognized hegemony and dominant role of Pashtuns or Haqqani leadership belong from eastern part of Afghanistan. According to the Haqqani leadership opinion that the sacrifices of their mujahedeen and suicide squad had played important role against national and international enemies of Afghanistan during the past few decades (Ahady, n.d).

Initially they fought against the Russian forces and compel them to withdraw the Afghan territory and then later they also fought for more than two decades against the international forces of NATO and compelled them to take out their forces. Therefore, they are demanding for more dominant role than military and political leadership in the current regime of the Taliban government. The Haqqani network performed an essential role during the Soviet Union invasion however later they allied with the Taliban but maintained their independence to make decisions according to their code of conduct (Kotokey, 2024). Mostly the Haqqani leadership graduated from the theological school of Akkora Khattak, Pakistan. They have a good affiliation with the Pakistan ISI.

The political wing of the caretaker government of the Taliban more closely knows about the internal realities as well as global communities as they remained in long-term engagement with national and international communities during the peace talks in Doha Qatar (Bijlert, 2021). However, they have been faced the lack of military and physical strength in order to enhance other fiction of the current non-inclusive government.

Several political leaders were kept in prison under severe observation by Pakistani officials for a long time. After 9/11 through various operations, many of their popular leaders were executed by the Pakistan military. The death of Osama bin Laden dramatically took place in Pakistan, Mullah Abdul Ghani Barader remained in prison for a long period in Pakistan. Mula Akhter Mansour was killed by Pakistani officials. Therefore, the Haqqani network has good ties with Pakistan's military as compared to the political and military wing (Giustozzi, 2021).

During the formulation of a non-inclusive government in Afghanistan, the Taliban leadership did not agree on any uniform formula for three weeks. Later on, the Pakistani official inter-service intelligence head, Faiz Hamid visited Afghanistan and played the role of mediator to unite them on any uniform formula regarding governmental structure. The interim government announced by the Afghan Taliban was dominated by the military wing of the Taliban instead other communities demanded an inclusive government as well as their dominant influence in state affairs. The son of former Taliban founder Mula Yaqoob was appointed as defense minister, while the interior ministry was awarded to Sirajudin Haqani He was included in the global terrorist list of FBI and the United States security sanctions. It is considered a greater security threat shortly (Barry, 2021).

To ensure internal security the interior ministry played an essential role and also efficiently dealt day to day affairs. In the case of Afghanistan the Haqqani wing bestowed to deal the internal security affairs however they led the interior ministry without any code of conduct or constitution which questioned the role of such an essential ministry.Amir Khan Mutaqi and Abbas Stanekzai belonging to the political wing were awarded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their primary responsibility was to ensure peace talks as well as the withdrawal plan of foreign troops. Former Taliban deputy Mulla Hassan Akhund has been selected as prime minister of Afghanistan while the UN Security Council declared him a global terrorist while the office of deputy prime minister was given to Barader (Brown, 2023). As he served as head of Doha peace talk and had well understanding about government diplomatic affairs therefore, he may be given some additional responsibilities related to foreign ministry in the future. Both Haqqani and military wing have influential status and role in state affairs and their decisions will shape and formulate the destiny of the new born state lead by Taliban.

When various organization have same enemy then it's so easy to unite them on their goals and objectives to achieve it but whenever if such insurgency gains political power, then power struggle generates among them it will give birth to conflict and similar is the case with current political development in Afghanistan, after the fall of Kabul power struggle among various groups is reached to its peak (Kundi.n. d). Each and every wing want their superiority and dominancy in

state affairs. Internal differences among Taliban ruling members may push the state into severe condition of instability. As various groups of Taliban revolting against each other it might be compel the state into another civil war and such differences might be provide opportunities for outsiders to interfere in their internal affairs.

3.2   Security Challenges for Taliban Current Regime

Afghanistan remains home to multiple ethnicities but here our main concern is those groups who challenge the Taliban ruling authority and create security challenges for them after the takeover of Kabul. The current violence in Afghanistan may create a situation of civil war as same like civil war took place after the withdrawal of the USSR as various ethnic groups united under the umbrella of northern alliances against the first regime of the Taliban. The main objective of the Northern Alliance was to abolish the Taliban government (Report, 2022). The Northern Alliance gained support from both national and international levels against the Taliban and ultimately after 9/11 they defeated the Taliban with the support of the US in 2001. The northern Alliances remained active till the formation of the Hamid Karzye's government. After the debacle of Kabul, a national resistance front was established by Ahmad Masood who conducted war against the Taliban current government and various other opposing groups also waging war against Taliban hegemony which are the Eastern Tristan Islamic movement and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

One of the greatest challenges for the Taliban government nowadays is the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK) which is constantly involved in insurgency against the Taliban which is a big challenge for the internal security of Afghanistan (Sayed et al, 2023). According to security specialists and political scientists' analysis of the back door relations of various Taliban leadership with ISK if the government fails to fulfill their demands, then it can also join them. In 2019 The ISK captured various southern districts of Nangarhar province from the Taliban but later it was cleaned up by the Afghan government with the support of NATO. But now Taliban are very conscious of the threat of ISK.

The current regime of the Taliban has been criticized by members of NRF including, Sunni Pashtun Sunni Uzbek, Sunni Tajik, Hazaras, and Shia Tajik ethnicities. Ahmad Masood's son Ahmad Shah Masood led the national resistance front and also gained the support of former Vice

President Amrulah Salih. There are multiple anti-Taliban insurgence groups in both urban and rural areas mainly including areas are Kabul, Herat, and Mizar (Selber, 2024). The NRF declared their plan for huge attacks against the Taliban government in January 2022. In the spring 2022 The NRF make an assassination attack against Abdul Hamid Khorasan Punjshair security chief with a heavy explosive device. However, if he remained safe and threatened the NRF to stop such activities through a video message then will be faced harsh consequences.

The Taliban government was challenged by the NRF after the first day of their takeover of Kabul (Wasielewski, 2022) The NRF is not only a militant organization but also a political rival of the Taliban government has good relations with world leadership as well as with various organizations and some other communities composed on various ethnicities fighting against Taliban both in national and international level to challenge Taliban hegemony. The leading founder of NRF Ahmad Masood trying to gain the support of anti-Taliban states to achieve their military and economic assistance to abolish Taliban dominancy in northern Afghanistan.in northern Afghanistan, these groups generate terrorist activities against the Taliban movement which creates hurdles for the Taliban to gain a strong hold on such territory.

Another big challenge faced by the Taliban's current regime is the former forces of Afghanistan such as former militia, security forces, and Afghan national defense. These forces were trained by United States and NATO forces through the latest techniques and war weapons however Taliban failed to integrate these forces into their militia or forces nor did they have any idea about the former forces of inclusive government nor did they have formulate any future outlines to fulfill their needs so they might be used their capabilities against the Taliban government because they need their basic rights such as food and shelter if Taliban are not able to provide them their basic needs then they may misuse their capabilities and strength to achieve food and shelter which ultimately causing the internal security challenges in state (Akram, 2023).

In northern Afghanistan some new anti-Taliban groups have been generated one of them is the liberation front of Afghanistan an active participant of anti-Taliban government activities. They consider the Taliban is responsible for killing many innocent people such as journalists, social activists and also kidnaping women. According to them Taliban is a terrorist organization and they

have no right to lead the state by any means of force without national concern (Report, 2022). LFA wants a pluralistic government on their soil where instead of one ethnic group all other ethnicities have equal rights in state affairs.

The former warlord Yar Muhammad's destem elder son Abdul Rashid Dustam created his so-called organization the Wolf Unit to challenge Taliban hegemony (Jones, 2022). According to him, they gained huge support from the people of the Jawzjan federating unit, throughout the Taliban summer invasion in 2021 he also commanded the provincial capital Sheberghan of Jowzjan however he fled to a foreign state before facing retreat by the Taliban government.

It is another anti-Taliban group that also announced war against the Taliban government even though released a video in which it shows a large number of people supporting them including women particularly the people belonging to Kapitsa province. They blame the Taliban ruling authority for an aggressive takeover through force of their homeland. They consider the Taliban government an occupier (Sakhi, 2022). This militant group is led by multi ethnic group having support with both Pashto and dare language speakers.

It's another group that also shows resistance against the Taliban government and is comparatively more active in militant activities. They targeted the Taliban security check post and their convoys which caused huge harm to the Taliban government (Report, 2022). These militant groups may bring difficulties for the Taliban's current regime both at the national and international level because they are not only a threat to the interior security of Afghanistan but also a threat to the internal security and interests of other states (Souza, 2023). Furthermore, the increasing insurgency may push the country into another civil war if the Taliban government fails to encounter these organizations and it will also damage the internal security of the Taliban's current regime.

Interview 2: Dr. Ismail Ph.D. scholar from NDU Islamabad serving as Assistant professor at the Department of Peace and Counter-Terrorism Minhaj University Lahore, Expert in Conflict studies.

Interviewer: Could you talk about the US's involvement with the Taliban and how it has affected ethnic conflict in Afghanistan?

Dr. Ismail: The influence of the United States' intervention in Afghanistan on ethnic strife has been multifaceted. One may argue that the US's backing of the Northern Alliance offset the Taliban's hegemony over the Pashtun people. However, the extended military presence and its later evacuation left authority vacuums, which made ethnic tensions worse. Resentment was heightened by US tactics such as airstrikes and special operations, which occasionally had an indiscriminate impact on civilian populations, particularly ethnic minorities.

3.3 Governance Challenges

After the takeover of the Taliban, the government of Taliban faced multiple governing issues. To formulate state affairs Taliban government adopted traditional norms and values instead of the Western democratic structure built up during the last two decades. Through traditional rules and regulations Taliban government is hurting the emotions of the generation as they introduce abaya compulsory for females, banning female education, and changing the national flag, etc. (Ayalon et al, 2022). Due to this Taliban government failed to win the confidence of the public and to gain legitimacy for governing.

Under Taliban leadership common citizens feel a continuous threat to their lives because they well know that the Taliban government is unable to fulfill their basic needs and provide them with basic resources of life (Khan et al, 2023). After the takeover of the Taliban in Kabul some highly qualified people migrated either to neighboring countries or to Europe which is a great loss for the Taliban government.

Due to the lack of technocrats, well-qualified citizens and technical the state institutions' governance system will be facing a struggle while running these institutions. A large number of professionals have not received their salaries and paychecks for a long time especially teaching and security sectors which will lead the country toward worse conditions because due to the lack of basic rules and regulations people adopted alternative sources of income so it's also affecting the state governance system (Iqbal et al, 2022). After the takeover of the Taliban the global organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, and various other organizations stop to support them or provide them with any foreign aid and their foreign reserves are also on the edge of a breakdown.

The current Taliban regime faced the biggest challenge in how to deal with the financial and fiscal structure of the country. In the current structure of the Taliban government there is a lack of a governing system, nor have they formulated any policy to collect tax on various governing levels such as federal, provincial, and district levels because the officials who led these institutions were either fled to other countries or adopted other means of income (Khan et al, 2024). In the governance system authority flows from top to bottom however in the case of Afghanistan there is a lack of such kind of hierarchy. During the democratic era of the last two decades, the Afghan government received eighty percent of the total budget from the United States but now they don't provide their share in the budget while the Taliban leads the country's administrative structure without any budget which will ultimately cause the failure of governing system of the state.

After three years of the Taliban takeover of Kabul, they are not in a position to bring stability to the governing system of the country unlike the Ashraf Ghani era although through Taliban perpetual resistance and demands some former officials rejoined their old positions and duties while most of them fled their homeland. The foreign investors also withdrew from the country after the Taliban takeover as they felt a threat to their investment which ultimately affected the import and export level of the country similarly there is also a lack of suitable environment for international multinational or national companies for business activities which also damage the administrative machinery of the country (Irfan et al, 2023). Nowadays the country is facing the failure of a governing structure as well as economic instability which increases the ratio of poverty, unemployment, and severe food shortage the prices of common goods have reached their peak due to which people are suffering from severe poverty and food shortage.

In the current regime of the Taliban, the country is standing on the edge of severe governing and economic crises which create a crucial circle of challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and uncertainty. Their whole economic and fiscal structure is facing failure. Furthermore, the common citizens are not permitted to withdraw more than 200$ from their bank accounts at the same time. However, the citizens are showing resistance against the Taliban withdrawal policy limitation for bank accounts. Additionally a rare number of banks are yet working in Afghanistan which creates hurdles for the common citizen to regulate their economic activities related to daily

life affairs. Through such restrictions on bank accounts, they deprive the common citizen of their property and also create hurdles for them (Khan et al, 2024).

As the Taliban came into power from the day first their leaders remain busy in power struggle as well as to achieve more authority from each other and up to now they are not able to merge their focus toward governing issues. The hierarchy of governmental machinery is not yet working actively. The suppliers providing necessities of life to the state ministries are not paid at the time which will further bring a shortage of commodities for the common public (Mehran et al, 2023).

The Orthodox run the entire governmental machinery without knowing the basic knowledge and skill about their duties so the deficiency of knowledge how may lead the Afghan society toward anarchy. Entirely the appointments made by the Taliban government do not know about the code of conduct of skillful and even the appointed ministries have no idea through which law they are ratified to run the official departments (Hakimi, 2022). Yet now the failure of the Taliban governing system is disclosed to their nation which creates a state of anarchy while public pressure is also increasing constantly on state ministries to achieve their demands is the great governing challenge for the Taliban government.

The state is ruled with the ancient concept of power as might be right and yet not the judicial system is working actively after the Taliban takeover. All the former officials and people working for the ancient democratic government are executed instead of general paradox by the Taliban local commanders. Both of them were executed publicly to discourage the rest of the common public from revolting against Taliban authority (Hazim, 2022).

The report disclosed the pregnant police officer murder in Ghor province which identifies the dual standard of Taliban officials on one side they declare the universal paradox but on the other side, their officials killed and executed innocent people due to a lack of checks and balances the Taliban official itself violate the basic law of the land. Taliban administrative behavior at both central and provincial levels highly contradicts each other the common example of such contradictory behavior is the Hilmad Federating Unit administration implemented the policy not

to allow men's beard commanding the local barber however this policy is not recognized by the central authorities and they rejected such policy introduced by the provincial management (Rahimi, 2022).

Understanding and managing human rights issues is one of the most prominent and complex challenges for Taliban leadership. Regarding human rights issues Taliban are facing failure due to clear differences in their attitude and outlook with the entire world (Kotokey et al, 2021). During the last two decades, the United States and NATO promoted and implemented Western democratic infrastructure which was completely constructed through modern norms and values however the young generation grooms under the Western democratic culture after 9/11 they did not agree to follow the Taliban orthodox design norms and values and they will challenge the Taliban Government traditional rules and regulation in future. The freedoms enjoyed by the Afghan young generation under the Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani democratic regimes for the last two decades don't agree with the Taliban's conventional and rigid administrative structure. So, it's difficult for the Taliban current regime to convince the modern generation and merge their attitude toward an orthodox pattern of rules furthermore in the future they may rebel against the Taliban's traditional rules and regulations.

The Taliban government is responding aggressively to the opposing groups protesting against repressive rules which further leads the country toward instability. Subjecting women's jobs and their academic institutions has being closed was the highest act of brutality by the Taliban rule (Rahimi, 2022). The Taliban government is unable to ensure smooth governing policies in the state.

3.4   Dissatisfaction of Basic Needs

Afghanistan mostly relies on international aid. Furthermore, after the fall of the Ghani democratic regime by the Taliban the country's situation became worse which ultimately caused humanitarian crises throughout the country. The Biden administration has initially decided not to cooperate with the Taliban government and maintain their sanctions which may justify their rule in Afghanistan (Sadat, 2023). Due to the higher level of influence of the United States, some other regional and international organizations also ignore the emerging crises which further leads to

severe crises. The humanitarian crises also increased during the 2018 to 2020 crises while in 2019 COVID 19 and the common citizen were suffering from the perpetual war (Khan et al, 2023). The foreign donors provided the democratic government the half of the annual budget of 6 billion $. To promote the life standard of Afghan common citizens the United States has been provided 17 billion $ from 2002 to 2017.

Since the withdrawal of the United States, the ratio of humanitarian crises has increased like Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, and Sudan with low standard of human life. Right now, 24.4 million population are in extremely require humanitarian aid. According to the UN, the world food program is concerned and predicted at the mid of March 2022 about 55% population reached the severe food shortage while 35% become victims of food shortage during the following winter (Rehman, 2023).

The 9 million population has been following the dead level of food shortage. The current food insecurity destroyed millions of children due to malnutrition. Through force more than 9 million Afghans have been displaced whereas additionally 3.4 million have been displaced internally while 5.7 million in the south Asian areas (Curry et al, 2023).

In early 2022, the United Nations provided $4 billion and $623 million in humanitarian aid to neighboring nations housing displaced Afghans to address the situation. However, the United Nations warns that donating money alone may not be sufficient to ensure long-term food security. The UN has encouraged the international community to provide prompt assistance to the Afghan populace in areas such as food, health, water, shelter, winterization, and sanitation (Mcconnell, 2022).

Afghanistan is currently experiencing a serious humanitarian catastrophe that will have long-term consequences both within and outside of its borders. People's restricted ability to generate income for themselves or others exacerbates the problem. Nonpayment to government and security officers, as well as job losses, are exacerbating the situation (Hamid, 2024). The prolonged conflict and COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the economy and quality of life for millions of Afghans. The Taliban's seizure of Kabul and US withdrawal caused huge

flights to neighboring countries and internal displacement, resulting in significant economic and social losses for citizens. The World Health Organization is concerned about the ongoing health crisis in the country, stating that the healthcare system is on the point of annihilation. Only 5% of hospitals and clinics have opened, not enough to address the country's rising crisis. The US has granted 45 million dollars, but this is insufficient to address the mounting humanitarian problem (Arif et al, 2023). Rural citizens are selling their things, even their daughters, to fund their basic requirements for food, clothing, and other necessities. The area around Ghazi Stadium has been converted into a market where individuals sell their things and second-hand items to support their livelihood. Winter has aggravated the humanitarian issue. The humanitarian issue is putting strain on both the Taliban regime and neighboring countries, as a large number of refugees are crossing borders.

At the end of 2022, an estimated 24 million people are experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis due to the 40-year war, poverty, and political uncertainty. The Taliban takeover has exacerbated the issue due to a lack of economic stability. The recent power change in Afghanistan has had a significant humanitarian impact on the country's basic needs, banking services, and economy. By 2022, 97% of Afghanistan's population will be living in poverty (Report, 2022). World organizations are concerned that the ongoing catastrophe would lead to the loss of millions of lives.

Approximately one-third of the population is experiencing acute food shortages and emergencies, with over half of children suffering from serious malnutrition. Living conditions have worsened for civilians, particularly women, children, the elderly, and disabled girls and boys (Sorush, 2023). Afghanistan is currently experiencing the world's biggest humanitarian crisis.

Food insecurity has reached a critical level, necessitating prompt action to prevent further tragedy. Afghanistan has a history of serious food security issues, with 19 million people in desperate need of food. In Afghanistan's North, 8.7 million people suffer from malnutrition, with 1.1 million children under the age of five suffering from severe malnutrition, 2.8 million suffering from moderate malnutrition, and 0.8 million pregnant women being heavily affected. Water scarcity affects approximately two-thirds of the country's population, posing a challenge for the

Taliban leadership (Nijat et al, 2023). The country requires abundant clean water and adequate sanitary standards. There is significant strain.

Because of COVID-19, millions of Afghans are vulnerable to severe health crises because of insufficient access to healthcare systems. Stopping funding for the Shatandi project, which is crucial for providing healthcare in Afghanistan, has resulted in millions of Afghans lacking access to basic healthcare. The health system is on the edge of failing due to a lack of medical supplies, professionals, salaries, and overall service provision.

Afghanistan has a vast population of 30 million people aged 18 and under. The country's ongoing conflict, displacement, and distorted local norms and beliefs have resulted in widespread abuse and violence against a large number of individuals. Afghan women face harassment, sexual abuse, honor killing, early marriages, domestic violence, education deprivation, personal freedom restrictions, and lack of fundamental rights. Afghan boys face similar challenges under Taliban rule, including early marriages and recruitment into Mujahideen, army, and police units to fight for both the Taliban and the government. Both genders are suffering greatly under the new Taliban administration, whether through job exploitation or domestic violence at home. Almost 90% of Afghan women feel that husbands have the right to beat their spouses, and that this behavior is accepted by the community. Women are mostly responsible for domestic chores in the home and fields. In Afghanistan, approximately 17% of adults have disabilities, while approximately 17% of children also have disabilities. Human Rights watch reports a high prevalence of serious impairments in women and girls. Women and girls face instability and denial of essential rights, making their lives unpredictable. Withdrawal of US forces poses a tremendous risk to the Hazara community, particularly women.

Under the Taliban regime, serious news regarding target assassination, kidnapping, and limited religious, movement, and expression freedoms remained an important component of the country's daily news. Discrimination based on gender and ethnicity is a common practice in modern Afghanistan. World humanitarian organizations have also noted significant problems in interacting with and attempting to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe in the country under the new Taliban regime. Taliban have captured most NGOs' offices and frozen their assets. The current banking

crisis also makes it extremely difficult for foreign humanitarian organizations to do their tasks. Following the US withdrawal, many agencies have halted programs on female freedom and career opportunities. Females with tremendous strength were suffering from previously employed in government, private national institutes, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and many are now experiencing unemployment. Unemployment. All of the organization is directed by the new Taliban leadership to replace women. Employ male staff members. Although females are experiencing and suffering from a huge psychological crisis. The Taliban believes in a male-dominated society. International organizations working are extremely affected by switching female to male and neither of that output is seen as it was before the Taliban because it is exceedingly difficult to cope with highly orthodox male personnel.

Despite receiving billions of money from the international community, the Taliban appears to be struggling to address social unrest. Social collapse has led to increased crime and vulnerability for the common people. Additionally, extremist organizations such as the Islamic State of Khorasan have suspended their efforts to rebuild the war-torn country, posing a significant threat to foreign organizations.

Out of 34 provinces of the country, 28 provinces are suffering from extreme humanitarian crises and have been suffering from severe crises. Presently available data provides that in term of food insecurity, highly vulnerable provinces are the Northern North East and Southern provinces (Apriliyati,2024). Although the Afghan humanitarian fund AHF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations funds FAO, the International Committee of Red Cross ICRC, the Norwegian Refugee Council NRC, United Nations Children Funds UNICEF, and World Food Program WFP are working to minimize the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

3.5   Economic Challenges

Taliban rule after more than three years in Afghanistan resulted severe economic crisis in the country. The worn-torn country is further worsened by the economic crisis after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021.

With toppling of Afghanistan's democratic government by the Taliban resulted collapse of their economy and sanctions were placed by the United States of America on Afghanistan. Sanction and freezing assets mounted the hardship in the country with a hike in prices. The Word Bank prescribed in July, 2022, that prices of consumers product like petrol, diesel, flour, rice and sugar etc has been surged about 50% from last years. Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is an economic crisis has become worse after Taliban emergence in power (Nagish, 2021).Thousands of people lost their employments and businesses were destroyed and closed after Taliban takeover. After two month of the Taliban took control, their economy fall with 30% which pushed millions of people into poverty. United State 7 billion, while Britain freeze 2 billion$, of Afghanistan Central bank assets after the fall of Kabul. In February 2022 United State President Biden sign an executive order which issued 3.5 billion $ while the remaining was deducted as compensation to the victims of 9/11(Mohsin, 2021). In early time of Taliban government didn't had accesses to the central bank reserves, yielded the Afghan banking sector to crisis. Due to sanction, people were unable to send money in or out which resulted severe losses to business and ordinary community.

Afghan administration didn't have technical staff to run the state economy also exacerbated the economic crisis. Majority of the professional and educated employee worked for the ministry of finance either left the country after fall of Kabul for neighboring or European counties. Taliban government brought unskilled and nonprofessional people to the ministry of finance having no educational background or either any experience of the concerned field. Short fall in income resulted limitation on physical activities in winter, mounting in food and other items of daily use prices, rampant ratio of unemployment is highly encouraging the worst condition facing by Afghan people (Byrd, 2021). The available data provides surge in household debt this year. The increasing of food item prices had left the food basket empty of millions of people to the utmost level. Up to 82 % percent of family income goes in the affirmation of food items for the survival. Moreover thousands of native undocumented Afghan's residing in neighboring countries or in western societies are forcefully returned to Afghanistan.

During 2022, about 677000, people has unsheltered by war in the country and 973000, undocumented Afghan citizen has compelled by international community to left for Afghanistan since January 2022. The nature of problems is much complex and different as it was in 1990s, due to development of economy in many ways. Social service is much developed since the 1990s, and there is a lot more room for decline and for things to go wrong. Though the international community wants help Afghanistan economic crisis but they don't know how to help out them because they do not recognize Taliban ruling as the legitimate one, which had made the economic assistance from international community difficult and even impossible. Current economic crisis is highly increasing poverty day by day with limited opportunities for the 600000 youngster who will reach to work age every year (Report, 2023).Current fragile status of economy, Taliban government failed to provide services in education, health, shelter, sanitation, energy and food sectors.

The economic condition has exacerbated with a year ruling of country by Taliban.The United States sanctions, banishing of foreign aid, surging inflation, ongoing winter and diseases exposed majority of nation into poverty. People having jobs were not paid for their work while those having no job are not finding any job. Food insecurity is on its peak which is affecting life of about 39 million people of the country. The situation has become tenser right now due to cold winter, prolong draught, lacing of electricity, gas and other energy resources. Taliban restrictions on female employment and COVID-19 have highly effected the health sector of the country (Report, 2022). The hasty occupation of central government by Taliban resulted national governance crisis. Fearful of Taliban, majority of the professional and able bureaucrats, economist, skilled workers fled to neighboring countries and were been replaced with Islamic theologians having no experience of rendering public service with most of them either remained in Pakistan prisons or declared global terrorist by United Nations security council .

CHAPTER 4

TALIBAN POLICIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The Taliban's current regime follows the old version of the 1990s Taliban first regime and stops women not to participating in state affairs, deprives ethnic minorities of their right to representation, and also prohibits the non-Talban personalities in state affairs. Their current regime is composed of the members who fought against the United States and NATO forces for the previous two decades and the Taliban government didn't allow the former leaders of the twenty-year democratic regime to participate in official activities. That's why they not only faced international rivalries but they are also faced internal rivalries either from non-ethnic minorities or former leaders of a democratic era (Yousef et al, 2022). The Taliban government was required to negotiate state societal relationships that have changed since 2001 to obtain some degree of political legitimacy. In this chapter, the researcher will analyze peace-building efforts such as intra-Afghan negotiation, fulfillment of promises made in the Doha agreement, and women's rights.

4.1 Intra-Afghan Negotiations

To engage other ethnic minorities in peace-building efforts Intra intra-Afghan negotiation is essential to settle down power-sharing issues. The Taliban government needs to address the vital concern of the international community and other ethnic minorities on the issue of power-sharing through a communal concern with all stakeholders in the country to find solutions for the issues such as the role of civil society, counterterrorism, governance issues, women rights, balance in relations with regional powers and rule of law (Hossaini et al, 2020).

The absence of inclusive government creates hurdles for the Taliban's current regime because they need to get recognition on both the state level and global level. Taliban did not appoint any former leader in their cabinet members from the last two decades of democratic leaders. The Taliban failed in their efforts to establish an inclusive government that would provide equal participate for all ethnic groups and include women, and they also broke their pledges. Afghanistan is also home to a diverse and vibrant population. The country is home to a vast number of ethnic and cultural identities such as Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkman, Baluch, Pachaie,

Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, Brahwui and other tribes and many religious group such as Sunni and Shia Muslims, Sikhs, Baha'is, Hindus and a small population of Christians. Afghanistan's future cannot and should not be dictated by any singular group. That means all Afghans should be included in decision-making processes at every level, be it local, national or international level.

Taliban make it clear did not want any non-taliban representative in to participate meeting on Afghanistan at Doha, conducted by United Nations, in February 2024. They even made it a condition for their own attendance layout, which the United Nations Secretary-General found unacceptable. Large portion of the international world opposed the taliban refusal of non-inclusive government and decision making. Additionally, the United State, the United Nation and several European countries have made recognition of taliban optional base the requirement for an inclusive government besides other factor (Ahmadi, 2024).

The Pashtun populace composed on 40-50 % of the total population of Afghanistan although, they dominated the Afghan non inclusive government. Taliban cabinet composed on former Taliban loyalist leaders. The current regime of Taliban is homogeneous composed on same ethnic group. The non-inclusive government of Taliban composed on 33 members cabinet only two members belong from other ethnic groups one is Uzbek and the other one is Tajik however they deprive other ethnic groups from representation in their interim constitution.

During democratic era of last two decades Afghan constitution official recognized that more than 20 languages are spoken and furthermore also recognized fourteen ethnic groups. Notably, Afghanistan composed on a heterogeneous society which comprising numerous ethnic groups, different culture, tribes and religions. The Afghan society revolve around a variety of traditions, rivalries and customs .if taliban take local customs, traditions and local histories in confident then peace building efforts will be successful. (Abbas et al, 2023).

Afghanistan possesses multi ethnic society so all of them need constitutional representation. Taliban did not give representation to a single woman in their cabinet and they also deprived women from their fundamental rights. The current Taliban regime is nothing but the same

version of 1990's Taliban government. Most of them are the former leaders of Taliban with new regime. Out of 33 cabinet members 17 members are included in security sanctions either the UN Security Council list or the FBI bounty list. Their interior minister had millions of bounties on his head while he was given the most essential ministry in the Taliban cabinet (Mehran et al, 2023).

The 2016 constitution of Afghanistan officially recognized 57 political parties, to represent the multi-communal society of Afghanistan but now Taliban administrative authorities have not appointed any single leader from the former constitutionally recognized political parties. The interim government of the Taliban was composed only of Taliban loyal persons and did not give representation to the leaders belonging to the democratic era of the last two decades (Terpstra, 2020). According to the analysts, the Taliban's current regime needs an inclusive government to settle down resistance faced by the Taliban from multi-ethnic groups to bring stability to the state as well as to establish stable relations with the global community. Due to the absence of inclusive government now Taliban faced failure to achieve recognition from both the international and national community.

The fall of Kabul resulted in significant damage to the state economy due to a lack of inclusive governance. Afghanistan receives the majority of its annual budget from the United States and numerous other international organizations; but, due to the Taliban's refusal to be inclusive, all foreign aid was withdrawn, and their assets were frozen, plunging the nation into a deep financial crisis (Hasar, 2024).

The majority of foreign organizations have declared that the Taliban government is an oppressive, enforced system of strict Islamic law, many of whose principles are at odds with democratic ideas, rather than that it represents the will of the people. Widespread questioning of the Taliban's legitimacy followed their closure of female education (Watkins, 2022). The previous democratic administration provided reserve seats for women in both chambers of the legislature, as well as open seats for all ethnic groups and disabled individuals.

The Taliban's spiritual leader, Mulla Haibatuallah Ahonzada, also known as Amir Ul Momeneen, is in charge of the new administration and has the final say over any political decisions made in Afghanistan at the moment. The head of the state Mullah Muhammad Hassan Akhund, was a co-founder of the Taliban movement in the 1990s, furthermore, he dealt day to day affairs. He has been designated a worldwide terrorist by the UN (Sahill, 2023). Former Taliban commanders were given additional significant responsibilities. Mulla Muhammad Yaqoob, the son of Mullah Omer, the former leader of the Taliban movement, was named defense minister. Sirajudin Haqani, the son of former Haqqani Network founder and US-designated global terrorist, has been appointed Interior Minister. The Taliban believe they should only be allowed to control Afghanistan; they are not prepared to include 60% of the country's inhabitants who are not Pashtun ethnic.

The NRF, led by the son of former Taliban warlord Ahmad Shah Masood, Ahmad Masood, Taliban opposing leader from Tajikistan, is another essential organization challenging the Taliban's Government. Ahmad Masood represented the Hazara, Uzbek, and Tajik communities. After the downfall of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan entered into a civil war in which several warlords began to seize control of various districts (Jabarkhail et al, 2022). Due to the ongoing violence and unpredictability, in the 1990s regular Madaras students began speaking out against the warlords, which led to the end of their autocracy and they were founding strong roots of Taliban authority.

The National Resistance Front was founded by these combatants to oppose the formidable Taliban force after they pooled their forces (Mills, 2022). The US and its allies supported the national resistance movement in Afghanistan, which helped take over Taliban rule following 9/11 and bring in a new era of democracy. Following his election as president in 2004, Hamid Karzye oversaw an inclusive administration that included members of every ethnic group in the nation. A democratic general election later saw Ashraf Ghani succeed Karzye, and with the support of ethnic minorities he introduce an inclusive administration.

Afghanistan has dramatically improved its infrastructure and democratic values throughout the last two decades under the leadership of inclusive government. The National Resistance Front

leaders have continued to serve in the administration for the past 20 years, representing their respective ethnic groups in the cabinet and parliament. When the time came, the general public was aware of the democratic process for altering the government. Selecting a representative to the parliament, where they would fight for their rights, was a right that the people enjoyed (Safi, 2024). The country of Afghanistan had the opportunity to express itself freely and live their lives as they choose, along with the shine of westernized democracy. The members of the United Nations acknowledged Afghanistan's democratic government, and it developed positive relations with the international community.

However, the current administration is a complete opposite mirror of the previous democratic government, in which only one Pushtun ethnic group holds political power and no other ethnic group is allowed to participate in governance. The 33 member's legislature, including the head of state and spiritual leader, do not speak for the people of Afghanistan. By using force and aggressiveness, they took over the corridor of power. The old democratic government leadership was forced to flee to other countries by the Taliban rule because they posed a serious threat to their lives (Rahimi, 2024). The Taliban caretaker administration has not disclosed the schedule for the next general election and has shown no willingness to involve the average person in governance. The nation lacks highly educated administrators, and neither they nor anyone else knew the laws under which the nation is governed (Partaw, 2023). Modern governance is a reflection of autocracy and totalitarian regimes rather than any democratic norms or values. After a year and a half, the Taliban leadership was unable to enact a new constitution.

The Taliban caretaker government has exhibited no interest to involve the common citizen in governance and has not released the date of the upcoming general election. Neither they nor anybody else knew the laws that govern the country, and there aren't many highly educated officials in the country. Contemporary government is not a reflection of democratic norms and principles, but rather of autocracies and totalitarian regimes (Guilbaud, 2023). A new constitution could not be enacted by the Taliban leadership after three years of takeover.

The desires of the common people were not taken into consideration by the current government, which is ruling the nation according to their whims. The younger generation that has

been raised over the last 20 years finds it so hard for them to understand the nature of the Taliban government and is unlikely to adapt it. In summary, the Taliban leadership has taken over the state and is ruling it without a constitution at the moment (Shekhawat, 2024). After more than a year and a half in power, the Taliban were unable to establish an inclusive government despite the state's multiethnic disposition.

4.2   Women Rights

The Taliban and international powers are engaged in a contentious argument about women's rights as a means of providing help to prevent starvation and poverty among the entire population. Western donors have sent hundreds of millions of dollars to Afghanistan since the military intervention there in 2001 in order to guarantee social equality for women (Barr, 2024). Over the past 20 years, women's lives in Afghanistan have improved and they now have access to essential rights including healthcare and education. In August, 2021, the comeback of taliban in power reverse the progressive gender regulation of the post -2001 were reversed. They keep deprived women from their constitutional rights. For instance, in Yemen the Houthi leaders also imposed same restrictions on female rights.

After the first day of taliban takeover Afghan women lost their independence. The global community opposed the taliban harsh policies toward women and they demand from them to amend their policies toward women rights (Report, 2023). Due to cut off of western aid, the whole country faced unparalleled hunger throughout the country, which increased the starvation ratio. Worldwide donors have requested for the rebuilding fundamental rights of females.

Afghan women vanish their independence after the departure of US (Goes, 2023). Millions of people have been forced to the brink of famine as a result of the Western world's abrupt termination of help to Afghanistan. International donors have made demands for the restoration of women's education and other fundamental rights. The Taliban ruling authority failed to fulfill their promises. The Taliban Amir called a cabinet meeting in Kandahar at the beginning of 2022 and overruled the minister's plan to restore secondary education for girls. The Taliban's promises of balanced policies and national progress left Western nations feeling cheated. Because female education was prohibited, the percentage of girls enrolled in schools fell from 23% to 13%, but it

did not reach 0% because certain provincial authorities disregarded the ruling of higher authorities and offered female private tutoring options instead.

In Kandahar, the Emir called a cabinet meeting in November 2022 and gave them instructions to impose more limitations on women's rights. Women are no longer allowed to visit parks, beauty salons, or gyms according to new regulations (Samsour, 2022). The Taliban reestablished the punishing regulations of their previous regime, which included public executions and whipping as punishment for offenses. Students at universities made passionate conjectures about whether the Emir's crackdown would next target universities.

A written notification regarding the suspension of women's university study until further notice was released by the Higher study Ministry on December 20. Women in the country suffered psychologically as a result of the Taliban's forced female bend at the university gates, believing that governmental policies were destroying their future (Wani, 2024). In numerous places, both male and female students demonstrated; nonetheless, the pervasive dread that female students had for their carriers was caused by beatings and arrests.

The country's higher education ministry's restriction has left female students feeling hopeless. The day the embargo was implemented was set aside for hundreds of students at Kabul University to get their diplomas. They were turned away, not given robes and degrees. Unfortunately, most students never achieved their dreams of contributing positively to their families and communities. There was a lot of outcries among female students when the Taliban forcibly prevented pupils from visiting private tuition centers. As they were getting ready for their final exam, thousands of master's degree candidates at various colleges broke down in tears upon understand that they would not be eligible to complete their degrees (Mallyar, 2023). Under the preteens that women's participation in engineering and agricultural programs is anti-Islamic, the Taliban forbade women from attending school. One such excuse was that it is considered unIslamic for women to live in hostels distant from their homes.

Taliban decision about implemented ban on female education is contradict with reality because it's not a realistic approach. If woman is able to utilize her abilities in various field, then

why not agriculture education. The international community badly criticize the Taliban ban on women education. Although many of Muslim states Pakistan, Saudia Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and United Arab Emirates also condemn Taliban implementation ban on female education moreover Islamic school of thoughts also criticize Taliban policies about female education (Hanif et al, 2023). On June 2022, the organization of Islamic cooperation had send a delegation for the purpose to find out solution for female education in Afghanistan and also criticized Taliban stance on female education further visit would be arrange of muslin scholars belong from muslin world in order to advocate female education in Afghanistan.

The western society also opposed Taliban official's decision about female education. Western world implemented more sanction on Taliban current regime they reduce the amount of aid and moreover imposed more punishment in response (Basu, 2024). According to the report of the G7 foreign minister meeting presided by Germany declare Taliban policies on gender discrimination and ban on female education is consider a crime against mankind. After imposing ban on female education, the doners of G7 cutting 3 billion $ humanitarian aid received each year by Afghan former democratic government before Taliban take over. According to the United State, secretary of state Antony Blinken response if Taliban government didn't reverse their decision about female education, then they might be facing harsh consequences.

According to the ministry of economy introduced notification on 24th of December, in which they prohibited Afghan women working at any earning department, particularly NGOs. Only the health sector was excluded from the ban, and thousands of women were forbidden from working in NGOs and other governmental and private sectors of the country. To show solidarity with Afghan women, major aid organizations discontinued operations (Report, 2021).

According to the report, on December 24, 2021, the minister of economy issued a ban on all earning sources for women, specifically all NGOs jobs. Solely in the health sector, and employment in the government and private sectors was prohibited. These restrictions prevented thousands of women from working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other government and business sectors around the country. Major assistance organizations ceased operations in order to show solidarity with Afghan women; in fact, most operations could not

continue without female personnel. According to recent data, 30% of the country's female workforce has been forced to leave the NGO sector.

On December 25th, the aid coordinating associations accomplished an urgent meeting at Kabul with NGO official, and it was decided that all projects must be ended or postponed. The issue was discussed at an Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting, with some members counselling complete withdrawal of assistance until the Taliban government reversed their decision, while others advised continuing the job despite obstacles because total withdrawal would have a massive impact on human lives, particularly women's interests. Aid agencies are having difficulty since it has become harder to assist native people in conservative areas without the presence of female staff. Because of the long history of conflict, most widows relied on aid from various organizations to ensure their families' survival. So, these assistance organizations recognized that stopping help would be ineffective for native Afghan interests, to compel Taliban regime to amend their approach toward women (Shah, 2023).On December 28th, the United Nations Inter Agency Standing Committee said that most humanitarian relief activities would be suspended, and that a mission would visit Afghanistan to seek compromises with the Taliban through negotiations. It is impossible to reduce all humanitarian initiatives, so food deliveries will continue, but other schemes, like as the program to provide shelter, sanitation, education, agriculture, and protection of basic rights, will be phased out in order to force the Taliban leadership to reconsider their policies. Massive harm has been documented as a result of Taliban meddling in NGO operations, affecting the lives of around 11.6 million women and children. Reduction in add operations caused roughly 1 million individuals in need of aid to suffer greatly last winter.

4.3   To Fulfill Promises Made in Doha Agreement

After the withdrawal of US, they have highly concerned about the terrorist net of ISK and AL Qaida According to a recent UN Security Council assessment, ISK and Al Qaida are becoming stronger and pose a greater threat beyond their borders. According to recent UN reports, terrorist groups like Al Qaida and ISK have had more freedom in Afghanistan than ever before (Hashimy,

2022). Security specialists predict that US disengagement could lead to a comeback of terrorist groups.

Terrorist networks in Afghanistan, such as Al Qaida and ISK, have resurfaced for two reasons. The Taliban's tight relationship with Al Qaida created a favorable climate for the organization's resurgence. Afghanistan's weak state and ineffective security system create an ideal environment for terrorists to hide (Report, 2024). Taliban have failed to create law and order on the edges of cities. Furthermore, the country's GDP has shrunk by at least 40% since the US exit. At the end of last year, the poverty rate was around 97% of the overall population. Terrorist groups can thrive in a weak economy and failing security apparatus.

Al Qaeda's belief has remained unchanged. They believe Muslim brotherhood ideology throughout the world. They purpose to introduced a pan-Islamic dominion and invalidate corrupt rulers in Islamic countries. Following the death of Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Al Qaida is now led by Saif Al-Adil and manages a global network. Al Qaida operates militantly in various other Muslim countries including Syria, Yemen, Africa, Somalia, and South Asia.

Anterior Egyptian army officer, Saif Al-Adil, is now the leader of Al Qaida, with a $10 million United State bounty. According to Security specialist Adel has the potential to transform Al Qaida into the world's most dangerous insurgent organization. Adel was found guilty in November 1998, by a United State federal grand jury for carrying out militant attacks on United State embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, resulting in the deaths of 224 civilians and injuries to 5000 more. In 2002, he planned the murder of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan. He was thought to be hidden before Zawaheri's death in Iran. He is a member of the Al Qaida leadership council and leads the military committee group.

Al Qaida's present strategic base is in Afghanistan, where they previously sought protection from persecution. Afghanistan is home to the majority of Al Qaida's high-ranking commanders, including Saif Al-Adel (Jones S. G., n.d). Amin Muhammad Ul-Haq Saam Khan, Osama Mehmood, and Yahya Ghouri. The Taliban's takeover of Kabul resulted in a doubling of Al Qaida's

strength in one year. According to a recent United Nations assessment, most members are recruited from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

Afghanistan is an ideal location for Al Qaida movement due to strong relations with Taliban leadership and a supportive regime. Al-Qaida has tight ties to the Haqani network, which includes Sirajuddin Haqqani, the current interior minister of the Taliban government (Noor, 2021). Sirajudin Haqani, a proclaimed terrorist by the UN Security Council with deep ties to Al Qaida, could constitute a significant threat to the United States. After the fall of the United State, Al Qaida found a safe haven in Afghanistan, posing a threat to the United State interests in the country. Recent data indicates a surge in their training camps, potentially jeopardizing United States interests in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia. Taliban and Al Qaida are associated with a commitment made in the 1990s by former Taliban leader Mullah Omer and Al Qaida's Usama Bin Ladin. Both parties have renewed this pledge multiple times. The Taliban agreed not to let Al Qaida or other terrorist networks use Afghan soil against US interests in the Doha deal. However, they have yet to publicly denounce Al Qaida, and Al Qaida has not changed its rhetoric towards the United States. After Bin Laden's death, his successor Al Zwaheri repeated the pledge with Taliban leader Mullah Akhter Mansoor in 2015. Mansoor publicly supported Al Qaida's international Jihadi objective and accepted the pledge from their leadership. In 2016, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was killed in a United States drone attack, leading to the occupation of Taliban leadership by Mullah Akhondzada. Al Qaida has yet to accept or reject the repeated pledge. Since regaining control, the Taliban has been divided into two factions. The Taliban has pledged to prevent Al-Qaida from carrying out militant attacks in Afghanistan, but they cannot ignore their 20-year alliance with the group.

ISIS-K, a local affiliate, poses a rising threat to Taliban dominance in Afghanistan. ISK, an opponent of both Al Qaida and Taliban, shares a similar philosophy (Beckmann, 2024). ISK is likewise striving globally for the establishment of Khilafat and is willing to disband. The unIslamic governing structure in Muslim countries. Prior to the US pullout, ISK faced challenges from both the US and the Taliban, resulting in a significant fall in its strength (Sakhi, 2022). However, since the withdrawal, ISKs come back has been rapid.

The Taliban's strength has risen in less than a year following United State withdrawal, posing a substantial challenge to their hegemony and interests in the area. The release of thousands of captives from Bagram Air Base and Pul-e-Charkki led to a small increase in ISISK numbers, from around 2,000 to 4,000. The country's frail economy and weak security enable them to enhance their position against the Taliban in multiple areas (Giustozzi, 2021). Sanuallah Ghafari, Maulawi Rajab Salahudin, and Aslam Farooqi are the most prominent ISISK leaders involved in violent attacks against Taliban. ISISK has attracted many former Afghan military and intelligence agency members owing to its anti-Taliban stance.

Unlike Al Qaida ISISK has highly increasing its capabilities within the country as well outside Afghanistan and put Taliban government in severe danger by sabotaging United State interest in the region (Khan et al, 2024). It may easily attack the US in other countries. In Afghanistan it already showed its capability of attacking Kabul Airport on August 27, 2021, which killed more than 180 people. ISISK conducted seventy-six attacks when Taliban initially controlled the Kabul from 18th September to 30th November 2021.

The United State institute of peace has declared a report on the emerging threat with the fall of Kabul into the hands of Taliban and their support for TTP organization would be detrimental for the interest of Pakistan. Recent criticism of Kabul over Islamabad's policies determines Kabul inclination toward TTP despite of Pakistan reservations. Taliban Emir and his close advisors support TTP on ideological basis. During the Taliban triumph in Kabul, the TTP's violent actions increased dramatically. TTP terrorists operate in Afghanistan and target Pakistan's security forces. Despite the Doha agreement, Al Qaida continues to support the TTP, and the Taliban failed to fulfill their promises. The release of hundreds of Taliban commanders imprisoned by the former Afghan government demonstrates the positive relationship between the TTP and Taliban (Report, 2023). The Taliban administration granted TTP leadership political sanctuary and freedom in Afghanistan, enabling the group to carry out brutal attacks against Pakistan. The Afghan Taliban's win fueled TTP determination, as they viewed it as a model insurgency and movement mother ship. Noor Wali Masood is the current TTP leader.

As the increase in TTP violence after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, Pakistan prefers a political solution with the TTP through Siraj Haqqani, the current interior minister of the Afghan interim government. Initial negotiations took conducted in Afghanistan, and a brief cease-fire was announced on the condition that Pakistan release approximately 100 TTP prisoners. However, the TTP soon accused Pakistan of failing to honor its commitment, and the cease-fire was stopped. TTP latest attack on police lines mosque in KPK resulted 80 deaths and 150 injured mostly police officers. The attack has been owed by TTP in respond to the death of TTP leader in Afghanistan by Pakistan agencies. After the takeover of Kabul, TTP activities has been increased as acts of suicide bombing, assassination, has been very common specially in the KPK region of the country which has vast sharing border with neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan institute of peace shows death from terrorist attacks rose to 25 % in 2022. The TTP has claimed 367 attacks in Pakistan in 2022 resulted the death of 1105 security officials and informants. One third of these attacks took place in Khyber Paakhtoon Khwa.

In addition to al-Qaeda and ISIS-K, other regional and international terrorist groups now operate in Afghanistan. These include the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, Islamic Jihad Group, Khatiba Imam al-Bukhari, and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Several groups, such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, pose a significant threat to India a major U.S. partner and have conducted high-profile attacks in Mumbai, New Delhi, and other Indian cities. More broadly, the Taliban's victory has inspired jihadis around the world. Groups in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere gleefully celebrated the Taliban's conquest of Kabul on chat rooms and other online platforms, pledging the revitalization of a global jihad. Al-Qaeda released a statement after the U.S. withdrawal congratulating the Taliban for its victory and calling it a "prelude" to other jihadi victories.

Interview 4: Dr. Sara Niazi, Authority on Post-War Afghan Society and Ethnic Relations at AWKU.

Interviewer: Dr. Niazi, can you discuss the impact of the Taliban's resurgence on Afghan society and ethnic relations?

Dr. Niazi: The Taliban's resurgence has had profound effects on Afghan society and ethnic relations. The group's return to power has led to a reassertion of Pashtun dominance, which has been detrimental to ethnic minorities. Many ethnic groups feel marginalized and threatened under Taliban rule. This has resulted in increased ethnic tensions and conflicts, as various groups resist the Taliban's control and advocate for their rights and representation.

Interviewer: What are the key challenges that the Taliban face in governing a diverse and multi ethnic Afghanistan?

Dr. Niazi: The incapacity of the Taliban to rule inclusively is one of their main problems. The majority of their leadership is Pashtun, and Pashtun interests are frequently reflected in their policies. Non-Pashtun groups have become enraged by this, sparking discontent and resistance. The unique cultural and religious customs of Afghanistan's ethnic communities are not taken into account by the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law, which makes establishing a stable and cohesive administration even more difficult.

Interviewer: In your view, what should be the focus of international efforts to address the ethnic conflict and challenges in Afghanistan?

Dr. Niazi: Promoting inclusive government and resolving ethnic minority' complaints should be the main priorities of international initiatives. It is critical to support programs that promote communication and rapprochement between various ethnic groups. Some of the tensions can also be reduced by promoting economic growth and offering humanitarian aid. It is imperative that the international community endeavors to achieve a political resolution that honors the rights and ambitions of every Afghan community, guaranteeing that no faction remains excluded or without Voting rights.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Major Finding

These findings highlight the complex interplay of ethnicity, power, and governance in Afghanistan under the Taliban and underscore the challenges that lie ahead. Afghanistan's diverse ethnic landscape, including Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks, has historically fueled tensions. The Taliban's Pashtun-centric rule has exacerbated grievances among non-Pashtun groups. Various ethnic groups have formed resistance movements against the Taliban, notably the Punjshair Valley fighters led by Ahmad Masood. This resistance highlights the ongoing struggle for power and representation. The Taliban's governance has been marked by reports of human rights abuses against ethnic minorities, particularly targeting Hazaras, which has intensified existing ethnic animosities.

The Taliban's inability to gain international recognition has hindered their legitimacy and economic support, complicating their efforts to address ethnic grievances and maintain stability. Economic instability has disproportionately affected minority communities, leading to increased frustration and unrest. Limited access to resources has further deepened ethnic divisions. Regional powers have taken sides based on ethnic affiliations, with countries like Iran supporting Hazaras, influencing the internal dynamics of conflict and complicating Taliban governance.

The Taliban's attempts to integrate diverse ethnic leaders into governance have often been superficial, leading to further alienation of minority groups and a lack of inclusive policies. Ethnic conflict has posed significant security challenges, with groups like ISIS-K exploiting divisions to carry out attacks, further destabilizing the region. The ongoing grievances and lack of effective dialogue suggest a potential for renewed ethnic violence, particularly if the Taliban fail to address the needs of all communities.

5.2 Recommendations

These recommendations aim to address the root causes of ethnic conflict and promote a more stable, inclusive, and peaceful Afghanistan. The Taliban should prioritize the inclusion of diverse ethnic groups in governance structures to ensure representation and mitigate grievances. Establishing a council with representatives from all major ethnic communities could facilitate dialogue and collaboration. Implementing and respecting human rights for all ethnic groups is crucial. The Taliban should commit to safeguarding the rights of minorities, particularly Hazaras, to rebuild trust and legitimacy.

Launch targeted economic programs aimed at minority regions to promote equitable access to resources and opportunities. Investment in infrastructure and education can help alleviate poverty and reduce tensions. Facilitate local and national dialogues among ethnic groups to address grievances and foster mutual understanding. Engaging civil society and local leaders can enhance communication and reduce polarization. Restructure security forces to ensure they represent the diverse ethnic composition of Afghanistan, which can help prevent abuses and build community trust in law enforcement.

Seek constructive engagement with international actors to gain recognition and support for inclusive policies. This can help stabilize the economy and improve relations with neighboring countries. Establish rapid response teams to address ethnic conflicts as they arise, providing mediation and conflict resolution services to prevent escalation. Promote programs that celebrate Afghanistan's diverse cultural heritage and educate citizens about different ethnic groups to foster a sense of national unity. Set up independent monitoring bodies to track human rights violations and ethnic tensions, ensuring accountability for abuses and providing mechanisms for redress. Invest in long-term peacebuilding initiatives that focus on reconciliation and healing, involving community leaders and organizations to create a more cohesive society.

5.3 Conclusion

Afghanistan's strategic location increased its importance and made it a resident of various ethnic communities. The multi-communal status of Afghanistan destabilized the peace construction efforts. Yet now no single policy deals with the necessities of a single group. The multi-ethnic nature of Afghanistan has played an important role in the division of Afghan society. The strategic

location of Afghanistan increased its importance with time which made it home to multiple ethnicities. Now the diverse ethnic society of Afghanistan is under peace-building efforts. Yet now No single policy addressed the needs of any ethnicity. The division in multi-ethnic diversity played an essential role in ethnic conflict.

The current ethnic strife has its roots in former rulers' adaption of measures as they wanted to achieve central power, which had an adverse influence on the political nourishment of other ethnicities. Amir Abdurrahman discriminated against other ethnicities and reinforced Pashtuns because he wanted to destroy their political power, hence he sowed the seeds of ethnic war while approving a centralizing system of rule in Afghanistan. Former rulers' policies to gain consolidated authority have led to severe consequences for minority group's political development. Amir Abdurrahman discriminated against other ethnic groups. He preferred Pashtuns to weaken their political power, leading to ethnic tensions and a centralized rule in Afghanistan. The formulation of the 1964-73 constitution sparked a significant effort to construct a nation-state based on democracy. The discrimination that continued for centuries was eliminated while throughout the state equality was promoted.

In 1978 when PDPA came into power the nature of state affairs was changed and minorities were also able to participate in state affairs for the first time. The PDPA also recognized other ethnicities including Tajik, Uzbek, Hazaras, Turkmani, Balochi, and Nuristani party also recognized both Dari and Pashto as official languages. While a communist faction made a faction in order to reduce the standard of Dari and Pashtu.

The post-Soviet Union era in Afghanistan created climate suitable for emerging of Islamic fundamentalist groups might could involve in power struggle. multi fundamentalist groups including, Hezb Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Jamaat e Islami, led by Rabani, Younis Khalil, Ittihad e Islami, led by Abdul Rasool Sayif, and the Taliban were involved in the power struggle. After 1994 the Taliban Pashtun dominant faction emerged which destroyed all warlords and established their own rules. The Afghan Taliban dominated by Pashtun reestablished their

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government after two decades-long struggle against US and NATO forces as they were ousted in 2001 with the help of the Northern Alliance. The Taliban reestablished non inclusive government dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group while other ethnic groups present in Afghanistan opposed the nature of the Taliban government.

Three years after the fall of Kabul, the researchers have witnessed a continual decline, and minority groups are also suffering due to the lack of access to state democratic institutions. For almost three years, Afghan people have faced violations of their rights including a lack of livelihood possibilities, access to healthcare and education, and ongoing insecurity. As a result, several ethnic groups have turned against the Taliban leadership. The current governing system is not constitutional. In the formation of state constitutions taliban are facing failure.

Afghanistan faced severe uncertainty among various institutions regarding the division of powers. There is a lack of clarity under which constitution the Taliban leads the country. Taliban leadership did not fulfill their promises they made it with world leaders during the Doha peace talk. They faced failure to promote a democratic culture in Afghanistan. The world leadership demands inclusive government but yet now Taliban leadership has not agreed to establish an inclusive government. Their cabinet was composed of 33 members only two leaders out of them were taken from other ethnic groups instead of multi-ethnic society.

The strength of opposing forces increases after the departure of US forces against Taliban. Right now, the multi ethnic groups are fighting against Taliban hegemony and current regime. Therefore, Taliban imposed restriction even on peaceful protest of other ethnicities. Taliban officials announced harsh punishment to the protestors of Uzbek, Tajik and Hazaras. Number of women suffer from harsh punishments given by the Taliban due to rising slogans for their fundamental rights and want their liberty which is given by the Taliban's brutal regime.

Taliban bands on female education are destroying the bright future of millions of women. The greatest challenge faced by the Taliban regime was to get legitimacy and recognition for leading the state from both national and international levels. Due to the lack of inclusive government ethnic minorities are suffering from their right of representation. Furthermore, women

and technocrats are ignoring the formation of the Taliban's non-inclusive government. The governing issues and lack of expertise regarding different departments also caused institutional deformities in the state.

The counter-terrorism issue also degrades Taliban promises made in the Doha agreement as insurgency raised by ISISK, Al Qaida, and various other militant groups. The departure of the United States also increased humanitarian crises which had already been hampered by the 2018-2020 drought, COVID-19 in 2019, and perpetual war, all of which had serious consequences for the country's general population. Since the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, the humanitarian situation has eclipsed that of all other countries with low human life standards, including Syria, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Yemen. Currently, 24.4 million people are in dire humanitarian need. The UN World Food Program expressed worry last year, predicting that almost 55% of the population would face severe food insecurity and an emergency by the middle of March 2022, with an additional 35% becoming prey to food crisis the following winter. Nine million people have already died as a result of food scarcity. The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan's democratic government resulted in the collapse of the country's economy, and the United States imposed sanctions on Afghanistan. Sanctions and asset freezes exacerbated the country's distress as prices rose.

In summary, the Taliban can recover the situation in Afghanistan by founding inclusive administration and equal rights for all gender. Additionally, the supremacy of the constitution and the people will be required to establish peace and order in society. The Taliban must abandon their antiquated theological system in Favor of a more moderate one that ensures citizens' fundamental rights, liberty, and security. While doing so, the Taliban will almost certainly gain recognition for their rule from various ethnic groups within the country as well as from neighboring countries and the rest of the globe.

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