

A call for action

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Every nation has a right to be developed, prosperous, and strong. The foundation of a nation is its people. For a developed and prosperous country, it is important to educate its people to open their minds to different ideals and get on the path to a progressive society.

When it comes to education, there should be no distinction between men and women. However, Afghanistan has a different story to tell.

The Taliban's recent decision to ban women's education in Afghanistan has once again raised concerns. The ban will also have a negative impact on the image of Islam internationally. It also goes against the Taliban's previous commitment to allow girls to return to school once the US and its allies exit the war-torn country. But now the group has implemented a ban on female education, and they use co-education as a reason to justify their decision.

The Taliban believe mixed education is against not only Islamic principles but also against Afghan culture and values. The Taliban should have offered an alternative like segregated education facilities, but they have failed to do this so far. As a result, women will be left far behind, unable to become productive citizens of Afghan society for a long time to come. Also, they will be increasingly isolated and marginalized in a country where only men will have authority.

There is a saying – 'educating one woman is like educating a generation'. Women play a large part in the upbringing of children. An educated woman can raise her children more efficiently. Stripping Afghan women of their rights will inflict serious damage on Afghan society and create a huge gender gap. It will also push Afghanistan backwards.

In communities within the country where women are not allowed to be treated by male doctors, denying Afghan women the right to education also means that there will be no female doctors in the future, and healthcare for Afghan women would be an issue serious enough to ring alarm bells across the globe. The maternal mortality rate is already one of the highest in Afghanistan. And the recent ban will make it even more difficult for Afghan women to access healthcare. It will not be wrong to say that this ban is a silent killer. The Taliban have also shown that they are the enemy of their people.

Prohibition against women working or getting an education is not supported by Islam. Women have the right to work and earn a living.

After taking over power, the Taliban have made their own rules, and women have been forced out of the public sphere and strictly confined to their homes. History will witness that the land of Afghanistan, also known as the "graveyard of empires", will soon become a graveyard of wisdom/knowledge, especially for women, a few years down the road.

Women's right to learn, to speak, and to fight back are taken away from them. "We will not be influenced by anyone; we don't care about anyone. We are resolute in our will to implement the laws of God," says Neda Mohammad Nadeem, the Taliban's minister of higher education.

In universities in Afghanistan, the number of male students is higher. Many women have no access to education and vocational training that can help them get into jobs and create a better future. This is a clear example of gender discrimination and a country that has fallen into darkness. Women are the most important asset in any society. They should have access to education, healthcare, and various other things that they need in their lives while ensuring safety for them as well.

It is good to note that the brave Afghan women are fiercely resisting against this injustice. They recently protested the Taliban's ban on women and girls attending school in the streets of Kabul, and remained firm despite being tortured, harassed, and intimidated by the Taliban. Male students also showed solidarity and took to the streets to protest against the ban.

The best course of action at the moment is to persuade the Taliban to change their views and adopt gradualism as a strategy to promote women's rights. As fellow humans, we are responsible for speaking up against this gender inequality and standing with Afghan women, who are looking desperately for global support.

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