Section III.

Question 18 - Equality and Difference.

Afghanistan is culturally embedded with religious beliefs and values that have affected the traditional stereotypical gender stereotypes and inequalities of the society. Since the Taliban took over the government in 1996, the laws and restrictions that were infiltrated into the legal system have not yet been readdressed in the minds of Afghan men and women.

Under the Taliban, an extremist group affiliated with the principles of Islam, women were subjected to highly sexually discriminatory behavior and regarded inferior to men according to the Islamic writings of the Qur’an. Thus rules were incorporated to prevent equality between men and women and thus confining women to a second position of social subjugation in and repositioning in society Afghan society. Women failed to receive substantial quantities of socially valued resources such as a limited access to employment, healthcare and education and were confined to the home and a life of domesticity.
The Islamic practice of Purdah prevented women to be seen wearing a full length sheet over their bodies in public, called the Burqa. The employment of this practice symbolically represents the conditions and status to which women were vulnerable to. They were perceived by the Taliban to be inferior and thus the Burqa was designed to further exemplify this notion and conceal women from the eyes of society, they became invisible in the face of their country.

Women were not allowed to see male doctors and the media because of the lack of funding for reproductive services. Women often experienced death during childbirth and there existed a high infant mortality rate.

In relation to education, women and girls were banished from schools and has resulted in Afghanistan's positioning as second world's most illiterate country.

The geographical location of communities affects the kind of inequality exists amongst Afghans. The Sunni Muslims are exist mostly within the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, and have greater access to SRVs than the

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The Shiite Muslims who are centred in the rural areas of Afghanistan. Due to their geographical situation, Shiite Muslims have limited access to services such as education, employment and health care, resulting in high levels of illiteracy, infant mortality, death rates and poverty. The inequalities that exist amidst Afghanistan impact upon the women experienced a degree of hope when for one improvement the NATO government organization infiltrated the exist overtook the existing power of the oppressive Taliban and have since tried to improve the inequalities of existing inequalities in Afghanistan.

The impacts of maintaining existing inequalities are detrimental to this society's social development and the gender discrimination against women. The socially expected gender roles will remain and continue to affect the disintegration of the status of women in Afghanistan thus impacting on the levels of health care availability, literacy and educational access and employment to aid in the support of their families. Non-government organisations are trying to break through the overriding existing values of the Taliban and create a society in which equality exists among both genders.