GENDER APARTHEID IN AFGHANISTAN: EXCLUDING WOMEN FROM HEALTHCARE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

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Fig: 1


Fig: 2


Fig: 3

BACKGROUND

Afghan women face escalating gender apartheid. The 2024 ban on women's medical training threatens the female health workforce and access to care.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do Afghan women pursuing studies or working in healthcare experience Taliban-enforced gender apartheid?

QUALITATIVE METHOD

Anonymous online survey of 32 Afghan women (8 complete). All available open-ended responses were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

KEY STATISTICS

An estimated **3.8** million girls are out of school, while up to **25,400** female health workers could lose their jobs by 2030.

UNICEF, 2026

Among **426** participants, **87.6%** reported depressive symptoms and **49.8%** reported suicidal ideation.

Mohammadi et al., 2024

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: KEY FINDINGS

RESILIENCE AND ASPIRATIONS

Participants described coping strategies, sustained motivation, and determination to continue their professional paths.

PSYCHOSOCIAL HARM

Participants reported stress, loss of control, and profound emotional distress.

STRUCTURAL EXCLUSION

Educational, political and economic barriers restricted access to training, employment and professional advancement.

PARTICIPANT VOICE:

"I feel like I am in a prison."

WHY IT MATTERS — WHAT SHOULD CHANGE

Afghanistan demonstrates how gender-based exclusion from education can become a health-system crisis, weakening the workforce, restricting access to essential care, and deepening health inequities.

⚖️ Recognise gender apartheid and strengthen international accountability.

🎓 Protect Afghan women's right to health education and employment.

💻 Fund safe, accessible learning pathways developed with Afghan women.

SCAN FOR FULL REFERENCES ▼

Selected References:

Bennett, 2026; Bennoune, 2022; Majrooh, 2025; Mohammadi et al., 2024; Popalzay, 2025; UNICEF, 2026.