

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 14, 2015

## Narcotics Fuel Insurgency

Alongside terrorism, narcotics have been debasing Afghan society to a great extent. Both of them, as a matter of fact, have joined hands and basically support each other. It is important to eradicate narcotics if the government is really serious about fighting terrorism.

The previous government promised many times that the menace of narcotics would be dealt with iron hands; but it failed to do so. The international community, as well, could not play a significant role in this regard and, thus, the menace has persisted and targeting us.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah also agrees that narcotics have a role to fuel insecurity in the country and close coordination among institutions is needed to counter the menace. Talking to a cabinet meeting on Monday, April 13, he said that the previous government was not able to eliminate drugs and its smuggling; therefore, serious efforts are required to control the menace. He also mentioned that absence of thorough implementation of law and lack of coordination among departments were among hurdles to counter the narcotics business. And, the relevant law was flexible and smugglers would manage to flee.

It is now an open secret that the poppy cultivation and its smuggling are linked with the networks of organized crime in the country that further extends to international mafia and drug dealing and they have their strong backers in the international drug market and national authorities who appear to be guardians of the nation. But one of the most alarming and unfortunate facts is that they have their links with the terrorist networks in the country. The growing insurgency and expanding networks of terrorism suggest that the terrorists have strong financial support and currently there are many reports that disclose the fact that the terrorist networks receive most of their funding from the same source.

This scenario is really very much threatening. This is going to ruin the lives of the people of Afghanistan in various ways and unfortunately no break in it seems very much likely - at least not in near future as the statistics show that there has been and there will be increase in the opium production in the country if not handled properly.

The situation would not be difficult to handle if it was limited only to farmers but the fact is that the farmers are not alone to benefit from the rising prices and the rise in production; rather farmers take a negligible part of it while most of the income goes to the networks that manage its filthy business. And it is not concealed from knowing minds that the terrorist networks have a lion's share in such income. So, it means that with the growth in the production of opium, there will be considerable increase in insurgency from the terrorist networks that are already in the process of gaining strength. Moreover, it has also been observed that the cultivations mostly take place in the areas where Taliban seem to have more control. It is believed that most of the cultivation is concentrated in southern provinces, and heartland of the Taliban-led insurgency, where the government does not seem to have much control.

This clearly suggests that there is connection between the poppy business and the growing insurgency. Definitely, the poppy business in Afghanistan is well knit in the larger network of organized crime. But unfortunately, the measures that have been carried out to counter the growth of this menace have not been comprehensive and serious. It is even believed that the important figures are involved in backing this business that should, otherwise, have the responsibility to counter them. And the growing corruption and negligence of responsibility in the country does not let the government notice such realities. Though Afghanistan has been under international pressure to take notice of growing poppy cultivation, it is yet to hit the bull's eye in this regard. Moreover, there have been technical and financial assistance from the international community to help Afghanistan eradicate this evil, but most of it goes to the pockets of rampant corruption.

So, the menace of poppy cultivation is determined to influence the country in various ways. It, on one side, is making drugs available to a large number of people, who are both intentionally and unintentionally becoming addict to it and becoming responsible for giving birth to different social problems. On the other hand, it is providing the fuel for insurgency as it is bound to benefit the terrorist networks in the country that largely depend on such sources of income after losing support from elsewhere. Government authorities in this regard have to get very much serious and try to take concrete steps to make sure that the production is reduced to a considerable extent. Destroying the crops is one of the most practical steps at the present scenario and can to a very great extent discourage the poppy cultivation but it has certain complexities with itself. For the long-lasting solution it is preferable that the government must try to facilitate the farmers and landowners the opportunity of growing alternate crops. Moreover, corruption, in this regard, must not be tolerated in any condition, as it the matter that has been influencing the entire nation and would keep on influencing many generations to come. The relevant authorities must consider their responsibilities and play their part in extracting the nation out of this evil; otherwise it would be too late to mend anything.



## The Causes of Violence against Afghan Women

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

In Afghanistan, women are the most vulnerable segment of the society. For decades, they have suffered from violence, deprivation and misbehaviors stemmed from wars and the dominant conservative attitude towards them. In general, the widespread violence against women can be examined in two different but related contexts. First, the women have suffered from the deeply-rooted violent conservatism in the Afghan society and a culture based on male-dominant traditions. Second, the long-lasting wars and adverse security conditions have affected all vulnerable segments of the society, most severely the women. The over-a-decade efforts for promoting women's rights and improving their conditions have had considerable impacts, but enormous challenges are still remaining.

Obviously, the most important reason behind the widespread violence against women is the fact that the Afghan society is deeply conservative. The common view to women as the inferior gender can be attributed to the Afghan conservatism. The widespread domestic violence and violent behaviors against women are closely related to the conservative attitude of the male members of the families to the women. Male family members usually seek superiority in form of guardianship over female members. Inevitably, efforts from the male in seeking superiority result to conflicts in the families and consequently violence against women. The major reason behind the attitude of violent domination of male members over the women and girls in the families is the traditions, flawed interpretation of religion and the low rate of literacy in the society. Therefore, the Afghan women have long suffered from domestic violence and discriminations in the male-dominated Afghan families.

In this context, women's rights are systematically violated, their legitimate freedoms and rights are severely restricted and they usually have less say in decision-makings. Due to the conservative attitude and lack of respect and commitment to women in the war-torn country, girls and women encounter discriminations and violent behaviors in workplaces and public areas on a daily basis. Despite considerable progress in the cities, the status of women in the remote villages and rural areas remains distressing. Still, a large portion of women and girls are deprived of accessing education and work opportunities due to the dominant conservative culture.

Moreover, Afghan women have been deprived of their basic rights and freedoms as they have been treated as an inferior class in the society as well as the families. For instance, for a typical Afghan girl, particularly in rural areas, it has been less likely to have the permission of her family to go to school, university or workplace, virtually leading to her deprivation from opportunities critical for a better life. In more conservative areas, a girl has no say about her preference or endorsement for marriage while the male members of the family have the final authority in making decisions.

The decades of war and violence have played a major role in violation of women's rights and limitation of their freedoms. In fact, the women have been direct victims of war and instability, and the most affected segment of the society during the past decades of wars. They have suffered from wars and subsequent displacements. The militant groups still target the women activists as well as the women and girls who go to schools or work outside. The insurgents continue to target women activists and school girls to discourage them from their social activities and attending public schools. Despite extensive pro-women campaign during past fourteen years, there are many cases

of violence against women on daily basis. Time and again, there are reports of shocking cases of violence against women such as honor killings, rapes and tortures.

Despite all progresses made during past 14 years, there are still concerns for probable setbacks in women's rights. Many wonder about what would happen when foreign troops completely withdraw and how it would affect the status of women and the hard-gained achievements of the past over-a-decade. Despite the substantial gains, there are still potential dangers threatening the minimum achievements in this regard.

Despite all concerns about the future, the fact is that Afghanistan has changed and the status of women in Afghanistan has considerably improved since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The programs aimed at improving the life conditions of women have worked and helped in reshaping public opinions towards the women. The government-led policies and strategies towards promoting the rights of the women have been effective - though insufficient. The government is continuing to provide support to the media, human rights organizations, women activists and other women's rights advocates. The collective efforts of the government of Afghanistan and the international community have helped to encourage other parties in the society to step in the campaign for the cause. Human rights organizations and women activists bear the brunt the campaign against extremists and in the conservative society.

Public awareness campaign for promoting women's rights has been the most major driver for change. But it has not been carried out with potent momentum which could benefit all parts of the society. Public awareness gradually changes the conservative mood of the society and makes it ready for embracing new ways of life and accepting a new set of rights for the women. In order to carry out such public awareness, general education is the key. By generalizing education to the far-reach corners of the country, and to all parts of society, Afghans will be able to fight conservatism. In addition to that, the women now have direct and active involvement in the campaign, giving them a voice and the energy to make their voice heard.

As a result of the efforts, the conservative Afghan society is opening up for embracing new status and rights for the women in post-Taliban Afghanistan. In recent years, the situation has much improved as the collective move towards the goal of a violence-free society for women impacts the society. While there were almost a-zero percent of girls in school during the Taliban era, there are now millions of girls going to schools and universities, which virtually would change their life as well as the attitude of the society and that of families. During the Taliban regime, the women of Afghanistan were fully banned from working outside and in public services and were forced to stay indoors. They were forced to be accompanied by a male relative when going out, visiting relatives or shopping. But now, they are memories of the past.

Today, there are women presenters in the media, women teachers at schools and universities and women lawmakers in the parliament. This is a clear sign of what is going on in Afghan still-conservative society. The fact that millions of girls are going to universities is indicating that the country is changing, though not at a fast pace, but is moving in the right direction. All the events and developments are indicative of change for the women and that the deeply conservative society is opening up for embracing new values and standards of life values for the women.

Abdul Ahad Bahrami is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at [ahad.bahrami@gmail.com](mailto:ahad.bahrami@gmail.com)

## Child Upbringing and True Understanding!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

As a part of increasing coordination with parents and establishing good relations with them for the sake of betterment of children, teachers once or twice visited the homes or offices of parents in a year called 'Home Visits'. In this way, teachers learned more about the habit and abilities of the child and parents also felt confident to communicate with the teacher and school administration more openly and confidently to discuss different problems. I was on one of my visits and we were warmly received in a very beautifully decorated room. The table was full of different edibles and tea was already served. We were getting introduced to each other and also having light discussion about the child and her performance in school. The mother of the child was a doctor and she had good knowledge about the education of children and different techniques used in this regard. Her knowledge about the psychology of children really impressed me. When our smooth discussion was in progress, an old bearded man entered the room. He looked more than 60 but was still healthy and active. He wore a fine white cloth and had a charming personality. I and my colleague teacher stood up in his respect and he also welcomed us nicely. He was the grandfather of the child. Soon two more kids entered the room who were the brothers of the girl and studied in another school. Our discussion circled around different topics regarding education like book reading, generating and following a time table, health problems and other similar topics. Then the discussion started about behavioral problems of children and especially students. The grandfather was saying, 'You see these two kids; they are very good in studies and are very obedient. They listen to you and do the way they are directed. Right from the first day of their school, I have helped them with their studies at home and they have shown marvelous performance in school. But this girl is a different case. I am a bit strict because of which they not only obey me but also listen when I teach them or ask them to complete their homework. But when I started teaching this girl, soon she started running away from me and her mother also took her side. Now, she has developed a habit of not listening to anyone and doing each and everything according to her own wishes. I believe that if her mother lets me to control her according to my method, she will not only be a good girl but her performance in studies would also improve.' When I was about to say something, mother of the child started speaking, 'but it is a fact that we should not be strict on children and give them freedom so that their talents and abilities should flourish. I know that by her grandfather's method, we may make her obedient but then her confidence will be crushed and all her talents and hidden abilities will wither away which I would not like to have at any cost.' I was silently listening to both the parties and thinking about the discussion which is getting very hot with every passing day. There are two generations that think absolutely differently in this regard. Before ten years or more, there was not present any such problem. Beating, shouting and keeping a strict control was regarded as the most important and essential element of children's training and there was not present any two views in this regard. But with increasing knowledge and educational enlightenment, the scenario is changing. The educated and fresh minds are getting increased access to the present day thoughts and they have started thinking differently. On the other hand, it is also difficult to change those perceptions that existed for many centuries and the results are both satisfactory and worthy for them.

But the ground realities are also very harsh. Number of parents with a different perspective are increasing who believe in bringing children with complete freedom, without any kind of control on them and it is the reason that, today's children are more difficult to be controlled and more problematic. In old times, children were expected to be comparatively quiet, well-behaving and obeying almost all the orders or directions of elders but today's Afghan children are more resilient, ill-mannered, undisciplined and problematic. Parents are very much worried in controlling their kids and their behaviors are not acceptable for them. Teaching has become a very taunting and asking profession when government has officially banned any kind of physical punishment or shouting and the result has come in form of students who are not willing to listen and obey the teachers and with every passing day, teaching is becoming more and more difficult. This scenario has supported those who are in favor of old system and criticize the modern techniques and their followers.

Both the perspectives carry weight on their place. The modern techniques about training and bringing up children are the fruits of research and study of many decades. When children are brought up with this knowledge and understanding, they become open-minded, exhibit their natural confidence and come up with their talents and hidden abilities and it is the reason why, every developed nation has given emphasis on the education necessary to bring up children on modern lines. But it is necessary that parents and educators must be fully educated about all the different needs of children and they should treat them nicely and properly. In our case, it was not implemented in a proper manner. Parents only learned that they should give absolute freedom to the children and should meet all their demands and they did not bother to study or train themselves as how this delicate work is to be carried out. At the same time, they were not ready to come up with this responsibility. As a result, absolute and uncontrollable freedom was given to the children and we see that our children have run out of our control.

When we talk of the old methods, it has also been misunderstood. In old times, our society was based on knowledge, there used to be gatherings of poets and scholars and the elders were of extraordinary impressive characters. Having a look at these strong points, words of elders carried much weight and children obeyed them nicely. When the children were brought up in such an atmosphere when the sound character of elders intimidated all other factors, children remained under the impressive and obedient control of elders. Unfortunately, we lost our educational and cultural heritage in last few centuries and today's elders only know to shout and order but their personal character, knowledge and level of wisdom is so poor that our young generations no more appear interested in them or whatever they say.

We are lucky that we have the past glory of knowledge, wisdom and rich literature. On the other hand, we have also access to the modern knowledge and thoughts. We cannot ignore the importance of either of them. At the same time, following any one of the paths would really be problematic. We can follow the middle path learning the modern techniques and thoughts and we can also enrich our lives and of our children by learning and adopting practically the strong character of our forefathers. This will be the most suitable and permanent solution of this erroneous problem of modern day parents and teachers.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at [muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com](mailto:muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com)

Chairman / Editor in Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa

Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: [mail@outlookafghanistan.com](mailto:mail@outlookafghanistan.com), [outlookafghanistan@gmail.com](mailto:outlookafghanistan@gmail.com)

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Omeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan

Sub Office: Shora Road, Street 10, District 6, Kartey 3, Kabul, Afghanistan

