

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

Daily Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

April 17, 2016

Fighting Rising Insecurity

There were certain expectations in the beginning of the new year that some sort of negotiation with Taliban may start and there may be some positive development towards peace; however, all those expectations do not seem to be bearing any fruit as the peace talks with Taliban are nowhere to be found and the fighting season has already started.

There are serious security challenges in different parts of the country. Heavy clashes are going on in Uruzgan, Kunduz, Baghlan and Farah between Taliban insurgents and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) nowadays, and they may continue for some time to come unless there is some sort of cease fire which does not seem probable. The security situation in other parts of the country does not seem satisfactory as well. Taliban do not seem to be in a mood for negotiation; not at least now as they claim they are ready for the fight. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah said in a statement on Saturday, April 16, "The war continues. It means that the Taliban still believes in a military solution. They [Taliban] however in some places, at the sideline of some conferences as well as official and unofficial meetings say that war is not a solution."

Mostly, Taliban intensify their offensive during the spring season which is called as Spring Offensive and this year they may continue it as well and pose serious threats to ANSF. ANSF will have to deal with several clashes in different parts of the country simultaneously and this they have to do without much support of the international security forces.

Afghan government is also aware of the fact that their potential will be tested during this year's Spring Offensive. President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday, April 16, had a video conference with governors, police chiefs and other officials from 34 provinces and directed them to prioritize security and the fight against the enemy - in their relevant provinces. According to a press statement issued by the president's office, in this video conference, the officials briefed Ghani on their activities and security situations in their relevant provinces. Ghani meanwhile said military operations carried out by Afghan security and defense forces are going well against militants in parts of the country. He also directed governors, religious scholars, tribal elders and the people to condemn and stand against the "imposed war" in their relevant provinces; because, according to him, terrorists target children, women, Ulema (religious scholars) and other civilians.

It is extremely important that the security officials in different parts of the country should be encouraged and motivated at this crucial juncture but it also imperative that they should be provided enough and timely support from the center whenever required. On various occasions when the security forces faced enemies in different clashes and they required the support from the center they were not provided such support on time and therefore they had to face temporary setback. The fall of Kunduz was one of the main examples. Currently, as well the officials in Baghlan province require the support from Kabul, which should be provided to them on time so as to avoid any serious consequence.

It has to be observed closely that the threatening insecurity is not only influencing the lives of the security officials but the civilians as well. Afghan government, therefore, has to keep in consideration as well that as a result of decades of instability and socio-economic and political problems, the Afghan people have been suffering from myriads of problems. Though there have been certain important improvements made in the last decade or so, some very concerning issues still exist that threaten the lives of the common people of Afghanistan. There are claims that changes have been brought within Afghan society; however, it should be noted that if the effectiveness of the changes have to be felt or observed, they should be observed by the changes in the lives of the common people. If there is any change in the condition of living of the common people as the outcome of the change; the change should be guarded for and even backed and supported vehemently. If not, either the claim must be discarded as wrong or the efforts should be improved to make the changes effective. And that is what Afghanistan needs to do - it has to improve its efforts to bring about necessary changes in the lives of the common people that have been jeopardized both by insecurity and lack of rudimentary requirements of life.

Afghan government must therefore get serious in tackling with the issue of the insecurity and at the same time strive to provide at least the rudimentary requirements of life to people as they can also play a tremendous role in fighting against the insurgents. If the people are sure that the present government can strive honestly to provide them their necessities they will definitely join hands together along with the security forces to fight terrorists and terrorism successfully.

The Endless Suffering of Women

By Hujjatullah Zia

The vulnerability of Afghan women is beyond doubt. Their life is fraught with manifold problems. The traditional frames of mind and cultural taboos curtail their freedoms to a large extent. A large number of girls and women are not allowed to take part in social activities - especially in the Taliban-dominated areas. Women and girls are supposed to abide by the traditions rule their surroundings. After all, to the unmitigated chagrin of Afghan women, the Afghanistan's presidential election in the solar year of 1393 was not a panacea for their bleeding wounds. They fell victim to gang violence and rape constantly as ever before. In other words, the macabre stories and hackneyed phrases of violence made repeated headlines on national and international newspapers - and continue up to now. They still appear to be treated as pariah in traditional areas.

Everybody is used to the words of 'feminism and feminist', this ideology is based on equality of man and woman and feminists struggle in support of women. There are three main feminist viewpoints - liberal, radical and black feminisms - and I would like to explain them shortly.

Liberal feminism seeks gender inequality in social and cultural attitudes. In spite of radical feminists, liberal feminists do not consider the inferiority and obedience of women a part of larger system or structure. They study the bias against women in work-field, educational institutions and media. They support equal opportunities for women through legislation or other democratic methods. Liberal feminists support legislative development such as equal payment or abolishing sex bias. Moreover, they perform their activities through existing systems so as to bring gradual amendments. Therefore, their method is far more moderate than radical feminists who want the collapse of the existing law. Even though, liberal feminists played vital role in the development of women within the last decade, nonetheless the critics believe that they were not able to discover the root cause of gender inequality and the essence of systemic cruelty which is going on in the society against women. Likewise, radical feminists accuse liberal feminists of encouraging women to accept unequal society with its competitive characters.

This belief is the essence of radical feminist that men are responsible for women's exploitation. Analysis of patriarchy - systemic dominance of men over women - is the main tendency of this type of feminism. They believe that patriarchy is a nationwide phenomenon throughout the cultures and times. Radical feminists consider family as a basic source of atrocity and cruelty in the society. They state that men exploit women by making them work free of charge. Moreover, they believe that men are a setback for women to reach power in the society. Firestone, one of the first writers of radical feminist who used to live in 19th

century, states that men have control over the role of women in reproduction and training of children. Furthermore, radical feminists believe that women cannot get rid of sexual cruelties and atrocities by gradual changes and amendment. According to them, patriarchy is a systemic phenomenon; gender equality is possible only by demolishing the system of patriarchy. They believe that those social and cultural norms which reiterate the slender figures and sympathetic attitudes of women, aim to extend their inferiority and obedience. According to this type of feminism, objectifying women through media, models and advertisements change women to sexual objects with the intention of amusing and pleasing men.

Black feminism, forms due to discontent with the existing feminisms, and concentrates on the challenges lying ahead of black women. Many black feminists and the feminists of developing countries allege that feminisms are not implemented equally between white and black women. The writings of American black feminists reiterate the effect of strong heritage of slavery, prejudice and seclusion and movement of civil law over the gender inequality in black community. Black women were exposed to prejudice based on their race and sex. Stratification was also a factor which played its role negatively about black women. According to black feminists, black women are involved in multiple deprivations which are based on color, sex, and stratification. Hence, when these three factors come together, they intensify one another. I am neither feminist nor radical, however, I agree with radical feminism. Women do not only suffer violence but they are widely exploited in social life and objectified in advertisement gimmicks. Considering the rights and dignity of women around the world, including Afghanistan, women suffer painfully on the basis of their sex. Their rights are violated to a large extent and their freedoms are curtailed mainly in traditional societies. Afghan women suffered greatly not only during the Taliban's regime but also in post-Taliban time. As a result, members of the Taliban insurgents sprayed corrosive acid on the faces of school girls and flagellated the women in desert court with great inhumanity. In suicide bombings, the lifeless bodies of women, as drops of boiling blood trickle down their wounds, fill one with a strong sense of sorrow and disgust.

Women are not inferior in the eye of religion and law. Hence, the government should enforce the law strictly and empower women through safeguarding their rights and dignity. The constitution of Afghanistan aptly states, "Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable. The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity."

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

Poverty Beyond the Numbers

By Julia Corvalan

What is poverty? For decades, we have defined it with a number, which the World Bank currently puts at a personal income of less than \$1.90 per day. But a single number fails to capture the complexity of poverty. Measuring more than just income is essential to understanding the needs of poor people and delivering optimal assistance.

As the World Bank convenes its Spring Meetings in Washington, DC next week, we have an opportunity to set benchmarks that include social and environmental dimensions of poverty. The Bank has acknowledged that more than income should be considered, and recently established a Commission on Global Poverty to recommend additional metrics.

Although many public and private groups already collect data on a range of issues affecting poor communities such as nutrition, maternal health, or access to education, such information remains largely untapped and is rarely shared across institutions. But there are some beacons of light, including the Social Progress Index, which provides a framework for tracking multiple symptoms of poverty across countries and complements traditional income-based measures.

When we rely on a single number to measure poverty, we misdiagnose the needs of poor people. In my home country, Paraguay, I work with one of the country's largest social enterprises, Fundación Paraguaya, to provide microfinance, education, and training to thousands of our poorest citizens. We look at 50 metrics across six dimensions of poverty, including income, housing, education, and infrastructure.

One of our clients, Doña Mercedes, is now a successful micro-entrepreneur from a rural community not far from the capital city of Asunción. When she first started with Fundación Paraguaya, she was sharing a single-bedroom home with 16 other family members and cooking meals on a small fire pit on the dirt floor. Now she has a cement floor, a brick house, a separate kitchen, and around \$500 in personal savings.

By using Fundación Paraguaya's self-evaluation on poverty, she was able to understand her own needs better and address them one at a time. While traditional approaches focus largely on estimating the sources of household expenses and income, the Fundación Paraguaya self-evaluation helped Doña Mercedes break down her needs into 50 discrete areas that she could work on, piece by piece, and monitor over time.

For example, she self-evaluated the state of her bathroom and kitchen, the quality of the food eaten at home, the fam-

ily's dental health, the number of separate bedrooms in the house, and even her self-esteem and decision-making capacity. A simple poverty map helps her track her progress by using the colors of the stoplight, red, yellow, and green, and highlight her priority areas. Next she plans to add two more bedrooms to her house and to work on enlarging her business.

Fundación Paraguaya has been able to replicate this type of success in other parts of the world. In Tanzania, where I worked for three years in rural communities, we helped villages in the Southern Highlands adapt our poverty indicators to the local context in order to tackle water, sanitation, and electrification needs. Similar efforts are being deployed in South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, China, and beyond.

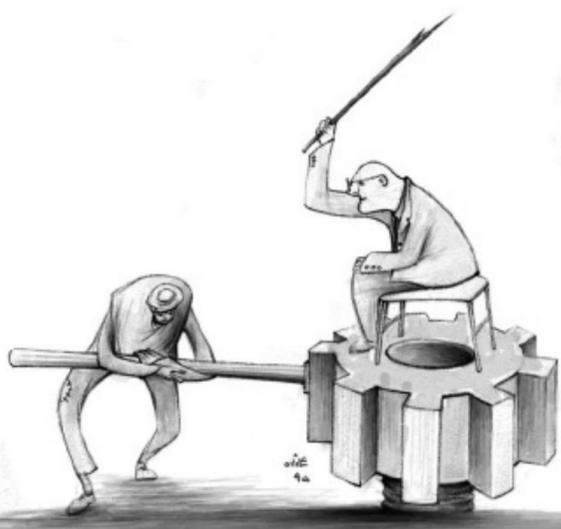
We could make even more progress with public-sector support. Fundación Paraguaya collects rich data across multiple dimensions, tracking more than 8,700 families each year in Paraguay alone. If this information were to reach the government of Paraguay - which has its own methods for collecting data - we could identify pockets of poverty sooner and customize programs to help each family. Because the information is self-reported, this sort of collaboration could deliver targeted aid and highlight specific public services that are needed.

Moreover, if the World Bank's Commission on Global Poverty adopts multidimensional poverty measures, it will spur other organizations to produce and share more detailed poverty data. That will give aid workers a more comprehensive poverty map of the world, helping to boost the effectiveness of anti-poverty efforts everywhere.

It won't be easy to choose which measures to include, or even how to set universal yardsticks; but even adopting a few basic ones would spur progress. For too long, one-dimensional measures such as the \$1.90 per day guideline have misdiagnosed poor people's problems - and more importantly, their causes. We know that the \$1.90 per day benchmark does not fully capture the struggles of poor people in places such as Paraguay.

Fortunately, the World Bank now appears to recognize the limits of its income-based indicator. Ensuring that the right type of aid reaches those most in need in a timely and effective manner requires development policymakers to embrace the type of multidimensional poverty data that aid organizations like Fundación Paraguaya have learned to gather.

Julia Corvalan is an Aspen New Voices Fellow and Strategy Adviser for Fundación Paraguaya, a social enterprise based in Paraguay, with expertise in the replication and adaptation of poverty elimination programs between Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.



Daily Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان
The Daily Afghanistan

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.