

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



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The Dearth of Rudimentary Requirements

Though human beings require different types of needs in their lives, the needs to live alive are the most basic and important ones. These include food, cloth and shelter. Provided with these rudimentary requirements, human beings are able to pursue their other needs, objectives and goals. Fortunately, our planet earth is embellished with different sorts of resources and all these resources help human beings in acquiring their needs. Unfortunately, it is still weird to find millions of people without the basic needs in the world.

The American Psychologist, Abraham Harold Maslow had mentioned in his paper, "The Theory of Human Motivation" in 1943 that human beings have a hierarchy of needs and the basic needs like physiological and safety needs are at the very bottom of the hierarchy. These needs are, in fact, the most basic ones and human beings tend to follow their other needs only after they have these needs fulfilled. The need for affection and relatedness, the need for respect and dignity or the needs for self actualization stand on these basic needs and are followed after rudimentary needs. The other needs are basically a luxury if human beings do not have their basic needs.

Why is it so that even after having large reservoirs of different resources human beings are not able to get even their basic requirements? Though human beings are the most prudent of all the creatures and they claim to be the best, they are not able to use these resources wisely. From the very first human beings, like all the other creatures, they have strived to find out ways of fulfilling their needs. They have travelled much in this regard and yet stand nowhere. They have formed societies and developed systems, yet they are not able to provide even the basic needs of life to all the human beings. This is really very much pathetic.

Some of the thinkers suggest that human beings are bound by the law of nature to be so. They believe that all human beings may not be able to have their basic needs as only those among them are capable of doing so who are the fittest among them. They, in fact, strive to apply the biological theory of Charles Darwin in society - "struggle for survival, survival of the fittest." However, they forget to miss a very important point that the theory may apply for the struggle among different species with their environment, not among the members of the same specie for their personal benefits. If as specie human beings adopt the theory of evolution, they would find out ways of making human beings survive against the changing nature of their circumstances, not fighting one another to steal basic requirements.

Ill-fatedly, human beings are divided into 'haves' and 'have-nots'. They are divided in the rich and the poor. The rich have all the requirements of lives and they enjoy all the luxuries as well while the poor suffer because of the lack of basic requirements. This is not nature that has decided such an arrangement; it is human beings themselves. The nature does not differentiate the human beings into rich and poor. The scented breeze in the nature blows for everyone without the distinction of race, community, poor and rich. The river that flows in nature provides everyone with same bewitching scene and cold water to drink. The fountains do not recognize the strata and the economic status. And even the natural calamities; like earthquakes, floods and deadly hurricanes destroys everyone equally. However, some may have developed better defense against all these calamities by the dint of their wealth, which is because of the economic system in society developed by human beings themselves, not the nature.

It is the socio-economic and political systems in the country that divide the human beings in different classes. These classes are distinguished with vivid and sharp boundaries. The differences found in these classes are gigantic and one wonders how human beings are really satisfied with so much distinctions. The examples are not difficult to find. There are millions of poor people in the world. They have not enough food to eat, no water to drink and no cloth to wear. The economic system developed by human beings, with the intentions to fulfill their requirements, has in fact cheated them and they are at a stage of misery. The class-based system and the vivid class disparities have neutralized the capacity of human beings to fulfill their basic requirements from the infinite resources. This has generated an imbalanced system. This imbalance has further created different sorts of evils in society. There are crimes and injustices because of the same system. Poor, because of negligence and lack of basic requirements are bound to break the law and the rich, because of their authority to mock the law and order system, break it. Poor, to quench the thirst of their children and fill their stomach with few morsels of food, break the law; while the rich, to quench their thirst for luxury and adventure, break it.

This system cannot guarantee sustainability and has to change or to die one day. It is a widely accepted proverb that necessity is the mother of invention. Human necessities will compel them to design a better system - a system that would guarantee the providence of basic requirements to all the human beings on the planet earth.



Children's Vulnerability to Social and Political Challenges

By Hujjatullah Zia

Children are susceptible to social, political and economic challenges all around the world. Their life is replete with pain and sufferings. They are left at the mercy of child labor, sexual abuse and war and violence. The terrorist networks involve the children in armed conflicts and use them as human shields. Their rights and liberty are violated in the worst possible way, mainly in war-torn countries. An estimated 25 million children are uprooted from their homes; they make up nearly half of the refugee population worldwide. Moreover, there are approximately 150 million street children worldwide between the ages of 3 and 18, which include 40 per cent of homeless children. Decades of war and conflict, drought, other natural disasters and destruction of infrastructures created widespread poverty among millions of Afghans especially in the rural areas. Child labor is one of the serious challenges in Afghanistan. With the approach of winter, the number of children increases on Kabul streets. Male and female children are involved in selling plastics, polishing shoes, etc. It is believed that a number of children from poor families will take the desire of going to school to the grave with them. It is said that the escalated militancy, criminal activity and general insecurity affect education, with school closures reported in eastern and northern regions. Children continue to be the victims of grave violations by warring parties, including death, amputation and recruitment into armed groups.

According to UNOCHA, some 189,000 under five child deaths in Afghanistan are most likely attributable to malnutrition. Malnutrition is not only an illness that risks the life of a child, but it is also a problem that impacts the children's future.

After all, Fifty-seven percent of all marriages that take place in Afghanistan are classified as child marriages by UNIFEM (under the legal age of 16), and 70 to 80 percent of these are forced marriages. These practices underlie many of the problems faced by women and girls, with a correlation between domestic violence and child/forced marriage. Early marriages often contribute to girls dropping out of school and to early childbearing, with the attendant risks of health complications or maternal death.

Moreover, opium and heroin addiction is one of the challenges which have affected the children too. People in Afghanistan are using opium to block pain. The pain of hunger, sickness, physical and mental trauma forced them to resort to addictions so as to alleviate their challenges for some days. There are now around 3 million addicts in this nation of about 30 million people, including tens of thousands of children. Reportedly, as violence continues to escalate, nearly 500,000

children now live in 16 besieged areas in Syria. The number of children living under siege has doubled in less than one year and the children were almost completely cut off from sustained humanitarian aid and basic services. "For millions of human beings in Syria, life has become an endless nightmare - in particular for the hundreds of thousands of children living under siege. Children are being killed and injured, too afraid to go to school or even play, surviving with little food and hardly any medicine," UNICEF executive director Anthony Lake is cited as saying.

The war victims who take refuge, along with their children, to foreign countries to breathe in a climate void of violence and bloodshed and flee the IS's murderous acts and toxic ideology, succumb to death on a large scale. The children, especially the female teens, bear the brunt of war in Middle East. As a result, a considerable number of underage females fell victim to systematic rape perpetrated by IS group. Hence, it is not only the issue of education but they suffer manifold problems created by radical elements.

International humanitarian law, or the laws of war, prohibits the recruitment or use of children under 15 by parties to a conflict. "Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities" is a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to which Afghanistan belongs. Those who commit, order, assist, or have command responsibility for war crimes are subject to prosecution by the ICC or national courts.

The international community has to uphold children's rights and dignity and empower them through schooling. In another item, the terrible effects of war and persisting challenges of refugees and war victims will have to be mitigated via global campaign against extremism and providing education for teenage asylum seekers. After all, the perpetrators of war crimes and violators of child's rights have to be pursued and prosecuted in the first instance.

In Afghanistan, the government is responsible to protect the rights of the children. To advocate their rights, the state will have to conduct awareness programs to illustrate their rights on the basis of national and international laws. Moreover, it will have to provide children with educational facilities so that they can attend schools. In addition, the Ulema Council and the clergy will have to explain the rights of children based on religious tenets and Islamic Sharia and condemn the acts of the Taliban for killing and involving them in war and violence so as to mitigate violence against them.

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

Investment in Water Infrastructure

By Muhammad Zahir Akbari

Water is the foundation of life but no major investment has taken place to fight against widespread water issues in Afghanistan. According to reports 32 percent of people have access to improved drinking water, and about 68 percent do not have access to improved sanitation. Meanwhile according to the Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, overall 57 percent of Afghans are using surface water, which is an unimproved source of drinking water. Over 20% of the population (mostly rural) practices open defecation, often in the rivers they drink out of. The majority of the rest of the population use traditional latrines. The latrines are a better option than open defecation, but still not very good. Because they do not isolate excrement from human contact and do not dispose of the waste by moving it outside of the house they still lead to disease and infection. Even if you could move it out of the house Afghanistan has no wastewater management right now, and hasn't for a long time.

Afghanistan needs billions of dollars for dams and irrigation system to feed and water her growing populations. For centuries, most of the water from Afghanistan's main river basins has poured north to central Asia, east to Pakistan or west to Iran. Pakistan and Iran have both spent billions in recent decades building dams and reservoirs to store water for consumption and generating power. But Afghanistan has been unable to make any significant efforts, more than three decades of war ruining its water infrastructure.

According to expert, the amount of rain and snowfall in Afghanistan makes 57 billion cubic meters of water annually. Unfortunately, between 30 to 35 percent of this water can be used in Afghanistan and the rest ends up in foreign countries. As aforementioned, the loss of water means only 32% of Afghan has access to clean water system; we produce just one percent of the 23,000 megawatts of hydroelectricity it needs, and has less water than needed for growing wheat and other food commodities

Comparing to some neighboring countries, Afghanistan has only 32% population has access to improved sanitation facilities while the percentage in India is 40%, in Nepal it is 46% and in Pakistan it is 64%. The lack of clean drinking water is one of major factors to highest death rate of children in Afghanistan. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund, which found that 102 of every 1,000 children born in Afghanistan will die before reaching the age of five.

Waterborne diseases are very common in the country. The levels of diarrhea and dysentery, especially among small children, are at epidemic proportions. As well, a large number of people suffer from cholera because of dirty drinking water. The majority of the country gets its water from wells and storage tanks. Collecting water is most often a task assigned to women and children,

usually girls. In most areas of the county they walk miles to find water and then carry it back in large, heavy containers. The usual method of collecting the water is with manual hand pumps that are difficult to use. For children the task is particularly arduous and tiring. The water sources are heavily dependent on annual rainfall and snowfall but poor government policy has severely hampered the use of the country's river supplies. Climate change and drought are also severely affecting water supplies. Climate change is affected both shallow and groundwater levels. In major cities, thousands of wells already have been sunk while the number of population are increasing due to unemployment, security issues and forced systematic migration for instance the central area of country attacked by the Nomads.

The water table has dropped unprecedentedly, and thousands of settlements face severe water crisis. In addition, most of the shared water points and wells are contaminated, leading to illness. In Kabul city, with estimated population of 7 million people, 80% of them lack access to safe drinking water, and 95% lack access to improved sanitation facilities. Thus, other cities still do not have access to clean drinking water despite billions of dollars invested by the international community to supply the nation with a steady supply.

Due to lack of a canalization system, the underground water supplies in most large cities are under serious threat. According to some reports, the medical and solid wastes are mixed together and then buried and some thrown on the ground. The experts warn that over time the waste will seep into the underground water table poisoning the water.

The medical waste also contains infectious viruses and is putting the entire population at risk. Experts blame the problem on the lack of a proper waste management system in most of the country's hospitals. They also point out many industries' lack of corporate ethics for their unwillingness to protect the environment from the increase in industrial waste.

To overcome the issue, the government needs to invest in water infrastructure throughout the country, and devise an efficient plan which should also include the control of medical waste and polluted water in urban areas that is contaminating water supplies. Water sources should be distributed through pipelines and needs clusters of water tanks should be constructed in different areas to provide drinking water. New research is needed to form a collective diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of current river basin management practices especially in major cities. This would help ensure future plans for action are rooted in a realistic assessment of the current situation and add practical value where it's. Additionally, water misuse is rampant in the country therefore, necessary actions must be taken place broadly.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com



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



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