

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

# Daily Outlook

## AFGHANISTAN

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### Women Issues must be Dealt Permanently

The rights and role of women in Afghanistan have been important issues that have attracted much discussion but, in fact, there have not been sincere and appropriate efforts focused on them. As a result the key issues pertaining to the plight of women in the country have remained unsolved. The measures taken have not been persistent enough and have not strived to solve the root causes; rather they have dealt with temporary solutions and solace. Thus, the dirty and ugly existence has been covered with clean and ostentatious cloths and the same appearance is shown to the world, but the existence within has remained filthy.

The same has been highlighted by Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO). In a report (Women in the Eyes of Men: Tackling the Structural Roots of Women's Problems in Afghanistan) AHRDO has mentioned that women have remained a marginal force even after years of international investment in the country as international assistance has focused on short-term projects, failing to address women's structural impediments.

This has been one of the major issues with the assistance by the international community that it has funded the projects that have certain defined activities and limited to certain period of time. The organizations that have carried out these projects have mostly strived to generate benefits from the funds instead of using them for the proposed goals. As, the accountability has been insufficient the management of the projects and their success have been vague and, in certain cases, not even pursued properly.

Projects relevant to women issues have been used by different NGO's to attract donors and earn funding, not as genuine issues to be solved through proper processes and mechanisms. Thus the issues have remained the way they were or they are only solved temporarily and the institutional features that keep women subservient to patriarchal and masculine structures and out of mainstream developments have not been targeted.

The approach of men towards women and of different patriarchal institutions has been discriminatory as well which has further worsened the situation. The male members of the society have never understood that women have been really facing serious issues and they have their due rights that should be safeguarded.

In this regard AHRDO's research with Afghan men, with its central objective to engage with men and find out how they see women and women's problems and what long-term solutions they offer to institutional problems, says, "Afghan men's attitudinal and behavioral orientations largely appear to be discouraging, cynical, and at times aggressive and suppressive towards women... Characterized by parochialism, suspicion, violence and control, the men largely view women as subordinates and often treat them either with denigration or negligence in decision making and power projections."

Interactions during the research interviews revealed that Afghan men dominate key institutions and social structures that not only influence, but also shape and configure, women's lives in public and private realms. In part, patriarchal family structures, a male-driven-and-led religious establishment, an unsafe public space, the male dominated market place and conservative culture and traditions considerably restrain women both privately and publicly. It is now time that the short-term approach towards solving the women issues in Afghanistan should be stunned and it has to be comprehended that Women in Afghanistan have been suffering discriminatory behavior for a very long time, thus it has penetrated within social fabrics. The religious extremism and obsolete tribal values have played a dominant role in making every sort of violation and violence possible against them. Though they have been raising their voices every now and then but in the noise of male shrieks they seem to be negligible and get faded away. In fact, the male chauvinistic ears are not ready to hear them though they feel their vibrations clearly. Nonetheless, the efforts in this regard must never be given up and they should continue in every possible way.

Both women and men have to bring about changes in their attitude. Fighting the discrimination and violence does not necessarily mean that women alone should shoulder the responsibility. The men can also play an important role and they have to be made aware of it. There should be efforts to bring about changes in the attitude of men towards women; otherwise, fighting for the rights of women would be very difficult.

Different strata in society can also play an imperative role. The different institutions, functioning in the society must ensure that there should be biased policies and attitude against the women. Their policies and practices must never be inclined towards discrimination and injustice on the basis of gender. Not only the women rights organization but different other social, political and administrative organizations can have a part in making sure that women are properly compensated within the system and are not neglected on the basis of prejudice.

In the countries like Afghanistan, the religious and tribal institutions can also play tremendous role in uplifting the position of women and giving them the status they deserve. As most of the people are religious and tribal, they can easily be motivated by such institutions for better and higher purposes.

Central provinces



## Sustaining the Spirit of Goodness!

By By Muhammad Rasool Shah

A man was walking on the road that suddenly a car came like a violent and angry camel and hit and threw him away. The car driver slowed down for a while and the next moment, he found it safe to run away from the spot and in the blink of an eye, the car disappeared in the traffic. People came running to the man who had become unconscious and was very badly bleeding. Some cars also stopped and a man asked the men to help put the injured man into his car and carry him to the hospital. He drove the car fast and soon reached to hospital where the injured man was immediately carried inside for the treatment. The kind-hearted man waited outside to be sure that the injured man was out of danger. After some time he was informed that the injured man was safe. He was very much relieved and when he was about to walk out of the hospital, he was stopped by a police officer and requested to answer some of his questions. He went with them to the police station where he was made to wait for some hours without any reason. Now he got a bit uncomfortable of all these.

Then he was questioned in a way as if he was a criminal and had committed a crime by transporting the injured man to the hospital. Police officer did not believe his story and asked him to tell the truth. They were of the view that he had himself hit the man and then brought him to the hospital. He was threatened to be tortured and put behind the bars. The man was now seriously frightened as he had never been through any such investigation. The grim faces of policemen, the frightening atmosphere of police station and the threats made him lose his confidence. He started thinking of offering bribe to the policemen for his release but it also seemed very difficult. Anyhow, he convinced the police officer to come to the site of the accident and take the opinion of witnesses.

At last he was released late at night. He was advised to be careful next time which seemed very funny. He was tired and mentally disturbed and he vowed to himself not to take any injured person to hospital in future.

A man was driving home in afternoon in his new and luxury car. The day was hot and the road was absolutely deserted. He saw an old man signaling for a lift. Realizing the heat of the day and his old age, he picked up the man in his car. Man was praying for him when got himself seated in the rear seat. After a while, the old man ordered him to slow down the car and turn it to the left. The man was very surprised by the changed tone of the old man. When he turned back, he saw that he had taken out a gun and pointing with it to follow his directions. The old man did not seem much old now and at once he had become more active. The humility on his face had vanished away and was replaced with a harsh rudeness. When they came out of the city, old man ordered him to step out of the car. Before getting into the driver's seat, he also snatched his watch, cell phone and wallet. He threw a 50 Afghanis

bill towards him and advised him to take a taxi to home. When the sad man reached home with much difficulties, he had made up his mind not to give lift to anyone on the way again.

It was late and dark at night and all the members of the family had almost slept that there was a knock on the door. A family member went to the door and saw that a middle-aged man and a woman were standing outside. They told him that they were passengers and missed their bus and in the city they were complete strangers and had no place to go. They requested him to give them place to pass the night and they would leave the next morning. They looked very needy and tired. The man was moved by their poor condition and he brought them into the guest room. They were very grateful to him and prayed a lot for him and his family. Next day, all the members of the family were found dead who were brutally killed by these two strangers. They had also taken all the valuables with them. Whoever heard about them decided not to trust the strangers and not to open the doors of the house to anyone no matter how much needy he was.

The above shared three stories are very famous in our city and a lot many people tell some other such stories with almost the similar results. These stories have spread like a wild fire and thus everyone is afraid of doing any act of goodness to others. This trend has hardened our hearts and we try all our best not to feel any sympathy to anyone. No matter however a person is in need of our car, our money or our physical support, we hardly find ourselves ready for extending any kind of support.

Cruel and heedless act of some have deprived all the needy people of any kind of help. Once a rich man saw a poor and needy man who looked very disturbed and tired. He provided him with a decent job and also allowed him to live in his house like his family members. With the passage of time, he won the trust of the person. After some time, the needy man stole all the things of the wealthy and was about to escape that he saw his master at the door. The greed had blinded his eyes so he took out his knife and injured his master. The injured master called him and requested to listen to his last words before running away, "Please don't tell your story to anyone because then people will stop helping and trusting others." Same tragedy has happened in our society. The bad acts of some cruel criminals have changed our perceptions about helping others and thus hijacked our desire to help others.

We claim ourselves to be educated and civilized and believe in the help of our fellow citizens. Some stupid people have done their duty in a negative manner. It would be very pity if we get our good qualities hijacked by them and stop helping others. Now it becomes our duty to help others and tell others that we received prayers of others after helping them and that it is still safe to help others. The way we propagated the negative thought in the society, it also becomes our duty to do the opposite and promote the *Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. he can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com*

## The Negative Role of Media in Our Society

By Hujjatullah Zia

The negative impact of media on the mind and attitude of our youths is beyond doubt. The ostentatious style and flamboyant clothing of our younger generation, particularly the females, challenge our culture flagrantly. The amorous serials, advertising gimmicks and amorous programs have caused a colossal change in our culture and social customs. The mouth-watering attraction of the actors and actresses' latest fashions lure our teenage to adopt the same style and attitude in their social and individual life. Hence, it seems that our cultural norms, which are supposed to root in moral values, are on the verge of erosion.

Our society is flooded with foreign films and serials which threaten the private spheres of our compatriots. As a result, the girls and women's mini-skirt, tights and blouses are akin to the updated fashion of foreign actresses - whose main objectives are to portray the industrial products or represent as fashion models. Some may believe that their dignity lies in their beauty. But it should be noted that "Femininity is not just lipstick, stylish hairdos, and trendy clothes. It is the divine adornment of humanity. It finds expression in your qualities of your capacity to love, your spirituality, delicacy, radiance, sensitivity, creativity, charm, graciousness, gentleness, dignity, and quiet strength."

Furthermore, the fractious attitudes and asperity of our children are the very copy of the horror movies. Last year, a number of children who watched a popular Turkish serial "The Valley of the Wolves" in a village, started to fight in their childish game as it was shown in the serial and one of them was killed as a result of the violent behaviors of his playmates. Furthermore, a teenage boy, whom I knew, wished to try hanging on, tied a scarf around his neck and failed to untie it and succumbed to death. So, when the children are exposed to watch violent films, without their parents' care, they will be affected mentally.

Our local media, which have to play a positive role in social, cultural and political arenas with paying a due respect to our moral and religious values, spoil the morality of our youths. To write more incisively, our national TVs and radios broadcast amorous films, thrilling music and dancing without paying attention to our religious values, even in Holy Months. Moreover, musical programs are conducted by local media for the mere encouragement of our male and female youths, in western style, to participate. Do our youths take active part in the programs?

Lack of positive and educational amusements on one hand, and the charm of flamboyant world of virtuosity on the other hand tempt the teenagers greatly. Our males in general and our females in particular should note that such programs are not the impeccable creativity for them to embellish their world rather they are fraught with manifold problems. Firstly, in the critical time of their youthfulness, such programs are highly time-consuming which divert their attention from their studies or works to amorous shows. Therefore, it would be naive of them to fall in such injurious labyrinths. Secondly, they will succumb to foreign cultures, which are reflected via our TV programs, and they won't be able to notice this subtle change easily. It is believed that this alteration will not affect only their styles but also their minds and attitudes. Hence, they will be spoiled morally and alienated to their own personality, identity, cultural and moral values.

Charlie Chaplin writes a piece of humane and virtuous advice to his actress daughter Zheraldin as, "Your job is very difficult. I know that. Your body is covered only with a piece of silk. Because art can and will appear naked on stage, but to come back from there in wearing and cleaner... But nothing and no one else in this world deserves to see even the nails of the feet of a girl. Nakedness is a disease of our time. I am old and my words might sound funny. But me, your naked body must belong to one who loves Face your soul." He points out two incontrovertible facts as, "Nothing and no one else in this world deserves to see even the nails of the feet of a girl." The girls should value their dignity and personality so as not to easily succumb to applauses of audience. In other words, they have not to feel the temerity to cross the moral restrictions with the audience' whistles. He adds, "Nakedness is a disease of our time." Ill-fatedly, our actresses remove their veils without feeling a tinge of moral or religious guilt. They appear on stage in pure western culture. Their nakedness is an infectious disease which is not justifiable in Islamic societies.

Hence, both national and international media have to hold the public's beliefs and values in respect. The negative role of local media which act as catalyst to precipitate cultural change is highly hurtful to our religious people. In short, the media are urged to let the religious or traditional people also breathe a fresh air of freedom in their small cottages and do not muddy the waters for them anymore. The singular feelings permeated our people's atmosphere which threaten their pure faith and social, cultural and moral values. *Hujjat Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com*

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