

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

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Afghan Youth: Capital Human Resource Left Neglected

The decade long conflict and war in Afghanistan jolted everything, ranging from infrastructural to socio-political downfall, bloody conflicts rendering countless people physically impaired and socially segregated. Frequently, we find handicapped people, sitting at the corner of streets, asking for financial help, from every passerby. This is the disappointing picture of neglected section of society, battered by negligence of government devoid of willingness to rehabilitate them. Primarily stating, there are numerous issues associated with our society namely skyscraping illiteracy, ignorance, employments, dominant flawed cultural practices, socio-religious biases, extremism and militancy pressing hard our youth. The other hurdles before the Afghan youths range from insecurity, poverty, lack of access to poor education, unavailability of opportunities, ethnic and gender based discrimination. These issues in one way or the other inflict the catastrophic impact on youth's competence constantly eroding their talent to cope with the forthcoming challenges.

With exception to handicapped people, children and women are also dragged to begging as witnessed on the street of urbanized cities. Reportedly, some clandestine gangs are renting children of penniless families; drug them with opium to further their malicious design. The wide indifference of government facilitates, begging turn into one of the illegal trade in this piece of land. The government fallaciously deems that putting restrictions might win a congenial solution to this emerging problem. In this pursuit street-begging was outlawed in November 2008 by government and a commission formed was made up of different government bodies and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) - to end street-begging in the capital.

Nevertheless, it did not help, instead the numbers seem to have grown in the last few years, and many of the beggars are women and children. The Afghanistan Human Rights Independent Commission (AHRIC) estimates that there are 60,000 child addicts in the country. Opium is the most common drug sown and used in the street of the country unchecked. The addict children are used as a tool to earn money for respective gangs. This is alarming figure narrating the grave human rights violation where children are subjected to ill-treatment under the very nose of concerned departments.

Afghanistan has one of the world's fastest-growing populations with an annual increase of 3.1%, according to a 2012 UN Population Fund report. Roughly 68% of Afghanistan's 30m citizens are under 25, with those ages 15-24 accounting for 40% of the total population, according to credible report. There are around 11m of young people aged 15 and above and adults who missed out formal education or could not complete their schooling to obtain a credential. It is a social debt to be compensated to those who were denied education, got their potential eroded. Afghanistan suffers acute poverty as one of the greatest problems. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) calculates nearly half of Afghanistan's estimated 30 million people live on less than 1 USD a day. Poverty might serve one of the reason pushing great majorities of young population towards illegal means of earning. Many concerned public officials lack, the requisite data pertaining the underlined figure, depicts the degree of interest of government toward this issue. Viewing the worsening state of affairs, one finds the lack of interest concerning welfare of masses serves the greatest reason for ongoing notorious condition. Some of public official hesitant to take action against may be allegedly involved in the trade. Youth, if educated in better way and provided with opportunities they require, can play a very effective role in development of our country. They are potent, energetic, zealous but perplexed, disappointed and unmotivated. They suffer emotional degeneration seeing the countless magnitude of apparently irresolvable problems. Young people in any country represent the future of that country. They have a vital role to play in the development of the country, a duty they must perform, given they are provided standard education and conducive learning atmosphere - the educational institutes designed to translate societal needs into mandatory achievable goals.

Formerly, Afghanistan National Youth Policy (ANYP) was drafted by Deputy Ministry for Youth Affairs and is expected to get endorsed, is a welcoming step forward. According to the officials, the policy's main objective is to design and implement strategies and programs to promote the talents, skills and potential of young women and men from various economic, social, cultural, and political backgrounds. Absolutely, the formation of policy is a bold tread to propel ahead nevertheless, the golden sayings framed in a decorated brochure will not resolve our problems unless practicable measures are taken to reframe them in doable frames.

It is agreeable that Afghanistan's first-ever national youth policy outlines initiatives to help young Afghans face challenges and explore opportunities. The policy's main objective is to design and implement strategies and programs to promote the talents, skills and potential of young women and men from various economic, social, cultural, and political backgrounds.

However, countless efforts are required to undo socio-political and cultural restraints that have established firm basis in our societies hindering our collective progress. As Afghanistan prepares to enter a transformative decade (2015-2024), it is critical to make strategic and well-organized investments in its youth now, so they can realize their full potential.

Conversely, the government and ruling elites relies on making promises, as if their hollow and fuzzy assurances could solace the relentless issues related with unemployment and poverty. The high degrees of disappointment are reflected from their sun burnt faces which are the timely manifestation to the underlying facts. It is an uncompromising reality that the escalating graph of poverty made it difficult for an ordinary person to make the ends meet. Consequently the circle of vagabonds enlarges irreversibly. Militancy, insurgency and radicalization are negatively effecting our youth, they can only be reversed when rational policies are framed and decoded, enforced and implemented with its full spirit.



"Art Washes the Dust of Daily Life off our Souls"

By Dilawar Sherzai

It is difficult to imagine how human life would be without art and science. These two have had a great impact on human beings and today the way human lives and their societies have been managed is to a great extent because of the influences of science and art. The developments that have been made by human beings in different branches of knowledge and the different inventions that have made their lives comfortable have been made possible because of the marvels of science. At the same time arts have enriched the human culture, influenced their way of living and even of their thinking. It has also embellished their houses and designed their clothes and even altered their souls. As Pablo Picasso had said, "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls," and that is a great purpose, which has only been pursued through art. If it is difficult to live without science, living without art would be really tasteless and colorless.

Human existence is not just physical reality. It has an emotional reality and an aesthetic aspect, without which living life would be nothing more than a dull and insipid journey towards nowhere. Art searches beauty, finds it and brings it to human life. It is through art that human beings have found the real meaning of beauty and they are able to make it a reality in their lives as well. This has also gifted human beings the love for nature, for each other and for the entire humanity. Lincoln Steffens had put this concept beautifully; "Art is like a border of flowers along the course of civilization."

It is also through art that human beings get the opportunity to express themselves. Art is like a door towards the outer world. Through this door the human feelings, emotions and thoughts flow outwards. And it is not just any sort of flow that qualifies to be called as art but the skilled and the fine-looking ones that reach to the level of true art. Thus art functions as exhaust for human's true nature, which, if closed, can cause human true self suffocate in a solitary confinement. That's why Amy Lowell had said, "Art is the desire of a man to express himself, to record the reactions of his personality to the world he lives in". The true artists are the ones who pursue true art and thus pursue beauty and refined skills. They are always innovative and creative and long for a world that is filled with love and affection. They, at certain times and in certain societies, may be considered as evils and destructive but that may be because of the standard or the criteria through which they are judged. They may be highlighting

the shortcomings and the defects within the society and the societies that do not have the capacity to absorb such criticism tend to discourage the artists and the art as a whole. Artists are a very important stratum of society and they should be encouraged to continue their work in every possible manner. They may prove to be the guides of human emotions and their aesthetic sense. They may lead human soul towards satisfaction and contentment. Human beings, in today's busy world have become very much mechanical. Their lives are mostly influenced by the routines and they are the victims of monotony. They require change and novelty and artists can support them achieve such novelty and change.

Vann Martel, in Life of Pi says, "If we, citizens, do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imagination on the altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams". Artists dare to dream, dare to think differently and dare to change and all these can support human beings towards a different life - a life that may be quite better than the one they are living. Therefore, the societies must respect their artists, value their work and realize their worth; otherwise, they may not be able to live life fully.

The societies that are liberal and democratic have a very favorable environment for their artists. The artists in such societies are free to pursue their skills and grow as artists and, thus, become a positive part of society and become the agents of change and progress. On the other hand the conservative societies that are dominated by rigid rules and extremist religious sentiments tend to undermine the artists and art. They do not have any sort of tolerance for them, neglect them and make their lives miserable. Afghanistan is also one of the societies where the artists are not given their due rights and they do not have the role and the position they deserve. In fact, the country has been caught in so many other problems that the issues pertaining to artists and art have never been pondered upon. Now that country is moving towards a relatively peaceful era, it is important that the artists should be valued. They should be supported both by the government and the people. Moreover, the institutions that support and promote art must be strengthened. Music, painting, acting, dance, singing and all forms of art must be given proper chance to grow and to evolve. Afghan people require them not only for erasing the memories of war and instability but also for maintaining peace and tranquility and providing satisfaction and contentment to their souls.

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Man's Cruelty to Man

By Hujjatullah Zia

And [mention, O Muhammad (PBUH)], when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.' They said, 'Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?' Allah said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know.'" (Al-Quran: 2:30)

Seemingly, men evince intrinsic tendency for violence and bloodshed. The current bedlam and disarray caused by strong conflagration victimize people indiscriminately. As a result, the bloody bodies of women and children in debris, the inanimate bodies of men riddle with bullets on streets, the bitter tears of rape victims, the oozing blood of war victims, etc. are the lugubrious story of our day.

Man's megalomania and egotism led to war and violence throughout the history. For instance, the dictatorial regimes sought to eradicate their political opponents so as to keep their positions safe from jeopardy. The despotic rulers had constantly choked the voice raised for rights or liberties or declaimed against oppressions. The puny individuals, who were bereft of their basic rights, were subjugated to puissant forces. The historical conflagrations and eruptions of aversion and animosity put the man's humanity under question.

Men still live in a deplorable state. Violating religious and moral taboos are really imprudent of us. Malice and cruelty continue unabated. We harm one another, perpetrate honor-killing acts, blacken our neighbors' reputation and shed our brethren's blood with no iota of mercy. We succumb to the worldly temptations, yield to carnal desires and satiate our voracious appetite for not only pecuniary issues but for hurting our fellows without feeling a sense of guilt.

It is a matter of great surprise to see that in the transient moment of life, men curtail others' freedom and sacrifice their rights and life for their own enjoyments. In another item, one wishes to relegate his fellows to dystopian world so as to live in his utopia. For instance, the cruel rulers persevered to live with no moral or religious restrictions and whoever dared impede them from their evil desires, were doomed to death.

It should be noted that, "A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening

our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive."

Morality is of a big value in individual and social life. "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them," wrote Immanuel Kant, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within." These days, the moral law within is being viewed with increasing awe, if not always admiration. The human moral sense turns out to be an organ of considerable complexity, with quirks that reflect its evolutionary history and its neurobiological foundations.

These quirks are bound to have implications for the human predicament. Morality is not just any old topic in psychology but close to our conception of the meaning of life. Moral goodness is what gives each of us the sense that we are worthy human beings. We seek it in our friends and mates, nurture it in our children, advance it in our politics and justify it with our religions. Disrespect for morality is blamed for everyday sins and history's worst atrocities. To carry this weight, the concept of morality would have to be bigger than any of us and outside all of us.

The first hallmark of moralization is that the rules it invokes are felt to be universal. Prohibitions of rape and murder, for example, are felt not to be matters of local custom but to be universally and objectively warranted. One can easily say, "I don't like brussels sprouts, but I don't care if you eat them," but no one would say, "I don't like killing, but I don't care if you murder someone."

The other hallmark is that people feel that those who commit immoral acts deserve to be punished. Not only is it allowable to inflict pain on a person who has broken a moral rule; it is wrong not to, "let them get away with it." People are thus untroubled in inviting divine retribution or the power of the state to harm other people they deem immoral. Bertrand Russell wrote, "The infliction of cruelty with a good conscience is a delight to moralists - that is why they invented hell."

"Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life." Naturally, human beings develop a strong appetite for religion and moral values. In other words, our soul feels hunger the same as our body, and religion seems the only satiating source and one will be pacified through prayers. Hence, let's practice virtue and morality in our daily life, so as to get rid of violence and inhumanity.

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