

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

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Giving Respect to the Right People

One of the bonds that keep the members of a society close to one another is undoubtedly respect. Giving respect to others is essential if one wishes to keep the social relations strong and durable. Respecting others only for the fact that others are human beings as well and have the right to live in the same world is without any doubt a human attribute. There are possibilities that others may differ from you, oppose you and may even earn your hatred, but the first gesture towards them must be filled with reverence and esteem.

Respecting others means giving them enough opportunity to express themselves and striving to understand them. It does not mean giving them worth and value because of their social status, wealth or influence, but admiring them for being what they are in their nature, behavior and thinking. Everybody has the right to be listened to and given enough time for proper display of his true nature. Respecting them means guarding this right.

In our society the difference in viewpoint and stance between two persons or two groups of people means being each other's enemy. This sort of attitude has created a great deal of disrespect among the people. Is it really the kind of attitude that must be adopted by the most superior of all the creatures? Does this suit the rational minds that have the ability to think and to differentiate between the right and the wrong? Such sort of attitude is really very damaging for a nation and does not let the cooperation, mutual respect and trust take place easily.

It is imperative to understand that it is basically the same right that you and your opponent demand and that is the right to have opinion. Yes, it is correct that you can have that right but you must take care and respect the same right of your opponent. You both have to respect each other and realize that what the other person is saying is basically his opinion, not a sin or a crime. If there is no such respect then there is no need of sharing opinions and ideas and then there is no other way of deciding what the truth is. First, it is really necessary that there should be respect for each other and then start the discussion and arguments so as to find truth.

It is also possible that a person may face different situations in his life. In the world where there are inequalities and differences, he may face people who belong to lower class or may meet someone who may belong to the affluent section of the society; his responsibility at that moment is to consider both of them worthy of the same respect.

It is also important for all the members of our society that they have the tendency to impart respect to others but on the basis of achievements and services that have supported in achieving positive factors in our society. As our society is still tribal in its true nature, it can be found that the people tend to respect others based on their family background and dominance based on money. Therefore, it can be found that the society members who are busy in contributing positive services, for example teachers, do not have as much respect as tribal heads who do not have even proper education and cannot provide something positive to the society.

A similar sort of attitude can be observed in different sorts of gatherings, events and functions. The people who belong to wealthy families, though may be even illiterate get every sort of respect. They are treated as the special guests and given the most of the concentration and attention. On the other hand the people who may have spent their whole lives for social service but do not have enough money to be counted among the rich class are neglected and not given their due position.

This sort of the wrong criteria has resulted in a society suffering from evils and imbalance. People, in our society, strive to get as much wealth as possible, instead of pursuing education and knowledge. This has resulted in a society that is suffering from myriads of problems as negative competition to gain as much wealth as possible in every possible manner has given birth to nothing else except social evils.

The time has come for us to change our attitude and amend our standards. Our society requires to fight social evils and problems, it cannot afford to continue in the present state indefinitely. The people need to realize whom they consider valuable enough for the society - an educated and knowledgeable person who has all the qualities of a scholar and can support the society intellectually or a self-centered, status-conscious person whose whole life has been spent by gathering money in every legal and illegal means?

The young population and upcoming challenges of the Afghan government

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Population is one of the most important factors and variables that must be considered in macroeconomic, social and political programs in national level. Undoubtedly, any long-term planning for the country without considering such important variable, will not only lead to failure, but also cause the wastage of national resources. With regard to the age pyramid and demographic structure of the country, the top national policy makers and politicians are trying to predict the challenges that may take place in the coming years and prepare themselves to tackle the problems emanating from increase and decrease of population. The quantity and optimal distribution of the population in the country and, more importantly, population growth are one of the indicators that influence the process of sustainable development. Contrary to traditional responsibility of governments that were limited to maintaining the public security and fight against foreign enemies but in the current era, these tasks were directed towards more accountability for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of life and responding to demographic and general accelerated needs.

According to the central statistics office, the total population of the country in 2018 was estimated to be 31.6 million of which approximately 16.1 million are males and about 15.5 million are females. In another division, about 22.6 million people (71.5%) are rural, 7.5 million (23.7%) are urban and 1.5 million (4.8%) are nomadic populations. Age-wise, Afghanistan is one of the youngest countries in the world. According to the age pyramid of Afghanistan, the number of population between 0 and 30 years old are about 25 million which forms 70.9 % of the whole population. Regarding global birthrate ranking, Afghanistan is on the 11th highest birthrate in the world, and also the highest birth rate in non-African countries. The first country with the highest birth rate is Niger, a western African country, (at 51.26 births per 1,000 people) but the country with the lowest birth rate is Monaco, at 6.72 births per thousand comparing to Afghanistan has roughly 40 births/1,000 population.

Anyway, young population has both pros and cons; young population has the potential to change their lives and ultimately change a nation provided that directed in a right way; otherwise it is also possible to act as a threat in absence of logical program, especially educational program. In fact, Education is the first important program towards development process of countries; almost all developed countries acquired their advancement, especially the development of their productive human power from good quality education. That is why the advanced countries make a lot of investments in education because they know that the future of their countries depends on education and training of high quality human resources. As Afghanistan has been suffering from internal and external imposed war, many of the infrastructure and facilities, that a country needs to progress, has been totally destroyed. One of these issues that originate from population

growth is increase in the number of students at the schools and universities. As a result, a large amount of government budget should be deducted from other parts so as to provide education and education facilities.

So, the overgrowth of one sector interrupts the growth of other sectors. As It is not possible to handle unlimited programs with limited resource unless deduct from the share of other parts. In 2018 the budget for ministry of education was about 37.5 billion Afghanis while there are 17.5 thousand schools and nearly 196 thousand teachers nationwide. Given the mentioned number of schools and teachers, the allocated budget is extremely low. The average salary of a teacher in Afghanistan is around a 100\$ per month in comparison to the salaries paid to teachers in advanced countries such Japan is around 7500\$. In these circumstances, the capital investment should be appropriately proportional to the increase of students in all scientific and educational centers, or the contribution share of students need to decrease; in both cases it imposes great economic and social losses on financial and human capital, and then on social capital.

The other issue that originates from increase of population is unemployment; today unemployment is one of the great social problems in the world, and the massive increase in population directly links to this social problem. Considering the demographic trends in Afghanistan, we can say there will be a large number of job seekers entering the labor market in the coming years. If we do not make proper plans and policies towards these groups, we will see a large number of unemployed people in the near future. And it can become one of the fundamental constraints of the state. The issue of youth unemployment should not be viewed only from the economic point of view. Usually youths have more political and social expectations that due to the lack of political development and impossibility for fulfillment of these demands provide an enabling environment for unemployment crisis, adherence to radical groups and eventually cause instability to the country. In terms of social pathology, unemployment which results from a disequilibrium between population growth and investment is the source of many social anomalies

Although the relationship between abnormalities such as poverty, prostitution, divorce, theft, robbery, insecurity, drug trafficking, psychological, suicide, and terrorist operations requires a separate paper, but the comparative study of the above indicators with population overgrowth and unemployment in developing countries, including Afghanistan has been confirmed. It is also confirmed that there is close link between high birthrate and high death rate. Therefore, the government must take necessary measures address the needs of the young population; otherwise, we may face numeral challenges in the future which will be beyond the control of the government.

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Selling Africa's Good News Stories

By: Shayera Dark

Anywhere in the world, freelance journalism is an extreme career choice. The job requires withstanding pitch rejections, ignored queries, stolen story ideas, and delayed payments. It means reconciling oneself with the economic precarity that comes with having little or no leverage in pay negotiations. But for African freelance journalists, covering the continent presents its own set of unique challenges.

In Nigeria, for example, most media companies need diligent editors, seldom publish incisive features and analysis, and struggle to compensate their staff due to lack of funding. Kenyan media entrepreneur and former CNN anchor Zain Verjee recently bemoaned the reluctance of African billionaires and governments to fund and implement policies that support African media startups, even though they bridle at often jaundiced Western media coverage. And, where positive coverage can be bought and sold, and journalism is viewed as glorified public relations, African freelancers can only dream of proper remuneration.

Consider a recent 800-word article I wrote for one of the country's largest newspapers; it ran barely edited and earned me a paltry 10,000 naira (about \$30). And that was after I haggled with the editor to bump it up from 5,000 naira. A story of similar length would earn me \$200 or more from a publication in the West. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that many Nigerian freelancers - including me - gravitate toward Western media.

But that leads to other problems, such as an over-emphasis on crises, strife, and other issues viewed as relevant to Western audiences. I've experienced this firsthand. I once pitched a story about a Nigerian Paralympian to a news website in the United States that frequently showcases African writers. The editor rejected it because it was too "optimistic." On another occasion, a Western magazine tried to edit my initial draft to suggest that a refugee's deceased parents were killed by armed militias when, in fact, her father's death was undisclosed and her mother died from an illness.

As Karen Rothmyer pointed out eight years ago in the Columbia Journalism Review, foreign media outlets seem beholden to the idea that Africa is in perpetual chaos. Rothmyer, who lived in Kenya for several years, traced the endless stream of bad news to nongovernmental organizations' use of data to justify their existence, which in turn shaped Western reporters' "frames of reference" before they even arrived on the continent. Eight years later, those reference points have not really changed.

This penchant to accentuate the negative does more than reduce Africa to stereotypes; it also feeds the one-dimensional narrative of Af-

rica as a war-torn, disease-ridden, poverty-stricken hellscape where all hope dies. This inclination to fit people and events into simple plot lines leads to what Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls the "danger of a single story." A limited viewpoint, repeatedly promulgated, comes to frame all coverage and emerges as the only truth. And yet, editorial bias is not the only challenge for African freelance journalists. Another common problem is relegation to co-author or "fixer" status when assisting Western media. Nigerian photojournalist Fati Abubakar, who is often a source for foreign reporters writing about Northern Nigeria, describes the current situation as "a brain-drain sort of relationship," and says her consulting services should be compensated but rarely are. Changing this would obviously benefit local journalists and help foreign media avoid embarrassing and dangerous cultural faux pas, like revealing the identities of assault victims or photographing dead bodies.

Then there is the issue of the pay discrepancy between African and Western journalists. Many publications expect local hires to charge less than their foreign counterparts. When Abubakar was just starting out, she accepted whatever was offered. Now, as an established and sought-after photographer, she is able to turn down work that pays too little. But most freelance journalists in Africa are not so lucky, which leaves many vulnerable to the whims of commissioning editors. International coverage of Africa can sometimes feel patronizing, either from a lack of local knowledge or because of sheer laziness. A recent photo essay in The New Yorker about some of Nigeria's biggest Afrobeats musicians fell flat with Nigerians, with some criticizing its shallowness and the absence of quotes from the included artists. Hiring a well-versed Nigerian music critic (yes, they exist) would almost certainly have resulted in a deeper and more compelling feature.

Aside from commissioning African journalists to provide insight - which is the minimum we should expect - Western publications could improve their Africa coverage by surveying the views of contributing freelancers. It would also be beneficial for foreign media outlets to staff dedicated and robust Africa "desks" with local journalists and hire African editors who have the nuance and experience to identify topics and frame coverage in ways that best serve readers.

But, above all, African governments and philanthropic organizations need to assist African media startups, and media companies must pay journalists better, properly train their editorial staff, and resist the temptation to accept money for coverage. Only then will African stories be given the attention they deserve, and be told by journalists who are unencumbered by the skewed preferences of Western audiences and media.

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