

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



July 09, 2019

## Controversy over Women's Rights and Freedoms Continues

The rights and freedoms of women have been a highly controversial subjects during Afghan kings, communist regimes, Mujahidin, and the Taliban regime. Afghan women have been vulnerable to social and political changes and their rights have passed many ups and downs with the changes of regimes. In the post-Taliban Afghanistan, with the establishment of nascent democracy, women's rights and dignity are still debated hotly.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghan women have made significant advances in rights, with millions of girls attending schools and women holding high political posts within the government. But with the steady withdrawal of foreign forces and the Taliban insurgency still resilient, there are growing fears the gains will be lost. The peace talks between the Taliban and their US and Afghan interlocutors have compounded the fear since there are not enough seats around the table for women's representatives.

The history of Afghan women's struggle for social recognition and equality chronicles Afghanistan's physical and cultural devastation. Following the Soviet Invasion (1979-89), the Afghan Civil War (1994-96) and the Taliban regime (1996-2001), women's access to education, security and jobs has been minimal. Today, in the post-Taliban era, both the Western "liberation" and religious fundamentalism are likely to impose their own values on Afghan society as political models. Westernization, with regards to gender equality, does not take into account the traditional concept of family in Islamic or Afghan culture and tends to negotiate the rights of Afghan women outside their community and family. However, religious fundamentalism views the rights and freedoms of women from a narrow lens and tend to hamper women's advancement in social, political, and cultural aspects. Worst of all, religious fundamentalists target women to curtail their freedoms and restrict their rights. They seek to narrow the environment for the women's activities through posing threat to their lives.

Despite the progress made, women's struggle for civic and human rights still has a long way to go. Four decades of war and conflict have left many Afghans both eager for change and afraid of it. There are still many instances of ordinary women experiencing domestic violence, being sexually abused, or being forced into marriage. Women in senior leadership roles - such as in parliament or the police - are still being targeted. It is said that some men feel threatened by the presence of women in senior positions. These men see women's rights as the "westernization" of Afghan culture.

In traditional society like Afghanistan, women's freedoms and social role are restricted within the cultural frames. In another item, women encounter manifold socio-cultural barriers to take active role in social issues. A woman is considered as a productive creature to give birth and to feed and train her children.

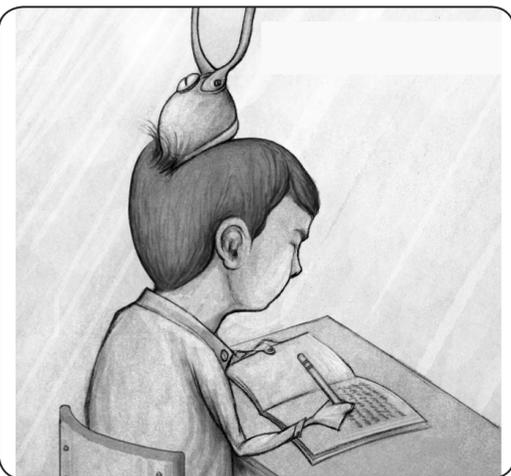
Hillary Clinton once said, "There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the lives of their country." She adds, "Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights. Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely - and the right to be heard."

It is believed that if women are not respected in a society and their rights and freedoms are not protected, that society will be embroiled in serious challenges and its progress will be extremely slow. It is because the half population of a society is not active or playing its role due to social or cultural obstacles. For example, if Afghan women had had the opportunity to play their role within all the past years, Afghanistan would have been an affluent and advanced society.

If Afghan government seeks to support democracy, it has to advocate the rights and freedoms of both men and women and put an end to gender discrimination. The voice of women have to be heard as their male counterparts and their rights and freedoms have to be safeguarded.

Afghan women also need to struggle for their rights and freedoms. They have to raise their voice against injustice, sexual discrimination and violation of their rights and freedoms and seek to play their role actively and constructively. They have to break the obstacles which hamper their social, cultural, and political activities and make their voice heard.

In short, Afghan society will be democratic if both men and women could exercise their rights and freedoms equally and women could not feel themselves as second class citizens.



## The Economic Decline is Rooted in Lack of Human Capital in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

With formation new social life and modern human society, debate over use of limited resources to meet the unlimited needs of humankind has been raised as a fundamental issue. Scientists and scholars of social sciences have made constant efforts to find a right answer to fundamental question of how to be able to make a logical balance between the unlimited human needs and the limited resources. These efforts mainly focus on this central point to find a logical and effective mechanism for balancing existing needs and resources. On the other hand, the history of human livelihood has shown that all social changes and many of the world's scientific and cultural developments are shaped by the factor of economic resources and facilities. The social scientists consider the economy as the foundation for all developments in human life. Our culture has also paid a special attention in the economic variable. This saying is very common in our society: "one, who does not have a livelihood, does not have doomsday reward."

In the Afghanistan, after many years of war and destruction, now there are some chances to move forward towards social and economic developments. At this step, given the priorities of Afghan society, we need to focus on training of highly professional people so as to lead the economy of our country. According to economic experts, in addition to other factors which caused economic and currency decline in Afghanistan, the main factors are lack of specialist people in field of economic activities. So, we need to cross from the level of managing greatest public banks of the country by undergraduate people; the Afghan National Bank and other financial organization of country must be lead by PDH holders and highly professional people. In short, we can never respond to the economic needs and crisis unless focus on training of human capital through serious investment in universities.

The universities our country, in addition to other disciplines, they need to expand and explain the latest scientific achievements in the economy. According to experts, training of human capital, especially in the field of economics and business management is one of the major areas of social science as a foundation of other social developments. Economics is one of the few areas which influence all areas; perhaps it is not exaggerated, to say that economics is unique among all other majors. Only the professional human capitals are able to make strategic plan and manage private and public businesses and banks.

Initially, the human capital is created by providing children with good primary and secondary school services. Private financing of this type of investment is not feasible for poor children. Countries that are highly developed today have a long history of providing free or highly-subsidized education to the poor. A review of their

history suggests that the initial impetus for this schooling had a religious basis, but that as the public's level of education and income rose, their demand for schooling rose, and the financial support from private donors was replaced or greatly augmented with public funds. If poor countries wish to achieve high levels of national income, they need to provide public funding for the universal education of the poor, at least at the primary and secondary levels of schooling.

Economists believe that poor countries are poor because they lacked human capital. They deduced that rich countries devastated in World War II were able to quickly employ massive amounts of new physical capital, while the poorest countries seemed unable to successfully utilize even small amounts. They theorized that a nation's capability to productively use physical capital is a function of its level of human capital and that if human capital does not increase along with physical capital, then economic development cannot proceed. In addition, it is notified that human capital is more likely to be the constraint to development because foreign investors are eager to invest in physical capital, but not in human capital.

However, the relationships between the two capitals (human capital and physical capital) are complementary. There is some variation in the relative amounts of the two types of capital, but no countries have high levels of only one type. For example, the U.S. has more human than physical capital, while Japan has more physical than human capital, but both countries have high levels of both. Similarly studies show that economic development does not occur automatically. If it did, there would not be such large differences in the magnitude of the capital stocks between countries. Nevertheless there are some other characteristic(s) which is not present in the less developed countries, facilitated historic investment in both types of capital. It is also evident that whatever these characteristics are, they vary widely across countries because levels of capital/adult vary widely. If human capital and physical capital are complementary, then historically either type of capital or both could have been the factor limiting investment in the other type of capital.

Finally, the most suitable and sustainable solutions for poverty reduction, economic growth and social development of the country is to prioritize some key educational field such as economics, politics, psychology, education and so on. Accordingly, the policy makers of the country can make their skillful economic strategy on basis newly produced economic theories with help of national universities. With the aim of sustainable development in the field of economy it is predicted that the academic centers of country would be able to take effective steps towards social and economic growth of the country.

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## The Case for a World Carbon Bank

By: Kenneth Rogoff

Although much derided by climate-change deniers, not least US President Donald Trump, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal hits the nail on the head with its urgent call for the United States to lead by example on global warming. But the sad truth is that, for all the needless waste produced by American's gluttonous culture, emerging Asia is by far the main driver of the world's growing carbon dioxide emissions. No amount of handwringing will solve the problem. The way to do that is to establish the right incentives for countries such as China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

It is hard to see how to do this within the framework of existing multilateral aid institutions, which have limited expertise on climate issues and are pulled in different directions by their various constituencies. For example, to the dismay of many energy experts, the World Bank recently rather capriciously decided to stop funding virtually all new fossil-fuel plants, including natural gas. But replacing dirty coal plants with relatively clean natural gas is how the US has managed to reduce emissions growth dramatically over the past decade (despite Trump's best efforts), and is a centerpiece of the famous "Princeton wedges" pragmatic options for minimizing climate risk. One cannot let the perfect become the enemy of good in the transition to a carbon-neutral future.

It is high time to create a new, focused agency, a World Carbon Bank, that provides a vehicle for advanced economies to coordinate aid and technical transfer, and that is not simultaneously trying to solve every other development problem. Yes, I fully understand that the current US administration is reluctant to fund even existing international institutions. But the West cannot retreat from a world of intertwined climate responsibilities.

According to the International Energy Agency - one of the few honest brokers in the global climate-change debate and a model on which a new World Carbon Bank research department could build - annual CO2 emissions in Asia are now double that of the America's, and triple that of Europe. In advanced economies, where the average age of coal plants is 42 years, many are reaching the natural end of their lifespan, and it is not a great burden to phase them out. But in Asia, where one new coal plant a week is being built, the average age is only 11 years, and most will be running for decades to come.

Coal accounts for over 60% of electricity generation in rapidly growing China and India. Even though both countries are investing heavily in renewables such as solar and wind power, their energy needs are simply growing too fast to cast aside widely avail-

able coal.

How can the US arrogantly tell India to cut back on CO2 emissions that are only one-tenth those of the US? For that matter, how can the US persuade Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's government to cut back on Amazon deforestation (rainforests are nature's carbon sink) and development without providing some concrete incentives?

There are many options for trying to reduce carbon emissions. Most economists (including me) favors a global carbon tax, though some argue that the more politically digestible cap-and-trade formula can be virtually as effective. But this is pie in the sky for developing-country governments desperate to meet their people's basic energy needs. In Africa, only 43% of people have access to electricity, versus 87% worldwide.

Ignorant presidents aside, most serious researchers see the risk of catastrophic climate change as perhaps the greatest existential threat facing the world in the twenty-first century. The effects are already with us, whether record heat on the US West Coast and in Europe, epic flooding in Iowa, or the impact of climate risks on the price of home insurance, which is rising beyond the reach of many people. And today's refugee problem is nothing compared to what the world faces as equatorial regions become too hot and too arid to sustain agriculture, and as the number of climate migrants explodes to perhaps a billion or more by the end of the century.

The US military is readying itself for the threat. Back in 2013, the chief of the US Pacific forces, admiral Samuel J. Locklear, listed long-term climate change as the biggest national-security threat. Given grave doubts about whether existing measures, such as the 2015 Paris climate agreement, are likely to do more than slightly slow down global warming, pragmatists are right to see preparing for the worst as a grim necessity.

Advanced economies need to put their own environmental house in order. But it will not be nearly enough if developing Asia, and perhaps someday developing Africa, are not also placed on a different development track. A new World Carbon Bank is almost surely a necessary piece of any comprehensive solution, even given the miraculous technological developments everyone is hoping for.

How much it will cost depends on assumptions and ambitions, but one can easily imagine a trillion dollars over ten years. Crazy? Maybe not, compared to the alternatives. Even a Green New Deal is better than a Green No Deal.

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