

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

Daily Outlook

AFGHANISTAN

The Leading Independent Newspaper

July 25, 2018

Consciousness about Social Self

It is imperative for a human being to be well cognizant of the society in which he exists. He needs to have such cognizance since it would be likely for him to realize his character, position, privileges and duties. In this manner he would have the capacity to play a constructive part in the society.

Socio-political consciousness aids the individuals in the society to make thoroughgoing usage of shared life as it is by the dint of social life that human beings have made stunning accomplishments. The tasks and activities, which are else difficult to be achieved, become very common and are achieved without considerable exertion through supportive actions. Socio-political consciousness, however, is not in human character by instinct. It has to be settled within him through appropriate sustenance and inculcation. Socialization, in this regard, has a very compelling role. Children who are born in a society do not essentially become social in the actual sense of the word. Particularly in today's society when the people have become very much motorized and worldly, it is tough to see children get effortlessly allied with the social and political collections. Social isolation is prevalent and social interactions are now upheld through technology. Having such a scenario in hand, it is vital that children are socialized suitably and this has to be instructed to them that their relation with the society is of great standing and they have a responsibility to the surroundings wherein they reside.

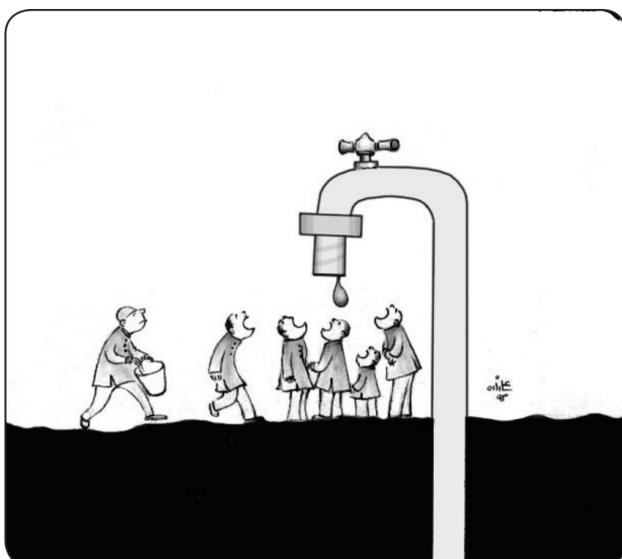
In this connection, the role of family is immense. As family is the primary institution in which human beings learn and practice their social lives, the outlook, conducts, thinking and notions that are settled in the start of family life are indeed very hard to disremember. Parents who are able to give sufficient time to their children and share love and warmth with them have the aptitude to make their children accountable social and political beings. Cooperativeness among the family members makes them comprehend how they can produce collaborations through collective exertions and make human beings human in true sense. Sense of responsibility, task-sharing, dependability and adoration can initially be developed in children through their families. It is really important for all the children to get cultured from their families and understand that all the people are central in one way or the other. Everyone desires to be treasured, appreciated and respected. Consequently, a kind of kindness has to be developed within the attitude of the children so that they also apprehend the significance and the necessity of others. They should learn sharing their figurines and playing in teams according to the team rules. Families are surely rudimentary and vital; thus, it is really essential that the institution of family must be used to the maximum degree so as to spread socio-political consciousness.

Schools, colleges and universities can also play a marvelous role, but eventually it is the overall society wherein the individuals get their education and involvements of socio-political life. Hence, they have to obtain everything from the society. There are certain means that can be agreed within the societies by the individuals to develop socio-political consciousness. One of the most imperative steps in this regard is to have the nerve to play a role within a society in a productive way. Solution-oriented approach can play a remarkable role in this connection. An individual wishes to make sure that he has a role, in one way or the other, in the solution of skirmishes within the community or society. Some people strive to circumvent conflicts and are limited to their comfort zone; nevertheless, such an attitude would never benefit them as a responsible being.

In order to be socially aware, it is needed that an individual ought to augment his compassion towards the social fairness and accord. He requires having the capacity to judge others and their actions as per the requirements of justice not as per their social rank, appearance or affluence. He needs to understand what the basic rights of the human beings are and must endeavor to safeguard them. Furthermore, he must examine the social and political verdicts in the society on the foundation of justice, not on ethno-centric prejudices.

An important way of attaining socio-political consciousness is to have more info about the society nearby. It is central for an individual to know about the social issues and ills and attempt to play a part, no matter how small, in their eradication. Today, in human societies there are evils like poverty, bigotry, discernment, chauvinism and some others; they all play their role in making human societies suffer. It is essential for an individual to recognize them, receive them as issues and try to face them in certain techniques.

Displaying kindness and responsiveness can play a farfetched part in getting nearer to others and fastening the social bonds. Comprehending the pain of others when they are hurt and understanding their position is of key importance to invigorate the social responsibility. Courteousness and responsiveness are also obligatory in this regard. It is also central for an individual, who craves to develop socio-political consciousness, to be prepared to listen to others and ask them for response regarding his attitude and conduct.



Media: ups and downs in Afghanistan

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Journalism, as it is one of the top ten high-risk jobs in the world, is a tougher and riskier task in Afghanistan. Afghan journalists work in the worst security conditions for raising awareness and practicing the freedom of expression in newly democratic system. In the new era and the era of democracy, after the fall of the Taliban regime, the growth of journalism and media growth is one of the most important achievements of the Afghan government and the democratic system. Journalists freedom and media activities are of very great importance for building a conscious, civic, and democratic society. Hundreds of media company and thousands of journalists are working in this field in Afghanistan. Afghan journalists are pursuing the career with facing different types of problem such as lack of security, freedom of the press and over all lawlessness.

According to the Reporters Without Borders, Afghanistan is one of the deadliest place for journalists in the world. They ranked Afghanistan 118th out of 180 countries regarding media freedom. Meanwhile, NAI, a local media supporting company, repeatedly accused government for trying to influence the media and failure for protection workers as they are frequently threatened in one way or other way which resulted in closure of 150 media company in recent years. Legally, according to NAI, 85% of journalist contracts are not concluded in accordance with the labor law. This shows that Afghan journalists are the real victims of fighting in the course of media freedom both inside and outside of media organization.

However, Afghan journalists are considered as the leaders of public opinion and freedom of speech, but their ability and professionalism is another issue which strongly affects their work quality. On the other hand, there are very few independent media to implement their impartial programs based on the national needs and creative minds. In addition, due to lack of a professional bed for journalism, the journalism students receive some basic training but they do not acquire specialized expertise to fulfil the needs of the time; so, they cannot respond the need properly and should be supported to improve their work quality. Out of numerous challenges in journalist community what has become more serious and common problem for all reporters, is job security and health insurance. There are no guarantees in any media in Afghanistan that a reporter can be kept in his job. The media company can cancel the contract whenever they wish without considering the content of labor code. Thus, no insurance is taken into consideration for their risky job when they are recruited; they usually go to the most insecure area and among terrorist groups even out of government's control rule to make available fresh news and information.

Fighting for freedom of expression, reporters have given numerous victims with crossing many challenges. In the latest statistics released by the Journalists' Security Committee in Kabul, 22%

violence against journalists increased in the first six months of 2018 compared to previous periods. This increase in statistics also left 11 deaths. The fact is that all national and international efforts to protect freedom of expression and the media, have not been enough effective. However, there have seen some improvements in quantity, not quality.

Most media face dependent policy issue due to fiscal problem. Most of them are sponsored but expected to act like a loud-speaker for the benefit of donors. The lack of freedom and lack of independency in policy making have caused a lot of censorship in journalism job preventing from expression of realities and impartialities. Anyway, reporters undertake the riskiest duty in the course of raising awareness and fighting for media freedom with the least amount of salaries. So, they need to be supported both by people and government as the freedom of media is freedom of thoughts.

Many institutions have been established to support journalists and the media, but no fundamental change occurred in the level of violence against journalists and media freedom. Although new research suggests that Afghanistan has a better voice than its neighbors in the world opinion poll, but still there are deaths, threats, humiliations, censorship and work challenges among media sectors. These may show that there has paid some superficial attention while there is need for a profound politicization on the basis of national needs and democratic values.

Given the capacity these institutions possess, it was possible that some of these institutions would work better and more efficiently. For instance, the joint government and media committee under supervision of the second deputy president is a good example of effectiveness for support of journalist community. This institution started by the Independent Media, Journalists and Government Representatives during the National Unity Government to co-ordinate the media with the government, to handle journalists' judicial cases, and to address the challenges of journalism in Afghanistan. In short time, this institution could succeed to review so many cases.

The committee set up a joint regular meeting for legal cases and finding solutions to issues related to the growth of journalism and freedom of expression in a country. In this series of discourses, dozens of cases of violence against journalists were successfully investigated, as it is said. As the organization progresses, all cases of violence against journalists will be finalized by next year. In addition, a representative was introduced to the United Nations in order to support the journalists and as the international institutions called, the committee is promising for the future of journalism in Afghanistan.

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Ending AIDS, the Dutch way

By Shobha Shukla

We are all very familiar with the phrase 'going Dutch' (meaning each person of a group pays one's own expenses in an outing), but are we also aware of dealing with HIV/AIDS the Dutch way? Perhaps very few of us know that "Amsterdam, which is currently hosting the 22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018) from 23-27th July 2018 - the largest conference for any global health issue in the world - became the first city in the world to overshoot the 90:90:90 target, set by UNAIDS (joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS), with a continuum progress of 94:90:94," said Alphonsus Stoelinga, Netherlands Ambassador to India, in an exclusive interview given to CNS (Citizen News Service) on the eve of AIDS 2018.

Stoelinga shared with pride (and rightly so) that Netherlands has indeed been on the forefront of the global fight against HIV/AIDS for quite some time now. "We are actively contributing to UNAIDS' 90:90:90 target for 2020 that is also intertwined with the global promise of ending AIDS through the adoption of SDGs by 2030. As per UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Country Progress Report 2016, the Netherlands' estimated continuum progress in as far back as December 2014 was 88:94:92, with 88% HIV-infected people diagnosed and linked to care; 94% with initiated combination antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 92% of all people receiving ART with suppressed viral load", said the Ambassador.

Multi-sectoral approaches and innovations are a must. Any efforts directed towards ending AIDS cannot function without multi-level cooperation and innovation. Presently, in the absence of functional vaccines or cures against HIV infection, the need for countries to join hands and innovate - both at the local and global levels - becomes more important than ever. "I am very proud to share that the Kingdom of the Netherlands has consistently and diligently been working at both these levels. The Dutch HIV/AIDS policy focuses on 3 core principles: (i) Prevention (ii) Linkage between prevention and care and (iii) Ensuring low threshold access to testing and treatment", informed Stoelinga.

Dealing with HIV the Dutch way

Netherlands Ambassador to India Stoelinga claimed that the Dutch were the first nation in the world to spearhead large scale needle exchange programmes to combat the spread of HIV among injecting drug users (IDUs). "The first information campaign targeting the Dutch population began in 1987 and it was initiated by the government. HIV testing through public health institutions is free-of-charge. Outreach programs are perpetually being set up for specific risk populations being tested. Free HIV testing, on World AIDS Day (December 1) and during the AIDS Conference 2018, are also being offered. All pregnant women in the Netherlands are tested free of cost for HIV. For most other people, HIV testing is covered by health insurance. Those who are more likely to have STIs and/or HIV (the high risk populations) for various reasons can get tested for free at an STI Outpatients' Clinic of the Public Health Service", he said.

The again, in Netherlands, HIV testing is also available through the internet and the pharmacy. This allows one to test one's blood or saliva for HIV antibodies at home. The young population is given particular attention - by way of sexual education at schools, mother/child care (in the form of food supplements), prevention of teenage pregnancy, ensuring that young people can be tested for HIV, and those living with HIV have access to the care they need.

"Our efforts cover the full spectrum. We have a close-knit system of physicians, nurses, social workers working together to keep all people living with HIV in a continuum of care. Additionally, keeping up with the reach and power of social media, communicating about HIV/AIDS is also a part of our efforts", the Ambassador said. Global collaboration

Netherlands collaborates and shares technical assistance and knowledge with other countries at the global level. At the same time, it also learns from partner countries that have their own set of challenges and solutions. Partnerships are key, working together across sectors and national boundaries is deeply embedded in the country's traditions.

Stoelinga gave one the example of one such initiative - the HIV-Cohort between India, Netherlands and Sweden. Launched during Prime Minister Mark Rutte's visit to India in May this year, the programme is aimed at tapping into complementary, diverse research strengths and expertise across the three countries to strengthen the development of better tools to understand and address the epidemic of HIV/AIDS, informed Stoelinga.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are closely related to the goal of ending AIDS. For the Dutch government, the diagnosis, treatment and subsequently, ending AIDS is also closely linked to two of its international policy priorities - SRHR and women empowerment. "We focus on linking SRHR with HIV/AIDS to ensure people have the knowledge and the means to prevent HIV. Linking HIV/AIDS initiatives with SRHR also create an enabling environment in which individuals are free to take decisions to protect themselves."

Stoelinga emphasised that Netherlands government's priority is to find a functional or real cure for HIV infection. Various research programmes, such as the one at Erasmus Medical College, have been set up to reach this goal. While this is still at a research stage and not clinical practice, he reiterated that the Netherlands will continue to strive for a functional cure against HIV/AIDS.

Stoelinga firmly believes that HIV/AIDS issues also form a vital branch for UN's Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 5 (Gender equality). "Netherlands has been consistently performing well under the SDG 3. Our country is in full compliance with the international health regulations, and for seven Shobha Shukla is the Managing Editor of CNS (Citizen News Service) and is leading CNS onsite at 22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018) in Netherlands. Follow her on Twitter @Shobha1Shukla or @CNS_Health or visit www.citizen-news.org

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