

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

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Roads are Necessary for Development

One of the major problems in Afghanistan is that its basic infrastructure has not been developed and that is the reason why the country is not able to perform well in different sectors. There are many sectors that are directly linked to the infra-structure development; therefore, the country requires performing well in this regard so as to provide opportunity for development and growth.

Among the different priorities in the infra-structure development, the roads play a very crucial role. Without well-constructed and well-maintained roads, it is impossible to improve economy and even security. For economic activities, it is important that there should be useful roads that can help in transportation of raw material, capital, fuel, final goods, and even labor. If these all factors are not transported on time, the whole businesses tend to suffer huge losses and, therefore, they are disheartened and decide not to invest in the country.

As far as security is concerned the timely transportation of the troops and the arms is really vital. If the forces are not able to transport enough number of troops and weapons, the consequences can be really very much severe. In past, on many occasions in different parts of Afghanistan, when Taliban were able to carry out serious assaults, Afghan forces were not able to defend themselves because of the same reason that the troops and weapons were not transported on time. It is also crucial to note that there are many places in the remote areas where troops do not have any way of reaching except using the aerial route, which is always very expensive and not convenient for transferring large number of people at short span of time.

Certain major catastrophes in the country, mostly brought by natural disasters also revealed the fact that the country is not properly equipped with enough roads. Landslides, severe snowfall, avalanches and floods, at different instances, brought to the light the fact that the concerned authorities could not reach to the affected people because of roads. In some cases, the roads were never present; while in other cases they were in pathetic condition, not possible to use.

The roads are also very much necessary for bringing about beauty to a place and support people to have safe recreational journeys. It is really weird and unpleasant to find the roads that are broken and dusty. Moreover, the ugliness further increases in such roads when there is rain or overflow of drain water. Such conditions can cause different types of diseases as the drain water may remain on the roads for days and invite mosquitoes and other insects. In addition, the drain water, containing different types of bacteria, dries on the road and afterwards is blown in the air by passing vehicles and wind and becomes the stuff the people breathe, which can cause different types of lung diseases.

One of the major contribution in Afghanistan for the development of basic infra-structure would be construction of roads. Help and support from international community and international organizations should consider this as top priority. They have, on different occasions, supported Afghanistan in this regard, as well. Afghan government should also get serious in this connection and use the opportunities to the maximum.

In a recent undertaking, contracts worth more than five billion afghanis for three road construction projects were signed between the Ministry of Public Works and local construction companies. Public Works Minister Mahmood Baleegh said that the first project was the construction of Fairzokoh Road in western Ghor province in Gardan Diwal area. The 60km long and 10 meters wide road would cost four billion and Af. 463 million provided from the government budget and take 32 months to complete. The second project is the Lesai Numan Shahr Road between Charikar and Qala-i-Band of Bagram district. This road - 13km long and 9-metre wide - would cost Af. 250 million with financial support from Japan and would take 14 months to be put into service. While the third project would be construction of 25km of roads inside Aibak city of northern Samangan province.

This initiative is worth appreciation; however, the important factor is that these projects should be pursued with true intentions and enthusiasm. Negligence in this regard would be a dishonesty with the entire nation. Therefore, there should be every effort not to allow corruption and fraudulence creep in these projects and thus fail them pathetically.

It is also important to realize that Afghanistan does not have latest technology that can support in maintaining their roads. Attention and consideration in this regard is of great importance. Afghan government, donor agencies and developed countries that are willing to support Afghanistan can divert attention to this important issue. Such supports are very much crucial for Afghanistan and can assist them in developing strong infrastructure. Afghanistan is in crying need of latest technology in almost all fields of life and in case of maintenance of roads the requirement becomes even more essential as the situation is not satisfactory in this regard.



IS Can't only be Defeated by Military Means

By Manish Rai

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook

Islamic State which stormed Iraq and whole world in 2014 with its takeover of major Iraqi and Syrian cities by exploiting Sunni Arab grievances in Iraq and chaos in neighbouring Syria. But the militant group is steadily losing ground in both the countries. The so-called Caliphate is on the back foot. Even some analysts are predicated that IS has more or less passed the peak of its military power on the Syrian and Iraqi battlefield. If IS continues to lose territory at the same pace, some people believe the year 2016 could well be its last to function as pseudo state. The Islamic State has lost about 45 percent of its territory in Syria and 20 percent in Iraq since the peak of its control in August 2014, according to estimates by United States analysts. With every town and village that is lost, the group also loses income that comes from fines and taxes. Their oil industry has been bombed which is the main source of funding and supply lines into Turkey almost cut. The overall effect of all these losses on the group's funding, leadership, arms, propaganda communications and manpower is immense and it surely degrades the group's fighting capabilities.

The C.I.A. now estimates that IS currently has 20,000 to 25,000 fighters on the ground that is the lowest force level since the end of 2014. Islamic State's ability to function as a military pseudo-state is troubled because it's finding it difficult to replenish its armed ranks. Various forces are squeezing the caliphate at multiple points simultaneously, ISIS can't resist everywhere. Even the current affiliates of Islamic State in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula face stiff competition from local rival groups and rising counterterrorism pressure from the states. But forcing IS out of the cities and territories which it currently holds is unlikely to lead to its demise. ISIS may revert to its previous tactics more those of an insurgency than a state. They're going to have sleeper cells, bombings, kidnappings and assassinations. It's going to be continuous and IS still after losing its core territory can run a bloody deadly insurgency for years. Islamic State is a hybrid organization. Its members disparate experiences combined to transform an insurgent force into a formidable army that can shift from acting like a guerrilla militia to a conventional army, all while fighting on multiple fronts hundreds of miles away from its logistical bases. The core of IS are former Saddam-era army and intelligence officers, particularly from the Republican

Guards which provide IS with good military strategy and when its combined with insurgency experience of its fighters who comes from various parts of the world. Then it makes IS a very different type of terrorist organisation which can fight as conventional forces and even can run insurgency campaign.

Islamic State can find other unstable places on the globe which can be used as its base. At present, Libya looks the most promising. It has just the kind of failed-state anarchy, the "savagery" that leaves room for the jihadists to move in, forging alliances with local militants and disgruntled supporters of the overthrown regime. Just like Iraq. Moreover IS the best-funded terrorist organisation history has ever seen can run a successful insurgency campaign with its deep pockets. The group financing is certainly more reminiscent of a state than that of organisations such as al-Qaeda that relied heavily on donations to fund their operations. So it would be erroneous to assume that IS will simply melt away by suffering military defeats in Syria and Iraq. With its surviving fighters IS can certainly engage in guerrilla warfare in whole Middle East and in direct or inspired suicidal bombing operations within its global network. Already, the group has stepped up the pace of suicide bombings in Baghdad, Damascus and elsewhere in an apparent attempt to assert its presence even as it is defeated on the ground. Both the military and counterinsurgency strategy is required for the complete defeat of Islamic State. Any counterinsurgency strategy core assumption is that the enemy has significant support in the communities from which it recruits and gets support. The aim of effective counterinsurgency strategy is to deny the enemy any propaganda victories that can further fuel its recruitment and support base. Unfortunately ISIS is very good in its propaganda war they always try to show war going in the region as a new form of crusade which they are fighting for defending the faith. We should not allow IS to brand itself as the icon of global jihadism, broadening its affiliate and allegiance-based networks. As such, a longer term strategy needs to be developed which includes prevention of further proliferation of the group within the Middle East and beyond. This approach needs to address ways of decreasing the group's appeal within the region. At last the local divisions and regional sectarianism that fuelled the rise of IS should also be taken care off so that Islamic State could not return to the places from where it was driven out.

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Distinctive Features of the Japanese Education System

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Japan's education system played a central part in Japan's recovery and rapid economic growth in the decades following the end of World War II. After World War II, the fundamental law of education and the school education law were enacted in 1947 under the direction of the occupation forces. The latter law defined the school system that is still in effect today: kindergarten, ages 3-6 (3 years) elementary school, ages 6-12 (6 years) junior high school, ages 12-15 (3 years), high school, ages 15-18 (3 years), university and college orderly four and two years. In addition, schools for special needs education, vocational school, specialized higher education and colleges of technology are incorporated. Education is compulsory at elementary and lower secondary levels in Japan. Most students attend public schools through the lower secondary level, but private education is popular at the upper secondary and university levels. Japan has ZERO illiteracy!

Japan has 23,633 elementary schools, 11,134 junior high schools, 5,450 senior high schools, 995 schools for the handicapped, 702 universities, 525 junior colleges, and 14,174 kindergartens (May 2003 figures). School attendance rate for the nine years of compulsory education is 99.98%.

Public schools are funded by a combination of support from the national, municipal and prefectural governments. Public upper secondary school did require tuition, but in March 2010, the government passed a measure intended to abolish these fees. Now, schools receive enrollment support funds that they apply to the cost of their students' tuition which equals about \$100 a month, per student. However, if these funds are not sufficient, the students must make up the difference. If students come from a low-income household, the government provides further subsidies of up to \$200 a month.

Private schools also receive a great deal of public funding, with the Japanese government paying 50% of private school teachers' salaries. Other forms of funding are capital grants, which go to private schools for specific costs, including new buildings and equipment. While private schools are considered to be more competitive and prestigious than public schools, public schools still account for 99% of primary schools and 94% of lower secondary schools. There are many more private upper secondary schools, however; 23% of upper secondary schools are classified as private.

The Japanese government spends less on its schools than do many other OECD countries. Schools are functional but unadorned, and most schools have a very small administrative staff, with only a principal, an assistant principal, a janitor and a nurse. The focus of the funding is on teachers and students. In 2011, Japan spent 5.1% of its GDP on education - lower than the OECD average of 6.1%. Japan spends \$8,280 per student in primary school, \$9,677 in lower secondary, and \$10,093 in upper secondary, compared to the OECD averages of \$8,296, \$9,377, and \$9,506, respectively.

The average salary of teachers is 7500\$ but they are responsible to play role not only a teacher but also a researcher. They also required renewing their education personnel certificates every 10 years, after undergoing professional development to ensure that their skills and knowledge are up to date. This new system ensures ongoing professional development, and also provides schools with the ability to remove teachers who are not willing to upgrade or renew their certifications.

In fact, one of the main determinants of educational quality is the competence of the teacher. The high quality of Japanese education owes much to highly qualified teachers. Teaching jobs attract many college graduates because teachers have higher occupational prestige, higher salaries, and generous pensions. Furthermore, teaching is one of the few occupations where people can apply what they have learned in college. Moreover, teaching is one of few professions in which women can build lifelong careers, and simultaneously keep their family commitments. This is why teaching jobs are very competitive, and only one out of every five to eight applicants will eventually become a teacher. The majority of teachers work for almost forty years, until they retire at the age of 60.

Almost all teachers report that they are always busy, and spend much of their time on paperwork and extracurricular clubs. Smaller class sizes for English, mathematics, and science, more team-teaching, and additional teachers have been proposed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in order to ease the workload of teachers. If schools take on classroom aides and volunteer teachers, teachers would be more effective in the classroom and after school, without massive increases to the educational budget. The Japan Teachers' Union (JTU) is composed mostly of leftist unionists who have fought the conservative MOE for control of the educational system since 1947. There is no question that the JTU has promoted peace education, student-centered education, teacher autonomy, higher salaries, and education for minorities, the poor, and low-achievers. However, after losing its political power, the JTU needed to adopt a more moderate strategy. JTU members who opposed the compromise with the MOE left the JTU, and formed the All Japan Teachers and Staffs Union (Zenkyo). The JTU finally compromised with the MOE. Even after adopting more conciliatory approaches to the MOE, the JTU is still struggling to attract young teachers.

Both American and Japanese teachers are growing older, with the average teacher now over 40 years old. Japanese teachers have larger classes without classroom aides than do American teachers; however, they will have smaller classes soon. Unlike American teachers, Japanese teachers spend much more time dealing with paper work, counseling, and student activities. Despite demanding work, the majority of both American and Japanese teachers entered the profession because of a love for children.

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