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Women and Development

Afghan women occupy a special position in terms of their roles in the health sector. This includes women participation in many activities which affect the health and wellbeing of their families in particular and their society at large. Furthermore, the role of Afghan women as key actors in the health care system are well known with regard to the prevention, cure, rehabilitation and health education dimensions of health care. The Afghan health care system comprises of the traditional and Western orthodox medicine and the relevant health facilities such as maternity homes, dispensaries and hospitals. In fact, the development and expansion of these facilities is usually considered as a sign of development of any country, community and society. Despite the role women in the health sector play, some of them play roles that are different and subservient to those of the men. Most men dominate in positions of high status like physicians, and top hospital administrators. Some women are mostly found in the low status health related occupations such as hospital ward attendants, nurses, dieticians and other paramedical jobs.

Development

The concept development is as difficult as any other concept when one attempts to define it. There is no agreement as to what development means.

The questions to ask about a country's development are three: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to inequality and unemployment? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond this has been a period of development concern.

Development must be human, economic, political and social. Thus, when development is human it involves a process whereby an individual develops self-respect and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, co-operative and consciously disposed to national economic and political values. When it is economic, it becomes a process through which people own individual and/or joint efforts to boost production through the mobilization of some combinations of all factors of production. When development is political, it involves a change in which people increase their capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities, and use this knowledge to organize themselves so as to acquire real political power in order to participate in decision making, plan and share power democratically and create and allocate resources equitably and efficiently among individual groups. In this way, it is possible to avoid corruption and exploitation, realize social and economic development and political stability and create a politicized population within the context of their own culture and political system.

Afghan Health Care System Development

Afghanistan faces a significant challenge to creating a functional medical system in a post-conflict setting a low-income country recovering from decades of strife, the health care system has been in disarray for many years. Rebuilding the health care system in Afghanistan is currently being undertaken by a number of groups, including the Afghan government, several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the US government. While some progress has been made, many hurdles remain.

Afghan women have played a vital role in the health sector development. And, one of the sectors where the most notable progress has been made is in health. The key advances for women in the health sector since 2005 include: a lower maternal mortality ratio; a lower fertility rate; an increase in qualified female health professionals; and a far wider network of health facilities capable of providing reproductive healthcare. In order to further these advances, key areas of focus should be: further expanding the healthcare system, such that uncovered areas gain access to proximate facilities; investing further in health human resources while incentivizing work in rural areas, such that more women can access health professionals closer to their homes; and a coordinated national effort on the nutritional issues of women and children, an area that has not been strongly addressed to date.

In summary therefore, and within the context of this article, development refers to a change process characterized by increased skills, capacity, productivity and equality in the distribution of social products within the society. It also involves a process whereby an individual develops self-respect and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, co-operative and consciously disposed to national economic and political values. And finally the active participation of women in the health sector for good health care provision and further development of this sector is inevitable.

The Real Issues Must be Addressed

By: Dilawar Sherzai

No problem can ever be solved unless it is identified properly. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to do it. There are different problems within a social and political life and people are caught in them in such a way that it is always difficult to come out of them. In most of the cases people become accustomed to those problems and never realize that they have the option of getting rid of them. This situation is further complicated by different interpretations of the problems and their solutions. Different people view social, economic and political problems with different spectacles and they have their own versions of how the problems are solved; therefore, they create a sea of confusion that drowns everyone.

At this stage it is important for the political and social leaders to come forward and provide guidance to the people. They should be educated, trained and experienced enough to understand the true problems and make the best choice among the choices that are available for their solutions. However, in case of Afghanistan, the political and social leaders, themselves, further add to the confusion of the people, instead of providing them solutions. In most of the cases, they even highlight the wrong problems so that people get diverted towards those issues and forget the real issues that the society faces. In this way they are able to achieve their self-centered objectives and keep on meeting their personal goals.

People, on the other hand, remain confused and unaware of their social and political responsibilities. A cursory glance at the mindset of the common people will depict that though there is a realization and complain against myriads of problems, there is no clear idea or vision about how to tackle these problems and what to prioritize.

As a matter of fact, we have forgotten the real issues and we are so lazy that we do not want to reach to the roots of the issues that we are facing; that is why we are not able to solve our issues. We keep on cutting the leaves, while never touch the branches, the trunk and most importantly the root, and we expect that the leaves would not grow again, which is really weird.

We believe that changing few things here and there may solve our real issues, but that is not the case. In fact, the measures that we

take to change few things are all based on the wrong diagnosis. The medicine that we have suggested for the infection in our society is not suitable for it at all because the diagnosis is not appropriate. Unless, we have proper diagnosis, how can we suggest the proper medicines? It is really impossible that the medicine for fever must cure tuberculosis.

There are many in our society, among our so-called leaders, the most intelligent among our government authorities and intellectuals who claim that they are paying service to their countrymen, and they believe that they have the treatment of all sorts of our social diseases and infections. They keep on insisting that they the society has the same disease that they have cure for; they do not let us know that it is possible as well that our disease is of the type they do not have any awareness about. Nonetheless, now we have to decide that how long these sorts of insane and illogical approaches and practices would continue? How long would we keep on suffering from the, otherwise, curable infections?

Now is the time that we adopt a somewhat logical and reasonable approach. We require understanding that we have to change the society as a whole if we are really interested in curing its disease. We need to rebuild and strengthen its immune system so that it is able to resist against the infections successfully. We have to make it believe that it can live without an infection and that it has a choice to do so. We need to make it appear beautiful and clean and let its susceptibility to diseases shrink. We need to fill its stomach with the hard-earned and easily digestible food, and make its veins filled with the blood full of energy and life. We need to strengthen its bone with the vitamins of determination and iron will. We need to make its mind clear and able to think logically and rationally. We need to make its legs and hands supportive enough so that it will be able to stand on its own and do things independently.

There is no more room for mistakes, laziness and ignorance. The time would never wait for us and the history is never lenient to the ones who are not prepared and who waste their time in repeating their errors. We need to re-diagnose the infections of our society and need to suggest medicine as per the proper diagnosis.

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Why Economics Must Get Broader Before It Gets Better

By: Mohamed A. El-Erian

The economics profession took a beating after most of its leading practitioners failed to predict the 2008 global financial crisis, and it has been struggling to recover ever since. Not only were the years following the crash marked by unusually low, unequal growth; now we are witnessing a growing list of economic and financial phenomena that economists cannot readily explain. Like Queen Elizabeth II, who famously asked in November 2008 why nobody had seen the crisis coming, many citizens have grown increasingly skeptical of economists' ability to explain and predict economic developments, let alone offer sound guidance to policymakers. Some surveys rank economists among the least trusted professionals (after politicians, of course, whose trust economists have also lost). A solid economic training is no longer regarded as a must-have for candidates for top positions in finance ministries and central banks. This marginalization has further weakened economists' ability to inform and influence decision-making on issues that relate directly to their expertise (or what they would call their comparative and absolute advantage).

The profession owes its deteriorating reputation largely to excessive reliance on its own self-imposed orthodoxies. With more openness to interdisciplinary approaches and the broader use of existing analytical tools, particularly those offered by behavioral science and game theory, mainstream economics could start to overcome its shortcomings.

Three recent developments underscore the urgency of this challenge. In the 12 months between the World Economic Forum's 2018 and 2019 annual gatherings in Davos, those in attendance went from celebrating a synchronized global growth pickup to worrying about a synchronized global slowdown. Notwithstanding the deterioration in European growth prospects, neither the extent nor the speed of the change in consensus seems warranted by economic and financial developments, which suggests that economists may have misdiagnosed the initial conditions.

A second area of concern is monetary policy. Professional economists still have not spoken up clearly enough about the challenges facing the US Federal Reserve's communication strategy, despite the fact that even slight misfires, such as occurred in the fourth quarter of last year, can trigger severe bouts of financial instability that threaten growth. Instead, they have simply continued to embrace the contemporary view that greater Fed transparency is always a good thing.

We have come a long way since the era of former Fed Chair Alan Greenspan's "Fedspeak" (or, as he put it, "mumbling with great incoherence"). But that raises a new problem: illusory precision. The Fed now follows every policy meeting with a release of statements, minutes, transcripts, blue-dot plots, and a press conference, signaling to markets a level of sophistication that is scarcely realistic in a world of fluidity and heightened uncertainty.

Rather than simply going along with the view that more is better, economists should be urging the Fed to adopt an approach more like that of the Bank of England, which emphasizes scenario analyses and fan charts. Economists could also be doing more to inform—and perhaps even influence—the Fed's ongoing review of its policy frameworks and communications strategy. After all, the economics literature on asymmetrical information suggests that greater input from economists outside of the Fed is both appropriate and neces-

sary for ensuring an optimal policy outcome.

A third area of concern is the Sino-American trade conflict, which is more controversial, owing to its political nature. So far, the vast majority of economists have trotted out the conventional argument that tariffs (real or threatened) are always bad for everyone. In doing so, they have ignored work from their own profession showing how the promised benefits of trade, while substantial, can be undermined by market and institutional imperfections. Those who wanted to make a productive contribution to the debate should have taken a more nuanced approach, applying tools from game theory to distinguish between the "what" and the "how" of trade warfare.

These are just three recent examples of how economists have dropped the ball. In addition, economists are struggling to explain recent productivity developments, the implications of rising inequality, the impact of persistently negative interest rates in the eurozone, the longer-term effects of other unconventional monetary policy measures (amplified by the European Central Bank's latest policy pivot), and the sudden slowdown in European growth. They also failed to foresee the Brexit saga and the political explosion of anger and alienation across the West in general.

None of this is a huge surprise, given the profession's embrace of simplistic theoretical assumptions and excessive reliance on mathematical techniques that prize elegance over real-world applicability. Mainstream economics has placed far too much analytical emphasis on the equilibrium condition, while largely ignoring the importance of transitions and tipping points, not to mention multiple-equilibria scenarios. And the profession has routinely failed to account adequately for financial links, behavioral-science insights, and rapidly evolving secular and structural forces such as technological innovation, climate change, and the rise of China.

All of this should tell economists that there is plenty of room for improvement, and that they need to expand the scope of their analysis to take into account human interactions, distributional effects, financial-economic feedback mechanisms, and technological change. But this cannot just be about devising new analytical models within the field; economists also must incorporate insights from other disciplines that the profession has overlooked.

A discipline long dominated by "high priests" must now adopt a more open mindset. That means acknowledging and addressing unconscious biases, not least by making a concerted effort to improve inclusion and diversity within the field. It also means focusing more on inter-disciplinary approaches and distributional effects, and less on the purity of mathematical models, average conditions, and just the belly of distributions. Such structural changes will require more and better intellectual and institutional "safe zones," so that analytical disruptions can be managed and channeled in productive directions.

Without significant adjustments, mainstream economics will remain two steps behind changing realities on the ground, and economists will be risking a further loss of credibility and influence. In an era of concern about climate change, political upheavals, and technological disruption, the shortcomings of mainstream economics must be addressed posthaste.

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